

Post & Courier

CHARLESTON COUNTY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING Tuesday, December 7, 2021 at 6:30 PM

Notice is hereby given that Charleston County Council will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 6:30 p.m. in the Beverly T. Craven Council Chambers, Lonnie Hamilton, III Public Services Building, 4045 Bridge View Drive, North Charleston, SC 29405 on the following:

HIST-09-21-00038: Request to designate the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 3754 Old Charleston Road, as a Historic property on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Public comments, written and oral, are invited. Submission of written public comments is encouraged and those wishing to provide written public comments for the public hearing should email comments to CCHPC@charlestoncounty.org by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 7, 2021.

This Public Notice is in accordance with Section 6-29-760 of the Code of Laws of South Carolina.

Kristen L. Salisbury
Clerk of Council

**Historic Property Designation:
Bethel African Methodist
Episcopal Church**

HIST-10-21-00040

- Case History**
- Presentation**
- Application**
- Public Input**

DESIGNATION OF HISTORIC PROPERTY REQUEST: HIST-09-21-00038
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
CASE HISTORY

Historic Preservation Commission: November 16, 2021
Public Hearing: December 7, 2021
Planning & Public Works Committee: December 16, 2021
First Reading: December 16, 2021
Second Reading: January 18, 2022
Third Reading: February 1, 2022

CASE INFORMATION

Location: 3754 Old Charleston Road (Johns Island)

Parcel Identification: 285-00-00-011

Council District: 6-Middleton

Property Size: 0.32 acres

Application: Request to designate the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (TMS# 285-00-00-011) as a historic property on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Parcel Information and Area Description:

The subject property is zoned Single Family Residential 4 (R-4) and contains a church structure. Adjacent properties to the north and west are zoned Commercial and are undeveloped. Parcels to the east are also zoned R-4, containing single-family homes and parcels to the south are zoned Industrial and contain single family homes or are undeveloped.

Historic Significance:

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was established in 1888 by the Right Reverend Richard Allen as a bush church in the Red Top area along Old Charleston Road. The land was deeded to the church in 1908 by the Bennett, Robinson, and Blake families.

The church is located along a long-established route that was highly traveled and commercialized to provide services to those who traveled through the area. The church is one of several amenities that acts as a central point alongside other businesses along this route. The church's presence containing a reigning steeple, resounding bell, distinctive features of the "old church" acted as a safe-haven for travelers in route to their destinations. Parishioners provided customized services to visitors and people in need, making Bethel known as the "church of hospitality". The resounding bell provided a system of communication to the community to alert residents and visitors in times of emergency, call for assemblage, or to announce a death. Bethel has continually provided a place of retreat and safety to those that visited.

The original (permanent) church structure is described as a wooden building containing a balcony constructed with a choir loft housing a foot-pedal pumped organ. At this time, worshippers were seated in both the balcony and the first floor sanctuary before it was later reconfigured moving the balcony to the left side of the sanctuary facing the pulpit. Bethel's location and sizable auditorium has made it a long-standing place in the community for activities, communication, meetings, and other events related to social concern in addition to traditional religious service. Most notably, the Watch Night Service, originating from events tied to the Emancipation Proclamation, is an annual service event held at Bethel that is well-known and greatly anticipated throughout the community.

Bethel AME has also functioned to provide a community health and educational services through the 1940s and 1950s. Most notably, Mrs. Mary Washington, Mrs. Evelina Brown, and Reverend Herbert Blake were hailed for their service and dedication to the community in providing educational and midwifery services, and transportation to school during the time that South Carolina did not provide this service for African American students.

The current church structure began construction in 1982, and the brick veneer was completed by 1998. The current structure was built around the original structure which can be seen from the crawlspace. The rear interior wall contains a painting of "The Last Supper" painted by local artist, Reverend Robert White, Sr. When viewed from the balcony area, the painting appears to be an extension of the table extending to those seated on the upper floor of the sanctuary.

The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Application History

Previous Applications: Permits for constructing an addition to the current church building (2005) and electrical upgrades (2008).

Designation of Historic Property Requirements:

The Charleston County Code of Ordinances, Chapter 21, Historic Preservation, Sec. 21-3.B states, "The historic preservation commission may nominate historic properties and/or historic districts within the unincorporated area of Charleston County for designation with written consent from the owners of such properties pursuant to this section, provided such nominations comply with the designation of historic property process and requirements contained in this section. Additionally, applications to designate historic properties within the unincorporated area of Charleston County may be submitted by the property owner(s) of the subject property(ies), site(s), building(s), structure(s), object(s), or district(s) provided such applications comply with the designation of historic property process and requirements contained in this section."

Sec. 21-3.h, Approval Criteria, states "In order for an application for designation of historic property to be approved, one or more of the following criteria must be met:(1)Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation;(2)Is of an event significant in history;(3)Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state or nation;(4)Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation;(5)Individually or collectively embodies distinguishing characteristics of a

type, style, or period in architecture or engineering;(6)Is the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced the development of the county, state or nation;(7)Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation;(8)Is part of or related to a square or other distinctive element of community planning;(9)Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or community;(10)Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history (potential archaeological site); and/or(11)Is deemed eligible for or already listed on the NRHP.

Zoning and Planning Director Review and Report regarding Approval Criteria of Sec. 21-3.H:

In granting a designation of historic property application, the Historic Preservation Commission shall consider one or more of the following criteria:

- 1. Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation;*
- 2. Is of an event significant in history;*
- 3. Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state or nation;*
- 4. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation;*
- 5. Individually or collectively embodies distinguishing characteristics of a type, style, or period in architecture or engineering;*
- 6. Is the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced the development of the county, state or nation;*
- 7. Contains elements of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation;*
- 8. Is part of or related to a square or other distinctive element of community planning;*
- 9. Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood or community;*
- 10. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history (potential archaeological site); and/or*
- 11. Is deemed eligible for or already listed on the NRHP.*

The applicant's letter of intent states approval criteria #1, #3, #4, and #5 are met:

- 1. Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation;**

"These citations document criterion #1 (rural county history)

As a bush tent, the founding fathers established Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (historical road); Johns Island, South Carolina 29455 in the year 1888 (venerable cornerstone housed in present church) of the Lord, deeded in the year 1908, and recorded in the County of Charleston, 1965. The land was given in two portions. The rear portion was given by Francis and Sarah Bennett and the front portion was given by the Robinson and Blake families.

Foremost, an altruistic spirit describes the inherent character of Bethel. Visible from a distance, Bethel's reigning steeple or resounding bell, distinctive features of the "old church" alerted the church's proximity to strangers and worn travelers seeking a haven or securing a "safety zone" en route to their destinations. As destituted visitors needed recovery assistance, parishioners delivered "customized services" labeling the church as "the church of hospitality".

The method of communication demonstrates an aspect of the custom of the rural county.

The building and the bell correlated – each emphasized the importance of the other in recognition and extensions of services. The bell used as one of the systems of communications, detailed different movements for specific purposes. Attempting to mimic staccato spacing, short or abbreviated quick motions announced emergencies or calls to assemble; however, long or prolonged movements created the toll which indicated death. Now, the bell, a valuable relic remains an indelible monument merging nostalgic moments with validations of its history.

Still important to the history, the route shows its significance as a customary practical problem solving mechanism. Similarly, the Bethel route merges nostalgic moments with validations of its history. How to meet daily challenges in living, a paramount concern, then finds the parallel concern in today's society. Sometimes, defying circumstances retreat with simple implementations. Generational accounts verify the Bethel route – a simple implementation. In effort to save time by shortening commuting distance, consistent users etched the Bethel route. Concealed by the church's building and the terrain, only members of the community knew its purpose, its route, or its existence; thereby varying the interpretation of the "safety" proposition. The Bethel route remains protected by the elements of time.

Fostering aesthetic appreciation, music and the interior design of the church were equally important. Tellers of this church's story recall the first permanent structure as a wooden building having a balcony constructed with a choir loft housing a foot-pedal pumped organ. Church worshippers sat in the balcony as well as on the first floor of the sanctuary. Eventually, the choir area was moved from the balcony to the left side of the first floor of the sanctuary facing the pulpit; then, to the position it now resides.

The heritage of the county shows with the religious service. One religious service, Watch Night Service, originated exclusively from events tied to the Emancipation Proclamation. Watch Night Service at Bethel had no equal. An electrifying worship service, unfolded with acknowledging God's Presence, expressions of gratitude delivered through prayers and testimonial accounts highlighted by fervid sermonettes, and laced with inspirational singing. Such songs like "How I Got Over", "Look Back And See How Far We Have Come", "I Look Down The Road And I Started, But I Am So Far From Home" and "Just Keep On Praying, The Lord Is Nigh", allegorical and spiritual in content alluded to the remembrance of the event when sung at watch night service. Still, a very anticipated worship service, members engaged in genuine worship in Watch Night Services.

A moment of interest occurs with the efficiency attitude revealed in the history of the rural county. One of the strategies to facilitate the church's efficiency was the utilization of the circuit. Bethel was a member of the circuit with two other churches: Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church on Wappoo Road, Charleston, South Carolina and St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church on Bear Swamp Road, Johns Island, South Carolina. On the first and third Sundays of each month the pastor held services at Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church, second Sunday of each month the pastor held service at St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church and the fourth Sunday of each month service was held at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The three churches had joint quarterly conferences which rotated among the churches. Quarterly conference services were held during morning worship."

3. Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state or nation;

"These citations document criterion #3 (rural county history)

Bethel's direct association with Richard Allen, founder, of the oldest black religious organization with national extensions and exemplary leadership in ecumenical organizations, activates positive leadership stemming from its source. Bethel renders service under this umbrella. In addition, persons from Bethel contributed significantly to the culture and development of the state and nation.

Also in the early 40's through the early 50's Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church functioned as a community clinic providing health care using resources from Charleston County Health Department and their doctors, and local midwives from the community.

Mrs. Mary B. Washington (January 18, 1899 - 1954) taught "rudiments" to members of the community in the church to those who desired to learn.

Mrs. Evelina G. Brown (May 16, 1906 – November 22, 2009) "Sophie" detected the health crisis with black infants and their mothers, pursued training certifying her in midwifery.

When the State of South Carolina made no provisions for black students to attend school by bus, Reverend Herbert Blake (March 23, 1920 – March 3, 2002) purchased a bus transporting students of the Red Top vicinities to school and continued this endeavor until South Carolina changed its position and policy. A son of Bethel, an ordained minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and usually triumphant in his approaches to kingdom building worked cogently with the targeted communities to renovate several churches and to erect others (Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Edisto Island, South Carolina, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Johns Island, South Carolina, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Johns Island, South Carolina, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, St. George, South Carolina and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church Fellowship Building, Ridgeville, South Carolina) in his pastoral charge.

Mrs. Mary Washington helped in eliminating illiteracy benefiting the county, state and the nation. Mrs. Evelina G. Brown helped in alleviating the health problem in the county, state and the nation. Reverend Blake assisted in eliminating unjust practices of segregation and worked towards improving the development and the culture of the county with improvements of the targeted churches."

4. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation; and

"These citations document criterion #4 (rural county history)

Bethel exemplifies the historic heritage of the county, state and nation. The church, is sometimes considered as a microcosm of society and it extols certain principles seen in many aspects from the historical perspective. First, order must ensue. Most successful organizations work with some structural framework. Bethel follows the pattern. Leadership under this church denotes "episcopal" governmenting. *Noteworthy, Bethel also leads under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Norvel Goff Sr., Presiding Elder, Edisto District and The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Presiding Prelate, 7th Episcopal District.* This leadership permits structure but allows individual productivity.

Effective innovative leadership produces phenomenal results: In 1982 the church was reconstructed under the leadership of Reverend Jeremiah McKinley. Reverend McKinley was also instrumental in establishing the first youth ministry. During Reverend Marvin Pasley's tenure (1990-1993), the church continued its progressive direction. Building the porch, adding bricks to the

exterior of the church, placing of the cornerstone, and dedicating the church amassed landmark steps in 1992.

On November 24, 1996, Reverend Herbert Blake returned home as the pastor of the church. During his tenure, plans were made to add a fellowship building to the church. Reverend Blake donated land to extend the church's parking area and he provided opportunities for young ministers to preach: Reverends Earl Harris, James Eric Nelson, Michael R. Mack, Gerard A. Moss and the late Calvin Morris.

In 2001 under Reverend Albert Abraham's administration, a set of drums was purchased, a new organ obtained, the balcony was opened and the fellowship hall was built. The actual phases and processes in building the church are seen as each minister and the people activated resources constituting a phenomenal exemplification of a group united through a vision and achieving success by persevering against odds. These traits characterize the historic heritage of this county, state, and nation. Criterion #4 appears in a subtle position on the criteria sheet. Question #1 begins the circle and Question #4 closes the circle. Criterion #4 addresses those valuable traits which allow and cause humans to breathe. Such intangible traits as freedom, liberty, individualism and love must exist in all of living and at all levels of county, state and nation. Those questions designed as variables may change thought processes but they cannot control the circle. The circle exists as the infinite symbol and it stands on its own power."

5. Individually or collectively embodies distinguishing characteristics of a type, style, or period in architecture or engineering.

"These citations document criterion #5 (rural county history)

This building illustrates a typical architectural style of the rural county of 1982. The church has two columns on the cement porch. Originally, the present church was built from cement blocks, but later bricks were used to cover the cement blocks to fortify the church and to enhance its appearance. Pictures supply evidence of the church's exterior and interior appearance. The pictures clarify the content and representation for documentations. Pictures of the cornerstone represent primary source documentations. Pictures supply aesthetic perspectives of the present church. The artist emulated the structural angle seen in the rear of the church above the balcony and the angular beams structure formed at the ceiling of the church by repeating the angle design at the apex of the painting producing an illusory effect that the painting recedes into another segment or exists in an ethereal dimension. The detailed accounts implied in the timeline dates exhibited in the window of the fellowship hall do not culminate Bethel's narrative, instead Bethel's narrative attests the power of the regenerative process which lies in the innate traits of humans. As aesthetics were important in the earlier church and still they are important now.

These criteria document Bethel's significant history correlating universal concepts and universal impacts. Bethel makes the request that the Historic Preservation Commission designate Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List."

Staff Recommendation: *The application meets approval criteria #1, #3, #4, and #5; therefore, Staff recommends approval.*

Pursuant to Chapter 21, *Historic Preservation*, Section §21-3.H, *Approval Criteria*, of the Charleston County Code of Ordinances, (adopted July 18, 2006), the Historic Preservation Commission may

recommend approval of designations of historic property requests to County Council only if the Historic Preservation Commission finds that the proposed designation meets one or more of the criteria in §21-3.H.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION: November 16, 2021

Recommendation: Approve, 8-0 with 1 absent

Notifications: 378 notification letters were sent to owners of property located within 300 feet of the boundaries of the subject parcel, individuals on the Historic Preservation Commission, St. Andrews, and Johns Island Interested Parties Lists on October 29, 2021. Additionally, the request was noticed in the Post & Courier on October 29, 2021.

Public Input: 16 letters in support of the designation request were received and are included in the packet.

Speakers: Barbara Moss and Arthur Geddis spoke in support of the application.

PUBLIC HEARING: December 7, 2021

Notifications: 378 notification letters were sent to owners of property located within 300 feet of the boundaries of the subject parcel, individuals on the Historic Preservation Commission, St. Andrews, and Johns Island Interested Parties Lists on November 19, 2021. Additionally, the request was noticed in the Post & Courier on November 19, 2021.

Speakers: Benjamin Edwards, Barbara Moss, and Arthur Geddis spoke in support of the designation request. 15 members of the public were in attendance to show support.

Public Input: 19 letters in support of the designation request were received and are included in the packet.

- 18 in support, 4 of which were from surrounding property owners; and
- 1 in opposition from adjacent property owner.

PLANNING AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE: December 16, 2021

FIRST READING: December 16, 2021

Designation of Historic Property Application:
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Redtop Area

Historic Preservation Commission: November 16, 2021

Public Hearing: December 7, 2021

Planning & Public Works Committee: December 16, 2021

First Reading: December 16, 2021

Second Reading: January 18, 2022

Third Reading: February 1, 2022

Designation of Historic Property Application

Parcel ID: 285-00-00-011

Acreage: 0.32 acres

Property Address: 3754 Old Charleston Road

Area: Johns Island/ Red Top

Owner: Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

HIST-09-21-00038: Request to designate the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (TMS# 285-00-00-011), as a historic property on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

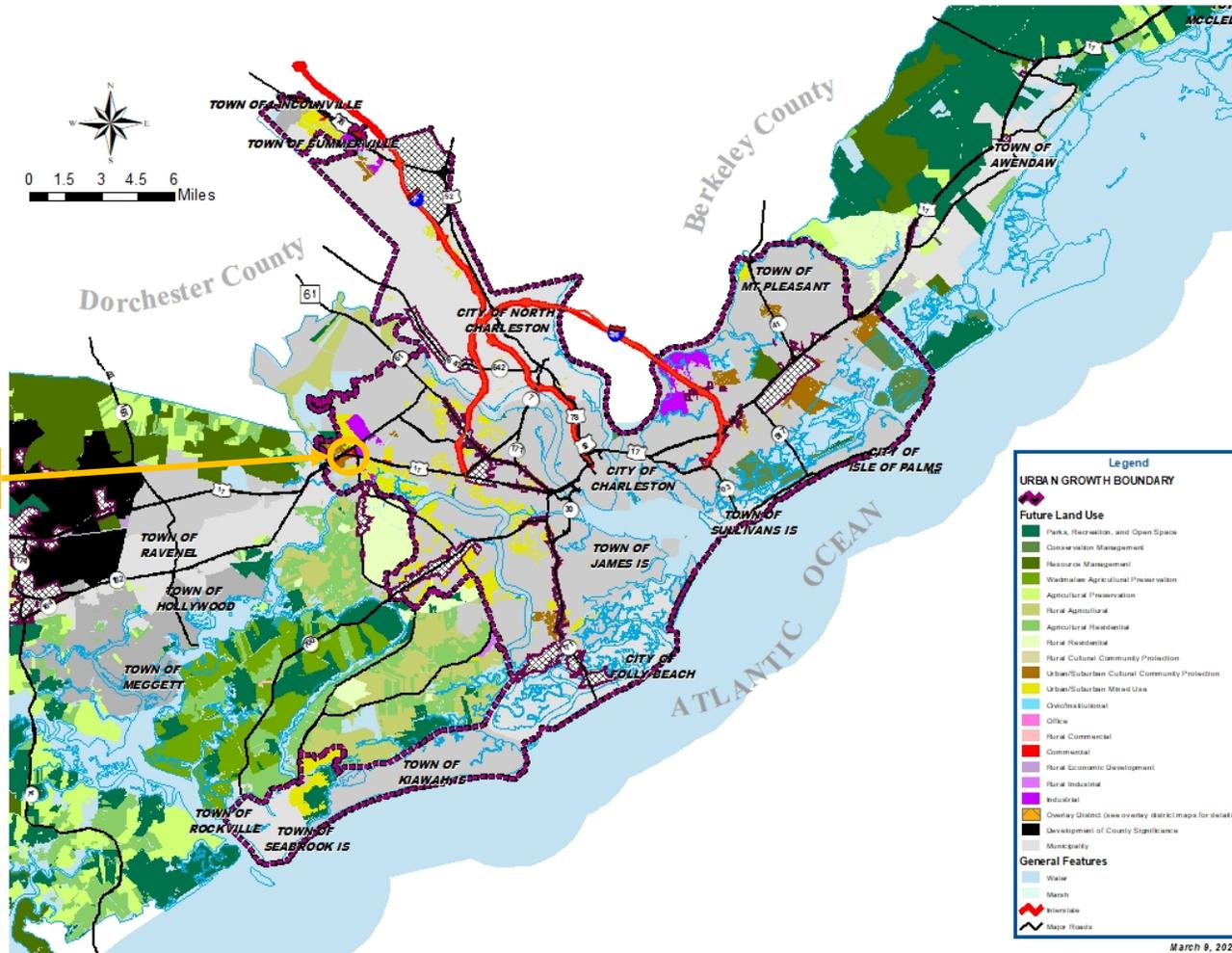
Bethel A.M.E. Church Historic Significance

- Established in 1888 by the Right Reverend Richard Allen as a bush church.
- Land was deeded to the church in 1908 by the Bennett, Robinson, and Blake families.
- The church is one of several amenities that acts as a central point alongside other businesses along this route.
- The church's presence containing a reigning steeple, resounding bell, distinctive features of the "old church" acted as a safe-haven for travelers in route to their destinations.
- Parishioners provided customized services to visitors and people in need, making Bethel known as the "church of hospitality".
- The resounding bell provided a system of communication to the community to alert residents and visitors in times of emergency, call for assemblage, or to announce a death.
- The original (permanent) church structure is described as a wooden building containing a balcony constructed with a choir loft housing a foot-pedal pumped organ.
- Bethel's location and sizable auditorium has made it a long-standing place in the community for activities, communication, meetings, and other events related to social concern in addition to traditional religious service. Most notably, the Watch Night Service, originating from events tied to the Emancipation Proclamation, is an annual service event held at Bethel.
- Bethel AME has also functioned to provide a community health and educational services through the 1940s and 1950s.
- The current church structure began construction in 1982, and the brick veneer was completed by 1992. The current structure was built around the original structure which can be seen from the crawlspace.
- The rear interior wall contains a painting of "The Last Supper" painted by local artist, Reverend Robert White Sr.
- The Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Application History

- Previous Applications: Permits for constructing an addition to the current church building (2005) and electrical upgrades (2008).

