



## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Naomi Cohen <ncohen52@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2020 3:16 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair  
**Subject:** Current Desecration of Moses Cemetery

**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

Good Afternoon,

My name is Naomi and I am a resident of Montgomery County and have been for almost my entire life. I am ashamed to say that it's only been in the past month that I learned of the atrocities committed in our county against Black folks, as recent as May of this year, going all the way back to the time of slavery. I hope you are familiar with the names Finan Berhe, Robert White, and Emmanuel Otukuga - three Black men gunned down by police officers in our county. It's long past time to be doing better and doing right by the families of those three Black men and the countless other instances of racism and actions rooted in white supremacy that have occurred in our county.

I am writing to you today about the current desecration of the Macedonia Baptists's Church Moses African Cemetery in Bethesda. As you might know, a storage company has begun construction on top of this historical burial ground that houses the bodies of enslaved Africans and their descendants. I highly doubt this would be happening if the bodies buried were white.

As civilians, we can only do so much to try to stop the construction. This is where we need you, a member of our current governing authority, to invoke your power to stop any further desecration of this cemetery so it can be publicly proclaimed as sacred ground. The enslaved Africans and their descendants are beyond owed our respect and honor.

I am of course hoping that you'll take this matter seriously and discuss with other members of our governing bodies so we can put a stop to this blatant erasure of Black history. Thank you for your time.

Best,  
Naomi

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Hannah Dexter <hannahdexter@alum.calarts.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 30, 2020 5:02 PM  
**To:** councilmember.rice@montgomerycountymd.gov;  
councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;  
councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;  
councilmember.reimer@montgomerycountymd.gov; MCP-Chair  
**Subject:** Respect for the dead  
**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

Hello Councilmembers,

Thank you for working during this global pandemic. I am emailing you from Los Angeles, California. Loved ones have expressed outrage over the construction happening right now at the historic Bethesda African Cemetery, and that outrage can be heard from across the country. I urge county executive Elrich to use the powers of their office to immediately halt this desecration. I urge each of you to represent your communities, and demand this violence stop. The land needs to be placed in the care of the Macedonia Baptist Church for the proper memorialization. I am disgusted that your city would even entertain the idea of desecrating human remains like this. Have you stopped to consider if it were your family buried there? Poured over with concrete with not consideration or discussion? I demand that this construction be stopped.

Thank you,  
Hannah Dexter

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Alison Boyce <aliboyce@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 20, 2020 9:05 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair  
**Subject:** written testimony for Board meeting on 7/23  
  
**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

I am writing to ask the Board to stop the desecration of the Moses African Cemetery. This is a moment where the MoCo leadership has an opportunity to prove whether or not you stand with Black lives. Allowing the community to create a living memorial on the cemetery site is the least that the leadership can do to honor the Black ancestors in bondage upon whose backs this country was built. It is inconceivable to put the economic interests of a relationship with a public storage site over the human interests of our Black community. Please find it in your hearts to make the right, honest, decent, and human choice.

Signed,

Alison Boyce, MD

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Steve Warner <sdwarner219@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 20, 2020 9:38 AM  
**To:** MCP-Chair

**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

I write as a taxpayer as I cannot in good conscience support the storage company usage of the Moses Cemetery as if leaders over a half century swindled the land out from the rightful owners it should be deeded to Macedonia Baptist Church in its entirety as there are other parcels nearby the storage company cab be built...another note is on Ellsworth Drive I'm Silver Spring I hope the detailed glass panels on both stairway and light fixtures on the elevator will not end up in a dumpster but can be incorporated as well as the tiles in the fountain as I am aware of previous approval yet can see possibly the fixtures repurposed

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie <Debbie.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 7:04 AM  
**To:** Anderson, Casey; MCP-Chair; Fani-Gonzalez, Natali; Cichy, Gerald; Patterson, Tina; Verma, Partap  
**Cc:** Wright, Gwen  
**Subject:** Westbard Self Storage  
**Attachments:** CE to PB 7-21-2020.pdf

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Please see the attached letter from the County Executive.

*Debbie Spielberg*  
*Special Assistant to County Executive Marc Elrich*  
*301-461-3570 cell*  
[debbie.spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:debbie.spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)

**Take 10 minutes to be counted now – visit: <https://2020census.gov/>**



**For COVID-19 Information and resources, visit: [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COVID19](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COVID19)**



**OFFICES OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE**

**Marc Elrich**  
*County Executive*

July 21, 2020

Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA E-mail

Dear Chairman Anderson and Members of the Planning Board,

As you are reviewing the request for amendment to the current approved site plan for Westbard Self Storage, I would like to request you consider some further modification. The Planning Board had sufficient concern about the possibility that some human remains may have been buried there that you required the hiring of an archaeologist with expertise in human remains and funerary objects. However, the descendant community is still greatly concerned about the project. They begin with a low level of trust based on how this whole situation has been handled. They have really never had any role in determining anything about the various properties that have been discussed, and in this case they are left as by-standers to a process that could involve burials. They weren't consulted on the choice of an archaeologist and on the conditions of excavation. They have not been allowed to have an archaeologist they trust evaluate the plan, nor are they, or anyone they might designate, allowed on-site to observe the excavation itself. I understand their desire to see with their own eyes what is coming out of that ground.

I respectfully request that the Planning Board modify the site plan conditions to:

- 1) allow an archaeologist chosen by the descendant community to have an opportunity to review the process of excavation and make suggestions that would improve the process and increase the certainty of any determination as to whether or not remains are present
- 2) that a small number of residents (suitable for the site), or their designees, be allowed to be present on site so that they can observe the soil as it's being removed and to be able to see what is revealed beneath that soil.

These are two changes that could be accommodated and might be important to establish some trust between the community and your agency. I hope you will consider these suggestions.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich

Cc: Gwen Wright, Planning Director of Montgomery County Planning

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** rian adamian <rian.adamian@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:03 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair  
**Subject:** Re: Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting Thursday, July 23, 2020, Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To the Montgomery County Planning Board:

My name is Rian Adamian, and as someone who has grown up in Bethesda, I am testifying against the desecration of the Bethesda African Cemetery for the preservation of our community's history, and against the erasure of Westbard's African American history. This is a form of genocide and it must stop. I would like to provide the following comments to the board in support of ending this desecration:

As the Montgomery County Planning Board (the "Board") is well aware, the Macedonia Baptist Church, located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland (the "Church"), the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition ("BACC") and members of the community have for many years voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 (the "Parcel") by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further risks the desecration of these burial grounds. Since construction began, the Church and the BACC expressed to Montgomery County officials the concern that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am providing these comments to the Board to demand all activity at the Parcel be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and the descendants preserved.

Although the development conditions placed on the project by the Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC ("1784") (as owners of the Parcel) to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that the practices of the archaeologist apparently retained by 1784 have not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to test to determine if the remains are human.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I demand an *immediate* halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors, and choose the interests of the community it represents over the interests of business and development. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor the ancestors of Bethesda's African American community. This is long overdue.

Regards,

Rian Adamian  
Bethesda, MD 20816



## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Patricia E. Kolesar <pkoles@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 3:32 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair  
**Subject:** COMMENTS - DENY REQUEST - Agenda Item 3 - July 23 - Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Chair Anderson and MoCo Planning Board:

Please deny Westbard Self Storage's request to expand the footprint for the above-referenced project.

Macedonia Baptist Church ("MBC"), located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland, the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition ("BACC"), and members of the wider Bethesda community have, for many years, voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses African Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging, and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 by Bethesda Self Storage Partners risks the further desecration of these burial grounds as the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site.

When the above-referenced project first came before you, residents observed (and commented before you) that its behemoth structure would overshadow both the Willett restoration efforts and the future Moses African Cemetery memorial (the scope of which is yet to be determined). We don't want (or need) this project to expand into any additional space – especially since it may be sited upon burial sites/graves already, which is a terrible injustice.

Please halt the on-going construction and open-up the archaeological process to the residents and MBC. MBC, BACC, and others have repeatedly requested archaeological transparency. However, it seems that the pleas for assistance and transparency are being ignored. It's only right and just to include the descendant community in the archaeological process which is now underway and which may have already uncovered bones of unknown origin.

Thank you,

*Patricia E. Kolesar, 5508 Jordan Road, Bethesda*  
*[pkoles@verizon.net](mailto:pkoles@verizon.net)*  
*cell: 301-503-4109*

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Stephen Swartz <xtheunchosenonex@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 4:24 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair  
**Subject:** Re: Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting Thursday, July 23, 2020 Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Hello Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is Stephen Swartz and I have been a Montgomery County resident since 2014. I am writing concerning the construction being done by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC at River Road Moses Cemetery, and the harm they are doing to the community. I am extremely concerned that the owners of Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, as well as this Board, have repeatedly stood in the way of a proper archaeological investigation, so the grounds can be examined and the remains of the enslaved Africans who were laid to rest there. County Executive Marc Elrich has said bones have been found by the owners of the property, and I am dismayed that these bones have not been independently examined to determine if they are human.

I am requesting an immediate halt to the construction at Parcels 191 and 242 by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and that county officials commit to engaging with the community to establish a transparent and trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the entirety of the site, not merely one corner of it. At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcels to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Macedonia Baptist Church and Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

It is long past time the Board engage with the community on this issue, rather than ignoring us as they have for years. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. It is time to do the right thing, and halt this desecration of human remains.

Thank you,

Stephen Swartz

## MCP-Chair

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**From:** Timothy Dugan <TDugan@beankinney.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:41 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair  
**Cc:** Fuster, Marco; Wright, Gwen  
**Subject:** July 23, 2020 Planning Board Meeting, Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A. Request to include in the official record the attached documents.  
**Attachments:** Boyd Sipe MA , RPA Resume (01603049xAC2B5).pdf; Alexandra Jones, PhD, RPA, Curriculum Vitae (01603199xAC2B5).pdf; Resume Thomas Cuthbertson, MA (01589984xAC2B5).pdf  
**Importance:** High  
**Categories:** Tracked To Dynamics 365

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To the Planning Board:

I respectfully request that the attached documents be included in the official record regarding the credentials of the archaeologists and the anthropologist who are responsible for monitoring the excavation being conducted on the Westward Self Storage project site:

1. Resume of Mr. Boyd Sipe Archaeologist, indicating among other information, his years of experience, notable projects including the Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial, City of Alexandria, VA, his M.A. in Archaeology and Heritage, and his Registrations and Certifications with the 2019 Register of Professional Archaeologists.
2. Curriculum vitae of Ms. Alexandra Jones, including her PhD in Anthropology from the University of California at Berkeley, her publications, university teaching experience, and her archaeological, laboratory, field and research experience.
3. Resume of Mr. Thomas Cuthbertson, including his M.A. in Anthropology, College of William and Mary, his years of experience, and his Registrations and Certifications with the 2019 Register of Professional Archaeologists.

Thank you.

Timothy Dugan

Mobile: 301-922-4504

Office: 703-526-5583

Timothy Dugan



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Arlington, VA 22201

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[beankinney.com](http://beankinney.com)



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## Boyd Sipe, M.A., RPA

### Manager-Archeology



#### Firm Association

Wetland Studies and  
Solutions, Inc. (WSSI)



#### Project Assignment Project Manager

#### Years of Experience

With this firm: 13

With other firms: 5

#### Education

M.A./Archaeology and  
Heritage/The University of  
Leicester

#### Registrations & Certifications

2019/Register of Professional  
Archaeologists

HAZWOPER Hazardous  
Materials Technician Training

2019/HAZWOPER 8-Hour  
Review

#### Associations

Society for Historical  
Archaeology

Council of Virginia  
Archaeologists

Middle Atlantic  
Archaeological Conference

#### Arlington National Cemetery Stream Restoration Millennium Project Arlington, Virginia

Mr. Sipe served as Project Manager for the cultural landscape documentation related to the expansion of Arlington National Cemetery (known as the Millennium Project) and the future restoration of 1,700 lf of badly degraded stream channel that flows through the site. As part of the environmental and preservation compliance process, pursuant to compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and regulations in 36 CFR Part 800, documentation of the cultural landscape of the Millennium Site has been included in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between ANC, the National Park Service (NPS), and the Virginia State Historic Preservation Officer to mitigate adverse effects.

