

Russel Watsky
21 Hawkes Ave.
Ossining, NY 10562

October 9, 2025

To: The Planning Board of the Town of Ossining
Attn: Carolyn Stevens, Chairperson

Re: St. Augustine's Chapel

Dear Ms. Stevens:

I received the "Notice of Public Hearing" dated 10/5/25 regarding the proposed construction of a chapel at St. Augustine's Cemetery. The property where I built my home and have lived for 42 years shares a property line with the cemetery, so I am directly affected by what happens at the cemetery. I have reviewed the materials related to the public hearing and offer the following comments/questions:

Short Environmental Form:

Item #11: "Will the proposed action connect to existing wastewater utilities?" The response was "yes". However, the site plan shows construction of a septic field. Please clarify if the wastewater will be piped to the municipal sewer line, or if a septic field will be built.

Item #13: "Does any portion of the site of the proposed action, or lands adjoining the proposed action, contain wetlands or other waterbodies regulated by a federal, state or local agency?" The response was "no". In actuality, the cemetery is adjacent to the Kill Brook which includes wetlands.

Item #20: "Has the site of the proposed action or an adjoining property been the subject of remediation (ongoing or completed) for hazardous waste?" This response fails to recognize the fact that the south half of the cemetery site operated as a landfill for two years (about 25 years ago). Thousands of truckloads of construction demolition debris were dumped here. The original grade sloped gently to the adjoining brook. The quantity of material was so great that the cemetery had to construct a retaining wall along Hawkes Avenue. While the CD materials were supposed to be "clean", in reality no one knows what was dumped here. To address this concern, the cemetery installed a series of monitoring wells, which were to be sampled and tested periodically to check for possible contaminants. Are there any records showing the results of this testing? I have attached photos of the Kill Brook directly downstream from the cemetery; these show an orange color of the water. Is there a natural explanation for this color, or is it an indication of something discharging from the landfill? Perhaps the test results answer that question.

Drawings PZ-1 and S-101:

The aerial view included in PZ-1 shows the detention basin where all the storm water from the site is collected before it is discharged into Kill Brook. This detention basin is not shown on S-101, which indicates the location of the proposed septic fields. If septic fields are to be built (see Item #11 above) I think it is important to show how they relate to the detention basin and the stream.

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On drawing PZ-1, the north arrow does not point north. This makes it very confusing to understand this series of drawings (building elevations, etc.).

The landfill operation raised the grades substantially. This was followed by the addition of 6-feet of topsoil to accommodate gravesites. Construction of a building typically begins by pouring footings which are placed on undisturbed earth. What were the results of the geotechnical investigation, and how will the proposed new structural be properly supported when it is constructed on landfill that continues to decay and settle?

Thanks for your consideration of my comments. I plan to attend the public hearing on 10/15/25 to learn more about this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Russel Watsky". The signature is stylized with a large, flowing "R" and a cursive "Watsky".

Russel Watsky

Attachments:

- Photo 3540: outlet from detention basin
- Photo 3541: discolored water downstream of detention basin