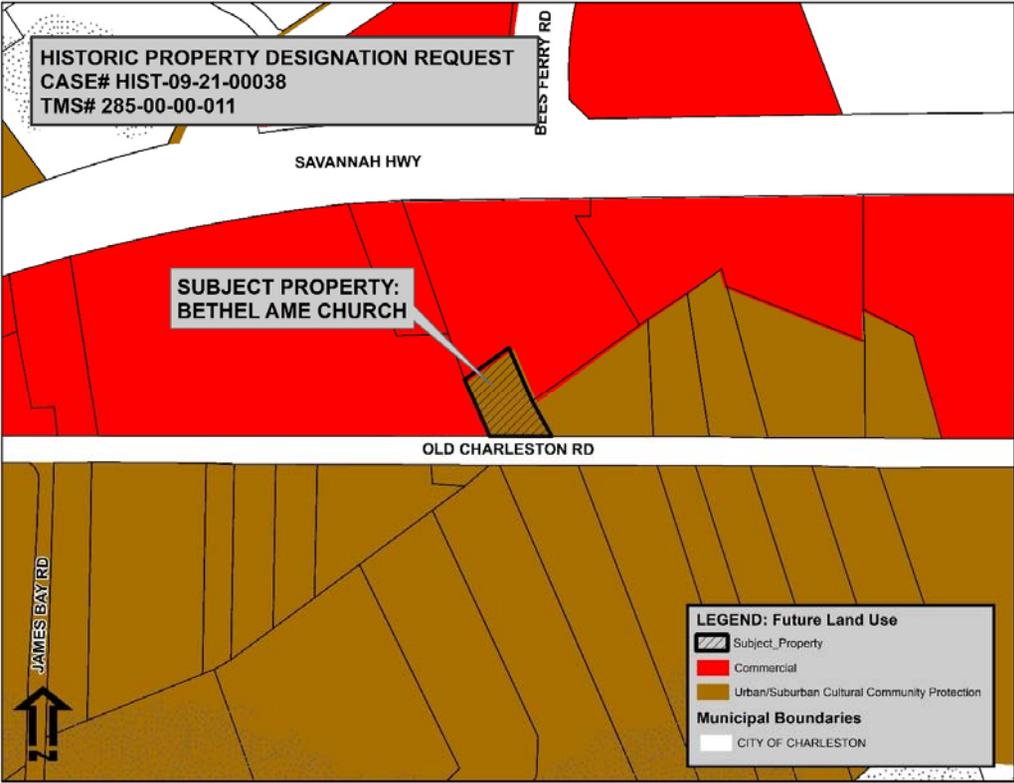
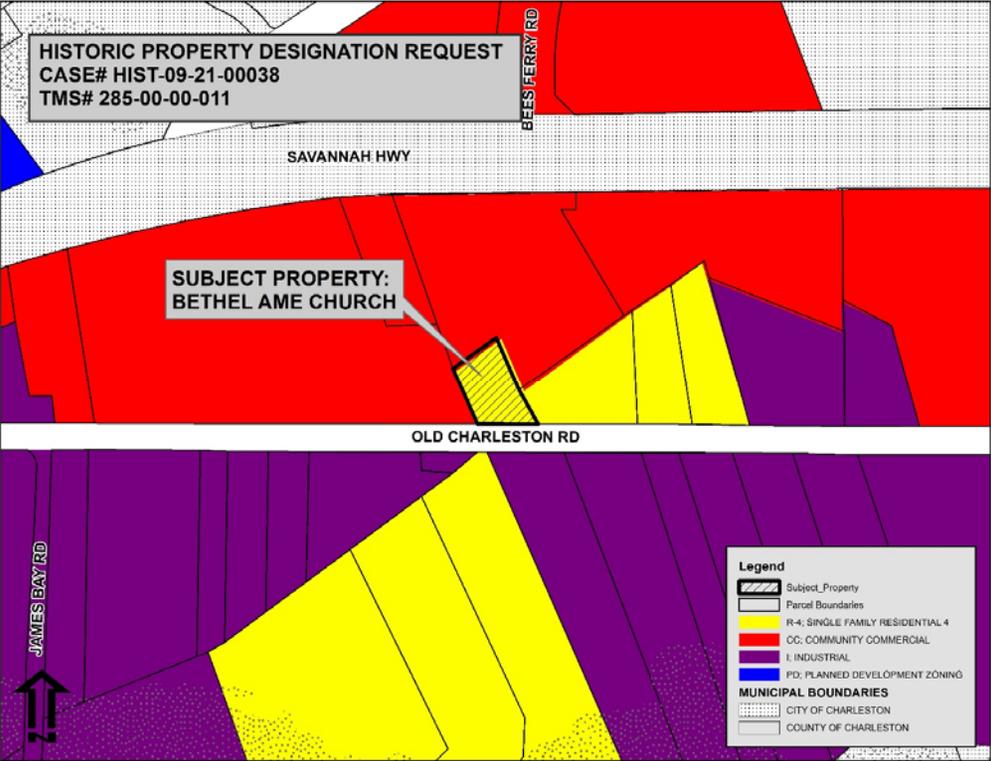
Countywide Future Land Use Map (Urban Area)



Subject Parcel

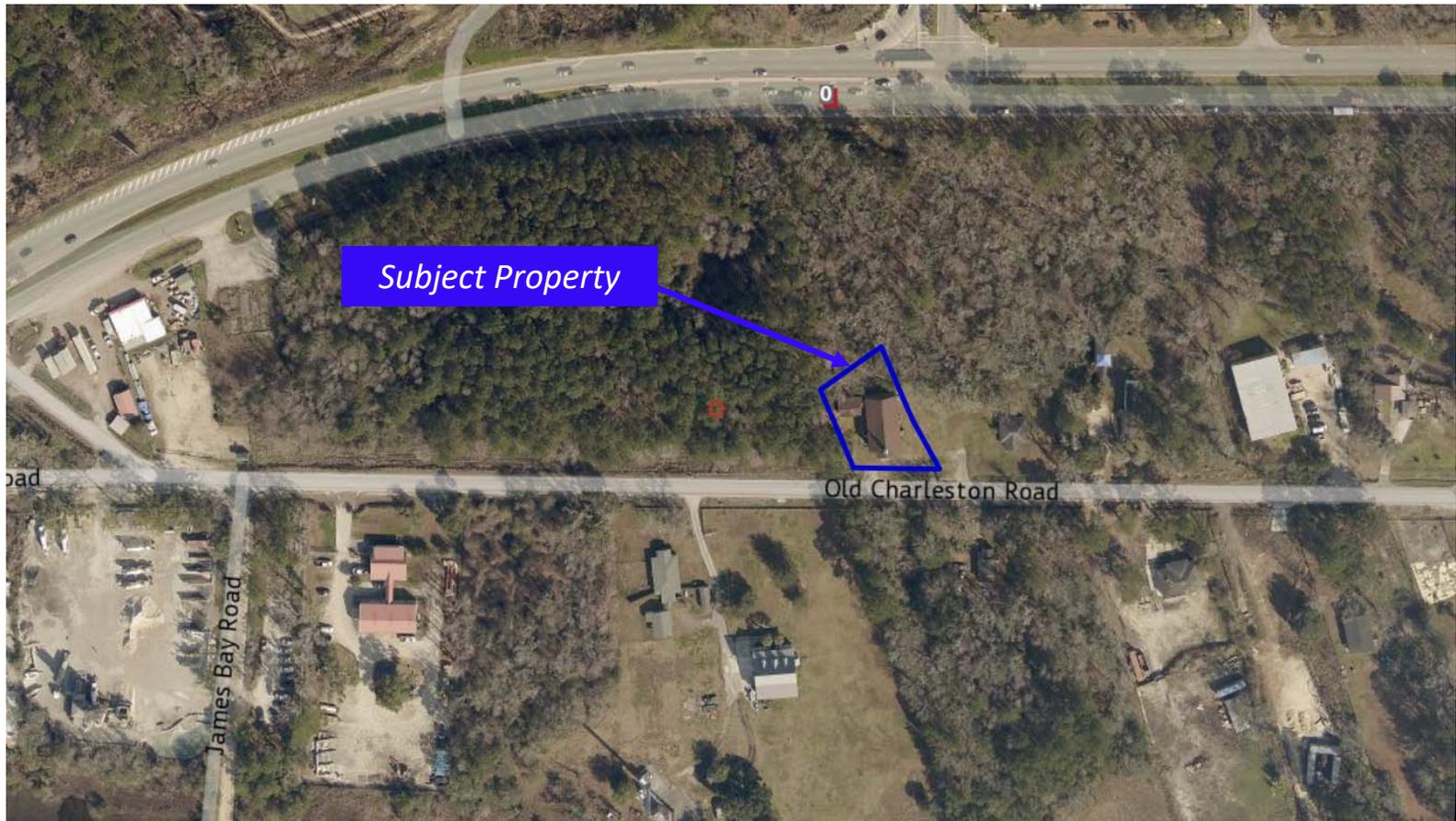
Zoning and Future Land Use Maps

Current Zoning Map



Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Designation

Aerial View



The subject property is zoned Single Family Residential 4 (R-4) and contains a church structure. Adjacent properties to the north and west are zoned Commercial and are undeveloped. Parcels to the east are also zoned R-4, containing single-family homes and parcels to the south are zoned Industrial and contain single family homes or are undeveloped.

Bethel A.M.E. Church– Site Visit

Side Elevations



Bethel A.M.E Front Elevation

Cornerstone



Bethel A.M.E. Church- Site Visit



Interior of Church- balcony view

Interior of Church/ Window Details



Bethel A.M.E. Church- Site Visit



“The Last Supper”- painted by Rev. Robert White, Sr.



View of the balcony



Original Bethel A.M.E. Church structure, c. 1888



Resounding bell and original cornerstone



Approval Criteria for Designation of Historic Property

Sec. 21-3.h, Approval Criteria, states “In order for an application for designation of historic property to be approved, one or more of the following criteria must be met:

- (1) Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation;
- (2) Is of an event significant in history;
- (3) Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state or nation;
- (4) Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation;
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- (10) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history (potential archaeological site); and/or
- (11) Is deemed eligible for or already listed on the NRHP.

Applicant's Response: Approval criteria #1, #3, #4, and #5 are met

1. Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation;
3. Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state or nation; and
4. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation; and
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Applicant's Response to Approval Criteria (continued)

1. Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation;

“As a bush tent, the founding fathers established Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (historical road); Johns Island, South Carolina 29455 in the year 1888 (venerable cornerstone housed in present church) of the Lord, deeded in the year 1908, and recorded in the County of Charleston, 1965. The land was given in two portions. The rear portion was given by Francis and Sarah Bennett and the front portion was given by the Robinson and Blake families.

Foremost, an altruistic spirit describes the inherent character of Bethel. Visible from a distance, Bethel's reigning steeple or resounding bell, distinctive features of the “old church” alerted the church's proximity to strangers and worn travelers seeking a haven or securing a “safety zone” en route to their destinations. As destituted visitors needed recovery assistance, parishioners delivered “customized services” labeling the church as “the church of hospitality”.

