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March 8, 2025

## Via E-mail (DRDApplications@ppd.mncppc.org)

Ms. Mridula Gupta
Acting Supervisor, Subdivision Section
Development Review Division
Maryland – National Capital Park & Planning Commission
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

RE: 4-24011 & ADQ 2024-014 - Iglesia Evangelica Apostles Church
Statement of Justification and Assessment of Environmental Guidelines

Dear Ms. Gupta:

I represent Iglesia Evangelica Apostles Church (hereinafter "Applicant"), which is located at 10050 Riggs Road, Hyattsville, Maryland, with regard to the above-referenced Preliminary Plan of Subdivision ("PPS") application. The subject property is known as Parcel 13 and contains 1.15+/- acres. The property is currently located in the RR Zone, and was previously zoned R-R prior to April 1, 2022. The Applicant and owner of the subject property is an existing church that purchased the property "asis" in September 9, 2016. Parcel 13 was recorded in Book 38662 page 140 of the Prince George's County Land Records in September 2016 and is located in Tax Map 17 Grid E4. The property is located within the boundaries of the 1989 Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity which recommends low suburban future land use on the property.

A church or similar place of worship on a lot between 1-2 acre is permitted in the R-R Zone under the prior Zoning Ordinance. In accordance with Section 27-441(b), footnote 52, a Detailed Site Plan is required, subject to footnote 52, which requires the following:

- (A) The minimum setback for all buildings shall be twenty-five (25) feet from each lot line;
- (B) When possible, there should be no parking or loading spaces located in the front yard; and;



(C) The maximum allowable lot coverage for the zone in which the use is proposed shall not be increased.

The existing building does not meet the 25-feet setback requirement, and thus, a variance from this requirement will be requested under the upcoming Detailed Site Plan application. It should be noted that the current Zoning Ordinance has the same setback requirement under the Use-specific standards in Section 27-5102(d)(2)(C); however, per Section 27-3613(b)(2)(D), no deviations from the use-specific standards are permitted and the application would not be able to proceed under the current Zoning Ordinance unless the existing building is modified to meet the setback requirement. For this reason, the Applicant has selected to proceed with an application under the prior Zoning Ordinance.

The property is currently improved with a 2,200 square-foot single-family dwelling now used as a rectory a 730 square-foot garage, and 3,970 square-foot vacant building for a total of 6,900 square feet. The rectory, garage, and building addition are all a part of the non-residential gross floor area and exceed 5,000 square feet. The conversion of these spaces cannot be considered an addition to a development in existence before January 1, 1990, as the garage and building addition were built in 2009 and 2013, respectively. Thus, the Applicant is applying for Preliminary Plan of Subdivision and an associated Certificate of Adequacy alongside the PPS.

It should be noted that the prior owner of the property, which was also a church (International Bethel Church), apparently constructed the garage and building addition without approval of the required permits. The prior owner started the building permit process to validate the construction of the addition after-the fact, but became exhausted by the process, abandoned the building permit application, and sold the property. As indicated above, the Applicant purchased the property in 2016. For the last 7 years, the Applicant has occupied the rectory portion of the property. The Applicant is now seeking to validate the existing conditions of this property. The Applicant is not proposing any further construction on the property. The first step is moving forward with a PPS, followed by a Detailed Site Plan application, under which any required variances or departures will be requested.

The Applicant filed a Preliminary Plan of Subdivision application and received pre-acceptance comments on March 22, 2024. A point-by-point response to the comments have been included with this re-submission. The comments required a statement of justification which addresses how the development meets the guidelines of the Environmental section of the 1989 Approved Maser Plan for Langley Park – College Park – Greenbelt and Vicinity which are set forth and assessed below.

## **Environmental Guidelines**

1. An open space and conservation area network, based on existing soil conditions, slopes, watercourses, vegetation, natural ecological features, and estimated future population needs, should be established and maintained.

**Response:** The processing and approval of the Applicant's Site Development Concept Plan, SEC Concept and NRI will ensure that open space and any conservation area networks are maximized to the fullest extent possible. The Applicant must also obtain DSP approval of the subject church.

March 8, 2025 Page 3

2. Developers shall be encouraged to utilize the Comprehensive Design Ordinance, the cluster provisions and site plan review provisions of the subdivision regulation and other innovative techniques that ensure responsible environmental consideration.

**Response:** This standard is outdated, as the Comprehensive Design Ordinance and cluster provisions are no longer in effect.

3. Land dedicated in accordance with the subdivision regulations for the provision of needed recreational facilities should not consist solely of floodplains or other parts of the Natural Reserve Areas.

**Response:** This standard does not apply, as recreational facilities are not required or proposed.

4. The responsibility for environmentally sound development practices should apply equally to private and public interests; decisions concerning the selection and use of properties should be based on environmental considerations.

**Response:** Sound is not a factor under the Applicant's proposal.

5. Developers shall be encouraged to capitalize on natural assets through the retention and protection of trees, streams, and other ecological features.

**Response:** The Applicant has received approval of a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and FSD.

6. The Natural Reserve Areas, containing floodplain and other areas unsuitable for development, should be restricted from development except for agricultural, recreational and similar uses; landfilling should be discouraged.

**Response:** As noted above, the Applicant has received approval of a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and FSD. Prince George's County also required quantity control of the 100-year storm event. An underground system with point source discharge has been designed for the site and will be underneath the parking area.

7. All development proposals should provide effective means for the preservation and protection of Natural Reserve Areas, and development plans for lands containing open space and conservation areas should specify how and by whom these areas will be maintained.

Response: Please see above response.

March 8, 2025 Page 4

8. Limited development should be permitted in Conditional Reserve Areas, based on the significant physiographic constraints and natural processes of the land.

**Response:** This PPS concerns the validation of existing, as-built conditions. Development is limited to the church use, and no further construction is proposed for the site.

9. In the Perceptual Liability Areas, land uses such as schools, residences, nursing homes, and libraries that are sensitive to noise intrusion, air pollution, and other characteristics of excessive vehicular traffic should be protected by suitable construction techniques and by the enforcement of legally mandated standards.

Response: This standard does not apply as the site is not located in a Perceptual Liability Area.

10. Developers shall be encouraged to include careful site planning and construction techniques which are designed to reduce the adverse impact of point and nonpoint source noise that exceeds the State's current maximum allowable levels for receiving land uses.

**Response:** This PPS concerns the validation of existing, as-built conditions.

11. Citizens, developers, and other should be encouraged to seek current information on the area's environmental condition, and on all aspects of related regulatory systems and functional programs from the appropriate local, state and federal agencies.

**Response:** The Applicant has an approved Site Development Concept Plan, including a Stormwater Management Concept Plan, and an approved NRI/FSD.

Should you have any questions or require additional information at this time, please contact me at 240-397-3625.

Sincerely,

REES BROOME, PC

Attorney for the Applicant

By: Traci R. Scudder