

Et-1224

MIDDLETOWN METHODIST CHURCH - 1856 - NE corner of Middletown and (New) Freeland Roads....(20109 Freeland Road). Congregation is an outgrowth of meeting held at Tipton's Meeting House in early 1800s. Cornerstone reads, "Built-1856/Remodeled-1964." Frame, clapboard-covered church in Victorian style. Gable roof covered with roofing material. Four bays deep. Square central entrance tower terminates in a belfry with a flat top. Gothic arch over main doors; side windows are rectangular, clear panes with colored glass borders. Building set on concrete foundation. Cemetery is east of Freeland Road near Gunpowder Baptist Church. Dedication ceremonies were announced for June 23 in B.C. Advocate, June 7, 1856, p.3.)

Daily Records , August 23, 1989...

MASONS MAY CONVERT FREELAND CHURCH TO LODGE

The Methodists own it. The Lutherans conduct services in it. And the Masons want it.

But before the Masonic lodge members can purchase a church building in the Freeland section of northern Baltimore County, the property must be rezoned.

So the 185-member Charity Lodge 134 is asking the Baltimore County Board of Appeals to change the zoning category on the site. The reclassification request is the first to be considered by the three-member administrative panel since completion of the 1988 comprehensive maps review process.

The quadrennial procedure, which culminated in October with a vote by the County Council, determines the future of growth patterns for Baltimore County. Between the periods of remapping, the Board of Appeals may consider requests for a different zoning category from property owners.

However, the board can grant the reclassification only if an error has been made or if there has been a change in the character of the community.

Even if the rezoning request is granted by the appeal board, the upgrading is just the first of a two-step process the Masons must complete before moving in.

Only after a more intensive zoning classification is affixed to the 1.04-acre parcel, located on the northeast corner of the Freeland and Middletown roads' intersection, can the charitable organization file for special permission from the Baltimore County zoning commissioner to use the structure as a "community hall."

The prolonged effort is worth it, say lodge officials, because their current facility is located in a Parkton flood plain.

"We've got to get out and this property was available," said James Rolier, chairman of the Mason's building committee."

As proposed, the 180-seat church building, currently rented to Redeemer Lutheran Reform Church, will be converted into the lodge's main hall. A two-story future addition to the southeast side of the building will add another 4,200 square feet to the facility.

The Lutherans will move out when construction is completed on a church of their own.

But when the Masons appeared recently before the Board of Appeals, they asked for additional time to change the site plan and reconfigure the proposed addition. With the new plan, the Masonic officials say they will not need a setback variance.

Though relocating the addition did not materially alter the rezoning request, the Board of Appeals postponed the hearing on the petition. The new date for the board to hear testimony on the reclassification has been set for Oct. 26.