The method of communication demonstrates an aspect of the custom of the rural county. The building and the bell correlated - each emphasized the importance of the other in recognition and extensions of *services*. *The bell used as one of the systems of communications, detailed different movements for specific purposes. Attempting to mimic staccato spacing, short or abbreviated quick motions announced emergencies or calls to assemble; however, long or prolonged movements created the toll which indicated death. Now, the bell, a valuable relic remains an indelible monument merging nostalgic moments with validations of its history.*

Still important to the history, the route shows its significance as a customary practical problem solving mechanism. *Similarly, the Bethel route merges nostalgic moments with validations of its history. How to meet daily challenges in living, a paramount concern, then finds the parallel concern in today's society. Sometimes, defying circumstances retreat with simple implementations. Generational accounts verify the Bethel route - a simple implementation. In effort to save time by shortening commuting distance, consistent users etched the Bethel route. Concealed by the church's building and the terrain, only members of the community knew its purpose, its route, or its existence; thereby varying the interpretation of the “safety” proposition. The Bethel route remains protected by the elements of time.*

Applicant's Response to Approval Criteria (continued)

1. Has significant inherent character, interest, history, or value as part of the rural county or heritage of the county, state or nation; (cont.)

“Fostering aesthetic appreciation, music and the interior design of the church were equally important. *Tellers of this church's story recall the first permanent structure as a wooden building having a balcony constructed with a choir loft housing a foot-pedal pumped organ. Church worshippers sat in the balcony as well as on the first floor of the sanctuary. Eventually, the choir area was moved from the balcony to the left side of the first floor of the sanctuary facing the pulpit; then, to the position it now resides.*

The heritage of the county shows with the religious service. *One religious service, Watch Night Service, originated exclusively from events tied to the Emancipation Proclamation. Watch Night Service at Bethel had no equal. An electrifying worship service, unfolded with acknowledging God's Presence, expressions of gratitude delivered through prayers and testimonial accounts highlighted by fervid sermonettes, and laced with inspirational singing. Such songs like “How I Got Over”, “Look Back And See How Far We Have Come”, “I Look Down The Road And I Started, But I Am So Far From Home” and “Just Keep On Praying, The Lord Is Nigh”, allegorical and spiritual in content alluded to the remembrance of the event when sung at watch night service. Still, a very anticipated worship service, members engaged in genuine worship in Watch Night Services.*

A moment of interest occurs with the efficiency attitude revealed in the history of the rural county. *One of the strategies to facilitate the church's efficiency was the utilization of the circuit. Bethel was a member of the circuit with two other churches: Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church on Wappoo Road, Charleston, South Carolina and St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church on Bear Swamp Road, Johns Island, South Carolina. On the first and third Sundays of each month the pastor held services at Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church, second Sunday of each month the pastor held service at St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church and the fourth Sunday of each month service was held at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The three churches had joint quarterly conferences which rotated among the churches. Quarterly conference services were held during morning worship.”*

Applicant's Response to Approval Criteria (continued)

3. Is associated with a person or persons who contributed significantly to the culture and development of the county, state or nation;

“Bethel’s direct association with Richard Allen, founder, of the oldest black religious organization with national extensions and exemplary leadership in ecumenical organizations, activates positive leadership stemming from its source. Bethel renders service under this umbrella. In addition, persons from Bethel contributed significantly to the culture and development of the state and nation.

Also in the early 40’s through the early 50’s Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church functioned as a community clinic providing health care using resources from Charleston County Health Department and their doctors, and local midwives from the community.

Mrs. Mary B. Washington (January 18, 1899 - 1954) taught “rudiments” to members of the community in the church to those who desired to learn.

Mrs. Evelina G. Brown (May 16, 1906 - November 22, 2009) “Sophie” detected the health crisis with black infants and their mothers, pursued training certifying her in midwifery.

When the State of South Carolina made no provisions for black students to attend school by bus, Reverend Herbert Blake (March 23, 1920 - March 3, 2002) purchased a bus transporting students of the Red Top vicinities to school and continued this endeavor until South Carolina changed its position and policy. A son of Bethel, an ordained minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and usually triumphant in his approaches to kingdom building worked cogently with the targeted communities to renovate several churches and to erect others (Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Edisto Island, South Carolina, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Johns Island, South Carolina, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Johns Island, South Carolina, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, St. George, South Carolina and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church Fellowship Building, Ridgeville, South Carolina) in his pastoral charge.

Mrs. Mary Washington helped in eliminating illiteracy benefiting the county, state and the nation. Mrs. Evelina G. Brown helped in alleviating the health problem in the county, state and the nation. Reverend Blake assisted in eliminating unjust practices of segregation and worked towards improving the development and the culture of the county with improvements of the targeted churches.”

Applicant's Response to Approval Criteria (continued)

4. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social, ethnic, or historic heritage of the county, state or nation;

“Bethel exemplifies the historic heritage of the county, state and nation. The church, is sometimes considered as a microcosm of society and it extols certain principles seen in many aspects from the historical perspective. First, order must ensue. Most successful organizations work with some structural framework. Bethel follows the pattern. Leadership under this church denotes “episcopal” governmenting. Noteworthy, Bethel also leads under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Norvel Goff Sr., Presiding Elder, Edisto District and The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Presiding Prelate, 7th Episcopal District. This leadership permits structure but allows individual productivity.

Effective innovative leadership produces phenomenal results: In 1982 the church was reconstructed under the leadership of Reverend Jeremiah McKinley. Reverend McKinley was also instrumental in establishing the first youth ministry. During Reverend Marvin Pasley's tenure (1990-1993), the church continued its progressive direction. Building the porch, adding bricks to the exterior of the church, placing of the cornerstone, and dedicating the church amassed landmark steps in 1992.

On November 24, 1996, Reverend Herbert Blake returned home as the pastor of the church. During his tenure, plans were made to add a fellowship building to the church. Reverend Blake donated land to extend the church's parking area and he provided opportunities for young ministers to preach: Reverends Earl Harris, James Eric Nelson, Michael R. Mack, Gerard A. Moss and the late Calvin Morris.

In 2001 under Reverend Albert Abraham's administration, a set of drums was purchased, a new organ obtained, the balcony was opened and the fellowship hall was built. The actual phases and processes in building the church are seen as each minister and the people activated resources constituting a phenomenal exemplification of a group united through a vision and achieving success by persevering against odds. These traits characterize the historic heritage of this county, state, and nation. Criterion #4 appears in a subtle position on the criteria sheet. Question #1 begins the circle and Question #4 closes the circle. Criterion #4 addresses those valuable traits which allow and cause humans to breathe. Such intangible traits as freedom, liberty, individualism and love must exist in all of living and at all levels of county, state and nation. Those questions designed as variables may change thought processes but they cannot control the circle. The circle exists as the infinite symbol and it stands on its own power.”

Applicant's Response to Approval Criteria (continued)

5. Individually or collectively embodies distinguishing characteristics of a type, style, or period in architecture or engineering.

“This building illustrates a typical architectural style of the rural county of 1982. The church has two columns on the cement porch. Originally, the present church was built from cement blocks, but later bricks were used to cover the cement blocks to fortify the church and to enhance its appearance. Pictures supply evidence of the church's exterior and interior appearance. The pictures clarify the content and representation for documentations. Pictures of the cornerstone represent primary source documentations. Pictures supply aesthetic perspectives of the present church. The artist emulated the structural angle seen in the rear of the church above the balcony and the angular beams structure formed at the ceiling of the church by repeating the angle design at the apex of the painting producing an illusory effect that the painting recedes into another segment or exists in an ethereal dimension. The detailed accounts implied in the timeline dates exhibited in the window of the fellowship hall do not culminate Bethel's narrative, instead Bethel's narrative attests the power of the regenerative process which lies in the innate traits of humans. As aesthetics were important in the earlier church and still they are important now.

These criteria document Bethel's significant history correlating universal concepts and universal impacts. Bethel makes the request that the Historic Preservation Commission designate Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.”

**Historic Preservation Commission Recommendation:
Approve, 8-0 (1 absent)**

Staff Recommendation: the application meets approval criteria #1, #3, #4, and #5; therefore, Staff recommends approval.

Notifications

November 16, 2021 HPC Meeting:

- **October 29, 2021:** 378 notification letters were sent to owners of property within 300 feet of the boundaries of the subject parcel, individuals on the Historic Preservation, St. Andrews, and Johns Island Interested Parties Lists.
- **October 29, 2021:** Advertisement in the Post & Courier.

December 7, 2021 Public Hearing:

- **November 19, 2021:** 378 notification letters were sent to owners of property within 300 feet of the boundaries of the subject parcel, individuals on the Historic Preservation, St. Andrews, and Johns Island Interested Parties Lists.
- **November 19, 2021:** Advertisement in the Post & Courier.

Public Input

- 18 letters in support of the designation request have been received - 4 of which are from surrounding property owners.
- 1 letter in opposition of the designation request has been received from an adjacent property owner.
- 2 individuals spoke in support of the designation request at the November 16, 2021 HPC meeting.
- 3 individuals spoke at the public hearing and 15 total individuals were in attendance to support the request.

Designation of Historic Property Application:
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Redtop Area

Historic Preservation Commission: November 16, 2021

Public Hearing: December 7, 2021

Planning & Public Works Committee: December 16, 2021

First Reading: December 16, 2021

Second Reading: January 18, 2022

Third Reading: February 1, 2022

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APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Designation of Historic Property- Application Form

Owner Information

First Name:	Last Name: Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
Mailing Address:	3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, SC 29455
Home/Cell Phone #:	843-212-5450
Email Address:	newbethelameredtop1@gmail.com

Applicant Information (if not being submitted by owner)

First Name: Spavarie	Last Name: Taylor
Mailing Address:	64 Cannon Street Charleston, SC 29403
Home/Cell Phone:	843-906-9899
Email Address:	revspallytaylor@yahoo.com

Property Information

Address: 3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, SC 29455	
TMS #: 285-00-00-011	Acres:
Deed: 051-J044-017	Plat:

Brief description of the proposed property, object, site, building, or structure to be listed on the Charleston County Historic Designation List:
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church at 3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, SC 29455 to be listed on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

I (we) certify that Rev. Spavarie Taylor is the authorized representative for my (our) Designation of Historic Property application.

Ramona Maultie May Edwards Arth Hedley Shamela Jr
Maurice Hudson Low Moore
Signature of Owners Date 9-15-21
Rev. Sp. B. Taylor
Signature of Applicant (if other than owner) Date

OFFICE USE ONLY

Invoice Number HIST-09-21-00038
Amount Received 25 Cash Check # 2440 Credit Card Online Invoice

[Signature]
Staff Signature Date 9/23/2024

3754 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island, SC 29455
843-212-5450
Website:
www.newbethelameretop.com



New Bethel

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Rev. Spavarie B. Taylor, Pastor

September 13, 2021

Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View Drive
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Committee Members:

We the members of New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church authorize our pastor, Rev. Spavarie B. Taylor to act on our behalf in all manners relating to the application process designating Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Sincerely,

Almarie Hudson, Steward/Church Secretary

Arthur Geddis, Steward Pro Tem

Shamekia Graham, Steward

Mary Edwards, Steward

Ramona Moultrie, Trustee

Ida Moore, Trustee



New Bethel

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

3754 Old Charleston Road

Johns Island, SC 29455

843-212-5450

Website: www.newbethelameredtop.com

Rev. Spavarie B. Taylor, Pastor

LETTER OF INTENT

Acquisition to a sustainable future necessitates persistent improvement in all aspects of present living by connecting pertinent and definitive knowledge of the past; therefore committed to the concepts of promoting ideas and empowering people, the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church makes the request that the Historic Preservation Commission, designate Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

The Right Reverend Richard Allen (February 14, 1760 – March 26, 1831) founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (July 29, 1794) altered the events of history with his innovative leadership. Under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Bethel radiates and from the mission statement: *The mission of the AME church is to minister to the spiritual intellectual, physical, emotional needs of all people by spreading Christ's liberating gospel through word and deed.* As a bush tent, the founding fathers established Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (historical road); Johns Island, South Carolina 29455 in the year 1888 (venerable cornerstone housed in present church) of the Lord, deeded in the year 1908, and recorded in the County of Charleston, 1965. The land was given in two portions. The rear portion was given by Francis and Sarah Bennett and the front portion was given by the Robinson and Blake families.