#### James Bland Development Property, City of Alexandria, VA.

Mr. Sipe conducted archival research and authored the documentary study for this five city block project and conducted oral history interviews from several long-time residents of the area. Based on his research, a Phase I archeological survey was recommended and a research design was developed. Mr. Sipe supervised the Phase I archeological work which resulted in the identification of two archeological sites that warranted further investigation.

#### Architectural Reconnaissance Survey & Preliminary Information Form (PIF) Preparation - Highland Springs, Henrico County, Virginia

Serving as the Project Manager on a survey of 240 representative historic properties. The survey area contains homes, churches, civic buildings, and 40-to-50 commercial properties in this early streetcar suburb of Richmond. Historic maps geo-referenced by GIS staff assisted in identifying which properties to survey. Oversaw all survey efforts and preparation of a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) to evaluate the proposed Highland Springs Historic District potential for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

#### Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery Memorial, City of Alexandria, VA.

Under the supervision of Alexandria Archaeology, investigations were conducted between May and December of 2007 at the Contrabands and Freedman's Cemetery (44AX179). Thunderbird Archeology was also contracted to assist with public interpretation for the memorial. Mr. Sipe assembled a team to design the City's official website and historical brochure for the site. He authored all text for the web site and assisted in the brochure design and layout. Finally, Mr. Sipe managed additional excavations and supervised archeological monitoring during construction of the Memorial.

#### Lyndam Hill II Property (44FX0223), Fairfax County, VA.

Mr. Sipe served as Principal Investigator during the Phase II site evaluation and Phase III data recovery of site 44FX0223, a circa 1720 to 1769 outlying farm quarter site in Fairfax County, Virginia, and served as primary author for the Phase II and co-author for the Phase III reports describing the results of the investigations. Intact historic features and artifact deposits indicated the discrete locations of an overseer's house and a dwelling for enslaved laborers, a unique and rarely identified site type in Virginia. Major research issues in the archeology of regional slavery including the lifeways and material culture of the enslaved and overseers, ethnicity, agency, and plantation provisioning were re-considered in view of findings at the site.



# ALEXANDRA JONES, PhD, RPA

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## EDUCATION

Ph.D. Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, May 2010

Dissertation: *Gone But not Forgotten, Gibson Grove A.M.E. Zion Church: The Archaeology of an African American Church* Committee: Dr. Laurie Wilkie (Chair), Dr. Rosemary Joyce, and Dr. Ula Taylor

M.A. Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, December 2004

M.A. History, Howard University, May 2003

B.A. Anthropology, Howard University, May 2001

B.A. History, Howard University, May 2001

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## PUBLICATIONS

(2018) Dunnavant, Justin, Ayana Flewellen, Alexandra Jones, Alicia Odewale, William White III

Submitted Assessing Heritage Resources in St. Croix Post-Hurricanes Irma and Maria. *Transforming Anthropology*.

(2018). Odewale, Alicia, Justin Dunnavant, Ayana Flewellen, and Alexandra Jones. Archaeology for the Next Generation. *Anthropology News website*, January 2, 2018. DOI: 10.1111/AN.729

(2016). Gibson Grove: A Segregated Community Integrated by Archaeology. *The Quest*, IV(1), 6-19.

(2012). *Getting Their Hands Dirty: Archaeology and Youth*. Washington, DC: Branding Bryon.

(2011). Archaeology and My Mission to Empower the Youth of My Community. *SAA Archaeological Record*, 11(2), 30-31.

(2010). "Corn." *World of a Slave: Encyclopedia of the Material Life of Slaves in the United States*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO.

(2007). *Archaeological Investigation at Adams Kilby House*. Annapolis, Maryland: Historical Annapolis Foundation.

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## UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2020 FALL, Assistant Professor, Archaeology/Center for Humanities, as such I'm responsible for the instruction of students in the discipline of Archaeology. I am working on the Hallowed Ground Project, a large project to understand the history and legacy of enslavement on the property in which the campus of Goucher College is located.

2016 – 2020, Assistant Professor, Baltimore City Community College, Sociology Department, as such I'm responsible for the instruction of students in the discipline of Sociology. I teach online courses and developed and implemented Open Education Resource courses. In addition, I also participate in departmental and college wide activities in keeping with the mission and vision of Baltimore City Community College

2013 – PRESENT, Adjunct Instructor, University of Baltimore, Anthropology Introductory Level Courses, these courses are designed to give students a basic introduction to the field of anthropology. The courses are focused on the general concepts of anthropology as a discipline, the evolution and structure of humans and human social groups, and in-depth culture descriptions and cross-cultural comparison involving both past and current societies.

2015 FALL SEMESTER, Adjunct Instructor, Howard University, Cultural Anthropology, a course are designed to give students a basic introduction to the field of cultural anthropology.

2003-2006, Adjunct Instructor, University of California, Berkeley, Anthropology Study Strategies, a course designed for students concurrently enrolled in Introduction to Anthropology who are interested in developing effective learning strategies.

2003-2006, Adjunct Instructor, University of California, Berkeley, Study Strategies, a course designed for freshman and continuing students who are interested in developing effective learning strategies.

2005 Fall Semester, Archaeology Teaching Associate, University of California, Berkeley, Introduction to Archaeology 2AC (American Cultures), a course designed to introduce archaeology to students through exploring the many cultures of the United States.

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## **OTHER TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **2017- PRESENT, ESTATE LITTLE PRINCESS ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR – ST. CROIX**

Designed and implemented the week long "Estate Little Princess" Field Schools for youth, ages 11 to 17, located in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Developed and wrote the curriculum and activities for the youth in the field school. I lead and taught the in-classroom and laboratory portion of the youth field school, while other lead archaeologists supervised the students in the field.

2007, 2008, and 2009 (summer), African American Studies and World Culture Instructor, Archbishop Carroll High School, Washington, D.C., African American Studies, A course designed to give high school students an introduction to the African American experience as lived in the United States. The course explores historical debates, literature, poetry and various theories utilized in this field of study. World Studies, a course designed to introduce students to the myriad of world cultures the course covers past and present ethnic and cultural groups; exploring how various dynamics such as gender, religion, class, and politics play roles in the development and sustainability of these cultures.

2008 (spring), Archaeology Instructor, Reginald F. Lewis Museum of African American History and Culture, Passport to Archaeology, Archaeology in the Classroom, a 12- week program designed to teach high school students' basic archaeology and archaeological methods.

2001-2003/ 2006- 2009, Substitute Teacher, Government of the District of Columbia, General Education, instructed students Pre-Kindergarten to High School according to the curriculum created by District of Columbia, Department of Education.

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## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL, LABORATORY, FIELD AND RESEARCH EXPERIENCE**

### **2019, CONSULTANT TO GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDS**

Fact checked and verified archaeological records for the 2020 Guinness World Record Book.

### **2013-2013, AFRICAN AMERICAN CIVIL WAR MUSEUM, Washington, DC, Consultant**

Created a youth-based outreach program for the Camp Barker Contraband Camp Site based around the archaeological results of a GIS study. Developed and wrote curriculum which will be used to teach middle school students about Camp Barker.

### **2012- 2012, OREGON PUBLIC BROADCAST – TIME TEAM AMERICA, FIELD SCHOOL DIRECTOR**

Designed and implemented four NSF-funded "Time Team America and the Science of Archaeology" Field Schools for youth, ages 11 to 17, located in New Mexico, Colorado, Maryland, and Oklahoma. Developed and wrote the curriculums and activities for the youth in the field schools and online field school. I coordinated logistics for the successful implementation of the field schools. I hired, trained and supervised volunteers and staff at each field school. In addition, I lead and taught the four-youth field school while collaborating with the television production team.

### **2010- 2011, VETERANS CURATION PROJECT, BROCKINGTON AND ASSOCIATES, INC., LABORATORY MANAGER**

Trained and supervised employees on the process of rehabilitating and curating federal archaeological and archival collections. Wrote technical reports on the rehabilitation process for the receiving repositories. Developed databases and spreadsheets on the collections to aid the repositories in their collections management process.

### **2008-2009, GIBSON GROVE A.M.E ZION ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT, Maryland, Dissertation Site/ Principal Investigator**

Conducted all aspects of the excavation and research related to the site

### **2007, STEWART CASTLE PLANTATION (DAACS SITE), Falmouth, Jamaica, Field Technician**

Worked as a field archaeologist and conducted phase I excavations at Stewart Castle Plantation.

### **2005-2006, ARCHAEOLOGY IN ANNAPOLIS, University of Maryland, College Park, Archaeological Staff**

Excavated the Adams-Kilty House (African American) site in Annapolis and wrote the site report.

### **1999, NATIONAL CIVIL RIGHTS MUSEUM OF MEMPHIS, Archivist/Researcher,**

Catalogued and processed historical artifacts, video collections, and researched information for annual summer festival.

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## **OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE**

### **ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE COMMUNITY, INC., DIRECTOR AND FOUNDER/CEO, 2007 –PRESENT**

Provide leadership in developing program, organizational and financial plans with the Board of Directors and carry out plans and policies authorized by the board. Promote active and broad participation by volunteers in all areas of the organization's work.

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Maintain official records and documents, and ensure compliance with federal, state and local regulations. Maintain a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field. Develop, write and facilitate all youth programs

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### **Advisory Committees and Board of Director Positions**

**SOCIETY OF BLACK ARCHAEOLOGISTS, 2018 - PRESENT**  
Serve on the Board of Directors.

**JOSIAH HENSON ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK ADVISORY GROUP, 2017 - PRESENT**  
Serve as an advisory and liaison for the Josiah Henson Park in Montgomery County.

**JOURNAL OF COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY & HERITAGE EDITORIAL BOARD, 2014 - PRESENT**  
Serve as an editorial advisor for this international journal.

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### **PRESENTATIONS**

2018. Co- Chaired a Session with Alicia Odewale, Ayana Flewellen and Justine Dunnivant. Sustainable Archaeology in the Caribbean: The 2017 Estate Little Princess Archaeological Field School in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Paper presented at Society of Historical Archaeology Conference. New Orleans, Louisiana.

2017. Co-Author by Alicia Odewale, Ayana Flewellen and Justine Dunnivant. Sustainable Archaeology in the Caribbean: The 2017 Estate Little Princess Archaeological Field School in St. Croix, US Virgin Islands. Paper presented at Southeastern Archaeological Conference. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

2017. Co-Author by Leah Carrington. Archaeology's Role in Changing a Generation of Youth: Exploring Education and Intersectionality. Paper presented at Society of Historical Archaeology Conference. Fort Worth, Texas.

2016. Equity Issues for All: Historical Archaeology as a Profession in the 21st Century. Speaker on the panel at the Society of Historical Archaeology Conference. Washington, DC.

2015. Bringing Archaeology to the People One Festival at a Time. Paper presented at the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology. Fredericksburg, Virginia.

2011. Co-Author with Amelia Chisholm. Activist Archaeologies' New Direction: The Veterans Curation Project. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference. Austin, Texas.

2010. Silence Broken: Gibson Grove Archaeological Project. Paper presented at African Diaspora Conference. Howard University, Washington, DC.

2009. Gibson Grove Archaeological Project. Paper presented at the Archeological Research Facility. University of California, Berkeley.

2009. Integrating a Segregated Community: Archaeology and Gibson Grove Archaeological Project. Paper presented at the South Carolina Conference on the Archaeology of the Recent African American Past. University of South Carolina, Columbia.

2009. Public Archaeology and Gibson Grove Archaeological Project. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference. Toronto, Canada.

2008. Archaeology and Children. Poster presented at the World Archaeological Congress. Dublin, Ireland.

2008. Can You Dig It: Children and Archaeology. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference. Vancouver, Canada.

