

May 3, 2021

Rev. Dale B. Snyder
Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church
2720 Webster Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

Re: Bethel AME Church

Dear Pastor Snyder and members of the Bethel AME Church:

We, the undersigned representatives of Pittsburgh Arena Real Estate Redevelopment LP, an affiliate of the Pittsburgh Penguins (“PAR”), are pleased to form a historic collaboration with Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church (“Bethel AME”) with respect to the Lower Hill redevelopment that aspires to correct past mistakes from the 1950s, provide positive social change, and deliver benefits to the Bethel AME congregation and the entire Hill District community.

Thank you for hosting us for the meeting at Bethel AME last month, and for attending the Penguins game as our guests two Sundays ago to discuss our proposed collaboration (see attached photo). At a time when our nation and city are facing a racial crossroads, we seek to create with you a national model on how institutions can come together to rebuild the community, build greater trust, and fight continued institutional racism and injustice.

Together, we recognize the significant but painful history of Bethel AME Church in the Lower Hill:

1. Bethel AME Church was originally founded in 1808, and is the oldest African American congregation in Pittsburgh.
2. When its original location was destroyed by fire in 1845, a new church was constructed in the Lower Hill District at Wylie Avenue and Elm Street, and opened in 1906. (See Exhibit 1.)
3. In 1951, when the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh (“URA”) began to establish redevelopment plans for the Lower Hill, Bethel AME leadership entered negotiations with the URA and sought to retain the church’s location at Wylie and Elm.
4. After years of unsuccessful negotiations, Bethel AME Church was demolished on July 24, 1957 by eminent domain, and \$240,000 in damages was paid by the URA in 1958.
5. The plot of land of Bethel AME comprised 8,750 square feet, and currently is located on Parcel F on the Lower Hill site at newly constructed Logan Street. (See Exhibit 2.)
6. Bethel AME was one of at least 9 churches and synagogues that were demolished in the Lower Hill in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but was the only church with a predominantly African American congregation, with approximately 3,000 members.
7. A new Bethel AME Church was opened in 1959 at the corner of Webster and Morgan in the Upper Hill District, which disconnected the Church from its Lower Hill roots.

Together, we recognize the tremendously negative impact incurred by the Bethel AME Church demolition and relocation, and the pain caused to the Church's religious mission and membership resulting from the church being uprooted from the Lower Hill.

While the demolition of Bethel AME occurred a decade prior to the Penguins coming into existence, we acknowledge these historical wrongs and, together with you, assume our collective responsibilities to advance the transformational redevelopment of the Lower Hill, rebuild Black wealth, and pursue the goals of the Community Collaboration and Implementation Plan ("CCIP") adopted in 2014. Together, we seek the full collaboration of Bethel AME Church in good faith in accordance with the CCIP:

- We seek collaboration with Bethel AME Church with respect to the future redevelopment of Parcel F, which includes the plot of land where the Church was originally located.
- We seek collaboration with Bethel AME Church on pursuing workforce and MBE goals as identified in the CCIP, including assistance with referrals of Black workers and contractors, and promotion of resources and training at the First Source Center located in the Hill House.
- We seek collaboration with Bethel AME Church toward your plans of assembling vacant land parcels in the upper Hill District, together with the support of the City and URA, and pursuit of related redevelopment consistent with the Church's mission and the CCIP.

Together, we have faith in establishing a strong working relationship with you to help restore Bethel AME Church as the Citadel of Hope, and continuing our mutual legacy of service to the community.

Sincerely,



Kevin Acklin
Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel



Tracey McCants Lewis
Vice President and Deputy General Counsel

Photo of Penguins and Bethel AME members at PPG Paints Arena identifying the location of Bethel AME Church on the Lower Hill. (Sunday, April 25, 2021.)



EXHIBIT 1

Bethel AME Church Demolition



Photos by Charles "Teenie" Harris, on July 24, 1957 showing Bethel AME Church at the corner of Wyle Avenue and Elm Street in the Lower Hill District.

Exhibit 2

Bethel AME Church Location