Interestingly, this route, “Old Highway #17 Road”, “Old Savannah Highway”, “The Old Charleston Road”, a highly traveled and long established route connecting persons from several parts of the country, and commercialized in its function, maintained an unusual influx of travelers. Bethel, cognizant of the nearby automotive shop, the apartment building, and additional businesses centered this route.

Visible from a distance, Bethel's reigning steeple or resounding bell (housed in present church), distinctive features of the “old church” alerted the church's proximity to strangers and worn travelers seeking a haven or securing a “safety zone” en route to their destinations. As destituted visitors needed recovery assistance, parishioners delivered “customized services” labeling the church as “the church of hospitality”.

The building and the bell correlated – each emphasized the importance of the other in recognition and extensions of services. The bell used as one of the systems of communications,

detailed different movements for specific purposes. Attempting to mimic staccato spacing, short or abbreviated quick motions announced emergencies or calls to assemble; however, long or prolonged movements created the toll which indicated death. Now, the bell, a valuable relic remains an indelible monument merging nostalgic moments with validations of its history.

Similarly, the Bethel route merges nostalgic moments with validations of its history. How to meet daily challenges in living, a paramount concern, then finds the parallel concern in today's society. Sometimes, defying circumstances retreat with simple implementations. Generational accounts verify the Bethel route – a simple implementation. In effort to save time by shortening commuting distance, consistent users etched the Bethel route. Concealed by the church's building and the terrain, only members of the community knew its purpose, its route, or its existence; thereby varying the interpretation of the "safety" proposition. The Bethel route remains protected by the elements of time.

Equally important, tellers of this church's story recall the first permanent structure as a wooden building having a balcony constructed with a choir loft housing a foot-pedal pumped organ. Church worshippers sat in the balcony as well as on the first floor of the sanctuary. Eventually, the choir area was moved from the balcony to the left side of the first floor of the sanctuary facing the pulpit; then, to the position it now resides.

The church's sizable auditorium and strategic location easily accommodated requests for functions. Essential in planning and communicating salient information, the church hosted meetings and activities pertaining to communities and social concerns, as well as religious services.

One religious service, Watch Night Service, originated exclusively from events tied to the Emancipation Proclamation. Watch Night Service at Bethel had no equal. An electrifying worship service, unfolded with acknowledging God's Presence, expressions of gratitude delivered through prayers and testimonial accounts highlighted by fervid sermonettes, and laced with inspirational singing. Such songs like "How I Got Over", "Look Back And See How Far We Have Come", "I Look Down The Road And I Started, But I Am So Far From Home" and "Just Keep On Praying, The Lord Is Nigh", allegorical and spiritual in content alluded to the remembrance of the event when sang at watch night service. Still, a very anticipated worship service, members engaged in genuine worship in Watch Night Services.

One of the strategies to facilitate the church's efficiency was the utilization of the circuit. Bethel was a member of the circuit with two other churches: Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church on Wappoo Road, Charleston, South Carolina and St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church on Bear Swamp Road, Johns Island, South Carolina. On the first and third Sundays of each month the pastor held services at Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church, second Sunday of each month the pastor held service at St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church and the fourth Sunday of each month service was held at Bethel African Methodist

Episcopal Church. The three churches had joint quarterly conferences which rotated among the churches. Quarterly conference services were held during morning worship.

Also in the early 40's through the early 50's Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church functioned as a community clinic providing health care using resources from Charleston County Health Department and their doctors, and local midwives from the community. Many persons hailed from this amazing church as "quiet heroines and heroes". Mrs. Mary Washington, Mrs. Evelina G. Brown and Reverend Herbert Blake emerged.

Mrs. Mary B. Washington (January 18, 1899 – March 1954) taught "rudiments" to members of the community in the church to those who desired to learn.

Mrs. Evelina G. Brown (May 16, 1906 – November 22, 2009) "Sophie" detected the health crisis with black infants and their mothers, pursued training certifying her in midwifery, and who obtained one of the Bulow Plantation's slave houses, and had it converted as her home by building rooms around the original slave structure, and adding a front porch which currently sits at 3660 Old Charleston Road.

When the State of South Carolina made no provisions for black students to attend school by bus, Reverend Herbert Blake (March 23, 1920 – March 3, 2002) purchased a bus transporting students of the Red Top vicinities to school and continued this endeavor until South Carolina changed its position and policy. A son of Bethel, an ordained minister of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and usually triumphant in his approaches to kingdom building worked cogently with the targeted communities to renovate several churches and to erect others (Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Edisto Island, South Carolina, St. James African Methodist Episcopal Church, Johns Island, South Carolina, St. John African Methodist Episcopal Church, Johns Island, South Carolina, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, St. George, South Carolina and Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church Fellowship Building, Ridgeville, South Carolina) in his pastoral charge.

Effective innovative leadership produces phenomenal results: In 1982 the church was reconstructed under the leadership of Reverend Jeremiah McKinley. Reverend McKinley was also instrumental in establishing the first youth ministry. During Reverend Marvin Pasley's tenure (1990-1993), the church continued its progressive direction. Building the porch, adding bricks to the exterior of the church, placing of the cornerstone, and dedicating the church amassed landmark steps in 1992.

On November 24, 1996, Reverend Herbert Blake returned home as the pastor of the church. During his tenure, plans were made to add a fellowship building to the church. Reverend Blake donated land to extend the church's parking area and he provided opportunities for young ministers to preach: Reverends Earl Harris, James Eric Nelson, Michael R. Mack, Gerard A. Moss and the late Calvin Morris.

In 2001 under Reverend Albert Abraham's administration, a set of drums was purchased, a new organ obtained, the balcony was opened and the fellowship hall was built. On September 22, 2012 Reverend Barbara Fludd became the first female pastor; Licentiate Shanty Fludd was ordained Itinerate Deacon.

Reverend Spavarie B. Taylor was assigned as pastor to Bethel AME Church on October 2017. Under Rev. Taylor's leadership, Brother Ricky Nesbitt was ordained as a minister by the Annual Conference in 2018. Noteworthy, Bethel also leads under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Norvel Goff Sr., Presiding Elder, Edisto District and The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Presiding Prelate, 7th Episcopal District.

Presently, the pastor, Reverend Spavarie B. Taylor, seeks to empower members in building spiritual relationships with the Heavenly Father in impacting their daily lives as they seek to spread the "good news" of the resurrected Savior through service and outreach to others.

A painting (1991) on back interior wall of the present sanctuary, an interpretation of "THE LAST SUPPER" by the local artist Reverend Robert White, Sr. helps in creating the religious ambiance. Viewers may receive many messages. One emblematic interpretation indicates that innovative leadership effects change, but the innovation must occur only to edify aspects of living as portrayed by the GREATEST LEADER of innovation. Effective innovative leadership produces phenomenal results. In other words, a bold vision took form in the embodiment of a new church. Full of compassion and love, Bethel remains a strong and powerful force serving the present age; therefore Bethel makes the request that the Historic Preservation Commission designate Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Documents for Approval of Criteria

This response operates from the premise that all human behaviors influence living directly or indirectly. Whether those deleterious actions or positive actions cause ripples or explosions, the initiator bears the responsibility. Effects germinate. Although these criteria may appear as separate forms or questions or individualized criterion, in reality, they coexist as invaluable and insightful and comprehensive guides in understanding human nature. Humans depend on each other. Life rotates.

Adorned with the accoutrements of the rural county, Bethel's edifice projects a breathing paradigm. Centered for living, Bethel's generosity has no limits, as in earlier times as well as now. Presently, as an act of kindness, Bethel also permits another church to use its facility for worship services. Bethel annotates the life of its people, presents gifts of antiquity, and wears laurels of dignity.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church makes the request that the Historic Property Commission designate Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

APPROVAL CRITERION #1

These citations document criterion #1 (rural county history)

As a bush tent, the founding fathers established Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (historical road); Johns Island, South Carolina 29455 in the year 1888 (venerable cornerstone housed in present church) of the Lord, deeded in the year 1908, and recorded in the County of Charleston, 1965. The land was given in two portions. The rear portion was given by Francis and Sarah Bennett and the front portion was given by the Robinson and Blake families.

Foremost, an altruistic spirit describes the inherent character of Bethel. *Visible from a distance, Bethel's reigning steeple or resounding bell, distinctive features of the "old church" alerted the church's proximity to strangers and worn travelers seeking a haven or securing a "safety zone" en route to their destinations. As destituted visitors needed recovery assistance, parishioners delivered "customized services" labeling the church as "the church of hospitality".*

The method of communication demonstrates an aspect of the custom of the rural county. *The building and the bell correlated – each emphasized the importance of the other in recognition and extensions of services. The bell used as one of the systems of communications, detailed different movements for specific purposes. Attempting to mimic staccato spacing, short or abbreviated quick motions announced emergencies or calls to assemble; however, long or prolonged movements created the toll which indicated death. Now, the bell, a valuable relic remains an indelible monument merging nostalgic moments with validations of its history.*

Still important to the history, the route shows its significance as a customary practical problem solving mechanism. *Similarly, the Bethel route merges nostalgic moments with validations of its history. How to meet daily challenges in living, a paramount concern, then finds the parallel concern in today's society. Sometimes, defying circumstances retreat with simple implementations. Generational accounts verify the Bethel route – a simple implementation. In effort to save time by shortening commuting distance, consistent users etched the Bethel route. Concealed by the church's building and the terrain, only members of the community knew its purpose, its route, or its existence; thereby varying the interpretation of the "safety" proposition. The Bethel route remains protected by the elements of time.*

Fostering aesthetic appreciation, music and the interior design of the church were equally important. *Tellers of this church's story recall the first permanent structure as a wooden building having a balcony constructed with a choir loft housing a foot-pedal pumped organ. Church worshippers sat in the balcony as well as on the first floor of the sanctuary. Eventually, the choir area was moved from the balcony to the left side of the first floor of the sanctuary facing the pulpit; then, to the position it now resides.*

The heritage of the county shows with the religious service. *One religious service, Watch Night Service, originated exclusively from events tied to the Emancipation Proclamation. Watch Night Service at Bethel had no equal. An electrifying worship service, unfolded with acknowledging God's Presence, expressions of gratitude delivered through prayers and testimonial accounts highlighted by fervid sermonettes, and laced with inspirational singing. Such songs like "How I Got Over", "Look Back And See How Far We Have Come", "I Look Down The Road And I Started, But I Am So Far From Home" and "Just Keep On Praying, The Lord Is Nigh", allegorical and spiritual in content alluded to the remembrance of the event when sung at watch night service. Still, a very anticipated worship service, members engaged in genuine worship in Watch Night Services.*

A moment of interest occurs with the efficiency attitude revealed in the history of the rural county. *One of the strategies to facilitate the church's efficiency was the utilization of the circuit. Bethel was a member of the circuit with two other churches: Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church on Wappoo Road, Charleston, South Carolina and St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church on Bear Swamp Road, Johns Island, South Carolina. On the first and third Sundays of each month the pastor held services at Graham African Methodist Episcopal Church, second Sunday of each month the pastor held service at St. Mary African Methodist Episcopal Church and the fourth Sunday of each month service was held at Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church. The three churches had joint quarterly conferences which rotated among the churches. Quarterly conference services were held during morning worship.*

APPROVAL CRITERION #3

These citations document criterion #3 (rural county history)

Bethel's direct association with Richard Allen, founder, of the oldest black religious organization with national extensions and exemplary leadership in ecumenical organizations, activates positive leadership stemming from its source. Bethel renders service under this umbrella. In addition, persons from Bethel contributed significantly to the culture and development of the state and nation.

