



Town of Dennis

685 Route 134, South Dennis, MA 02660 / Telephone: 508-394-8300 Fax: 508-394-8309

**815 Route 134 – Oak Ridge Cemetery**

**PLANNING BOARD SPECIAL REVIEW - STAFF REPORT– December 10, 2025**

*Note: New Information is printed in bold italic type.*

<b>APPLICANT:</b>	DPW C/O Dave Crispin of BSC Engineering
<b>PROJECT ADDRESS:</b>	815 Route 134 at Old Chatham Road
<b>MAP AND LOT:</b>	202-1
<b>APPLICANT ADDRESS:</b>	803 Summer Street, Boston
<b>CASE NUMBER:</b>	SRVW-25-2
<b>ZONING:</b>	Project is in the R-40 District. Entire property is in the DEP Zone 2 Wellhead Protection Area. Project site is mapped as part of the Old Kings Highway Historic District.
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	November 3, 2025

<b>PROPOSAL</b>	Expansion of existing cemetery (80% Plan Drawings – some items undecided)
<b>PROJECT SUMMARY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Review of a Municipal Project for expansion of Oak Ridge Cemetery. Oak Ridge opened in 1965.</li> <li>• Oak Ridge is a mostly wooded 40-acre property with approximately 9-acres already developed as grave sites and driveways.</li> <li>• Project is approximately 4 to 4.5-acres of clearing to develop lawns for approximately 2,000 burial spaces using full casket interments, cremation graves and a cremation niche structure. This is expected to allow for 20-25 years of internments.</li> <li>• Site is west across Route 134 from MelPet Farms and is south across Old Chatham Road from the Wixon School property. Cemetery is bordered on the south and west by residential neighborhoods through the woods.</li> <li>• Project is expected to cost \$2-3 million. DPW hopes to bid in late December of January.</li> <li>• <b><i>Revised plans show a new entry off of Old Chatham Road (to be gated), a narrowed entry on Route 134, a section dedicated to Veterans, a revised tree planting plan.</i></b></li> </ul> <p>The project consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of new driveways, entry pillars gates, utilities, landscaping, niche feature, water system, walkways, and patios.</li> <li>• Construction of equipment building w/ storage/work area for septic system. Preliminary schematic plan in 80% drawings. Engineer to submit plans reviewed by Old Kings Highway on Monday.</li> <li>• Preparation of an EPA Stormwater NPDES permit.</li> <li>• Clearing of approximately 4-acres of trees.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Installation of Concrete foundations for future headstones (NIC).</li> <li>• Installation of metal grave lot corner markers.</li> <li>• Concrete walkways, including stamped concrete patio with stone benches.</li> </ul>
<b>PLOT PLAN</b>	<p>Plan of 815 Route 134 South Dennis MA, 80% Progress, prepared for Dennis Town Engineering DIY, 120 Theophilus F. Smith Road, South Dennis MA, 02660 by BSC Group 803 Summer Street Boston, MA 02127. Consisting of 16 Pages with Title Sheet, Existing Conditions/Site Preparation Plan (x2), Driveway to Soil Disposal Area, Site Layout Plan, Site Grading Plan, Drainage &amp; Utility Plan, Landscape Planting Plan (x2), Civil Details (x5), Landscape Details, and Elevations. Plan dated September 2025. <b>Revised plans stamped and dated November 26, 2025.</b></p>

1. **TOWN DEPARTMENTS COMMENTS:**

- **NATURAL RESOURCES:** Project was reviewed and approved by the Conservation Commission.
- **HEALTH:** Septic on maintenance building will have to file for Board of Health septic permit.
- **ENGINEERING:** Revised plans reflect Town Engineering’s comments to the applicant.
- **Water Department:** In Zone II. Water Department has no issues or comments.
- **POLICE:** No comment.
- **FIRE:** No comment.
- **PLANNING:**
  - a) **Traffic & Parking:**
    - a. Front entry on route 134 is proposed to be narrowed. Currently two 12’-14’ wide lanes lead in and out separated by 4’ wide planting island with sign. Proposal is to remove planting island and reduce entry to 20’ for in and out.
    - b. Project planners are considering a second entrance off of Old Chatham Road.
    - c. New drives will be 18” wide whereas some existing drives are 12’ wide. Engineer notes narrower 12’ wide lanes result in cars passing on the grass.
    - d. Trip generation and parking are not an issue.
  - b) **Stormwater:** Project will require a Stormwater Management Permit and Engineer expects to file for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
  - c) **Landscaping:**
    - a. Preliminary Landscaping Plan has been prepared with vegetative buffer surrounding project with deciduous trees and bushes.
    - b. Engineer has said additional landscaping is being proposed (not submitted yet)
    - c. Plantings will be a combination of native evergreen and deciduous trees.
    - d. Clearing of 4 to 5 acres of trees. Area cleared is expected to last for 20-25 years. Engineer suggests this is a reasonable time period rather than phasing.
    - e. Depression in woods will be cleared (app. ¾ acre) for soil displaced from burial plots.
  - d) **Lighting:**
    - a. No lighting is proposed other than motion sensitive security lighting on the 32’ by 40’ maintenance building.
    - b. Project Engineer notes the cemetery closes at sundown.
- a) **District Intent:** Rural Residential
- b) **PLANNING SUMMARY:**
  - a. **Plan Questions at this time:**
    - i. Plans are at 80% and some items are still being considered.

- ii. Can the plan be phased? ***Project Engineer says that planning for cemeteries typically looks at 20-25 years which is what they have planned for at Oak Ridge.***
  - iii. Does the soil disposal area have to be so large? Three-quarter-acre depression in woods is proposed to be used for soil displaced by coffins. Seems like a very large area for minimal amount of soil displaced.
  
