

November, 2007

Dear Mr. Leggett:

We write regarding the current plans to bring the Fillmore music venue to Silver Spring. We would like to share our concerns with you regarding the transparency of the process and the ongoing role of the community in this development.

As you know, this board was a strong supporter of bringing the Birchmere to Silver Spring. We regret that negotiations broke down and a deal was not possible. However, we recognize that it is time to move forward and bring an economically viable music venue to downtown Silver Spring. This once vibrant area along Colesville Road is economically depressed, and we appreciate your efforts to continue the urban renewal process.

We share with you the goal to create and sustain a first class arts and entertainment district in downtown Silver Spring – one that will benefit all of the residents of Montgomery County and the many visitors to our County. Many in the community have expressed concerns and we wish to share them with you as you proceed with your negotiations with Live Nation.

First, we believe that the County should have a transparent process in determining which company will operate the music venue. Towards that end, we urge you to have substantive discussions with other local music promoters before you finalize any deal. While we have been impressed by and appreciative of the presentations from Live Nation and Lee Development Group, we also have been interested in the offer from IMP and believe their offer should be further explored. In addition, we would like to have a better understanding of why one entity is chosen over another.

Second, since the non-binding agreement with Live Nation was announced, we have heard from many in the community who have raised concerns that are relevant regardless of which company operates the music venue. Below are concerns that we would like addressed before any final decisions are made.

Can the area sustain a venue holding up to 2000 patrons without creating serious safety, traffic congestion, noise and parking problems? Based on the projections of people likely to attend performances at the Fillmore, what is the anticipated occupancy range?

Local performers must have access to this facility. What ongoing arrangements will be made to accommodate them?

We understand that the County will require that space be available for community activities. Please advise us of the type of activities that will be accommodated and who at the venue will facilitate the necessary arrangements on an ongoing basis.

The community wants programming that will appeal to the diversity of musical and artistic tastes of all residents of Montgomery County. How will this be handled?

We believe that in order to achieve a truly successful public/private partnership in the development of this venue, the decision making process must be transparent and the community must be an active partner.

How will your office insure that community input is solicited in a meaningful manner prior to the County entering into a binding agreement?

We would urge that the operator of the music venue have a permanent designated community outreach specialist to insure that the views of residents are heard, represented and responded to.

We understand that Silver Spring Forward has recommended that a citizens advisory group be formed to serve as a “liaison between the community and Live Nation for any topic of concern to the community.” We agree with this recommendation and suggest that, rather than creating a specific group for this purpose, that our independent Board would be well suited to fill that role.

Again, we want to thank you for your ongoing support of Silver Spring and your understanding that this community still requires economic revitalization and support.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Deborah Spielberg

cc County Council
Silver Spring Forward

