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# Walpole Times letters to the editor: Jan. 22 edition



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Posted Feb. 1, 2015 at 9:19 AM

WALPOLE

### Why take a chance on cemetery?

Al Marhama Islamic Burial Services has initiated the permitting process to the town to open a Sharia Law-compliant burial cemetery in Walpole. This Islamic faith cemetery would be directly placed over the Walpole Town Aquifer, i.e. our town water supply. People of the Muslim faith buried in the proposed cemetery would be buried in what is described as a "green

protocol". Presently, the state web site indicates that the Commonwealth does not have any laws on the books regarding "green cemeteries." It is up to the local municipalities to determine the requirements.

The green cemetery process for internment utilized in Sharia law does not permit embalming the body. Caskets are not permitted in the burial plots nor are cement or liners in the grave. The bodies are placed in a cloth shroud only. This process results in a very rapid decomposition of the body. The concern is the downward movement of potential pathogens or dangerous chemicals toward the underlying town aquifer. People to be interned are not likely to be screened for retained pathogens which contributed to the cause of death. The interred body may have passed away from cancer and still retain significant amounts of toxic chemotherapeutic pharmaceuticals or radioactive agents utilized in targeted cancer treatment. Moreover, the dispersal of pathogenic decaying gastrointestinal contents (enteric bacteria), or extremely virulent viruses still present after death could become a hazardous leachate into our water supply.

Although the State has given the OK for the cemetery pending town review, the question for citizens of Walpole should be "Why take a chance on contaminating our drinking water?" The nature of the soil in the proposed site has been reported to be a high sand and gravel content with minimal clay. This type of soil easily disperses materiel from the decomposing body downward. As per Walpole Times report, the Al Marhama Islamic Burial proposed depth is 4 feet. Islamic Burial recommendations however state the body should be placed no less than 5 feet (approximately equal to the size of an average person). At the time of internment above our water supply, who will oversee the actual burial depth? Will the supervision come from an associated on-site Muslim Mosque or an appointed Walpole town official?

If the town is motivated regarding the purchase of Sharon Country Day camp to protect our water supply from potential contamination of a private interest, so should there be a compelling concern with the proposed new cemetery in Walpole. The town's municipal water supply is irreplaceable. Any proposal to allow a green cemetery or any development that could contaminate Walpole's drinking water should be rejected.

-- Timothy Hempton, Christina Drive

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Monday, July 25, 2016

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Cynthia B. Fox Community Room, Sharon Public Library

 **Movie Musicals on the Big Screen are Back** 6:30 pm  
Morrill Memorial Library

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