

**From:** [Riley, Mike](#)  
**To:** [Spielberg, Debbie](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition  
**Date:** Friday, January 7, 2022 5:03:00 PM

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Debbie,

When I last discussed the Westbard Moses Cemetery with the County Executive back in November, I explained that because the Parks Department doesn't have any demands to present related to its ownership of Parcel 177, that mediation was not an appropriate method to seek a path forward. However, at the County Executive's request, I did agree that I would attend a meeting regarding Moses Cemetery that included all relevant parties to present and clarify the Parks Department's role and position regarding the cemetery. Given that I learned today that this upcoming meeting has been set up as a mediation with a new mediator we did not participate in selecting, and further that HOC will not participate, the Parks Department will not participate in the mediation scheduled for January 12.

However, in order to be helpful to you as you seek a path forward, I would describe the Parks Department's position regarding the Moses Cemetery as follows:

Parcel 177, which includes a portion of the Moses Cemetery, is owned by MNCPPC and is part of the future Willett Branch Greenway as envisioned by the Wetbard Sector Plan approved by the Montgomery County Council in 2016. The Willett Branch Greenway project, which will transform the currently degraded, channelized stream into a community park amenity, will include long-term memorialization of the Moses Cemetery.

However, until the Parks Department acquires, through purchase or dedication, the remaining parcels necessary for completion of the Willett Branch Greenway we have no current plans to move forward with the planning, design, or construction of the Willett Branch Greenway project.

Mike

*Michael F. Riley, Director*

*M-NCPCC / Montgomery Parks*

*(301) 495-2500*

[mike.riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:mike.riley@montgomeryparks.org)

*@MikeRileyParks*

***We've moved! The Park and Planning Headquarters is now located at 2425 Reedie Drive in Wheaton, MD.***

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie <Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 10:37 PM  
**To:** Riley, Mike <Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

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

Dear Mike,

I have just been informed by Roy Priest at HOC that they will not be participating in the meeting because they have filed appeals motions in the court and he has been advised not to participate while there is open litigation so they will not be participating at this time although it's my understanding that he/they are open to meet after the litigation is resolved.

I would hope that you still are willing to participate and put forward the position of Parks.

Also, Marsha has asked for your email, which I will forward to her – I wanted to let you know that I will do that – as you know, it is public record and in the directory on the Parks website.

Thank you,  
Debbie

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**From:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 5:21 PM  
**To:** Spielberg, Debbie <[Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

Debbie,

I will hold the 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 for this meeting. Joining me for Parks will be Deputy Director Miti Figueredo and Associate General Counsel Debra Borden.

We will prepare our “position statement” and have it ready by Friday. A couple contingencies for us attending the meeting:

1. HOC’s confirmed participation in the meeting as the owner of one of the two cemetery parcels (P175).
2. Receipt of BACC’s “demands and positions” statement. If it includes transferring ownership of P177 (Parks Cemetery Parcel) to the BACC, Macedonia Baptist Church or any other entity, we will not participate.

Mike

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie <[Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 4, 2022 12:45 PM  
**To:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Cc:** Quinn, Harriet <[Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

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

Hi Mike,

I hope you are doing well.

The Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition and their attorneys are available to meet on Wednesday, January 12 at 5:30 pm and I have reached out to Roy Priest (HOC) as well because he told the County Exec he was willing to meet. I am waiting to hear whether the date/time work for him and if he’s still willing to

meet.

Here's what I have written to Marsha Coleman-Adebayo because she once again urged the County Executive to invite Bethesda Self Storage.

"The invitees to this meeting will continue to be BACC, HOC and Parks because HOC and Parks control lots 175 and 177, which are the properties purchased by the White's Tabernacle Number 39 Lodge of the Ancient Order of Sons and Daughters, Brothers and Sisters of Moses for the purpose of having a cemetery."

