

**THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
NEWS RELEASE**

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**PLANNING BOARD APPROVES PURCHASE OF  
UNCLE TOM'S CABIN HISTORIC SITE**

**SILVER SPRING, MD** – This afternoon the Montgomery County Planning Board unanimously and enthusiastically approved a \$1 million real estate contract to purchase the historic site and former home of Josiah Henson, a slave that served as Harriet Beecher Stowe's model for her novel on slavery, "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Originally a larger tobacco plantation, the one-acre property, including the 18<sup>th</sup> century main house with log kitchen wing, is located at 11420 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda.

Currently the property is designated on the Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation but has been in private ownership and not accessible to the public. When the settlement is completed, the property will become part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's 32,639-acre park system in Montgomery County, Maryland. To protect the property for future generations, the Board will explore options for restoring the building, interpreting its history and making it accessible to the public.

The heirs of Marcel and Hildegard Mallet-Prevost who owned the property since the 1960s and the Planning Board hope to settle on the property by the end of next week. If all goes according to plan, it is the Board's intention to hold a deed transfer ceremony on the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, Monday, January 16.

Josiah Henson, a slave who lived and worked on the property for more than 30 years, escaped to freedom in Canada in 1830, where he published his autobiography "The Life of Josiah Henson" in 1849. Harriet Beecher Stow based her 1852 novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" on his writings. Henson became prominent in the abolitionist movement and traveled in the United States and England to tell his life story. He lived to the age of 94 and is buried near his home in Dresden, Ontario, which has been preserved as a Canadian historic site.

Montgomery County will provide the initial funding to purchase the property and will apply for 100 percent grant assistance from Maryland's Program Open Space over the coming months.

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