

approved by unanimous vote of delegates  
March 8, 2010

Montgomery County Civic Federation Resolution Opposing Proposed First Baptist  
Church of Wheaton Development on Emory Church Road, Olney

Whereas First Baptist Church of Wheaton is proposing to build an 800-seat facility with a 225 space parking lot on a property in an area designated as a semi-rural "green corridor and a gateway to Olney" in the 2005 Olney Master Plan; and

Whereas the cumulative effect of private institutional facilities and special exception uses will permanently damage the low-density residential character that is recommended for this area in the master plan; and

Whereas on April 8, 2008 the County Council approved a category change allowing water and sewer service to this property "conditioned on the Planning Board's approval of a preliminary plan that conforms to the intent of the Olney Master Plan" (Resolution 16-500), and the master plan states the property is "not recommended to be in the public sewer service envelope"; and

Whereas, in Resolution 16-500, the Council asks that the Planning Board, in its review of the applicant's preliminary plan, ensure that deleterious environmental impacts are minimized, and installation of public water/sewer lines from Georgia Avenue to the property would cross a headwaters stream of the Northwest Branch and require the removal of centuries old trees in a "High Priority Forest Stand" along side Emory Church Road (shown on Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation for subject property); and

Whereas the proposed facility would significantly increase traffic on the existing, narrow secondary road and negatively impact the quality of life for its residential neighbors, and any widening of the road would impact the stream and forest stand cited above; and

Whereas, the 18% impervious surface land coverage of the planned project would negatively impact stormwater recharge of the local water table, posing a threat to the water supply for nearby residents, all of whom rely on well water for drinking and cooking;

Therefore, the Montgomery County Civic Federation respectfully opposes approval of the First Baptist Church of Wheaton project planned for a site on Emory Church Road in Olney because of the damage this large private institutional facility would do to the low-density residential character of the neighborhood, the probable negative impact on the quantity and safety of the well water relied on by the surrounding residents, and the deleterious effect it would have on the natural environment, and because the proposed project does not conform either to the intent of, or the site specific recommendations included in, the Olney Master Plan.