As you know Marsha also asked that the UN protocol be used, and as you also know Marc thought it seemed like a helpful process so he agreed to request that the parties use it. She had wanted to have the protocols sent to a mediator that she wanted chosen – I asked that instead they be sent to our office. Here's what I wrote to her:

I will try to get confirmation from HOC and Parks for the 12th at 5:30 and I will ask that everyone submit their protocols preferably by the 5<sup>th</sup> and by the 7th at the latest (given that the UN protocol you defined is 5-7 days). I have pasted below the explanation of the protocols that you sent to me:

"Simply, the goal of the UN protocol, as you may recall is to have all parties present their demands and positions prior to the meetings. This process allows for greater interaction, research and dialogue before the start of the meeting so that all parties are aware and educated about the positions of each participant. It will be helpful for each party to share their positions possibly 5 to 7 days before the start of the negotiations."

I also said that given the current spread of the Omicron variant, I am assuming that the meeting will be virtual, and we will send a link for all the participants. Perhaps the situation will have changed by next week, but for now, meetings are going virtual.

Let me know if you think this could work.

Many thanks for your review and consideration of this.

Debbie

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**From:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 28, 2021 4:09 PM  
**To:** Spielberg, Debbie <[Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

Debbie,

Is this date still being held? Please feel free to call me anytime tomorrow.

Mike

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie <[Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 23, 2021 12:26 AM  
**To:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

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

Hi Mike,

Marc did tell me you talked and I thought he had said you were willing to meet. I'm happy to talk by phone. Would sometime after 4 pm today (Tuesday) or Wednesday morning work?

Thank you,  
Debbie

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**From:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 22, 2021 2:14 PM  
**To:** Spielberg, Debbie <[Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

Debbie,

We need to talk about several things before I will agree to attend a meeting with BACC, particularly HOC's participation, the UN protocol, and the presence of legal counsel when there is open litigation on the cemetery parcels. I did discuss the parameters of such a meeting recently with Marc. Dale was present.

Let's try to connect by phone.

Mike

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie <[Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Deborah.Spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 22, 2021 1:46 PM  
**To:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Cc:** CEXschedule <[CEXschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CEXschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov)>; Parodi, Andrea <[Andrea.Parodi@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Andrea.Parodi@montgomerycountymd.gov)>; Quinn, Harriet <[Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

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

responding.

Hi Mike,

Sorry if I've missed your response – does December 2 at noon work for you and your team for this meeting?

Thank you,  
Debbie

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie  
**Sent:** Friday, November 19, 2021 1:08 PM  
**To:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Cc:** CEXschedule <[CEXschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CEXschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov)>; Parodi, Andrea <[Andrea.Parodi@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Andrea.Parodi@montgomerycountymd.gov)>; Quinn, Harriet <[Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

Hi Mike,

The BACC would like to meet Thursday December 2 at noon. Will that timing work for you and your team?

Thank you,  
Debbie

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**From:** Spielberg, Debbie  
**Sent:** Friday, November 19, 2021 2:38 AM  
**To:** Riley, Mike <[Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org](mailto:Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org)>  
**Cc:** CEXschedule <[CEXschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:CEXschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov)>; Parodi, Andrea <[Andrea.Parodi@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Andrea.Parodi@montgomerycountymd.gov)>; Quinn, Harriet <[Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Harriet.Quinn@montgomerycountymd.gov)>  
**Subject:** Meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition

Dear Mike,

Would you and your team be able to meet with the Bethesda African Cemetery Coalition either Tuesday, Nov 30 at 5 pm or Thursday December 2 at noon?

And the BACC has requested that both parties follow the UN protocol, which Marsha Coleman-Adebayo has explained means that all the parties submit in advance their “demands and positions.”

Here's what she wrote to me to explain it: “Simply, the goal of the UN protocol, as you may recall is to have all parties present their demands and positions prior to the meetings. This process allows for greater interaction, research and dialogue before the start of the meeting so that all parties are aware and educated about the positions of each participant. It will be helpful for each party to share their positions possibly 5 to 7 days before the start of the negotiations.”

And I believe that their attorneys will attend the meeting.

Thank you,

Debbie

*Debbie Spielberg*

*Special Assistant to County Executive Marc Elrich*

*301-461-3570 cell*

[debbie.spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:debbie.spielberg@montgomerycountymd.gov)



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