Bennington Park was a planned community in the Village of Freeport. In 1902, W. Newton Bennington and Charles S. Powell began to sell lots for individual homes in a section of Freeport that they named Bennington Park. The Bennington Realty Company advertised the sale of these lots in New York newspapers like the Brooklyn Daily Eagle. The properties were marketed as prime locations for suburban homes for members of New York City’s upper middle class. They were situated between the Long Island Railroad and Merrick Road, making them easy to travel to by train, but only ten minute’s walk to the shore.

Freeport is located on the South Shore of Long Island, and has always been home to people whose living was made at sea. Oystering, boating, and fishing were thriving businesses there due to the presence of the salt water port, fresh water streams, and estuaries. By the early twentieth century, Freeport became a popular resort location. Large hotels and wealthy homes were constructed near the shore, as businessmen, entertainers, and other members of the wealthy elite would vacation there.

The proprietors of the Bennington Realty Company were banking on the popularity of Freeport as a resort location. While they were marketing the properties as vacation homes, a different settlement pattern emerged. By 1910, a wave of migrants arrived in Freeport and settled in Bennington Park. Many African Americans moved from the South to Freeport in search of better opportunities for work. Southern-born African Americans lived alongside white immigrants of Italian, Irish, and eastern-European ancestry in Bennington Park. They sought employment in skilled and unskilled positions, as day laborers, in the hotels, and in the homes of elites. In 1910, many African American women were employed as house servants and laundresses, and most African American men worked as laborers.

Southern African Americans joined Freeport’s existing African American community to build the Bethel AME Church. Founded in 1902 by six individuals, the Church had forty members who constructed the first Church building on Henry Street by 1910.

Over the next thirty years, a rapidly-growing working-class of African Americans and whites made Bennington Park their home. Most African Americans worked for the wealthy white elite as laborers on their grounds, as chauffeurs, and as housekeepers, but some men also worked in the coal yard, lumber yard, and in skilled trades. By 1950, Bennington Park was crowded and deteriorated. Some African Americans owned their homes in Bennington Park, but most rented their homes from landlords who made few improvements to the buildings. The poor living conditions were identified by the New York State Housing Commission and Freeport residents, who sought to redevelop the location.

Bennington Park was redeveloped in the 1950s. Most of the homes were demolished and the location was rezoned for commercial use. The residents of Bennington Park were forced to find homes elsewhere, and some African Americans moved to other sections of Freeport, including the units of low-income housing that were part of the redevelopment plan. Today, Bennington Park is comprised of warehouses and stores north and south of Sunrise Highway.