



CENTRAL CEMETERY ASSOCIATION OF BROOKFIELD

PO Box 821 ~ 490 Federal Road
Brookfield, Connecticut 06804
Trustee@CentralCemetery.net
(203) 775-3278

September 6, 2018

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(203) 466-6313

Hon. Dianne Yamin
Danbury Probate Court
155 Deer Hill Avenue
Danbury, Connecticut 06810

Re: Review of Connecticut's cemetery industry
Creation of a trade association
Petition for an accounting of perpetual care funds

Dear Judge Yamin:

Thank you for your time on the phone and for your invitation to speak at the Lions Club.

Request

I am writing to ask you to consider participating in a process to petition the Court for an accounting of cemetery perpetual care funds across the state. I believe the system that is intended to provide fiduciary protection and oversight of these funds could benefit by a review conducted jointly with industry participants.

Background

This proposal is motivated by a recommendation from the Connecticut Cemetery Association (CCA) to create a separate organization to address state-level cemetery industry issues. That recommendation follows a yearlong debate over proposed changes to CCA's bylaws. The new organization would function as a cooperative trade association addressing broad-based concerns including: (1) standards of practice, (2) fiduciary and regulatory compliance, and (3) economic and modernization planning.

Emblematic of the need are the prevalence of local news broadcasts about abandoned cemeteries. These stories raise valid concerns about the protection and system of oversight for perpetual care funds.

To put this into context, the 152 non-profit cemetery associations that have filed comprehensive 990s reported \$287,184,629 of assets. This represents a small fraction of the number of entities and assets across all the federal, state, municipal, religious, commercial, private and volunteer organizations that own, operate and maintain the estimated 5,000 cemeteries in the state. Research conducted over the past eighteen months has yielded no definitive source of information about all of them. A 1930's WPA-era project by Charles Hale was the last time a census was taken. Attached is a summary of applicable statutes from OLR.

Your Honor, thank you for giving this consideration. I'll plan to call you the week of September 19.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey G. Nolan
Trustee, Central Cemetery Association of Brookfield
Board Member, Connecticut Cemetery Association
Steering Committee Member, CT GIS Users Group, Official Advisor to the CT Chief Data Officer