Also in the early 40's through the early 50's Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church functioned as a community clinic providing health care using resources from Charleston County Health Department and their doctors, and local midwives from the community.

Mrs. Mary B. Washington (January 18, 1899 - 1954) taught "rudiments" to members of the community in the church to those who desired to learn.

Mrs. Evelina G. Brown (May 16, 1906 – November 22, 2009) "Sophie" detected the health crisis with black infants and their mothers, pursued training certifying her in midwifery.

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Mrs. Mary Washington helped in eliminating illiteracy benefiting the county, state and the nation. Mrs. Evelina G. Brown helped in alleviating the health problem in the county, state and the nation. Reverend Blake assisted in eliminating unjust practices of segregation and worked towards improving the development and the culture of the county with improvements of the targeted churches.

APPROVAL CRITERION #4

These citations document criterion #4 (rural county history)

Bethel exemplifies the historic heritage of the county, state and nation. The church, is sometimes considered as a microcosm of society and it extols certain principles seen in many aspects from the historical perspective. First, order must ensue. Most successful organizations work with some structural framework. Bethel follows the pattern. Leadership under this church denotes “episcopal” governmenting. *Noteworthy, Bethel also leads under the leadership of Reverend Dr. Norvel Goff Sr., Presiding Elder, Edisto District and The Right Reverend Samuel L. Green, Presiding Prelate, 7th Episcopal District.* This leadership permits structure but allows individual productivity.

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In 2001 under Reverend Albert Abraham’s administration, a set of drums was purchased, a new organ obtained, the balcony was opened and the fellowship hall was built. The actual phases and processes in building the church are seen as each minister and the people activated resources constituting a phenomenal exemplification of a group united through a vision and achieving success by persevering against odds. These traits characterize the historic heritage of this county, state, and nation. Criterion #4 appears in a subtle position on the criteria sheet. Question #1 begins the circle and Question #4 closes the circle. Criterion #4 addresses those valuable traits which allow and cause humans to breathe. Such intangible traits as freedom, liberty, individualism and love must exist in all of living and at all levels of county, state and nation. Those questions designed as variables may change thought processes but they cannot control the circle. The circle exists as the infinite symbol and it stands on its own power.

APPROVAL CRITERION #5

These citations document criterion #5 (rural county history)

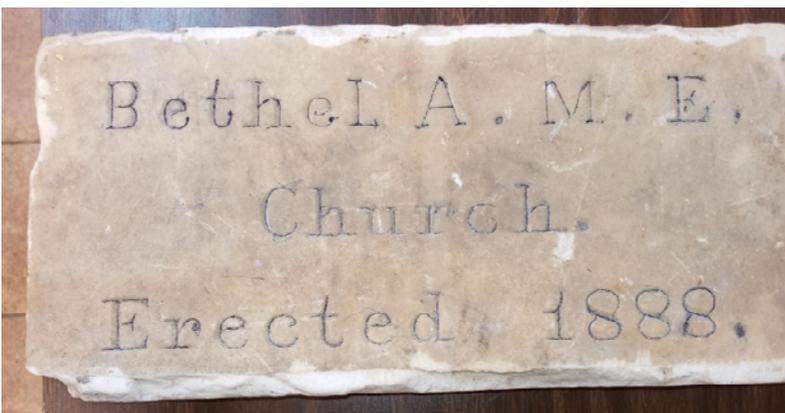
This building illustrates a typical architectural style of the rural county of 1982. The church has two columns on the cement porch. Originally, the present church was built from cement blocks, but later bricks were used to cover the cement blocks to fortify the church and to enhance its appearance. Pictures supply evidence of the church's exterior and interior appearance. The pictures clarify the content and representation for documentations. Pictures of the cornerstone represent primary source documentations. Pictures supply aesthetic perspectives of the present church. The artist emulated the structural angle seen in the rear of the church above the balcony and the angular beams structure formed at the ceiling of the church by repeating the angle design at the apex of the painting producing an illusory effect that the painting recedes into another segment or exists in an ethereal dimension. The detailed accounts implied in the timeline dates exhibited in the window of the fellowship hall do not culminate Bethel's narrative, instead Bethel's narrative attests the power of the regenerative process which lies in the innate traits of humans. As aesthetics were important in the earlier church and still they are important now.

These criteria document Bethel's significant history correlating universal concepts and universal impacts. Bethel makes the request that the Historic Preservation Commission designate Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Picture of the original church built in 1888
with the Cornerstone



Picture of the current church – built in 1982
with the Cornerstone



Resounding
Bell of
Old Church
(Housed in the
present church)



View of the pulpit, choir stand and painting (1991)
of the "Last Supper" upon entering the church



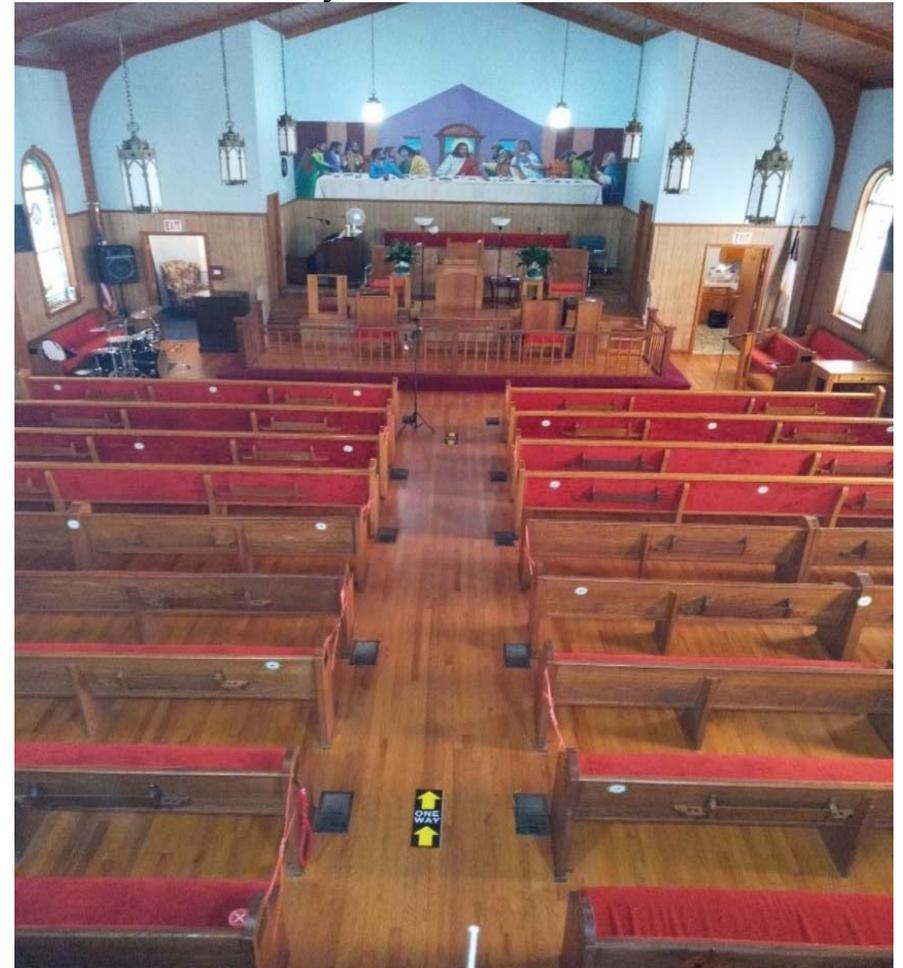
View of balcony located in the rear of the church



