

M.C. County should Fund the Scotland AME Church Project CIP Request of \$400,000

Testimony of Richard W. Allen

9427 Gentle Circle .

Montgomery Village, MD 20886

Esteemed members of the Montgomery County Council. It is my pleasure and indeed my community duty to testify before you tonight on **why** our County should fund the \$400, 000 Capital Improvement Request (CIP) for the Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church Project. I make this request of the County Council knowing of the serious budgetary deficit that you are facing tonight, in terms of your decision on this request. However, I retain the faith, the hope, and the reason to believe that each of you will come to understand the great history/legacy of the Scotland Community. But also, that inadequate County stormwater/environmental management planning decisions back in the 1960s eventually caused the flooding in 2019 that seriously damaged the church-building-structure.

Specifically, the filling of the Snakes Den Creek wetland and installing of the Seven Locks Road; allowing the construction of the Inverness Recreation Club and its vast parking lot on Deborah Drive during the 1980s; and the allowing of construction of housing development on the hill at Lakenheath Way during the early 1980s, with inadequate drainage and a large parking lot located above the church, were combined factors that causing the flooding. Annual tax revenues on these developments along with a tax base increase generated by the widening of Seven Locks Road, more than justify this capital expense request.

The Scotland A.M.E. Church, located at 10902 Seven Locks Road, Potomac, MD, 20854, was originally constructed the ancestors of slaves in 1924 and is one of the few remaining historical Black communities within Montgomery County. The church is pastored by Dr. E. Huggins. With the proposed expansion to the new church structure, the immediate and adjacent Potomac community will gain a significant amount of facility space available for community engagement in various educational programs, pre-school and after-school childcare, healthcare screenings, and general meetings of non-profit and faith-based groups.

Due to the previously mentioned County stormwater decisions, the Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church structure was seriously damaged. By granting the additional \$400,000 in this request combined with the prior \$300, 000 granted by the County for restoration in 2022, this would bring the County's total share of the budget to 6%, which is far closer to equity. Through the private sector/nonprofit sector coalitional work of the 2nd Century Project of

Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church, thousands of people from both inside and outside of Montgomery County have interacted and engaged with this great historical church, attending many activities such as, a Fundraising Breakfast, Musical Concerts presenting the great Scotland A.M. E. Zion Church-Choir, the Scotland Heritage Festival, and many other events. These activities have enlightened our DMV communities and given people both inside and outside of the church, the opportunity to share and better understand each other and gain conscious-raising appreciation of Scotland's ancestors, as well as the congregants of today.

Individual donations, foundational donations, and special event -activities such as the Scotland Juneteenth Heritage Festival, a Breakfast Fundraiser, and the great Choir-Program-singing activities, have served to bring our communities together and help in the restoration, regeneration, and the rejuvenation of the Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church and overall community. The Scotland A.M.E. Zion Church, is an affiliate of the national African Methodist Episcopal Church, founded by Bishop Richard William Allen and Absalom Jones in 1794, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The A.M. E. Church as envisioned by its founders, stands out like a beacon of light for freedom, justice, and mercy, for ALL Americans.

May I express my thanks for the challenging work of: Mr. Paul Tukey of Gladstone Museum, Ms. Latisha Gassaway-Paul, Mr. Chuck Williams, Ms. Joyce Siegal, former County Executive-Ike Leggett, the members of Scotland Church, the committees of the 2nd Century Project, and ALL who helped in bringing this Project to fruition.

Members of our Montgomery County Council, please support this Project and help us to get it to the finish line. Thanks.