

## Cemetery woes to be weeded out

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The operator of Bayside Cemetery in [Ozone Park](#) may have found a savior to drive out the weeds and overgrown foliage plaguing the Jewish burial grounds.

But a lawyer who filed a federal lawsuit last year against the operator, Congregation Shaare Zedek in [Manhattan](#), is skeptical that sufficient funds are in place to maintain the cemetery beyond a one-shot cleanup.

"We have agreed to give Congregation Shaare Zedek one last opportunity to remedy the serious and longstanding problems at Bayside Cemetery," said attorney [Michael Buchman](#), who represents a [Connecticut](#) man whose grandparents are buried there.

"We trust they will timely address the issues, but we are not optimistic given the disrespectful and neglectful manner in which they have historically maintained the cemetery," he added.

Federal Judge Raymond Dearie urged the parties to resolve the problem to avoid costly litigation. The suit accuses the congregation of breach of contract for failing to maintain perpetual care of the cemetery on Pitkin Ave.

According to a document filed in [Brooklyn Federal Court](#) on May 2, both sides have agreed to a stay of the suit until August, when the cleanup should be completed.

Congregation attorney [Stephen Axinn](#) declined to comment yesterday, but he described the plan in detail for Dearie last month.

"One of the leading owners of Jewish cemeteries in the [City of New York](#) volunteered that he would put his personnel and his equipment into Bayside Cemetery to begin the cleanup of this very, very large project," Axinn said, according to a court transcript.

"But he would not set foot in the cemetery or take any steps to assist us so long as this litigation is pending because he feared that he would somehow be brought into the case," Axinn said.

The Daily News is withholding the name of the benefactor, who wants to remain anonymous.

The cemetery has obtained a \$140,000 grant from United Jewish Appeal for the cleanup costs and also created a nonprofit corporation to raise funds to maintain the cemetery in the future.

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