

July, 2017

As announced at the annual meeting, the TBE Board approved the Temple's cemetery long term expansion plans at a second Ann Arbor cemetery location. After 30 years, the lots in our naturally contained geographic section at Arborcrest are almost all sold or occupied.

The Cemetery Committee worked for over a year studying expansion options at Arborcrest and other area cemeteries in conjunction with clergy, administration, TBE Board members, and funeral home partners.

The committee identified the Washtenong Cemetery (yes, spelled Washtenong, not Washtenaw) located on Whitmore Lake Rd. adjacent to the Barton Hills Country Club as a viable option. Washtenong is one of 28 cemeteries in Michigan professionally managed by the Michigan Memorial Group Corporation. That location met all the search criteria regarding location, pricing, business practices, customer service, separate Jewish space available, and expansion room for several decades.

Although an ecumenical cemetery, I want the congregation to know there is a cross on the entrance to the mausoleum building which is adjacent to the Washtenong office. We will not be using the mausoleum or that entrance. I trust the cross will not offend any congregants since we have always had a cross on our building.

We are not leaving Arborcrest. We are simply planning for our future needs at Washtenong. All lots owned at Arborcrest or on a current payment plan are not in any jeopardy whatsoever. No action is needed by any Arborcrest lot owner. Burials, graveside services, perpetual care and other products or services desired individually from Arborcrest remain unchanged. Lots may still be purchased there as well as ample space available in our cremation interment section.

Lots at Washtenong will be available for purchase starting in September. Reduced pricing for pre-need planning will be offered for one year. Further communications will explain purchase procedures through the Temple, pricing, decoration policy etc. and will also be posted on the cemetery link of our website. Our burial policies from Arborcrest will be maintained at Washtenong, if you have questions about certain policies, please contact the office.

An open house at Washtenong and short dedication service that I will lead is scheduled for Sunday, September 17 from 10am to noon. I invite all to attend and see our expansion location and meet Washtenong staff.

This study and decision took a considerable amount of time and effort, and I am confident the decision will serve our community well. I am so grateful to our cemetery committee: Harriet Charson, Ken Handwerker (Chair), Andrea Ludwig, Marty Ludington, Ronnie Simon, Gretta Spier, and Alex Wood. Jerry Lax provided legal advice as well, ensuring our negotiations with

Washtenong went well. It is only with the commitment and effort from community members that our congregation thrives, these members deserve our thanks.

For additional information or questions about this change please contact Sooji or any of the Cemetery Committee members listed below on the TBE Cemetery Web page.

Be well,
Rabbi Josh Whinston