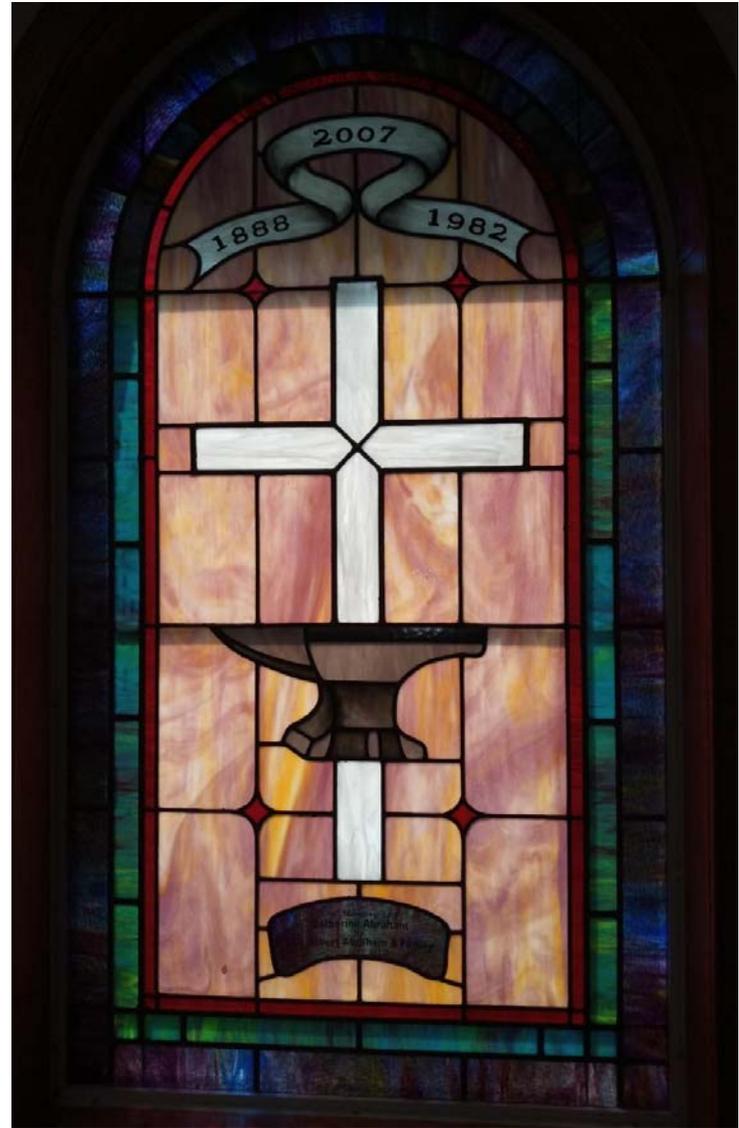
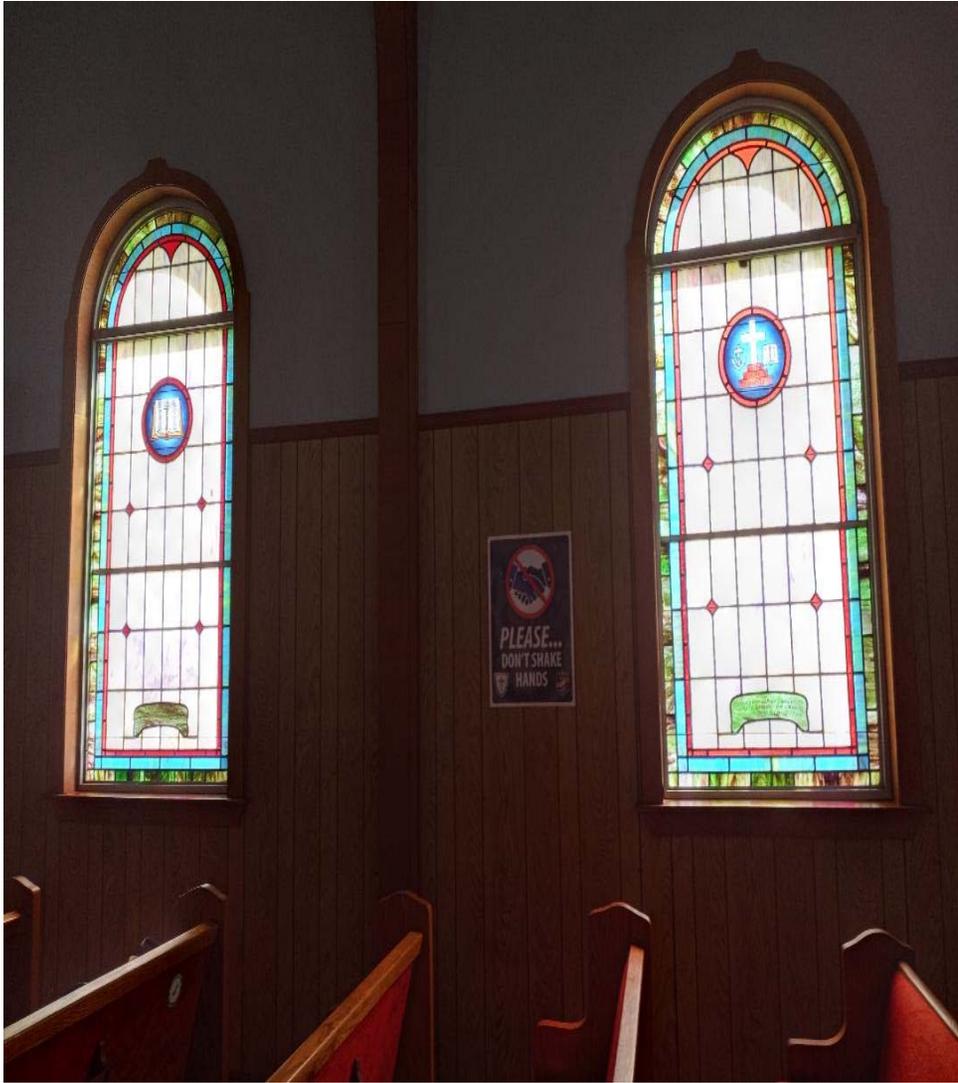
View of the church ceiling with angular wooden beams -
note wood panel borders accentuating the
blue sheetrock walls



View of the sanctuary as seen from the rear of the church



Picture of Stained Glass Windows in the sanctuary and the fellowship hall



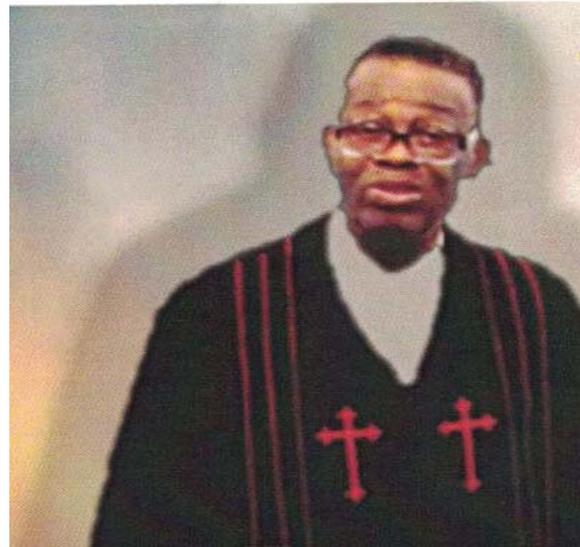
**Richard Allen – Founder and First Bishop of
The African Methodist Episcopal Church**



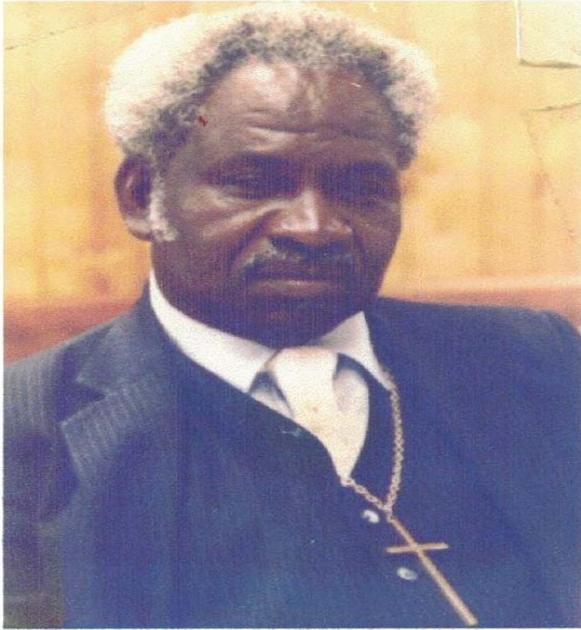
**Reverend Spavarie B. Taylor, Present Pastor
New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church**



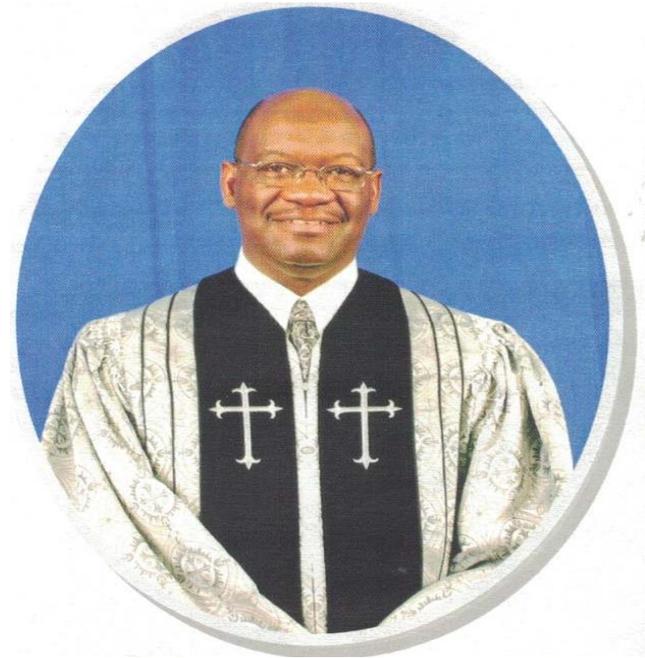
**Reverend Jeremiah McKinley
Former Pastor**



Reverend Herbert Blake, Former Pastor



Reverend Marvin Pasley, Former Pastor



**Reverend Albert Abraham
Former Pastor**



Mrs. Mary Washington



Mrs. Evelina G. Brown



**HIST-09-21-00038:
BETHEL AME CHURCH
HISTORIC DESIGNATION
REQUEST**

PUBLIC INPUT

Monday, October 25, 2021
3304 Barnes Drive
Johns Island, South Carolina

Zoning and Planning Department
Attention Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View, Suite 314
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Dear Committee Members:

Uniting with Bethel AME Church in various worship services and additional supporting activities provided me with innumerable opportunities which assist me in my growth as a minister in building interdenominational alliances in efforts to continue outreach endeavors. Placing Bethel on the Historic Preservation Designation List, appraises the world about the church's restoration and industrious contributions as a guide for productive living. I endorse highly this action.

Sincerely,

Rev. Michael Ray Mack, Minister



Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

3754 Old Charleston Road
Red Top, SC 29455

From: Rev. Dr. Earl Harris, Presiding Pastor
105 Towne Square Rd
Summerville, SC 29485
Ph. 843.324.1810

To: Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View Drive
North Charleston, SC 29405
Ph. 843.202.7200
Email: CCHPC@charlestoncounty.org

Subject: Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to a Be Historic Place

I, Rev. Dr. Earl Harris request that Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of the Town of Red Top become a historic place. My family and I have been going to Bethel AMEC for a life time. Bethel AMEC been a community church forever. Also, Bethel AMEC has been a second home for the whole community.

Rev. Dr. Earl Harris
Rev. Dr. Earl Harris

Niki R. Grimball

From: Jkeonye Moss <jkeonyem@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 03, 2021 9:20 AM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Charleston Preservation

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

Wednesday, October 27, 2021
1068 Cottingham Dr
Mt Pleasant, South Carolina

Zoning and Planning Department
Attention Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View Suite 314
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Dear Committee Members:

As a resident of Mt Pleaant South Carolins, I am writing to ask that you help to preserve the national heritage in Charleston County by supporting the historic preservation of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church located at 3754 Old Charleston Rd, Johns Island, SC 29455.

The procoss of preserving historic builidings connects us to the past. Historic buildings are physical reminders of what came before us and help to create a sense of culture in a neighborhood.

It is imperative we retain historic Bethel African Methodist Epicopal church. Investment in preserving this building brings positive returns for the future.

Sincerely,

Jkeonye Moss

Curtis B. Inabinett, Sr
5977 Old Jacksboro Road
Ravenel, SC 29407

11/6/2021

Zoning and Planning Department
Attention: Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View Drive, Suite 314
North Charleston, SC 29405

Dear Historic Preservation Commission:

The success of a society depends on the types of institutions it establishes and the kinds of provisions it seeks for its citizens. Founding members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church of 3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, SC 29455 crystallized their desire to move from a bush tent to establish a physical building for a place of worship in the year 1888.

These audacious movements demonstrate the qualities which make this nation great. Following the historically made movements of these members, such traits as self-reliance, determination, and faith evolve. Self-reliance created ingenuity and amplified attainment of viable resources. Determination eliminated impediments. Faith provided the catalyst for actions. These traits exemplify the admiral traits of this society.

