

# City of Middletown, Veterans Affairs at odds over land next to State Veterans Cemetery

Dec. 6th, 2024

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MIDDLETOWN, Conn. (WTNH) — The City of Middletown and Connecticut Department of Veterans Affairs are at odds over about 90 acres of land that the state wanted to buy for land needs they have.

Cemetery officials at the State Veterans Cemetery say they are running out of space and in just a few years, there will be capacity issues.

The cemetery space is sacred ground for Tim Ackert, when he is alone in his private thoughts about his father Lloyd who served in the Navy. Tim also served and is a Veteran so the cemetery has special meaning to him.

“I feel complete pride complete and utter pride those who raised their right hand and said want to serve this great country.” Ackert said.

During a recent council meeting, there was an 11 to zero vote to reject Veterans Affairs purchasing the land.

Residents, one after another, saying yes, they respect what our Veterans did, but more burials could mean more chemicals. Gene Nocera, who heads the council, says this was a tough call.

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“There were a number of variables that made this problematic for us first the residents were informed so it was a big shock to them quite frankly,” Nocera said.

Veterans Affairs says they are looking to be good neighbors. They sent a statement to News 8 saying

*“Our Middletown State Veterans Cemetery is experiencing usage rates that will reach capacity in 2027 for one burial option, which is in-ground cremations. the current property cannot accommodate expansion.”*

News 8 was first to bring this issue to light in February. Many other cemeteries around the state are facing a land crunch, forcing some places to go up and build mausoleums for the dearly departed.

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Ackert hopes it can get worked out so those in the future can still come here to honor those from the past.

“Sometimes I see people that served the same time that I did which is really heart warming because I served with them and unfortunately they passed before me,” Ackert said.

Right now, Veterans Affairs says its looking at options trying to figure out what can be done when it comes to space needed.

Watch the full story above.

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