



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett  
*County Executive*

July 26, 2007

Thank you for your email concerning the Birchmere.

Over a five-year period, Montgomery County sought to bring the Birchmere music hall to downtown Silver Spring. We first exchanged contract terms with Birchmere in September of 2004 – nearly three years ago. For the past six months, despite the exchange of a series of draft agreements, Birchmere has never signed final terms. We were unable to come to agreement on critical business issues. That’s why we put negotiations on hold and are exploring alternatives. The Birchmere, in response, declared the effort “over.”

You are disappointed that the Birchmere did not work out. So am I.

Those who know me know that I have the patience of Job. Still, the County has been working for five years to reach an agreement with Birchmere.

My responsibility is to make sure that County taxpayers get the best return on the projected \$8 million county/state public investment. And any partnership worth its salt requires *shared* investment and *shared* risk between the public and private sectors.

I’m sure you agree with me that any agreement has to be in the best interests of County taxpayers – not an agreement at any price or under any terms. The County, first under Mr. Duncan and now under this administration, has bent over backwards to make this work.

When this effort began five years ago, the decision was to look only at the Birchmere as a partner in this effort. That has not worked out; it is clearly time to consider other partners.

The County’s vision is to bring a first-class music and entertainment venue to Silver Spring in the former J.C. Penney building. And that’s just what we are going to do.

Again, I share your disappointment that the Birchmere didn’t work out, despite the County’s best efforts. Now it’s time to move on.

Sincerely,

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive