

From: [Bart Catching](#)
To: [Jeffrey Delapena](#)
Cc: [Oliver Orjiako](#)
Subject: FW: Cemetery code change testimony
Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 2:58:02 PM
Attachments: [Letter in support of cemetery code change.docx](#)

For the AG-20 cemetery record.

Thanks!

From: Brent Rotschy <brentr@oalcyacolts.org>
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2024 2:33 PM
To: Bart Catching <Bart.Catching@clark.wa.gov>
Subject: Cemetery code change testimony

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To whom it may concern,

We would like to submit this written testimony to the upcoming Planning Commission hearing scheduled for 11-21-24, regarding the contemplated code amendment allowing cemeteries in the AG-20 zone.

Thank you!

Brent Rotschy
Secretary,
Old Apostolic Lutheran Church of Yacolt
(360) 921-4306

Old Apostolic Lutheran Church of Yacolt
PO Box 330
Yacolt, WA 98675

Re: Proposed code change to allow cemeteries in AG-20 zoning.

To: Clark County Planning Commission, Council and Staff,

The Old Apostolic Church of Yacolt recently constructed a private cemetery next to our existing church in the FR-40 zone. To do so we requested and were granted a code amendment exactly like the proposed amendment now under consideration at your upcoming 11/21/24 Planning Commission hearing. The benefits from our cemetery have been outstanding, both for us and the community, and we fully support and recommend now amending the code to allow cemeteries subordinate to churches in AG zones as well as in Forest zones.

However, we notice the proposed language under consideration appears to limit the construction of cemeteries in AG-20 zones to those "... subordinate to a church in existence as of January 1, 2024" and of course, "permitted subject to the approval of a conditional use permit". We believe the proposed language is good but unnecessarily restrictive, and we urge the Planning Commission and Council to broaden the amendment to simply outright allow cemeteries - subordinate to churches – in all zones that allow churches. We cannot see that there is any negative risk to do so, as any churches built in the AG or FR zones are subject to conditional use permitting anyway. We believe the conditional use process is an adequate tool to protect our resources and the public. We also believe that this same request to amend the code will come before you again, and it seems that it would be worthwhile to simply broaden the code now instead of repeatedly dealing with these requests in the future. *Have one hearing instead of two.* Now is a great time to do so.

The benefits we have experienced:

Decreased traffic. Our church funeral services typically are held in the church with a procession to the cemetery then back again to the church for a meal. Many times, a round trip is 35 miles – plus. Now there is no driving anywhere.

Safety. Many of the existing cemeteries have dangerous parking conditions resulting in pedestrian traffic crossing high-speed roadways and parking within inches of railroad tracks, etc.

Increased attendance at the burial. Many times, the elderly feel they are unable to attend a burial, miles from the church, crossing dangerous roads and back again.

Better visitation to the grave of a loved one. It is a real blessing to have the grave of a loved one a few steps away from the church door instead of miles from home.

Better maintenance and care of family graves. With our cemetery on the church grounds, graves are visited more often and receive better and more frequent maintenance - and - at no expense to the public.

We suggest amending the new code footnote to read:

“A new cemetery, subordinate to a church, may be permitted subject to the approval of a conditional use permit.”

...making the footnote applicable to all resource and rural district zones.

Thank you for your consideration of this request!

Brent Rotschy

Secretary

(360) 921-4306