2008. African American Religious Practices in Annapolis. Lecture presented at the Banneker-Douglass Museum Annapolis, Maryland.

2007. African American Religious Practices in the Chesapeake. Lecture presented at the International Center for Jefferson Studies, Charlottesville, Virginia.

2006. Co-Author with Kelley Deetz. Politicizing Whiteness: The Lasting Effects of Colonization on African American Archaeology. Paper presented at the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference, Sacramento, California.

01603097-1



2005. Religious Practices of the African Diaspora in Caribbean and the United States. Lecture presented at Albany State University, Georgia.

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## **FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS**

Awesome Foundation, Washington, DC, 2015, (grant for AITC's Day of Archaeology Festival)  
Stahl Grant, University of California, Berkeley, 2008 (grant for archaeological excavations at Gibson Grove)  
Lowie-Olsen Award, University of California, Berkeley, 2005, 2006, and 2007 (travel awards for conference papers)  
Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, University of California, Berkeley, 2003-2008 (fellowship for graduate study)  
Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc, DAACS Fellowship 2007 (fellowship to conduct research using DAACS)

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Society for Historical Archaeology (Gender and Minority Affairs Committee, Nominations Committee)  
Archaeological Society of Maryland  
St. Croix Archaeological Society

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## **Registrations**

Registered Professional Archaeologist 17096

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## **PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

Open Education Resource Training  
Baltimore City Community College, 2017

Online Teaching  
Baltimore City Community College, 2016

Section 106 Training, ACHP  
Washington, DC 2010

Archaeology Field School  
University of Maryland, College Park, 2005

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## Thomas Cuthbertson, M.A., RPA

### Senior Archeologist



**Firm Association**  
Wetland Studies and  
Solutions, Inc. (WSSI)



**Project Assignment**  
Project Archeologist

**Years of Experience**  
With this firm: 1.5  
With other firms: 4.5

**Education:**  
2016/M.A. in Anthropology,  
College of William and Mary

**Registrations &  
Certifications**  
2018/Register of  
Professional Archaeologists

2018/HAZWOPER  
Hazardous Materials  
Technician Training

Mr. Thomas Cuthbertson has seven years of professional experience in archeological research in the Middle Atlantic region of the U.S. with a specialization in cultural resource management. He has participated in the excavation of diverse types of archaeological sites, including historic cemeteries, various 18th to 19th century farmsteads, homes, and plantations, Civil War battlefields and forts, lithic quarries and woodland camps. Most recently he participated in, and helped supervise, the excavation of 18th and 19th century industrial and domestic features along the Alexandria, Virginia waterfront. He is proficient in field and laboratory techniques, technical report writing and AutoCAD mapping. Mr. Cuthbertson's current responsibilities as a Senior Archeologist include archaeological and documentary research, the supervision of archeological field crews conducting pedestrian surveys, Phase I, II, and III investigations, and the preparation of technical reports and resource management plans.

#### 9520 Gunston Cove Road Phase I Cultural Resources Investigation

Mr. Cuthbertson conducted a Phase I, archaeological reconnaissance survey of a  $\pm 5.1$ -acre parcel in Fairfax County, Virginia with a small crew. The survey included subsurface testing as well as the documentation of soil disturbances in the area that would reduce the probability of locating cultural resources. Mr. Cuthbertson composed the resulting report, including cursory historic research, and registered the archaeological resources that were discovered.

#### Alternative 13th High School – Phase II Evaluation of Site 44PW1599

Under the direction of Mr. Daniel Baicy, M.A., RPA, Mr. Cuthbertson, functioning as a crew chief, assisted with the evaluation of a 19th century domestic site located in Prince William County, Virginia. The evaluation included close interval shovel testing and the excavation of several test units in areas with high concentrations of artifacts, and the documentation of features located during excavation.

#### LCPS ES-31 Phase I Cultural Resources Investigation

Mr. Cuthbertson conducted a Phase I, archaeological reconnaissance survey of a  $\pm 32.5$ -acre parcel in Loudoun County, Virginia with a small crew. The survey included subsurface testing as well as the documentation of soil disturbances in the area that would reduce the probability of locating cultural resources. Mr. Cuthbertson composed the resulting report, including cursory historic research, and registered the archaeological resources that were discovered.

#### Oronoco Dredging and Capping Project Archeological Monitoring

Mr. Cuthbertson served as archeological monitoring during offshore dredging operations in the Potomac River shallows at Oronoco Bay in the City of Alexandria, Virginia. The archeological monitoring followed a scope of work approved by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and Alexandria Archaeology. Mr. Cuthbertson also authored the resulting report.

#### Pennsylvania Ave – Minnesota Ave SE Intersection Improvement Phase I Archeological Investigation

Mr. Cuthbertson conducted a Phase I, archaeological reconnaissance survey of and urban greenspace parcel in Anacostia, Washington, D.C. with a small crew. The survey included subsurface testing through multiple strata of modern and potentially historic fills. Mr. Cuthbertson composed the resulting report, including cursory historic research, and created the CAD illustrations used within.



**From:** [Raina Martens](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** planning board meeting testimony  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 5:51:42 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Hello Mr Anderson,

I would like to share my written testimony in support of a building moratorium on the Bethesda Self Storage being constructed along River Road. As you may know, this building sits atop an historic African-American cemetery. The construction must be halted so that anthropologist Dr. Michael Blakely can perform a forensic analysis of the site. For too long Montgomery County has ignored the history of its Black residents. Graves and burial grounds are sacred sites that should be treated as such. Please halt the construction and give this historic site its due care and diligence.

Raina Martens

Raina L Martens  
(they/them)

**From:** [conner barrett](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Stop the desecration of Moses Cemetary  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:24:33 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Hello,

I am a longtime resident of Montgomery county, living here for over 20 years. I went to Montgomery County public schools for elementary school, middle school, and high school. This is my home. I love this my home, and a part of that love is the willingness to be honest.

Montgomery County has a terribly racist past. Look at the distribution of wealth among race in this county. Whitman High School recurred massive funding, and acclaim, but is nearly 100% white. That is not a coincidence. We must reckon with a racist past and present.

An easy step towards becoming the home we claim to be is to STOP THE DESECRATION IF MOSES CEMETARY. How can you claim that you believe Black lives matter if you will let Black history be destroyed in front of your eyes? For a storage unit? This is the perfect example of the dismissal that Black lives, issues, and history experience every day in Montgomery County. This is shameful, and we as a community must do better.

If you care, you and your colleagues will take action as soon as possible.

Conner Barrett  
6600 Pyle Rd  
Bethesda MD  
20817

**From:** [Isaac De Marchi](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:53:32 PM

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My name is Isaac DeMarchi from Bethesda, Maryland I would like to submit testimony advocating for the passage of a stop work order on the construction side on top of Moses Cemetery. This cemetery must be preserved for future generations, as Black lives matter in death as well as life. Montgomery County must work to preserve the bodies of the most vulnerable, who were enslaved and oppressed during their own lifetimes. Storage facilities can be built anywhere, the ancestors of our community are in only a few places.

Isaac DeMarchi  
isaacdmarchi@gmail.com  
3013103494

**From:** [Hannah Chenok](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Moses Cemetery Testimony  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 9:54:50 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Planning Board,

For many years, members of the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition have voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further risks the desecration of these burial grounds. Since construction began, the Church and the BACC expressed to Montgomery County officials the concern that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am demanding all activity at the site be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and the descendants preserved.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I request an immediate halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor Black ancestors. This is long overdue.

Very truly yours,

Hannah Chenok

**From:** [Robert Stubblefield](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Thursday  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:57:13 PM  
**Attachments:** [African Moses Cemetery Testimony.docx](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Good evening

Please see my testimony below for Thursday's hearing.

Have a wonderful evening

Robert Stubblefield

## **African Moses Cemetery Testimony(Planning Board)**

Chairman Anderson

Board Members

Greetings

My name is Robert Alex Stubblefield and I am a lifelong resident of Montgomery County. I am also an activist and organizer with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition, commonly referred to as BACC and I am writing this to demand that this body stop the desecration of the African Moses Cemetery by ending all construction now!!

I would first like to begin by dispelling untruths that have been spread in recent weeks. The first untruth that has been going around is that we want to have the westward apartment torn down. That is not true. Not once during the four years of this battle have we called for that apartment complex torn down because we are all too familiar with being displaced. In fact, the very black community that built Bethesda has been displaced and we wouldn't want anything like that to happen to anyone else trying to build up roots. The second untruth that has been going is that we have not asked for a meeting. We have for many years called, email, wrote letters etc asking a meeting and demanding a meeting with all parties involved only to either be ignored or when protest peacefully, have police called on us and called a nuisance. In my slang, we have the receipts showing that what we at BACC are saying is true. The third untruth, and this I feel is very important is that this body along with the rest of county agencies, do not have the power or influence to turn land over. Again, that is simply untrue. Any agency that deals with land use has the power to turn it over to the community. For example, in Tampa, Florida, the Tampa Housing and Planning Authority were planning on building a new development and as they were tearing down an old apartment complex to begin building a new one, they discovered all of these bones. After going through their archives, they discovered that the site was the location of an historically black cemetery and upon realization, they ceased construction immediately and turned that land back over to the only institution that didn't betray the black community: The black church. If one is looking for a local example, a few years ago, when it was discovered that a Jewish cemetery was being desecrated, not only did then County Executive Ike Leggett and this body cease the desecration but also despite being a time of financial and budget constraints, managed to find \$300,000 to fix up the cemetery and rightfully so. If Tampa, with its history of racism and anti-blackness was able to stop desecrating a black historical sight and if we were able to do it here with our Jewish community, how come we can't do it for the



African Moses cemetery? Even though the company in question is supposed to have an archaeologist on staff and report to this body among others, they have no obligation to report and there is no enforcement from here to do so. In addition, is that archaeologist familiar with African burial customs? The last untruth here that needs to be unpacked is that there is little evidence of burials on the site of construction. Again false because archaeologists and anthropologists have come out, researched and tested the soil and have found strong evidence that not only are bodies still there but there are foundations commonly found among cemeteries such as burial plots. The construction that this company has done has disturbed the site. Furthermore why is a storage building being built when there are already two storage units that have plenty of space?

I find it incredulous that the same agency who back in October of 2019 pledged as part of the Racial Equity and Social Justice act to fight for and be an example of racial equity is the same agency that is allowing this desecration to continue. If this was a Republican county, what is going on here would be front page news but because it is happening in a democrat enclave, there is silence. It is sad because according to the United Nations and international law, the desecration of cemeteries is considered a hate crime. An agency that has stated time and time again to act in the interest of community yet ignores the descendant community's pleas for memorialization. What is being done here is part of a centuries long genocide. Yes genocide. Genocide doesn't stop when a people are dead, it continues by trying to wipe out the memory that people even lived in this area at all. As Sun Tzu stated in the Art of War "The goal is annihilation to wipe out the memory is to truly conquer a nation." This agency along with others has been complicit in this not only with gentrification of the area but with its silence. To be clear, we are not anti-development. Like anybody, we would love to see beautiful parks, safe streets and quality affordable housing and small businesses. But you don't have to destroy black historical spaces to do it. Other places have found ways of doing that with incredible success. Please learn from them and talk to us so that way we can truly right a wrong but help move this county forward towards justice and turn the myth of a progressive county to a reality. End the construction at Moses and turn that land over so we can begin the memorilization so that healing can begin.

**From:** [Segun Adebayo](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** RE: AGENDA ITEM 3 -- JULY 23 WESTBARD SELF STORAGE SITE PLAN AMENDMENT No.: 82017011A  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 10:58:53 PM  
**Attachments:** [TESTIMONY BEFORE MNCPPC JULY23 2020.docx](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Chair Anderson,

Please see attached my testimony with regard to the above-referenced project.

