

State Of Maryland

2024 Bond Initiative Fact Sheet

1. Name Of Project		
Bethesda Meeting House		
2. Senate Sponsor	3. House Sponsor	
Kelly	Korman	
4. Jurisdiction (County or Baltimore City)	5. Requested Amount	
Montgomery County	\$350,000	
6. Purpose of Bond Initiative		
the acquisition, planning, design, construction, repair, renovation, reconstruction, site improvement, and capital equipping of the Bethesda Meeting House property		
7. Matching Fund		
Requirements:	Type:	
Grant		
8. Special Provisions		
<input type="checkbox"/> Historical Easement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-Sectarian	
9. Contact Name and Title	Contact Ph#	Email Address
Delegate Marc Korman		marc.korman@house.state.md.us
Henry D. Levine		240-888-2222
10. Description and Purpose of Organization (Limit length to visible area)		
<p>The Bethesda Meeting House Foundation is a non-profit Maryland corporation formed by the Bethesda Historical Society to purchase, restore, and repurpose as a community asset the Bethesda Meeting House, "the church that named Bethesda." The Bethesda Historical Society (BHS), an all-volunteer local organization, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Bethesda through research, community programs, and the maintenance of historical buildings and artifacts. Using the Foundation, it is organizing and leading the restoration of the Meeting House. BHS's website highlights and describes current Society activities (such as developing and cataloging a collection of Bethesda-related artifacts and ephemera) as well as a wealth of information about the history of Bethesda. See www.BethesdaHistoricalSociety.org.</p>		

11. Description and Purpose of Project (Limit length to visible area)

The project consists of the first phases of the conservation and restoration of the historic Bethesda Meeting House site, focusing on the Meeting House itself and the adjacent parsonage. Recently acquired by the Bethesda Meeting House Foundation, the buildings (which date from 1850) have been neglected for decades and require extensive repair. Early efforts include removing debris; replacement of the parsonage roof; boarding up/stabilizing broken windows; repairs to gutters, porches and porch railings; termite treatment; and rodent removal. Beyond repairs, planning and preparation are required if the site is to become an active community asset. The project encompasses prerequisites to that, including an Historic Structure Report, ALTA survey, topographical survey, preliminary Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation, utilities mapping and evaluation, and conceptual design of required access/egress enhancements.

Round all amounts to the nearest \$1,000. The totals in Items 12 (Estimated Capital Costs) and 13 (Proposed Funding Sources) must match. The proposed funding sources must not include the value of real property unless an equivalent value is shown under Estimated Capital Costs.

12. Estimated Capital Costs

Acquisition	\$185,000
Design	\$500,000
Construction	
Equipment	
Total	\$685,000

13. Proposed Funding Sources - (List all funding sources and amounts.)

Donations from Individuals and DAF's	\$235,000
Foundation Grants	\$100,000
State of Maryland	\$350,000
Total	\$685,000

14. Project Schedule (Enter a date or one of the following in each box. N/A, TBD or Complete)			
Begin Design	Complete Design	Begin Construction	Complete Construction
4/3/2024	10/31/2024	TBD	TBD
15. Total Private Funds and Pledges Raised		16. Current Number of People Served Annually at Project Site	17. Number of People to be Served Annually After the Project is Complete
235000.00		0	5,000-15,000
18. Other State Capital Grants to Recipients in the Past 15 Years			
Legislative Session	Amount	Purpose	
None			
19. Legal Name and Address of Grantee		Project Address (If Different)	
Bethesda Meeting House Foundation, Inc. 4424 Montgomery Avenue Ste 307 Bethesda, MD 20814		9400 Rockville Pike Bethesda, MD 20814	
20. Legislative District in Which Project is Located	16 - Montgomery County		
21. Legal Status of Grantee (Please Check One)			
Local Govt.	For Profit	Non Profit	Federal
[]	[]	[X]	[]
22. Grantee Legal Representative		23. If Match Includes Real Property:	
Name:	Robert Brewer, Jr.	Has An Appraisal Been Done?	Yes/No
Phone:	301-657-0165		
Address:		If Yes, List Appraisal Dates and Value	
Lerch, Early & Brewer 7600 Wisconsin Ave, Suite 700 Bethesda, MD 20814			

24. Impact of Project on Staffing and Operating Cost at Project Site			
Current # of Employees	Projected # of Employees	Current Operating Budget	Projected Operating Budget
1/2 FTE	1/2 FTE		
25. Ownership of Property (Info Requested by Treasurer's Office for bond purposes)			
A. Will the grantee own or lease (pick one) the property to be improved?			Own
B. If owned, does the grantee plan to sell within 15 years?			No
C. Does the grantee intend to lease any portion of the property to others?			No
D. If property is owned by grantee any space is to be leased, provide the following:			
Lessee	Terms of Lease	Cost Covered by Lease	Square Footage Leased
E. If property is leased by grantee - Provide the following:			
Name of Leaser	Length of Lease	Options to Renew	
26. Building Square Footage:			
Current Space GSF			
Space to be Renovated GSF			
New GSF			

27. Year of Construction of Any Structures Proposed for Renovation, Restoration or Conversion

circa 1850

28. Comments

The Bethesda Meeting House (BMH) is among the oldest surviving church buildings in Montgomery County. Constructed in 1820 to house the Bethesda Presbyterian Church, it was named for the healing pool in Jerusalem (See John 5:2-9). After a fire in 1849, the church was rebuilt and a parsonage was constructed next door. The two buildings sit on 2.8 beautiful acres atop a prominent knoll on Rockville Pike 1/4 mile north of the National Institutes of Health. A 200 year old cemetery, owned by Bethesda Presbyterian Church, occupies an acre just north of the site.

The community of Bethesda, an important commercial and residential center and the home of institutions ranging from Marriott International to the National Institutes of Health, is named for this historic property. It is literally the church that named Bethesda.

The BMH and parsonage are the most historically significant structures in Bethesda. They were the site of the area's first post office in 1852. The Meeting House has important links to the Bethesda African American community -- it features a slave gallery, and recent research has identified members of the original congregation who were enslavers as well as enslaved persons who may have worshiped in the gallery. Tradition has it that Abraham Lincoln worshiped in the Meeting House, which was occupied by Confederate cavalry during Jubal Early's 1864 raid on Washington, D.C. The church bell is said to be associated with Paul Revere. For all of these reasons the Meeting House site (including the cemetery) is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and was one of the original sites on the 1979 Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Architecturally, the Meeting House is a mid-19th century Greek Revival temple, rare in Montgomery County, while the parsonage is a prime example of the Queen Anne and Cottage Gothic style.

Bethesda Presbyterian Church sold the Meeting House and moved to its current location near downtown Bethesda in 1926. From 1952-2022, the buildings were owned and occupied by the Temple Hill Baptist Church, which was unable to maintain the buildings after it began to decline in the 1990's.

The Bethesda Meeting House Foundation recently purchased the site (with funds from a private donor) and hopes to partner with an appropriate non-profit to restore the buildings and transform the site into an asset that serves the community's present needs while teaching us about our past.