

Item 28

## **Dr. M. C. Brown II**

*Senior Pastor, The House of God Las Vegas*  
*State Elder, Diocese of Nevada*  
615 West Van Buren Avenue  
Las Vegas, NV 89106

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April 11, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I regret that I could not be physically present tonight. A prior commitment, where I am receiving the W.E.B. DuBois Distinguished Career Award from the American Educational Research Association, precludes my participation. Notwithstanding, I have asked our church secretary, Deaconess Christie Brown, to read my remarks. In fact, several of our trustees, deacons, and members are present in the audience (*please stand or raise your hand*).

My name is M. Christopher Brown II and I have the privilege of serving as the pastor of the House of God Las Vegas (formerly New Revelation Baptist Church) located at 615 West Van Buren Avenue in Las Vegas, Nevada (89106) on The Historic Westside for nearly one decade.

Our church history began in April 1994 when the Lord spoke to Pastor Donnell Horn, Sr., telling him that there was a great need for him to organize a church. Being obedient, Pastor Horn called a meeting with a group of selected people at a Denny's restaurant to lay forth the plan for what would later become the House of God Las Vegas (nee New Revelation Baptist Church).

In June 1994, Pastor Horn, Elder O. L. Jefferson, and the congregation of St. John Church of God in Christ welcomed New Revelation to use their building for worship services. A charter was opened for those wanting to be a member of the newly created New Revelation Baptist Church.

We officially became the New Revelation Missionary Baptist Church in July of 1994 with 65 initial members upon receipt of the official charter and seal from the Secretary of State for Nevada. On November 6, 1994, we held the first official service at St. Mark Masonic Lodge – our first temporary meeting place.

On December 11, 1994, the members and Pastor Horn transitioned to 1311 West Owens to conduct prayer and dedication for what would become the second temporary home of the New Revelation Baptist Church. After significant prayer and hard work, the church held its first service in on Owens Avenue on February 5, 1995.

Submitted at Planning Commission

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by Christie Brown

Pastor Horn eventually received the divine vision to permanently relocate the New Revelation Baptist Church (renamed the House of God Las Vegas on last year) to our current location at 615 West Van Buren – the property block adjacent to the proposed Harlem Nights, LLC. Several of our church land parcels stand at the crossroads of history and progress – personally for our church family and publicly for the Historic Westside.

In my role as senior pastor, I have personally met with multiple black elected officials, numerous real estate prospectors, the official developers for Harlem Nights, the UNLV Business Incubator unit, and multiple clergy and stakeholders over the past year. While I personally and many congregants held skepticism and trepidation, time, knowledge, and maturity have prevailed.

Our church family exercises congregational governance and can vote to accept or decline any action. To wit, I am authorized to state the following:

1. **Neither I, nor the church membership have any opposition to the 100 Plan.**
2. **Neither I, nor the church membership have any opposition to the Harlem Nights project.**
3. **Neither I, nor the church membership have any opposition to the Planning Commission approving the proposed project at this stage.**

The current matter before the Planning Commission should be considered thoughtfully and prayerfully. I have been advised by our church officials that some neighbors have taken to social media to criticize the House of God position in this matter (Psalm 105:15 says, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm."). Even more, one of the most vociferous dissenters has never met with me or any member of our congregation; and despite numerous attempts to have our youth tour the museum right next door it is regularly closed (Isaiah 1:18a says, "Come now, let us reason together.").

The Historic Westside is in need of economic investment, public resources, and sustainable employment opportunities. The proposed Harlem Nights project is well positioned to re-engage the Westside with the gaming industry for which Nevada is known, provide venue spaces for entertainment and community events, and provide adjacent workforce access for the unemployed and/or persons with limited transportation. With the loss of both the Texas Station and Fiesta casinos, Harlem Nights would provide neighborhood access to the lifeblood of our tourism economy.

Even more, the proposed project brings to remembrance the legendary venues of the Historic Westside – Town Tavern, the Louisiana Club, Carver House, the Cove Hotel, and without question the Moulin Rouge. We are the Historic Westside, yet at present there is little remaining to herald our historic connections to the Las Vegas traditions loved by tourists the world around. The proposed Harlem Nights, LLC project is best positioned to catalyze the entrepreneurship, innovation, and revenue receipts necessary to revitalize our important Westside community.

As to some of the remaining questions which time will not allow me to address, I briefly offer the following – simply put, we are not individually fans of the proposed 60 stories (it is reminiscent of the biblical tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 11). Our prayer is that a shorter and more appropriate height be considered (like 30 stories for the 30 years of our church's history, 25 stories for the multiplied grace evidenced in 5 times 5, or any normal Las Vegas height).

Additionally, our church has not made any decisions on relocation. We are a body of believers birthed on the Historic Westside. We are waiting and watching the various processes move forward like tonight. If necessary, we would consider building on Owens Avenue where we own property or possibly acquiring another property on the Westside where we can worship. The Baptist Church Covenant closes with explicit guidance on this wise – “WE MOREOVER ENGAGE that, when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God’s Word.”

I close with a story that parallels the current situation on the Historic Westside found in the book of 2<sup>nd</sup> Kings, chapter 6 – where the people of God are standing at the crossroads of history and progress. Verses 1-2 read: “One day the group of prophets came to Elisha and told him, “As you can see, this place where we meet with you is too small. <sup>2</sup> Let’s go down to the Jordan River, where there are plenty of logs. There we can build a new place for us to meet.”

I have the honor to remain,

**[SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY TO BE READ AS PUBLIC COMMENT]**

M. C. Brown II, Ph.D.  
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*State Elder, Diocese of Nevada*