

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Kidus Ayalew](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: HBKY Metmiq Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Nov. 30, 2023, PB Meeting
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 11:16:38 AM
Attachments: [OfficialCountyBoardLetter.docx](#)

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Dear County Board,

Please find my attached letter regarding HBKY permit. Thank you.

Respectfully,
Kidus Ayalew

Date: November 28,2023
Montgomery Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is Kidus Ayalew. I am from Gaithersburg, Maryland, and I am a freshman studying Computer Engineering at the University of Maryland at College Park.

My family and I started attending Hamere Berhan Kidus Yohannes when it was first opened in 2017. Hamere Berhan Kidus Yohannes is an environment where fellow Orthodox Christians are able to freely practice their faith without any hindrance. This church has provided me with many spiritual and physical gifts for which I am eternally grateful.

The church provides its kids and teens with a spiritual service, where we learn many things regarding the Bible, religion, community service, and culture. With this program, I was taught so many new things that I had never known before, spiritually bringing me closer to my faith and understanding my culture and the Bible even more. However, the physical gifts are something that I am equally grateful for.

Coming to this church, I was granted some of my greatest friends to this day, whom I was luckily able to meet at this church back in 2017.

While the church teachings and various programs allowed us to better ourselves as people, it also allowed us to better the community surrounding us outside of our church. We founded our own non-profit named "Tewlede Tewhado," meaning "Children of Tewhado". In this non-profit, our main goal was to help spread the word of God but, at the same, help make our surrounding community and our home country, Ethiopia, a better place.

As a group, we decided for our first big project to go around and gather donated clothes to gift to families in need in our community. We spent weeks gathering the clothing, days washing all the clothes and finding a way to ship the clothes. The clothes landed, and we completed our 4-5 month-long project. However, the sense of accomplishment didn't kick in until we all saw the faces of the kids. To this day, I'd never seen such broad and genuine smiles. Seeing the hard work pay off allowed us to understand that we were able to bring change.

With this group, we were also able to connect ourselves with other churches in the surrounding DMV area. We visited different churches and met many other teens with the same mindset and goals of wanting to help our community and our mother country. We designed sports events so that we could meet and have fun outside of the religious aspect but also connect with each other on deeper levels.

The Church also allowed many of its teenagers to engage in opportunities to gain SSL hours which are necessary for the graduation of high school. The church hosted and designed many events in which gave many students the opportunity to work with each to help better our surrounding community.

Allowing our church to have this permit would bring us so many benefits. Due to minimal space in our church, we are restricted in what we can do. However, this permit would allow us to provide a place of worship for even more fellow Orthodox Christians. It would allow us to spread awareness of our non-profit to get even more support from the community, allowing us to do even more projects that would benefit our community. Providing us with this permit will contribute to the flourishing of a vibrant, diverse, and harmonious community for generations to come.

Faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kidus Ayalew". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kidus Ayalew

Email: kidusayalewbmy@gmail.com

Permanent Address: 18405 Cherry Laurel Ln

Gaithersburg, MD20879

From: [Tzion Kergo](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Letter to Planning Board_ HBKY Tzion
Date: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 1:31:00 AM
Attachments: [Letter to Planning Board_ HBKY Tzion.docx](#)

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Tsion Kergo, Princeton University, Princeton NJ 08544, Email: Kergotg@gmail.com
(Permanent address: 5771 Antwerp Street, Ijamsville MD 217540)

Date: November 27,2023

Montgomery Planning Board

2425 Reedie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Greetings,

Ref: HBKY Metmiq Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Nov. 30, 2023, PB Meeting

My name is Tsion Kergo and I am currently a sophomore at Princeton University. I have been a member of the Hamere Brehan Kidus Yohannes Church for 6 years. I am writing today to express the positive impact that the church has had on my personal development and the well-being of its community. Throughout my time in Maryland, the church has been where I have found a strong and supportive community. My interactions with fellow church members were not only social but often also educational. I really treasured how the nurturing environment gave me the freedom to challenge my beliefs in a manner that was conducive to my growth.

HBKY has not only provided me with the opportunities that facilitated my personal growth but also empowered me to give back to my community. With the church's support, a few youth church members and I established the non-profit organization, Teweleda Tewhedo. Through this organization, we organized several community service projects, including clothing drives and school supply drives, to address the needs of our community.

In addition to the work of this organization, the church is also very supportive of student-led initiatives to benefit the community. For instance, two years ago with the support of the church I organized a menstrual hygiene drive at the church. This drive was not only beneficial to the church community because of the educational element but it also benefited our greater community, as all the menstrual hygiene products collected went to a women's shelter.

This all goes to illustrate the overall positive impact the church has had in its community. It not only serves its members but all those in the broader community. An expansion would allow the church to expand the scale to which it's giving back. Furthermore, the church is very invested in supporting its youth by providing instrumental academic and social support which has propelled us to success by giving us the tools to pursue our dreams and goals.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize the church's significant role in fostering a sense of community, personal growth, and community service. I wholeheartedly support the approval of the preliminary plan which is a crucial step for constructing a church building that meets the church's community needs.

Sincerely,

Tsion Kergo

Tsion Kergo, Princeton University, Princeton NJ 08544, Email: Kergotg@gmail.com
(Permanent address: 5771 Antwerp Street, Ijamsville MD 21754)

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

From: [Meron Abraham](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Nov 30 Hearing - Testimonial Letter Attached
Date: Monday, November 27, 2023 9:05:50 PM
Attachments: [HBKY.MCPD Hearing - Testimonial Letter Meron Abraham - 11.30.23.docx](#)

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Good evening MC Planning Board Chair,

Hope this message finds you well. I am submitting the attached written testimonial on behalf of my church, i.e. HBKY Metmiq Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. This is in preparation for Thursday, November 30th's Planning Board hearing.

Thank you for your support.

Kind regards,
Meron Abraham

Date: November 28, 2023

Montgomery Planning Board

2425 Reedie Drive Wheaton, MD 20902

Ref: HBKY Metmiq Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, Nov. 30, 2023, PB Meeting

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for HBKY Metmiq Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (the "Church"), a spiritual haven that has played a significant role in my life and the lives of many others in Montgomery County, Maryland.

Having been a dedicated member and member of the fund-raising committee of the Church since 2017, I have witnessed the profound impact it has had and continues to have on our community. My personal connection is deepened by the fact that all my three children were baptized at this sacred institution, marking significant milestones in our family's spiritual journey.

Beyond the sacraments, the Church serves as both a spiritual and cultural sanctuary, providing a sense of belonging and connection to our rich Ethiopian heritage. The Church's commitment to nurturing the spiritual growth of our community is evident in the year-round religious and spiritual lessons it imparts to hundreds of children, including my own.

In the decade I have spent in Montgomery County, the Church has consistently been a source of strength, guidance, and community for me and countless others. Its unwavering dedication to fostering spiritual well-being and cultural understanding deserves recognition and support.

I wholeheartedly endorse any efforts to sustain and enhance the vital work of the Church. The decision of this hearing will help our church's goals to consolidate the four parcels and a private driveway into one record lot to accommodate the construction of a new primary building for Religious Assembly to serve the HBKY Church congregation. On behalf my family, my community, and primarily the church, your support will be highly appreciated. May it continue to thrive as a beacon of faith, culture, and community for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Meron Abraham

Meron Abraham

16312 Coolidge Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20906