Sincerely,

Rev. Segun Adebayo

TESTIMONY OF REVEREND SEGUN ADEBAYO

PASTOR, MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

5119, RIVER ROAD BETHESDA MD 20816

PRESENTED TO

THE MARYLAND CAPITAL NATIONAL PARK & PLANNING COMMISSION

**RE: AGENDA ITEM 3 – JULY 23 WESTBARD SELF STORAGE SITE PLAN  
AMENDMENT NO.: 82017011A**

Dear Chair Anderson,

I am Reverend Segun Adebayo, the pastor of the Macedonia Baptist Church on River Road, Bethesda.

I write in opposition to the application by Westbard Self Storage to expand the footprint for the above-referenced project. Please deny the request.

We believe, based on oral testimony and historical research that Parcels 191, 242 in addition to other parcels of land in Westbard constitutes the ancient burial ground for Africans held in bondage on River Road by evil men, parading themselves as owners of our ancestors. The Moses African Cemetery (Parcels 175 and 177) is the post-emancipation manifestation of this burial ground. These parcels of land are the property of our ancestors who were abused and dehumanized. These valiant souls, a few years following emancipation acquired land and built a vibrant community on River Road that was systematically dismantled under the yoke of white supremacy and systemic racism. Simply speaking, the land was stolen from our ancestors through nefarious government-sponsored displacement of our people from River Road. The Macedonia Baptist Church, the only surviving institution of the erstwhile River Road African community, bears testimony to our ancestors and the spirit of just men who labored in sweat and blood and resisted dehumanization and injustice. We are proud that, in the footsteps of our most recent ancestor, we are engaging in ‘good trouble’, ‘necessary trouble’.

This is sacred ground and the continued desecration of this land is abominable. Your continued support for development on this land is a vestige of racism.

As the Montgomery County Planning Board (the “Board”) is well aware, the Macedonia Baptist Church, located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland (the “Church”), the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition (“BACC”) and members of the community have for many years voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County’s treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 (the “Parcel”) by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further

risks the desecration of these burial grounds. We have been prevented from venerating and pouring libation to our ancestors according to our custom. Since construction began, the Church and the BACC expressed to Montgomery County officials the concern that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am providing these comments to the Board to demand all activity at the Parcel be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and our ancestors can be treated with honor and dignity.

Although the development conditions placed on the project by the Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC (“1784”) (as owners of the Parcel) to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that the practices of the archaeologist apparently retained by 1784 have not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to determine if the remains are human.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing pain and irreparable harm to the Parcel and must cease.

We request an immediate halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, we demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archaeology reports prepared by the owner’s archaeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2017, notwithstanding the narrative on your website. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. We oppose the owner’s request to expand the footprint of the property. We seek justice and the right to honor our ancestors. This is long overdue.

Sincerely,

*Segun Adebayo*

Reverend Dr. Segun Adebayo

**From:** [Cherry Hunsaker-Clark](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting Thursday, July 23, 2020 Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:01:11 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

July 23, 2020

Re: Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

Ladies and Gentlemen, Board Members:

I am Cherry Hunsaker-Clark, a parent and anthropologist living in Takoma Park, MD. I have been a resident of Montgomery County for more than 8 years, and living in the DC area for the past 15.

I am writing to you today in support of Saving the Bethesda African Cemetery (Moses Cemetery) on River road. It is a place where former slaves were laid to rest from their earthly, oppressed labors. Let them rest in peace. The cemetery is a national gem along River road. It is a treasure trove of history dating back to civil war times. The land the cemetery is on should be made into place where African Americans can visit their ancestors, just as many white American's are able to visit their ancestors resting peacefully in grassy, tree-lined cemeteries. Furthermore, I speak in support of the Bethesda African Cemetery being designated as a National landmark with a visitor's center where future generations can learn about the complex circumstances of enslaved Africans.

First and foremost, this land should be protected from further development. It is shameful to build a storage facility atop decaying bodies, no matter who they are. I assure you that I would not store my things in such a facility. I don't understand how the cemetery got into its current state to begin with. There should be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

Going forward, it is imperative to have a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the Bethesda African Cemetery. They need to be involved in each county-level decision made about this land.

Lastly, I want to say, please, let them rest in peace. Use the power you have to do the right thing.

In kindness,,  
Cherry Hunsaker-Clark

--  
Cherry Hunsaker-Clark, MA  
(202) 725-3991

**From:** [Jordan Abramowitz](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Protect Moses African Cemetery  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:14:38 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To whom it may concern:

I was born and raised in Bethesda, MD, and went to high school just minutes from Moses African Cemetery. I am writing to urge you to protect this cemetery and order a stop to the construction that is currently underway on top of it. This is a sacred burial ground where many enslaved Africans and Black people have been laid to rest. By allowing the construction to continue, you are implying that property matters more than Black lives, and I think that is a disgusting message for our county to send. Please do the right thing and put a stop to the desecration of this cemetery. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Jordan Abramowitz

**From:** [Sydney Wolstein](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** STOP THE DESECRATION OF MOSES CEMETERY  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:14:52 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To whom it may concern,

As a member of the Bethesda community for the past 20 years, I want to share with you how devastating it is that this VITAL piece of history is being completely disregarded. PLEASE PLEASE STOP THE DESECRATION OF MOSES CEMETERY!! This community MUST do better to be anti-racist and THIS is one meaningful, NECESSARY, and tangible way to be apart of this movement.

Thank you,  
Sydney Wolstein



**From:** [Adam Seltzer](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Planning Board Testimony: Protect the Moses African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:30:15 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Hello,

My name is Adam Seltzer, and I'm a white resident of Bethesda, MD who is feeling saddened and angry about this county's blatant disrespect toward our Black ancestors who are unable to rest in peace due to disruptive digging and construction. This is particularly vile at a time of such heightened national attention to racial injustice and the rallying cries in support of Black lives.

As the Montgomery County Planning Board (the "Board") is well aware, the Macedonia Baptist Church, located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland (the "Church"), the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition ("BACC") and members of the community have for many years voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 (the "Parcel") by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further risks the desecration of these burial grounds. Since construction began, the Church and the BACC expressed to Montgomery County officials the concern that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am providing these comments to the Board to demand all activity at the Parcel be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and the the descendants preserved.

Although the development conditions placed on the project by the Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC ("1784") (as owners of the Parcel) to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that the practices of the archaeologist apparently retained by 1784 have not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to test to determine if the remains are human.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I request an immediate halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the

time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor our ancestors. This is long overdue.

All the best,  
Adam

**From:** [Seana Miller](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:06:00 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Members of the Planning Board:

I am a 13-year veteran Montgomery County Government employee and a lifelong Montgomery County resident, and I am familiar with the Planning Board's operational style. I write to you today to ask that you immediately cease all construction work on this site and allow the descendent community full control over this project. This is a desecration of a historic site and the Planning Board is complicit in furthering a genocide.

As the Montgomery County Planning Board (the "Board") is well aware, the Macedonia Baptist Church, located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland (the "Church"), the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition ("BACC") and members of the community have for many years voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing destructive work (digging) being done on Parcels 191 and 242 (the "Parcel") by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further risks the desecration of these burial grounds. Since construction began, the Church and the BACC expressed to Montgomery County officials that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am providing these comments to the Board to demand all activity at the Parcel be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and remains can be preserved.

Although the development conditions placed on the project by the Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC ("1784") (as owners of the Parcel) to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that the practices of the archaeologist apparently retained by 1784 have not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to test to determine if the remains are human.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I request an immediate halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by County officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for:

- (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity,
- (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and
- (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the community. I oppose the owner's request to

expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor our ancestors. This is long overdue.

Sincerely,

Seana Miller

**From:** [Sarah Barr Engel](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Moses African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:16:03 AM

---

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear members of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission,

As a Bethesda resident and community member, I strongly believe that the Moses Cemetery land should be designated as a historical site and therefore should be protected from further development.

There should also be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight for Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Moses African Cemetery, and they should be involved in every county-level decision made about that land.

Thanks,  
Sarah Barr Engel

**From:** [Anna Neubauer](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Community Member Testimonial for Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:34:49 AM

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Dear M-NCPPC committee members,

My name is Anna Neubauer, and while I live in Virginia, I have relatives that live in Maryland, and I am writing to the Montgomery County Planning Board as a concerned community member. Please add this testimonial to Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage. All construction at the Self Storage site must be halted immediately, as this is a historical burial site of enslaved African Americans. This historical area must be protected. In addition, there must be a citizen oversight committee made up of the descendants buried at Moses African Cemetery, so the descendant community is involved and has a voice in the matter. Lastly, there should be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight caused by Westbard Self Storage to see if the ethical and legal protocols required were followed.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,  
Anna Neubauer

**From:** [Odintz, Joshua D](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written testimony for July 23, 2020 hearing  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:36:43 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[WASDMS-#8501678-Testimony of J Odintz at MoCo Planning Board meeting \(002\).pdf](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Attached please find my written testimony for tomorrow's hearing. Please include the attached document in the hearing record.

Please let me know if you have any issues or questions regarding the attached document.

Thank you.

Kind regards,

**Joshua D Odintz**

Principal, Tax  
Baker & McKenzie LLP  
815 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20006-4078  
United States  
Tel: +1 202 452 7000  
Direct: +1 202 835 6164  
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Direct Fax: +1 202 416 7164  
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Cell: +1 202 557 6519  
[joshua.odintz@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:joshua.odintz@bakermckenzie.com)

**Baker  
McKenzie.**

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Testimony of Joshua D. Odintz, Baker & McKenzie, Counsel to the Macedonia Baptist Church

July 23, 2020 The Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting

My name is Joshua D. Odintz, and I am a partner with the international law firm Baker & McKenzie LLP. I lead a team of attorneys at Baker & McKenzie LLP that represents the Macedonia Baptist Church on a pro bono basis, and I am testifying before you today in my capacity as the Macedonia Baptist Church's legal representative. The Macedonia Baptist Church and its members are part of the descendant community for the enslaved and free Blacks buried at the River Road Moses Cemetery.

Today's meeting agenda includes an item titled, "Westbard Self Storage, Plan Amendment No. 82017011A." The agenda includes the following staff recommendation: "Approval With Conditions and Adoption of Resolution."

The Planning Board should not adopt the staff recommendation. Bethesda Self-Storage Partners, LLC originally applied in 2017 for approval to subdivide land and build a self-storage facility in an area that the Planning Board and its staff refer to as the "Westbard Sector." Our client, and other members of the descendant community, refer to the "Westbard Sector" by its true name, the River Road Moses Cemetery. When Bethesda Self-Storage Partners received approval in 2017, that approval was subject to several conditions. We do not believe that those prior conditions have been met.

For example, the conditions require Bethesda Self-Storage Partners to immediately notify the Historic Preservation Section of the Montgomery County Planning Department if "human remains or funerary objects are encountered at any time on any properties subject to [the] Preliminary Plan" in order "to allow documentation for the Montgomery County Planning Board Burial Site Inventory." See Condition #21, Montgomery County Planning Board Resolution, dated January 12, 2018, and appearing on page 5 of the attachment included with the agenda for this meeting. This condition was reiterated in a letter to Kelly McKone, Bethesda Self Storage Partners, from Elza Hisel-McCoy, Montgomery County Planning Department, Chief, Area 1, dated October 9, 2019. The October 9, 2019 letter included an additional condition: that, "[e]ven if no material of interest is found, the Professional Archaeologist must maintain and provide reporting of their observations including photographs of the related construction activity, to the Historic Preservation Section of the Montgomery County Planning Department within two weeks of completion of the related construction activity."

We are concerned that these conditions may not have been met. As Dr. Michael L. Blakey, a preeminent archaeologist and scholar specializing in African burial grounds and the National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies and American Studies and Director, Institute for Historical Biology, the College of William & Mary, will testify today that (1) photographs taken at the site show light-colored, elongated fragments and other indicators that suggest the presence of human remains and (2) County Executive Marc Elrich informed Dr. Blakey that bones were recently discovered at the site. Although the attachment of materials for this meeting includes reports of archaeological monitoring from Thunderbird Archaeology, those reports were not previously shared with us or our client--despite our repeated requests for these materials. Moreover, none of the reports included in the attachment make any mention of bones found on the site. Although Dr. Blakey was informed that the bones were tested, neither Dr. Blakey nor our client have been provided with a copy of any reports, test results, or other documents related to the bones that were recently discovered. Dr. Blakey has asked for access to the bones to conduct his own, independent testing, and the bones have not been provided to him.