I support the efforts of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to establish a place on the Charleston County Historic Preservation list.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Curtis B. Inabinett, Sr." The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Curtis B. Inabinett, Sr

Former SC House of Representative

Niki R. Grimball

From: Richard Waring <rvwaring@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 08, 2021 10:33 AM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Historic Designation - 3754 Old Charleston Road

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

Re: Historic Preservation Commission Meeting

To whom this may concern, please let it be known that the residents of 3763 Old Charleston Highway and 3759 Old Charleston Highway all vote in favor of having this church designated as a historic property. The residents of the addresses provided are:

3763 Old Charleston Highway

- Ruth Middleton
- Richard Waring

3759 Old Charleston Highway

- Jerome Deas, Sr.
- Richetta Deas
- Sarah Deas

Respectfully submitted,

Richard Waring

Niki R. Grimball

From: Kaylin <kaylin.bumblebee@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, November 08, 2021 11:27 AM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Historic Property Request

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

Hello,

This letter is written to request Bethel African Methodist Episcopal church located at 3745 Old Charleston Rd, Johns Island, SC 29455 be designated as a historic property. This church has been a staple in the local community bringing benefit to all that enter or have had contact with those who have entered the doors. The history and culture contained within this building are boundless.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal and its neighboring community members request your help to continue the legacy of being a stronghold in the community through the protection provided by historic designation status.

Thank you,
Kaylin Moss

11/8/2021

Ms. Shamekia Graham

1053 Reverend Joseph Heyward Road

Charleston, SC 29414

843-324-2974

Greetings Charleston Historical Foundation:

This letter is in support of granting New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 3754 Old Charleston Road, Red Top Section of Johns Island, SC 29455 a place on Charleston Historical Preservation List. This church has been located at the stated address for over 130 years.

Granting a place on this historical preservation list will allow New Bethel AME Church to be stay for another 100 years and beyond. Getting this placement will be instrumental in allowing future generations to experience such a rich establishment of worship. New Bethel AME Church is rich in African-American history, culture, and rooted deep into the Red Top Community.

I highly recommend placing New Bethel AME Church on your Charleston Historical Preservation List. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter of support for New Bethel AME Church.

If you have any questions, you may send an email to sgraham6991@yahoo.com or contact me at the above stated number.

Kind regards,

Shamekia Graham

Niki R. Grimball

From: V WRIGHT <mstrejour@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2021 8:29 PM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Charleston County Historic Preservation Designation List

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

To whom it may concern

Adding Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to the preservation designation list will be a impactful foundation for the next generations. This church was established in 1888. As slaves transitioned and incorporated the church for freedom symbolism and hope. Including this church will bring a opening visit for site seekers to participate in one of the original buildings among 18th century. Not including this building will lose the county history for generations to come.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
3754 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island SC 29455

Thanks

~Valerie Wright DNP, APRN
10 Weyburn Ct
Rose dale MD 21237

Niki R. Grimball

From: Debora Wright <debora27@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2021 8:59 PM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Charleston County Historic Preservation Designation List

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To whom it may concern

Adding Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to the preservation designation list will be a impactful foundation for the next generations. This church was established in 1888. As slaves transitioned and incorporated the church for freedom symbolism and hope. Including this church will bring a opening visit for site seekers to participate in one of the original buildings among 19th century. Not including this building will lose the county history for generations to come.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
3754 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island SC 29455

Thanks

Debora Wright
Church Member
5 Williams CT
Glen Burnie, MD 21061

3878 Courtland Road
Johns Island, South Carolina 29455
November 7, 2021

Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View Drive
North Charleston, South Carolina 29405

Re: Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
3754 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island, South Carolina 29455

Dear Sir:

I want to inform you that I support the members of Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church requesting that the church be listed on the Charleston County Historic Preservation Registry. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church has served not only as a place of worship, but also as a health clinic for prenatal care of women in the community of Red Top for decades in the past when health care was not accessible for women in the rural South. Mothers also took their children to Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to be vaccinated for early childhood infectious diseases before entering public schools. This was a much needed service for many years until health care was available in this area.

Please consider the request.

Thank you.

Mrs. Carolyn Dover-Jones

Mrs. Carolyn Dover-Jones

Niki R. Grimball

From: Verna Jones <missbuttonwright@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 09, 2021 9:38 PM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Charleston County Historic Preservation Designation List

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

To whom it may concern

Adding Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to the preservation designation list will be an impactful foundation for the next generations. This church was established in 1888. As slaves transitioned and incorporated the church for freedom, symbolism and hope. Including this church will bring an opening visit for site seekers to participate in one of the original buildings from the 19th century. Not including this building will lose the county history for generations to come.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
3754 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island SC 29455

Thanks

Verna Jones

Church Member
Missionary VP
124 Cedar Mill Drive
Goose Creek, SC 29445

November 11, 2021

Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission
4045 Bridge View Drive
North Charleston, SC 29405

RE: Letter of support for historic preservation

To whom it may concern:

I am writing this letter in support of New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road, John's Island, South Carolina 29455, obtaining the historic preservation designation with Charleston County.

New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church was established as a building in 1888. New Bethel is a lifeline for its elderly and senior member, like my 86-year old mother who has been a member for 72 years and still remains there. This church plays a fundamental role as one of the historically black churches in the Red Top/John's Island community. New Bethel has an established history in the community of a place where those who worship may come together and bond and is an essential source of religious fellowship and community engagement.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and considering this request to designate New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church as a historic property on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Krishinda Waring-Jenkins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping flourish at the end.

Krishinda Waring-Jenkins

Niki R. Grimball

From: Sherma Dukes <dukes9019@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, November 12, 2021 1:05 PM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Historic Preservation

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

We support there efforts to added the following religious location to the preservation commission. This historic church was established in 1888 and still functioning to this present day. We value the impact that this church has on the community and a race as a whole with its longevity and spiritual guidance.

Bethel AME Church
3754 Old Charleston Highway
Johns Island, SC 29455

Sherma Burch
Sent from my iPhone

Niki R. Grimball

From: Shawntiegh Fuzz-tiller <fuzzshawntiegh@yahoo.com>
Sent: Saturday, November 13, 2021 12:37 PM
To: CCHPC
Subject: Historic Preservation

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

----- Original message -----

From: Debora Wright <fuzzshawntiegh@yahoo.com> Date: 11/13/2021
To: CCHPC@charlestoncounty.org
Subject: Charleston County Historic Preservation Designation List

To whom it may concern

Adding Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church to the preservation designation list will be a impactful foundation for the next generations. This church was established in 1888. As slaves transitioned and incorporated the church for freedom symbolism and hope. Including this church will bring a opening visit for site seekers to participate in one of the original buildings among 19th century. Not including this building will lose the county history for generations to come.

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
3754 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island SC 29455

Thanks

Shawntiegh Fuzz
Church Member

1175 Mathis Ferry Rd Apt E3

Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

Sent from my iPhone

November 9, 2021

Almarie Hudson
709 Hitching Post Road
Charleston, SC 29414

Dear Charleston County Historic Preservation Commission:

New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, located at 3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, SC 29455 deserves a placed on the Charleston County Historic Preservation List.

3754 Old Charleston Road has been the home of New Bethel AME Church for over one hundred and thirty-three years. The church has played a powerful role in shaping the lives of so many residents of the Red Top community and provided them with opportunities to better their lives. Listed below are some of the ways the church participated in the community:

- The church provided a placed where residents could worship regardless of the affiliated religious group
- The church hosted various medical clinics when needed
- The church provided a place and a teacher to residents of the community who desired to learn

I deeply recommend placing New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston Historic Preservation List.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 843-303-4983 or almariehudson@att.net

Sincerely,

Almarie Hudson

November 10, 2021

Barbara Wright, Acting President
Red Top Community Improvement Association
3719 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island, SC 29455

Greetings Committee Members:

Recognizing the historical importance and the contemporary significance of New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, South Carolina 29455, I write this letter requesting that the church receive a place on the Charleston County Historic Preservation List.

New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church has played a major role in helping the residents in the Red Top community. The church has provided assistance with interdenominational services such as the fifth Sunday community services and scheduled New Year's Eve community services and Vacation Bible School. Additional outreach programs include Summer Lunch Program, community clean-up program and providing meals for the workers. The church assists with making and distributing Christmas food baskets to senior citizens. In addition the church helps in hosting monthly civic meetings.

An expanding and engaging annual community event, the Red Top Labor Day Parade evidences some of the involvement and contributions Bethel offers in creating positive environments while building empowering relationships.

As acting President of the Red Top Community Improvement Association, I am in support of placing New Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church on the Charleston Historic Preservation List.

If you have any questions regarding this letter in support of this church, you may contact me at 843-556-4839.

Sincerely,

Barbara Wright, Acting President
Red Top Community Improvement Association

November 11, 2021

Ms. Mary Edwards
3723 Old Charleston Road
Johns Island, SC 29455
843-452-6101

Dear Charleston Historical Preservation Foundation:

This letter is concerning Bethel AME Church, located at 3754 Old Charleston Road, Johns Island, SC 29455 being on the Historical Preservation list. Bethel AME Church has been a pillar in the Red Top Community for over a hundred years plus.

Bethel AME Church have a long history within the community. Bethel AME Church use to host clinics for vaccines and other medical needs.

If you have any questions, you may contact me at 843-452-6101.

Thank you,

Ms. Mary Edwards

Niki R. Grimball

From: Crossman Jay <jaymcrossman@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, December 02, 2021 11:53 AM
To: CCHPC
Subject: HIST-09-21-00038

CAUTION: This email originated outside of Charleston County. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders or suspicious emails. If you are not sure, please contact IT helpdesk.

I agree that the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church should be given the Historic Property designation.

Current development of this area will soon devoid the area of its historic and cultural contributions.

Please allow the church to have this designation.

respectfully

Jay Crossman

Dear Charleston County Council-

My company, Nirenblatt Hoffman Corporation, recently received a notification requesting the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church located at 3754 Old Charleston Road (TMS#285-00-00-011) be designated an historic property and be placed on the Charleston County Historic Designation List.

Nirenblatt Hoffman Corporation owns contiguous parcels (TMS#285-00-00-009 & #285-00-00-175) along Highway 17 South and Old Charleston Road. I'm 3rd generation in my family business and we've owned this land since the 1980's. We have been waiting for this area's growth to occur so that we could develop our land or sell it.

Apparently, this designation, if obtained, negatively impacts my properties because it would mean that any properties within 300 feet of the Church parcel would be required to obtain a Certificate of Historic Appropriateness prior to receiving permits for subdivision and/or site plan review applications. This would add additional approvals to an already difficult approval process.

While my company isn't opposed to the Church being designated an historic property, it does negatively impact my property(s) which comprise more acreage than the Church's with this additional requirement for approvals. There is no consistency being demonstrated as far as the prevailing patterns of existing lots, etc., but this arbitrary 300 foot restriction causes unnecessary and perhaps unintended adverse repercussions to our much larger parcel(s). This hardship would make it more difficult to develop or sell our land when the time comes.

A possible solution that would achieve a win-win outcome could be that the Church construct a wall or vegetative buffer around its perimeter? Or perhaps another suggestion would be to reduce the 300 foot parameter to a 30 foot buffer?

We do support the Church, but we would like to find a better solution that doesn't impose a hardship to us. Please contact me to discuss a possible positive result

Respectfully-

Ellen Hoffman NALP, CAM, CAPS
Nirenblatt Hoffman Corporation
P.O. Box 30789
Charleston, SC 29417
(843) 571-2210