



Emory Grove United Methodist Church

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Timothy B. Warner, Sr. Pastor

December 5, 2023

Christopher Conklin
MCDOT Director
Director's Office
101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition
Email: Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov

RE: Letter Joining in Petition AB-784 – Requesting the County abandon certain right-of-way easements on either side of Washington Grove Lane, primarily between Mid-County Highway and Pepper Ridge Road in Gaithersburg, Maryland

Dear Director Conklin and Ms. McCray:

The Heritage Emory Grove project described in Petition AB-784 (the “Petition”) remains as important to Emory Grove United Methodist Church (the “Church”) and the Church community as it was when I last wrote to you, on February 3 of this year. Therefore, we would like to join the Housing Opportunities Commission (“HOC”) in its request that the County abandon certain right-of-way, road widening easements on either side of Washington Grove Lane between Mid-County Highway and Pepper Ridge Road, as further described in the Petition.

As you can see from the Petition exhibits, the Church is located on the north side of Washington Grove Lane. Furthermore, the Church owns several additional properties adjacent to Washington Grove Lane, between the Church and Mid-County Highway. As a result, the Church holds property that abuts and/or is subject to these easements. It is the Church’s view that there is no need to widen the road at this location and doing so would damage the community.

We previously issued the following statement in support of the mission to repair Emory Grove Village:

The Church has its origins as the center of the life of the community of the descendants of slaves after which it is named. It arose from the vision and sacrifice of a community of people who understood that God was the center of the life of their community, as well as the source of the ethic that kept the community thriving and living in peace. As the community was decimated during the renewal of housing decades ago, the church has become the keeper of the ethic and history of the community. The former residents of Emory Grove and their families still drive in to the church. Its funerals and community gatherings (unfortunately, far more than its regular worship) still draw huge crowds who come to reminisce, to rekindle old

relationships, and to celebrate the ethic of the old community. The outgrowth of the church's role as keeper of the community's history and ethic is the vision the church has for the re-creation of the community, so that the history of the community can be rediscovered and renewed, and so that its ethic can find new life at the center of a new Emory Grove.

See Petition Exhibit C – Conceptual Master Plan p. 78.

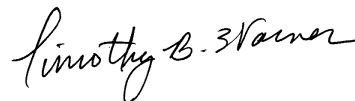
The Church remains fully committed to this vision, which will preserve that history and ethic of Emory Grove and allow our community to be rediscovered and renewed.

In summary, there is no need for the County to retain the right to potentially widen Washington Grove Lane at this location. Retaining this potential would be counter-productive to the extent that it could preclude the Heritage Emory Grove project from moving forward in the way it is currently envisioned. Moreover, any widening of the road at this location would be dangerous to pedestrians and undesirable.

For these reasons, the Church joins Petition AB-784 filed by HOC, and fully supports the abandonment of the road widening right-of-way easements on Washington Grove Lane.

If you have any questions or need anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me at the e-mail address or phone number listed above.

With best regards,



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