In addition to the fact that the original conditions imposed on Bethesda Self-Storage Company may not have been met, we do not believe that the Planning Board has properly considered the concerns raised by our client and other stakeholders. We also do not believe that our client has been afforded due process. I wrote to you on July 1, 2020, requesting (among other things) an immediate halt to the construction at the River Road Moses Cemetery



and a commitment to schedule a meeting between any archaeologist hired by Bethesda Self-Storage Company and our client's experts. Neither I nor my client has received a response from the Planning Board. As the attachment demonstrates, others who have contacted the Planning Board and its staff have received timely and detailed responses to their queries. See pages 67-72 of the attachment for this meeting. Please explain why our letter was ignored, while others have received detailed responses.

Bethesda Self Storage's failure to comply with the conditions previously imposed on it, coupled with the Planning Board's refusal to engage with our client and adequately consider the concerns of the descendant community, provides strong support to reject the Planning Department staff's recommendation to approve the owner's request to expand the property's footprint.

Rather than accepting the staff's recommendation, the Planning Board should reject the staff's recommendation and modify the permit to impose additional conditions.

We request an immediate halt to the construction at the site. In addition, before any further activity occurs at the site, we request that the Planning Board (1) require Bethesda Self-Storage Partners to notify the Historic Preservation Section of possible human remains at the site, (2) require that a copy of any reports, tests, or other documents related to the bones recently discovered on the site be provided to Dr. Blakey and our client, (3) require that the bones discovered at the site be made available to Dr. Blakey for independent testing to determine whether the bones are human remains, (4) keep the record open for additional written testimony or other evidence to be submitted by Dr. Blakey after he has conducted any necessary tests and investigation of the bones and any other materials found at the site that Dr. Blakey determines to be relevant, as permitted by Section 4.1 of the Rules of Procedure, The Montgomery County Planning Board, and (5) require Bethesda Self-Storage Partners to work with Dr. Blakey or another independent archaeologist selected by the Macedonia Baptist Church to determine the precise boundaries of the River Road Moses Cemetery. Should construction resume after these conditions are satisfied, we request that the Planning Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners to provide (1) full access to the site for an independent archaeologist selected by the Macedonia Baptist Church and the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition (BACC) to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (2) the independent archaeologist access to soil and any other materials that the independent archaeologist deems necessary to determine the presence of human remains, and (3) weekly reports from the Professional Archaeologist hired by Bethesda Self Storage Company to the Macedonia Baptist Church, the BACC, and the independent archaeologist.

**From:** [Chris Rigaux](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Marsha Coleman-Adebayo](#); [surjmoco-bacc@googlegroups.com](mailto:surjmoco-bacc@googlegroups.com)  
**Subject:** Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:37:53 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

My name is Chris Rigaux, and I am the President and Chair of the Anne Marie Deruyttere Indigenous Peoples Foundation.

I am also a member of the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition.

I speak today to demand an immediate stop to the desecration of Moses Cemetery being perpetuated by the 1784 Capital Holding Company at 5204 River Road.

The Parks and Planning Commission has known since it began the redevelopment of the Westbard area that Moses Cemetery lies in the heart of the proposed redevelopment. Yet you have chosen to ignore the rightful claim of the descendant community and Macedonia Baptist Church to allow a proper archeological analysis done of the area to see how far the human remains have spread before commencing your digging project.

Historic cemeteries do not abide by modern plats. As was discovered when Westwood Towers II was constructed in the 1960s, human remains rest below the now paved-over Moses Cemetery. Eyewitness accounts describe human remains being bulldozed into heaps and discarded. Until a proper analysis is done of the entire affected area, we do not know how far these remains have spread.

We do know that Willetts Branch bisects the area. We also know that WSSC further disturbed these remains when they dug a new sewer system and re-routed Willetts Branch.

Parks and Planning has ignored the wishes of the descendant community, even rejecting their selection of the foremost African American archeologist to survey the area and determine the spread of human remains.

Must we wait for a skull to appear in the dirt before you stop this assault on human dignity?

What if these were your ancestors buried there? Would you continue to be so callous?

In the name of racial justice, I call for an immediate stoppage of the digging until the descendant community can oversee a proper analysis of the site. In the name of all that is holy and right, I call for an immediate end to this atrocity.

May God have mercy on your souls.

--

Chris Rigaux  
44 Maryland Avenue, Apt. 1406  
Rockville, MD 20850  
(240) 441-9288

**From:** [Natalie Welber](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
**Subject:** Stop the desecration of Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:40:49 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

**The land of Moses cemetery must be designated a historical site and protected from any further construction/development. There must also be an independent investigation into the permitting process which did not follow the guidelines for treatment of a cemetery and allowed for the remains of Black Marylanders to be desecrated, denying them rights in their afterlife, just as they were unjustly denied their human rights by the Maryland government when they were alive. Bethesda has a horrid history of racism, and the lack of action to save Moses Cemetery only highlights how we have barely moved past Jim Crow. We must do better. We must value Black history over yet another self storage center.**

**Sincerely,  
Natalie Welber  
Bethesda resident  
(5825 Osceola Rd)**

**From:** [Maya Bon](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony In solidarity With Bethesda African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:57:32 AM

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To whom it may concern:

There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries. Moving forward, there should be a Citizen Oversight Committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. This land ought to be designated a hospital site and therefore protected from further development.

In solidarity with Bethesda African Cemetery,  
Maya Bon

**From:** [Julia Medine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:59:04 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing as a resident of Bethesda, MD in support of protecting the historic Moses African Cemetery off of River Road. A private company intends to build a storage facility on top of the sacred burial ground there.

There are many other areas, I'm sure, where we can find space for a storage site. It is no coincidence that our community leaders have chosen to desecrate a space held by black people. Please find another spot and respect the sanctity of this spiritual home.

Thanks,  
Julia Medine

**From:** [Lauren Buzdygon](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony to the committee on the desecration of Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:01:57 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To the committee:

I am providing testimony on the desecration of Moses Cemetery on River Road. This sacred site has been being actively destroyed daily by the construction of self storage units. Archaeologists have confirmed that there are remains of African American bodies located at this site yet construction continues without halt. There is no gray area to this situation. This is wrong and the construction must be halted immediately.

I urge the committee to take the following actions:

1. This land ought to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. We should never have to fight this battle on this particular piece of land again.
2. Moving forward there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county decision made about this land. We cannot continue to exclude the voices of Black Americans who are directly hurt by these decisions.
3. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries. We need to make sure this atrocity of a construction project is never allowed to go forward again when it desecrates the remains of Black Americans.
4. Listen attentively to Black voices when they tell you they are hurt by something you are doing. Take action to amend that hurt. This is the only way damage can begin to be healed.

Thank you for your attention and time and I hope that you will consider the actions I have listed and not only halt the desecration of Moses Cemetery but prevent such an atrocity against any African American sacred site in Bethesda ever again.

Sincerely,

Lauren Buzdygon

**From:** [Odintz, Joshua D](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Supplemental written testimony of Joshua Odintz  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:19:12 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Moses Cemetery 7.7.20.pdf](#)  
**Importance:** High

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Mr. Anderson,

I am writing to supplement my written testimony. This morning, I received the following email and attached correspondence from the Maryland Historic Trust (MHT). MHT contacted the owner of the property at issue on July 7, 2020, and has yet to receive a response. This is inadequate, given the destruction of the site.

County Executive Elrich said the builder discovered bones on the property, but my client and other stakeholders have not seen the archeologist's report or had access to the bones to test for human remains. Moreover, we have photographs demonstrating evidence of furniture and other potential funerary objects on the sight. The MHT should have access to the site to assess the historic significance of items found on the property. We request the record be held open to include additional reports from the MHT when and if they are provided access to the site. Further, we request the record be held open so we can provide photographs of various objects discovered and ignored by the developer and its agents. Finally, the permit should be amended to require MHT have full and unfettered access to the construction site.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Kind regards,

**Joshua D Odintz**

Principal, Tax  
Baker & McKenzie LLP  
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Washington, DC 20006-4078  
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Direct: +1 202 835 6164  
Fax: +1 202 452 7074  
Direct Fax: +1 202 416 7164  
Cell: +1 202 809 1757  
Cell: +1 202 557 6519  
[joshua.odintz@bakermckenzie.com](mailto:joshua.odintz@bakermckenzie.com)

**Baker  
McKenzie.**

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**From:** Charles Hall -MDP- <charles.hall@maryland.gov>

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 9:07 AM

**To:** Steven Lieberman <slieberm@rothwellfigg.com>

**Cc:** Rabbi Shmuel Herzfeld <rabbishmuelherzfeld@gmail.com>; Odintz, Joshua D <joshua.odintz@bakermckenzie.com>; Elizabeth Hughes -MDP- <elizabeth.hughes@maryland.gov>; David Buck -MDP- <david.buck@maryland.gov>  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: River Road African Cemetery

Dear Mr. Lieberman,

Attached please find a copy of a letter from our Director, Elizabeth Hughes, to the Bethesda Self Storage Partners LLC requesting that they consult with her as required by the Real Property article of Maryland code § 14-121.1. To date we have not received a response.  
Charlie Hall



Charles L. Hall, Ph.D.  
Maryland State Terrestrial Archeologist  
Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
(410) 697-9552  
[MHT.Maryland.gov](http://MHT.Maryland.gov)

Please [click here](#) to take our survey.

On Mon, Jul 20, 2020 at 3:01 PM Steven Lieberman <[slieberm@rothwellfigg.com](mailto:slieberm@rothwellfigg.com)> wrote:

Please see the attached correspondence being sent on behalf of Steven Lieberman.



ROTHWELL FIGG  
IP Professionals

Sandra Foster, *Legal Assistant to*  
*Steven Lieberman, Seth Cockrum, Rachel Echols, Jennifer Nock*  
Rothwell, Figg, Ernst & Manbeck, P.C.

607 14<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 800

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Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Robert S. McCord, Secretary  
Sandy Schrader, Deputy Secretary

July 7, 2020

Bethesda Self Storage Partners, LLC  
8777 N. Gainey Center Dr., # 191  
Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Re: The River Road Moses Cemetery

Dear Mr. Jackson,

I am writing in reference to the potential impact of proposed development activities to be undertaken by Bethesda Self Storage Partners LLC on a historic burial site. Specifically, it has come to my attention that Bethesda Self Storage Partners, LLC, may be planning activities on property located at 5218 River Road, Bethesda, in Montgomery County Maryland (parcel identifier: District - 07 Account Number - 00419363). This parcel is immediately adjacent to the reported location of the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, which was associated with White's Tabernacle No. 39 of the Ancient United Order of Sons and Daughters, Brethren and Sisters of Moses between approximately 1910 and the mid-1940s.

The Maryland Code, Real Property Article §14-121.1 ("Proper treatment of burial site in existence for more than 50 years") directs that:

"An owner of a burial site or of the land encompassing a burial site that has been in existence for more than 50 years and in which the majority of the persons interred in the burial site have been interred for more than 50 years shall consult with the Director of the Maryland Historical Trust about the proper treatment of markers, human remains, and the environment surrounding the burial site."