- 2. **4.1.2.5 Design Objectives:** The following design objectives (*italics*) in addition to any standards elsewhere in the Zoning By-Law, shall be used by Planning Board in considering all site plans.
  - a. **Landscaping:**
    - i. *Every effort shall be made to minimize removal of existing vegetation and to integrate existing mature trees and vegetation into the landscape plan. **The 40 Acre site has about 9-acres cleared for the existing cemetery with a proposed approximately 4 to 4.5-acres of additional clearing for 2,000 burial plots.***
    - ii. *Natural buffers ... shall be maintained whenever possible. **The site has about 120 feet wide vegetated buffer with mature trees along Route 134 and about 50 feet wide along Old Chatham Road.***
    - iii. *A minimum 10-foot vegetated buffer shall be maintained to abutting properties unless the appropriate permit granting authority deems crossing of buffer is warranted. **Landscaping plan includes a vegetative buffer around the project site.***
    - iv. *Landscaping shall include masses of trees and vegetation around/near buildings to reduce perceived scale and set them into the landscape. **Landscaping reduces view of building.***
  - b. **Circulation:** *With respect to vehicular and pedestrian circulation, including entrances, ramps, walkways, drives, parking and loading areas, special attention shall be given to*
    - i. *Location and number of access points to the public streets: **Appropriate.***
    - ii. *General interior circulation: **Adequate.***
    - iii. *Separation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic: **Adequate.***
    - iv. *Delineation of parking stalls and loading zones: **Typical.***
    - v. *Surface material: **Typical paved.***
    - vi. *Access to community facilities: **Adequate.***
    - vii. *Accommodations for the handicapped: **Will have to be accessible per A.D.A.***
  - c. **Surface Water Drainage:** ***Requires a Stormwater Management Permit***
    - i. *The removal of surface water shall not affect adjoining properties, streets or storm drainage systems nor obstruct circulation of vehicles and pedestrians. **Adequate.***
    - ii. *For parking areas serving new buildings or expansions to existing parking areas, the performance of surface drainage shall be based on standards set forth in the Dennis Subdivision Rules and Regulations for a 25-year storm frequency. **Adequate.***
  - d. **Building Location:** *Proposed building and structures shall be integrated as much as possible.*
  - e. **Building Design:** *The design of proposed buildings, structures and additions shall complement, whenever feasible, the general setback, roofline, arrangement of openings, color, exterior materials, proportions and scale of existing buildings in the vicinity. **To be reviewed by Old Kings Highway Historic.***
  - f. **Special Features:** *Exposed machinery, utility structures and areas for parking, loading, storage, service and disposal shall be screened from adjoining properties and streets. **Adequate.***
  - g. **Safety** - *All open and enclosed spaces shall be designed to facilitate building evacuation and maximize accessibility by fire, police, and other emergency personnel and equipment.*

3. **§ 1.4.2.1 Special Permit Granting Authority:** Special permits may be granted only upon a finding by the Board that the proposed use will not create a nuisance, hazard or congestion, or other significant harm to the neighborhood, nor cause derogation from the general purpose and intent of the By-Law, the stated district intent or applicable use criteria. The following criteria must be met:
- a. *The use is allowed by special permit in the district in which proposed, pursuant to §2.2.2 - Use Regulations Schedule; **The municipal use is required and allowed and serves the town.***
  - b. *Suitability of the site for the proposed use in light of the applicable district intent, as provided in §2.1.5; **The use is the expansion of an existing municipal facility.***
  - c. *Adequacy of management of traffic flow within the site as well as in relation to adjoining streets and properties, to minimize unsafe or harmful impacts of the use; **Very limited trip generation.***
  - d. *Compatibility of the proposed use with surrounding land uses, so as to minimize harmful impact or conflict with existing desirable neighborhood character, including views, vistas and other aesthetic values; **Site is well buffered.***
  - e. *Adequacy of provision of utilities and other necessary or desirable public services; **Adequate.***
  - f. *Adequacy of control of artificial light, noise, litter, odor or other sources of nuisance or inconvenience to adjoining properties, public ways and neighborhoods; **The proposal should be conditioned to ensure it will not generate light, noise, litter, odor or other sources of nuisance.***
  - g. *Adequacy of protection from degradation and alteration of the natural environment, including but not limited to slopes and other topographical features, vegetation, wetlands, groundwater and water bodies and wildlife habitat. **The property is an existing cemetery in existence since 1965 and is expanding appropriately. The proposed soli disposal area and edges of area used for cut and fill could be minimized somewhat.***

**4. PROPOSED CONDITIONS:**

<b>PROPOSED CONDITIONS</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The lot owners shall apply for all required permits and will comply with the intent of the Dennis Stormwater By-law, all requirements of the Dennis Conservation Commission and Board of Health and any other permits that are required.</li> <li>2. Construction shall not commence before 7:00 am nor continue after 7:00 pm Monday through Friday and shall not commence before 7:00 am nor continue after 5:00 pm on Saturdays. No construction shall occur on Sundays or legal holidays.</li> <li>3. The addition shall not generate new light, noise, litter, odor or other sources of nuisance. Any new lighting shall be restricted to downward-shielded security lighting, that is “Dark-Sky” compliant and does not spill off the property.</li> <li>4. Grading should be limited to what is absolutely necessary and as many existing trees as possible should be maintained. Disturbed areas should be stabilized and revegetated as soon as practical following construction to minimize erosion. Additional screening should be provided in areas where vegetation is removed or the grade is altered.</li> </ol>
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