



*Mitchell Chapel A.M.E Zion Church
1085 Mitchell Chapel Road
Pittsboro, North Carolina, 27312*

“The Church Where Love Abides And Is Freely Given”

May 2, 2016

Dear Chatham County Board of Commissioners,

As the pastor for Mitchell’s Chapel A.M.E Zion Church, I am writing you in favor of the affordable housing project that Sustainable Prosperity and Solstice Partners are proposing to construct and develop on Masonic Street in Pittsboro.

As Chatham grows it will continue to be a key part of the Raleigh-Durham Metropolitan Region. The growth will provide many new employment opportunities for its current and future residents. With this growth comes a great responsibility for its leadership to ensure that all citizens should be given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the growth. The present and future opportunity will depend upon our willingness to invest in our people by supporting CCCC, public education, transit and local businesses and non-profits. This potential success will rise or fall; however, primarily on the access our citizens, especially those from communities at risk, will have to safe, healthy and affordable housing in Chatham County.

As you are already aware, African-Americans, make up approximately thirteen percent of the county's population. However, they have long disproportionately comprised a large share of citizens at the bottom of North Carolina's and Chatham County's socio-economic ladder. These citizens endure such basic problems as access to health care, reliable transportation and the availability of safe, healthy and affordable housing. This is one of the critical social justice issues that we face as a county. Unfortunately, there are two Chatham counties – one of affluence, and one of poverty. We can make a difference by investing in affordable housing options.

In addition, the county has approximately 10,000 people of all races currently living in poverty which means that it is increasingly vital for its leadership to chart a path with all due speed toward prosperity that is inclusive, broad based and supportive of a variety of options for affordable housing. The time has come for committed and consistent action from its leaders.

In 2007 Chatham County's Affordable Housing Task Force commissioned the Wooten Company to study the issues of affordable housing at the time and make recommendations. The report identified an affordable housing deficit of 850 units for owner occupied housing; 900 units of affordable rental housing; and many rental and/or owner occupied units that were in substandard condition. This number has not decreased and as we grow, in the absence of strong leadership and aggressive progress on building affordable apartments, townhomes and houses, the deficit will grow in parallel.

The safe, decent, and healthy affordable housing that we support will house among its residents, tradesmen and women, teachers, firemen, police officers, students, retirees and agricultural workers.

Mitchell's Chapel AME Zion Church recognizes the critical nature of our affordable housing shortage and has chosen to make this issue not only a focal point of our advocacy, but also an area that we want directly impact. We intend to make that difference by partnering with Solstice Partners and Sustainable Prosperity on a series of projects in and around Pittsboro. Solstice Partners already has an impressive track record that includes the recent construction and quick occupancy of Bellemont Pointe Apartments on the north side of Pittsboro and Sustainable Prosperity has additional expertise and knowledge as well as the trust and confidence of Solstice Partners.

We urge the Commissioner to approve the request for support from the county to help secure the subject property, submit the appropriate applications and site plans to the Town and the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and thus achieve the funding to construct at least 80 more needed units in Pittsboro. In the event that you need additional information, or if you have questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at 919-225-1660 or I can be reached at tdavis27713@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony J. Davis", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Rev. Anthony J. Davis, M.A., DMin
Pastor, Mitchell Chapel A.M.E. Zion Church