Please provide any relevant information you might have regarding the River Road Moses Cemetery's location, condition, and history, as well as a description of your plans for the site and its surrounding environment for our review.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hughes, Director  
Maryland Historical Trust

cc: Reverend Segun Adebayo

---

Maryland Historical Trust • 100 Community Place • Crownsville • Maryland • 21032

Tel: 410.697.9591 • toll free 877.767.6272 • TTY users: Maryland Relay • [MHT.Maryland.gov](http://MHT.Maryland.gov)

**From:** [Melyssa](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting Thursday, July 23, 2020 Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:35:48 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Re: Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting  
Thursday, July 23, 2020  
Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

Dear all,

My name is Melyssa Cave, and I am a resident of Montgomery County. I have been following the struggles of those at the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition (BACC) to preserve their sacred land with dismay. As the Planning Board knows, the Macedonia Baptist Church, at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland, BACC, and members of the community have been voicing their extreme concern regarding the county's mistreatment of the historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans (Parcels 191 and 242) for many years. The recent construction there by Bethesda Self Storage Partners has further desecrated these burial grounds, including disturbing human remains. In light of this, I demand that all development be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and the descendants preserved.

Even though the development conditions placed on the project by the Board require the developers to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that this has not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC, and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to test to determine if the remains are human. The community deserves this opportunity to protect its ancestors.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I am requesting that construction is stopped, and a clear commitment from county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the entire site. To start, I demand that the planning board revises the permits for the site to ensure:

1. An independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity.

2. Such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains.
3. Weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

Now is the time to make this right. Engage with the community and stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor our ancestors. This is needed.

Sincerely,  
Melyssa Cave

11501 Gilsan St  
[melyssa.blog@gmail.com](mailto:melyssa.blog@gmail.com)

**From:** [Julia Sienkiewicz](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony - Bethesda African Cemetery and Desecration  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:46:57 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

I write because I am revolted by the actions of this county, past and present. Montgomery County touts its surface diversity and then materially robs the most vulnerable of their potential for community and prosperity. It is our obligation to preserve Bethesda African Cemetery as a historical site to start the beginnings of material change for the black lives and black histories of this county.

There should be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage, as they did not follow the legal and ethical protocols for the established oversight of cemeteries. That they did not listen to the descendent community is not simply racism, it's genocide: through allowing the development to go forward the county is condoning out the last memories of a community already forced out of this space. Moving forward there should be a citizen oversight community composed of the descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery, who should be involved in every county-level decision about this land. This is the erasure of history and it ought to be designated a historical site, therefore protected from further development and preserved for educational purposes. Bethesda African Cemetery is a sacred space and a potential for incredible growth for the county: through designating it a historical site and preserving it we say that Montgomery County's erasure of black lives, black hopes, black dreams, is no longer acceptable.

I have lived in Bethesda in the Glen Echo Heights neighborhood my entire life, proudly attending MCPS schools. I always thought this county was different than most--exceptional even!--and that we had the potential to model a sustainable and self-aware community that has respectful reverence towards its history. I still want to believe that, but I can't reconcile that naive belief to the knowledge that I have been driving past a graveyard my entire life without realizing it. I had no idea that there was *any* semblance of diversity in the Bethesda area, as this so-called progressive county actively chose to destroy it. Through condoning the actions of Maryland Self Storage, the planning board and Montgomery County are no longer able to say that this racist disenfranchisement is a part of a shameful past, it is present-day genocide. Let Cora Botts and her husband rest. Let the little girls forced into sexual slavery rest. Let these souls lie in peace. Preserving Bethesda African Cemetery is the bare minimum this county can do to materially demonstrate that black lives matter, in life and in death.

Julia Sienkiewicz  
Bethesda, 20816

**From:** [Kate Heacock](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Bethesda African Cemetery Construction  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:57:01 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission,

As a resident of Montgomery County, I am extremely dismayed at the progression of construction at 5204 River Road in Bethesda. With Montgomery County's long history of systematic racism against people of color, especially black residents, halting this construction is a chance to bring meaningful change.

This land needs to be designated as a historical site and protected from further development. There needs to be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land.

This cemetery has been disregarded for decades. The fact that bodies are spread across an unknown area is a testament to the continued disrespect shown to these people. You have the power to start to make this right. Show that black lives matter in life and in death by starting a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

Kate Heacock  
Montgomery Village, MD  
[kate.heacock11@gmail.com](mailto:kate.heacock11@gmail.com)

**From:** [andrea vergara](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** SAVE MOSES CEMETERY  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 10:58:28 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

I am writing to you as a concerned life-long citizen of Montgomery County regarding the construction atop of Moses Cemetery on Westbard Avenue.

This land ought to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda Africa Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

I ask that you seriously consider and follow through with these demands in your planning meeting on Thursday, July 23rd.

Sincerely,

Andrea Vergara De La Garza  
20896



**From:** [Alex Whittington](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:01:56 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you regarding the status of the Moses African Cemetery. This historic site is an integral part of the Bethesda community and must be preserved and protected. This land must be designated a historical site and therefore protected in perpetuity from any further development. Care of this site should also be placed within the hands of the community. Thus, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of the descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery. This committee must be involved in every county-level decision made about this land.

Furthermore, it is imperative that there be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage. The bastardization of these regulations resulted in complete disregard for the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries. It is essential that we preserve the cultural heritage of this site and return care of this historic and sacred place to the proper entities.

Thank you for your time,  
Alex Whittington

--

Alex Whittington (he/they)  
Yale University 2022  
B.A. Music; Theater and Performance Studies

**From:** [Elizabeth Rosenberg](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Montgomery Planning Board Testimony: Item 3 - Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:03:36 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Montgomery County Planning Board:

I testify as a Montgomery County resident appalled by the desecration of Moses Cemetery on River Road. The erasure of Black History by desecrating their burial site to replace it with a third Self-Storage unit within 200 feet is reprehensible. Archeological reports have determined the presence of human remains at the site and yet construction continues to dig them up and repurpose them as building material for the new building. Even more appalling, this construction and desecration was considered "essential" during a global pandemic and therefore, the construction continued during the state stay at home orders. The destruction must be stopped. The erasure of the genocide commemorated by the graves of those buried in Moses Cemetery must be stopped immediately. I urge the committee to take the following actions:

1. The land where the cemetery resides must be to be designated as a protected historical site. Concerned citizens should never have to this land from development ever again.
2. A citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery must be involved in every discussion and decision made about this land. This land was stolen from them so many times and we must stop anyone who tries to steal it again.
3. Launch a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that failed to follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries. Existing systems failed to protect this land and it cannot happen again.
4. Black voices must be valued, treasured, and put first in all conversations going forward in our society, but particularly with M-NCPPC. When damage is done, reparations must immediately follow. There is no other way forward and concerned citizens like myself will continue to remind you of this whenever necessary.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters. I pray that you will respond and follow up conscientiously.

Sincerely,  
Elizabeth Rosenberg  
[She/Her/Hers](#)  
2354 Cobble Hill Ter  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
[elizabergrosenbeth@gmail.com](mailto:elizabergrosenbeth@gmail.com)  
(202) 425-3922

**From:** [Victor Vergara](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** SAVE MOSES CEMENTARY  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:04:38 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Montgomery County Planning Board

I am writing to you as a concerned life-long citizen of Montgomery County regarding the construction atop of Moses Cemetery across Westbard Avenue.

This land ought to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cementarties.

Sincerely,

Victor Vergara De La Garza  
20896

**From:** [Victor Vergara](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** SAVE MOSES CEMENTARY  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:06:14 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

I am writing to you as a concerned life-long citizen of Montgomery County regarding the construction atop of Moses Cemetery on Westbard Avenue.

This land ought to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda Africa Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

I ask that you seriously consider and follow through with these demands in your planning meeting on Thursday, July 23rd.

Sincerely,  
Victor Vergara De La Garza  
20896

**From:** [Victor Vergara](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** SAVE MOSES CEMETERY  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:09:18 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

I am writing to you as a concerned life-long resident of Montgomery County - and as a Latinx that lived in Westbard Avenue as a child in the early 1970's - regarding the construction atop of Moses Cemetery on Westbard Avenue. I

This land urgently needs to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda Africa Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

I ask that you seriously consider and follow through with these demands in your planning meeting on Thursday, July 23rd.

Sincerely,

Victor Vergara

**From:** [Kim Sienkiewicz](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting testimony for 7/23/20  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:13:52 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

July 22, 2020

Re: Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting  
Thursday, July 23, 2020  
Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Kimberly Sienkiewicz and I have been a resident of Bethesda since 1997. Last summer I attended an important exhibit and program at American University sponsored in part by the Macedonia Baptist Church. I was surprised to learn that not only had there been a thriving Black community on River Road that was decimated by white supremacy, but there is also an unmarked cemetery that had been paved over and ignored by the county in favor of commercial development. And if that weren't bad enough, I now know that in 2020, though we should know better and do better, Montgomery County continues to perpetuate white supremacy by ignoring the pleas of the Black community and allowing continued development on this sacred land. This is unconscionable. Black lives should matter in death as well as life, but today Montgomery county has chosen to perpetuate the racism and genocide carried out by our white ancestors. I am here to demand that you stop this desecration and honor the souls buried in this space.

Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans has been despicable. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 (the "Parcel") by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further risks the desecration of these burial grounds. Since construction began, the Macedonia Baptist Church and the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition expressed to Montgomery County officials the concern that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am providing these comments to the Board to demand all activity at the Parcel be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and the descendants preserved.

Although the development conditions placed on the project by the Planning Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC ("1784") (as owners of the Parcel) to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that the practices of the archaeologist apparently retained by 1784 have not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to test to determine if the remains are human.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I request an immediate halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports

prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor these ancestors. This is long overdue.

Very truly yours,

Kimberly Sienkiewicz  
Bethesda, 20816

**From:** [Maximilian Gilder](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony: Bethesda African Cemetery and desecration  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:15:00 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

I write because what is happening at Moses Cemetery is horrifying, and has no place in a land that supposedly values and respects its citizens.

To dig up remains, and to destroy them, is tantamount to the erasure of history, and the destruction of a culture. It is despicable that this has been allowed to occur, especially considering the amount that those responsible for the desecration have been made aware of the scope of what they are doing.

The history is there, whether one chooses to ignore it or not, and those of good conscience should not only refuse to ignore it, but actively work to prevent it from being destroyed.

To do this, the land should be declared a historical site in order to prevent its desecration and destruction by way of further development.

To prevent this from happening again, an oversight community should be established that is composed of all those descended from the people buried at Moses African Cemetery. They should be intensely involved with every county-level decision regarding the land.

Finally, to understand why this happened in the first place, there should be a full legal investigation regarding how this blatant disregard for this historic site was permitted to occur.

These demands are not complicated, nor are they any measure of heavily imposing. They are indicative of a bare minimum of respect that these people have been thus far denied.

Make better choices than you have thus far. Make a change to your behavior, and take action to keep your behavior above the obscenely low bar of “avoiding the desecration of the graves of disenfranchised Americans.”

If the appeal to human decency is not enough: Rest assured, the more those desecrating the Cemetery push back on the descendants of the dead and their allies, the more public this debacle will become, and the more those responsible for the desecration will receive backlash and unwanted press.

It would be unwise to risk that kind of media exposure.



All the best,  
-Maximilian Gilder.

**From:** [Olivia Weals](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Planning Board Meeting - 7/23 SAVE MOSES CEMETERY  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:25:29 AM  
**Attachments:** [Testimony for Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting \(7.23\) SAVE MOSES CEMETERY - O Weals.docx](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Submitting to the Board,

My name is Olivia Weals, I am a 23 year-old lifetime resident of Bethesda, Maryland in Montgomery County. I live on Fallwind Lane in the Bannockburn/Whitman district of Bethesda. I attended Montgomery County Public schools my entire life. I drive past the lot on River Road which houses the Bethesda African Cemetery nearly every day. I know that land. I know that McDonald's. We used to ride our bikes there when we were kids. I am submitting this written testimony in support of the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition, the group who is fighting to stop construction by Maryland Self Storage on the land that houses the Bethesda African Moses Cemetery.

The land on River Road near Westbard and the McDonald's, the land that is being rapidly turned into a self-storage facility, is land that houses bodies. The Moses African Cemetery is being desecrated daily by a corporation seeking only profit margins, with no regard to the people whose graves are being disturbed. With no regard to how this desecration is impacting the still-present Black community that lives in Bethesda.

