

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: I strongly support New Bethel being designated as a Historic and Cultural Monument. I have lived in Venice since 1976 and have attended New Bethel faithfully since 1986. New Bethel has a rich history in the Venice community, dating back to the 1950s when my mother was a child. New Bethel represents significant contributions to the cultural and social history of Venice as an important place of worship for the African American community. Although the African American population of Venice continues to decline (unfortunately), New Bethel continues to influence the social fabric and political climate within the Community. New Bethel has been and continues to be connected to political and social movements during the 1980s (during my lifetime and experience), including the Anti-Gang and drug movements of the 1990s. New Bethel was a place of healing and refuge from the senseless gang killings, drugs, and violence. New Bethel continues its influence and its well-lit Holy Cross on Brooks Avenue serves as a beacon of hope, strength, and endurance of the African American experience in the neighborhood. Historically, churches were crucial anchors of the African American community. New Bethel was no exception. For decades, African Americans have been able to come together and share our historical experiences and this strengthens our ties for the future. New Bethel prides itself on its heritage and serves as a place where African American women and men hold offices and positions of prominence, review budgets and ensure fiscal stability, and make business decisions that enable them to learn leadership skills and expand business networks. Lastly, during the Cultural Heritage Commission hearing on October 4, 2018, three churches in Venice were highlighted as being associated with the early institutional development history in the African American enclave of Oakwood. These three were the New Bethel Baptist Church, (503 Brooks Avenue), Friendship Baptist Church (606-608 Broadway Avenue), and the Pentecostal Bethel Tabernacle Church of God in Christ (1209 6th Avenue). I am proud of the role New Bethel has played in the Venice community since its founding and I believe its accomplishments of the past are just a prelude to its successes in the future – God Willing.