There was once a thriving Black community on River Road in Bethesda. Through years of gentrification, white flight, red lining, economic pressures, physical intimidation, and the perpetual disrespect and disregard for Black lives and Black communities, the land has been stolen by white people, sold for immense profits, destroyed, constructed on, and Black people have been priced out of their own community.

This land ought to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now-desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in EVERY county-level decision made about this land. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

The fact that this is happening in our community is disgraceful. It is appalling. It is obscene. It is a desecration. Black Lives Matter, in Life and in Death. Continuing to desecrate this land is an affront to every community member of Montgomery County, of Bethesda, but particularly to our Black community members, who are being told — in no uncertain terms — that our County has no interest in protecting or respecting either their lives or their deaths.

Stop the construction. Allow the citizens, the community, the descendants who are impacted by this project to have control over their loved ones and their land. Give the land back.

Thank you for your time. My statement is also attached to this email in a Word Document.  
Olivia Weals



Submitting to the Board,

My name is Olivia Weals, I am a 23 year-old lifetime resident of Bethesda, Maryland in Montgomery County. I live on Fallwind Lane in the Bannockburn/Whitman district of Bethesda. I attended Montgomery County Public schools my entire life. I drive past the lot on River Road which houses the Bethesda African Cemetery nearly every day. I know that land. I know that McDonald's. We used to ride our bikes there when we were kids. I am submitting this written testimony in support of the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition, the group who is fighting to stop construction by Maryland Self Storage on the land that houses the Bethesda African Moses Cemetery.

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This land ought to be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now-desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in EVERY county-level decision made about this land. There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

The fact that this is happening in our community is disgraceful. It is appalling. It is obscene. It is a desecration. Black Lives Matter, in Life and in Death. Continuing to desecrate this land is an affront to every community member of Montgomery County, of Bethesda, but particularly to our Black community members, who are being told — in no uncertain terms — that our County has no interest in protecting or respecting either their lives or their deaths.

Stop the construction. Allow the citizens, the community, the descendants who are impacted by this project to have control over their loved ones and their land. Give the land back.

Thank you for your time.  
Olivia Weals

**From:** [Melissa Rettig](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Stop the Desecration of Moses African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:27:51 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Committee Members,

I am writing as a Montgomery County resident who understands that you have the power to stop the desecration of the historic Moses African Cemetery in Bethesda.

As representatives of a county government that prides itself on its progressivism, I am disappointed (though unsurprised) that your commitment to equity in our community appears to be contingent on whether it alienates commercial developers.

The Moses African Cemetery is infinitely more valuable to me and my fellow Montgomery County residents than another ugly storage unit complex could ever be; indeed, the site of the Cemetery should be designated a historic site, protected from any kind of further desecration, and archaeological surveys of the site commissioned. Frankly, I have a hard time imagining that you would permit similar development at the many beautiful historic cemeteries in our county whose decedents are primarily white rather than Black, as they are at Moses.

The erasure of oppressed peoples' history that you are allowing is a tactic powerful people all over the world use and have used to maintain and justify inequity. Fortunately, the courageous Black organizers leading the charge to preserve Moses for posterity recognize the tactic for what it is and have invigorated Montgomery County residents' consciousness of what's at stake. You do not to accommodate the hyper-wealthy, racist developers enjoining you to act against what your neighbors know to be best for our community. We will take your reversal of position in good faith—a demonstration of your accountability to democratic demands over private money.

I echo the Moses organizers in their demand that, moving forward, a citizen oversight committee composed of the descendants of the beloved people buried in the cemetery are involved in every county-level decision made about this land. I also second their call for a full investigation into permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that abjured legal and ethical standards for the disposition of burial grounds.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Rettig

**From:** [Sofia Bisogno](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony to Stop the Desecration at the Moses African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:30:53 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is Sofia Bisogno, a resident of Montgomery County for the past 22 years. I attended Carderock Springs Elementary, Pyle Middle School, and Whitman High School. I am writing today to testify against the desecration of the Moses African Cemetery.

Current construction of the Maryland Self Storage units is disrupting a historical landmark and must be stopped. Montgomery County has a sordid history of stealing land from the African American residents of River Road (forcing them out, tearing down their schools, etc) that is closely linked to this county's connection with the KKK. Rather than right our historical wrongs, by allowing the desecration of this cemetery, Montgomery County is continuing this cycle of abuse against its African American residents. This must end, the community demands it.

I am demanding that this site be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development. Additionally, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. Lastly, there must be an investigation conducted into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal or ethical protocols established for the oversight cemeteries.

Please listen and respect the wishes of the community before further action is taken. The difference between this land and a plot of land 2 miles away means absolutely nothing to the self storage unit but means absolutely EVERYTHING to your community.

Sincerely,  
Sofia Bisogno

--

**Sofia Bisogno**  
**Princeton University | Class of 2020**  
Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering  
Program in Dance



**From:** [nofearcoalition@aol.com](mailto:nofearcoalition@aol.com)  
**To:** [nofearcoalition@aol.com](mailto:nofearcoalition@aol.com)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Open Letter to Marc Elrich from BACC  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:32:26 AM  
**Importance:** High

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

## OPEN LETTER TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE MARC ELRICH

Marc, this is my response to your letters of July 5th and 16th, 2020.

Cease and desist from the desecration, destruction, and all other forms of disruption, disturbance, annihilation, ethnic cleansing, and genocide of Moses African Cemetery, currently underway with your official knowledge and approval. As your own letter articulates, Macedonia Baptist Church (MBC) and its related descendant community has yet—as of this very late date—to be included in the decision making process on what fate awaits our ancestors, be it annihilation as Montgomery County is presently pursuing or consecration as would befit the wishes of descendants who are currently fighting for their ancestors under attack by the County.

As you note in your July 16th letter, the descendant community was disenfranchised from the beginning of this process in 2017 during the Planning Board permitting process. We were disenfranchised for no other reason than our race. This was illegal and immoral but consistent with the racist history of Montgomery County's treatment of African-Americans. Therefore, the permitting process and the subsequent desecration underway at Moses African Cemetery is illegal and you must stop it now.

BACC and its allies are shocked and profoundly disappointed in your conduct on this foremost issue of racial justice in Montgomery County. Many of your grassroots supporters, felt you had the commitment, imagination and intellect to fight for those communities oppressed by white privilege. Instead you reveal yourself as a coward, afraid to do the hard work of truly fighting back when your re-election is in play. You have presented yourself as just another typical Montgomery County politician fighting for the few against the many.

Marc, we call upon you to stop the dog-whistling to developers that betray your constituents and your principles in an effort to protect yourself from a developer-funded opponent next year. You chose Moses Cemetery to make your case to developers because your calculation was that no one would care about dead black ancestors. It would have been unthinkable for you to approve of the desecration of a Jewish or confederate burial ground. You are dog whistling on dead black bodies today just as police have used dogs against civil rights activists before you.

Our movement is growing every day and you are on the wrong side of history. You should not listen to anyone telling you that you do “not have the authority to stop the desecration.” Your administration and your legacy depends on you standing up, finding a spine and taking the legal and moral position that the desecration of Moses must stop now...on your watch.

Marsha Coleman-Adebayo (on behalf of the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition) BACC



**From:** [Kyosin Kang](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:37:08 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Casey Anderson,

I live near the Macedonia Baptist Church, located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda. I would really like some answers about the historic River Road Moses Cemetery. Historically, it is a significant burial ground of enslaved Africans and it needs to be respected. Recently, Bethesda Self Storage Partners began digging on these grounds which is an intrusive disturbance of human remains. Montgomery County needs to take this site more seriously and mark it as a historical site that needs to be protected from development. The archaeologist that was hired by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings did not do a thorough enough job on coming up with answers. I ask that Montgomery County allows the Macedonia Baptist Church, Bethesda African Cemetery Colation, and the community do its own assessment of the site to confirm or deny the burial site. For example, let them test the bones that were found at the site to determine if the remains are human. Please don't be the person who erased valuable history from the land we live on. Instead, let's learn more about Bethesda's history and learn more about this site by protecting it. It is important to people like me who live in MoCo.

Let's get some serious engagement of the public and of independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists. First, we must immediately halt the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and get a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor our ancestors. This is long overdue.

Sincerely,  
Kyosin Kang  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

**From:** [Michelle Edwards](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Moses African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:45:02 AM

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

I am writing to testify on the Moses African Cemetery.

As a Maryland resident, it shames me to hear we have allowed for the desecration of a cemetery. A cemetery should be respected as a sacred place. The Moses African Cemetery should be protected from corporate interests and other institutions that would have it further damaged.

I believe this land should be designated as a historical site. No further development should be allowed. Let those buried there truly rest in peace. Decisions about this land should be made by a citizen oversight committee, whose membership should include the descendants of those buried at this site. The citizen oversight committee should be involved at every level of decision making for this land.

Additionally, an investigation must be made on what circumstances allowed for Maryland Self-Storage to be permitted to not follow the the legal and ethical protocols regarding the oversight of cemeteries. Also, if it is found that there are no ordinances, laws, policies, etc. that disallow the destruction of burial sites in this circumstance, that must be rectified.

Thank you,  
Michelle Edwards

**From:** [Dylan Cernea](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Moses Cemetery!!  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:46:59 AM

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

On the issue of Moses Cemetery...

This land ought to be designated a historical sight and therefore protected from further development!! Moving forward there should be citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in this now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision ever made about this land . There ought to be full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self-Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols for the over-sight of cemeteries.

Don't make out county notorious for lacking dignity and respect. Don't set a bad example. The true colors of this community should be ones of proper acknowledgement of claims and appropriate recognition and action taking after unlawful actions have been pointed out. Thank you for your time. I trust the right decision will be made and Moses Cemetery will remains untouched and untainted, along with the reputation of this county

Best,

A lifelong member of this county

(Dylan Cernea)

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Annie Brown](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:49:01 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Dear Mr. Anderson

My name is Annie Brown and I have lived in Montgomery County for my entire life. I am writing to express my anguish and disgust at the prospect that Moses Cemetery be destroyed. Conversely, it is vital that the cemetery receive status as a historical cite, thus protecting it from current and subsequent threat. It is utterly incomprehensible that no descendants of those buried in the cemetery have had power and voice—much less veto power—into what happens to the bones of their ancestors. If Moses Cemetery wasn't a black cemetery, would this be the case? And furthermore, what does this reveal about the lack of representation and the ethical codes preexisting this event within Montgomery County's government and protocol? I sincerely hope you are taking this issue and these questions seriously, and that this egregious violation does not go forward. If this is not the case, I pose a final question; who is it that you and your government are actually serving?

**From:** [Jadyn Brick](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:54:10 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Hello,

I am a Montgomery County resident writing out of concern for the Moses African Cemetery in Bethesda. I would like to make the following points:

The land should be designated a historical site and therefore protected from further development.

Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land.

There ought to be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage that did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

I hope you will take these points seriously, and with great care. This land is important to many people in our community, and by stopping any further development of the land, you would be affirming that Black lives do in fact matter.

Thank you,  
Jadyn Brick

**From:** [Adam Simon](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Moses African Cemetery, July 23 Item \*3  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:56:35 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

RE:

Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting

Thursday, July 23, 2020

Agenda Item 3: Westbard Self Storage, Site Plan Amendment No. 82017011A

Hello,

My name is Adam Simon -- I am a recent college graduate, currently residing in Bethesda, Maryland, where I was born and raised.

As the Montgomery County Planning Board (the "Board") is well aware, the Macedonia Baptist Church, located at 5119 River Road in Bethesda, Maryland (the "Church"), the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition ("BACC") and members of the community have for many years voiced their extreme concern regarding Montgomery County's treatment of certain parcels of land in Bethesda containing and adjacent to the historic River Road Moses Cemetery, a historically significant burial ground of enslaved Africans. Most recently, the ongoing grading, digging and construction on Parcels 191 and 242 (the "Parcel") by Bethesda Self Storage Partners further risks the desecration of these burial grounds. Since construction began, the Church and the BACC expressed to Montgomery County officials the concern that the intrusive disturbance of human remains may have already occurred at the construction site based on recent photographs. I am providing these comments to the Board to demand all activity at the Parcel be stopped immediately so that the grounds can be properly examined and the descendants preserved.

This is not news to the Board -- these demands have been ongoing for years. The decision to allow Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784 Capital Holdings, LLC ("1784") to continue their desecration during the coronavirus pandemic is duplicitous and callous. Although there were conditions placed on these companies to hire an archaeologist at the site, it is clear that the practices of the archaeologist apparently retained by 1784 have not been sufficient. The owners and this Board have repeatedly prevented the Church, BACC and the community from obtaining sufficient evidence to confirm or deny the destruction of burials. For example, County Executive Marc Elrich said the owners of the property discovered bones on the Parcel. Stakeholders want access to the bones to test to determine if the remains are human. The fact that there has been so little transparency with the so-called "archeological process" demonstrates how it either a) is entirely inadequate or b) is purposefully concealing significant archeological finds.

The continued construction by the storage company without serious engagement of the public and without apparent engagement from independent, qualified archaeologists and/or anthropologists is causing irreparable harm to the community and must cease.

I request an immediate halt to the construction by Bethesda Self Storage Partners and 1784, and a firm commitment by county officials to transparently engage with the community to establish a trustworthy process to evaluate the potential presence of human remains on the site (not simply one corner of the site). At the very least, I demand the Board revise the permit for the Parcel to provide for (i) an independent archaeologist selected by the Church and BACC be permitted at the site with full access to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (ii) such independent archaeologist to be granted access to the soil on the property in order to confirm or deny the presence of human remains, and (iii) weekly production to stakeholders (including the Church and BACC) of archeology reports prepared by the owner's archeology firm.

I have grown up only a stone's throw away from Moses Cemetery. I did not know of its existence and significance to the descendent community until only recently and that is a personal tragedy, as it has greatly limited my access to

and understanding of this area's history and treatment of Black folks. Public history is critical to a just society. The Moses Cemetery represents a sacred space in which Black history in Montgomery County, a history which has been actively targeted and desecrated for decades, can live on and inform the hearts and minds of our citizens for generations to come. It is important to recognize that the desecration that is ongoing is only the latest atrocity in a long history of such actions. The time is now to stop this.

County Executive Elrich confirmed that this Board has ignored the stakeholders since 2016. Now is the time for you to do the right thing and engage with the stakeholders. I oppose the owner's request to expand the footprint of the property. This Board must preserve the human remains of the ancestors. No meaningful effort has been made to evaluate the presence of human remains and establish the outer borders of the historic cemetery. I seek justice and the right to honor our ancestors. This is long overdue.

Sincerely,  
Adam Simon

**From:** [Talia Brenner](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony--Bethesda African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:58:05 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Good morning:

I am emailing to submit a written testimony about the construction at the Bethesda African Cemetery.

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As a lifelong resident of Bethesda, I am truly ashamed of what is happening at the Bethesda African Cemetery. I believe that human remains should be respected and treated with dignity.

Since 1990, the federal government has followed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, which mandates preserving and respecting Native American human remains. Montgomery County often prides itself on taking more progressive actions than those at the federal level, such as by raising the minimum wage and passing the CROWN Act. Yet in terms of treating the deceased with necessary respect, we are far behind than the actions taken even by the federal government.

Maryland Self Storage should never have been given permission to build on this sacred site, but it is not too late to do the right thing. Rather than stick its head in the sand, Montgomery County should take responsibility through two important actions: 1. halting construction immediately, and 2. creating a citizen oversight committee, composed of the descendants of those buried in the Bethesda African Cemetery, for county-level decisions made about this land.

Doing so would not only be a step toward reconciling the profound racial divides in our county, but could also generate positive change. As a graduate student studying to become a public historian, I can speak to the enormous potential that historic sites have to foster healing in divided communities. If the Bethesda African Cemetery becomes a designated historic site, it can educate Montgomery County locals, both children and adults, about the African-American history of Bethesda and serve as a starting point for important conversations about race and justice.

It's worth it.

Sincerely,



Talia Brenner

**From:** [Azraf Khan](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony - Thursday Board Meeting - Maryland Self Storage  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:59:32 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Moco Planning Board,

My name is Azraf Khan and I am a resident of Montgomery County. I am writing to demand the county stop building over the Moses Cemetery. The Land ought to be designated as a historical sight and therefore be protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a civilian oversight board composed of descendants of those buried in the cemetery that are consulted before decisions like this are made. There must also be a review of Maryland Self Storage, as they did not follow proper legal and ethical guidelines before starting their project.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Azraf Khan

**From:** [nofearcoalition@aol.com](mailto:nofearcoalition@aol.com)  
**To:** MCP-Chair; [nofearcoalition@aol.com](mailto:nofearcoalition@aol.com); [gahads@aol.com](mailto:gahads@aol.com)  
**Subject:** Comments to Montgomery County Planning Board  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:02:30 PM

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The Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition supports the statement below:

Marsha Coleman-Adebayo, BACC

Testimony of Joshua D. Odintz, Baker & McKenzie, Counsel to the Macedonia Baptist Church  
July 23, 2020 The Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting

My name is Joshua D. Odintz, and I am a partner with the international law firm Baker & McKenzie LLP. I lead a team of attorneys at Baker & McKenzie LLP that represents the Macedonia Baptist Church on a pro bono basis, and I am testifying before you today in my capacity as the Macedonia Baptist Church's legal representative. The Macedonia Baptist Church and its members are part of the descendant community for the enslaved and free Blacks buried at the River Road Moses Cemetery.

Today's meeting agenda includes an item titled, "Westbard Self Storage, Plan Amendment No. 82017011A." The agenda includes the following staff recommendation: "Approval With Conditions and Adoption of Resolution."

The Planning Board should not adopt the staff recommendation. Bethesda Self-Storage Partners, LLC originally applied in 2017 for approval to subdivide land and build a self-storage facility in an area that the Planning Board and its staff refer to as the "Westbard Sector." Our client, and other members of the descendant community, refer to the "Westbard Sector" by its true name, the River Road Moses Cemetery. When Bethesda Self-Storage Partners received approval in 2017, that approval was subject to several conditions. We do not believe that those prior conditions have been met.

For example, the conditions require Bethesda Self-Storage Partners to immediately notify the Historic Preservation Section of the Montgomery County Planning Department if "human remains or funerary objects are encountered at any time on any properties subject to [the] Preliminary Plan" in order "to allow documentation for the Montgomery County Planning Board Burial Site Inventory." See Condition #21, Montgomery County Planning Board Resolution, dated January 12, 2018, and appearing on page 5 of the attachment included with the agenda for this meeting. This condition was reiterated in a letter to Kelly McKone, Bethesda Self Storage Partners, from Elza Hisel-McCoy, Montgomery County Planning Department, Chief, Area 1, dated October 9, 2019. The October 9, 2019 letter included an additional condition: that, "[e]ven if no material of interest is found, the Professional Archaeologist must maintain and provide reporting of their observations including photographs of the related construction activity, to the Historic Preservation Section of the Montgomery County Planning Department within two weeks of completion of the related construction activity."

We are concerned that these conditions may not have been met. As Dr. Michael L. Blakey, a preeminent archaeologist and scholar specializing in African burial grounds and the National Endowment for the Humanities Professor of Anthropology, Africana Studies and American Studies and Director, Institute for Historical Biology, the College of William & Mary, will testify today that (1) photographs taken at the site show light-colored, elongated fragments and other indicators that suggest the presence of human remains and (2) County Executive Marc Elrich informed Dr. Blakey that bones were recently discovered at the site. Although the attachment of materials for this meeting includes reports of archaeological monitoring from Thunderbird Archaeology, those reports were not previously shared with us or our client--despite our repeated requests for these materials. Moreover, none of the reports included in the

attachment make any mention of bones found on the site. Although Dr. Blakey was informed that the bones were tested, neither Dr. Blakey nor our client have been provided with a copy of any reports, test results, or other documents related to the bones that were recently discovered. Dr. Blakey has asked for access to the bones to conduct his own, independent testing, and the bones have not been provided to him.

In addition to the fact that the original conditions imposed on Bethesda Self-Storage Company may not have been met, we do not believe that the Planning Board has properly considered the concerns raised by our client and other stakeholders. We also do not believe that our client has been afforded due process. I wrote to you on July 1, 2020, requesting (among other things) an immediate halt to the construction at the River Road Moses Cemetery and a commitment to schedule a meeting between any archaeologist hired by Bethesda Self-Storage Company and our client's experts. Neither I nor my client has received a response from the Planning Board. As the attachment demonstrates, others who have contacted the Planning Board and its staff have received timely and detailed responses to their queries. See pages 67-72 of the attachment for this meeting. Please explain why our letter was ignored, while others have received detailed responses.

Bethesda Self Storage's failure to comply with the conditions previously imposed on it, coupled with the Planning Board's refusal to engage with our client and adequately consider the concerns of the descendant community, provides strong support to reject the Planning Department staff's recommendation to approve the owner's request to expand the property's footprint.

Rather than accepting the staff's recommendation, the Planning Board should reject the staff's recommendation and modify the permit to impose additional conditions.

We request an immediate halt to the construction at the site. In addition, before any further activity occurs at the site, we request that the Planning Board (1) require Bethesda Self-Storage Partners to notify the Historic Preservation Section of possible human remains at the site, (2) require that a copy of any reports, tests, or other documents related to the bones recently discovered on the site be provided to Dr. Blakey and our client, (3) require that the bones discovered at the site be made available to Dr. Blakey for independent testing to determine whether the bones are human remains, (4) keep the record open for additional written testimony or other evidence to be submitted by Dr. Blakey after he has conducted any necessary tests and investigation of the bones and any other materials found at the site that Dr. Blakey determines to be relevant, as permitted by Section 4.1 of the Rules of Procedure, The Montgomery County Planning Board, and (5) require Bethesda Self-Storage Partners to work with Dr. Blakey or another independent archaeologist selected by the Macedonia Baptist Church to determine the precise boundaries of the River Road Moses Cemetery. Should construction resume after these conditions are satisfied, we request that the Planning Board require Bethesda Self Storage Partners to provide (1) full access to the site for an independent archaeologist selected by the Macedonia Baptist Church and the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition (BACC) to oversee any ongoing construction activity, (2) the independent archaeologist access to soil and any other materials that the independent archaeologist deems necessary to determine the presence of human remains, and (3) weekly reports from the Professional Archaeologist hired by Bethesda Self Storage Company to the Macedonia Baptist Church, the BACC, and the independent archaeologist.

**From:** [Janet E](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Moses Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:03:54 PM

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

To the distinguished members of the Committee,

Please designate this land as a historic site and protect it from further development, disturbance and disrespect.

Moving forward here should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land.

There should be a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage which did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

Black lives matter in life and death. Let's treat this land with the full dignity and respect long overdue for Black people, that all people should deserve.

Imagine if this was the cemetery where your loved ones were laid to rest? Where you will someday be laid to rest?

Please do the right thing.

Sincerely,  
Janet Ephraim

**From:** [Ben Heacock](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Save Bethesda African Cemetery  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 22, 2020 12:04:33 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.**

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission,

I am writing in regards to the Moses Cemetery at 5204 River Road, in Bethesda. This land must be designated a historical site and protected from further development. Moving forward, there should be a citizen oversight committee composed of descendants of those buried in the now desecrated Bethesda African Cemetery involved in every county-level decision made about this land. Finally, a full investigation into the permitting process and lack of oversight on Maryland Self Storage needs to be carried out, as the process did not follow the legal and ethical protocols established for the oversight of cemeteries.

We must acknowledge and remember Montgomery county's discriminatory history and current permitting practices, and to this end, the further desecration of the Moses Cemetery must be stopped.

Sincerely,

Benjamin Heacock  
Montgomery Village, MD