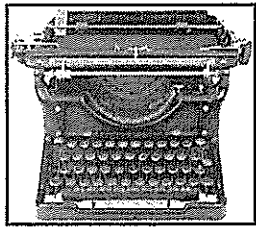


VOICE MAIL



All writers must provide full name, full home address, and a telephone number or e-mail address. Letters are subject to editing for length, accuracy and clarity. Letters, opinion pieces and articles submitted to the Voice may be published or distributed in print, electronic or other forms.

Send your letter to
Voice Mail, P.O. Box 11262
Takoma Park, MD 20913
or myvoice@takoma.com
or myvoice@silverspringvoice.com

We want Live Nation!

Dear County Councilmembers,

I am writing this letter in support of the current initiative to develop the former J. C. Penney site in Silver Spring into a live music venue to be operated by Live Nation. I am writing because it seems that only a vocal minority is being

heard, and we, the small businesses and residents of Silver Spring, want to make it unequivocally clear that we support this venture and consider it crucial to the economic health of our community and its vitality as a viable city center.

The primary opponent of this venture is not a resident of Silver Spring, nor is he a business owner in the County or Silver Spring--not a stakeholder here--but a businessman primarily with DC interests and a direct competitor of Live Nation. Just last year, IMP conducted the same PR blitz and government lobbying campaign to successfully defeat Live Nation's bid to open a House of Blues in Washington, DC.

Now Silver Spring and the County have gotten caught in the crosshairs of its ongoing battle to keep Live Nation out of this region. IMP had expressed no interest whatsoever in Silver Spring before learning its rival had secured a lease in its backyard.

Recently, NBC announced that IMP has been negotiating with DC for some time to open a new large scale music venue at the DC Armory and the completion of this contract is imminent. So while publicly trying to derail Live Nation's deal with Montgomery County, IMP has been privately negotiating another DC venture. Apparently, closed negotiations with a government authority suit IMP just fine so long as it is the beneficiary.

The arguments of fairness ring false, as articulated by another venue owner who had this to say: "...Seth has no problem

bringing Virgin Fest into my backyard; he has no problem with boundaries as long as he is the one and only one putting in the entertainment. The amount of money he put in Merriweather Post Pavilion has been minimal and it shows. The success of the music he has put in there has been great. I myself would have loved to have a chance of booking and running that facility. I may be wrong but I do not remember an RFP being put out on Merriweather?..." --Bill Muehlhauser, owner, Ram's Head

This project is not government "procurement"; it is a unique private/public joint venture in which a valuable private parcel of land is being donated to the County for a specific economic development initiative.

This is a multi-party transaction in which the County is not the sole authority but a partner. The County and the current landowner have the right to solicit an appropriate and qualified tenant who in their judgment has the ability to perform and competently oversee the intended use of the project.

Many economic development projects are developed this way by cities and counties trying to attract business to a specified zone. No RFP was offered or required at the time the Birchmere was solicited without any question of fairness. The RFP issue is a red herring designed simply to deny the County and Silver Spring a music venue.

We are undergoing a severe economic

downturn which is hitting the County and Silver Spring hard. Many small businesses in Silver Spring are reporting a decrease in sales of 10-20 percent in recent months. And by every economic forecast a recession is looming.

The Fillmore project promises to bring thousands of customers and bustling vitality to our wonderful downtown setting, making Silver Spring an important destination for culture and the arts.

Additionally, it ensures that Silver Spring will continue as a contributor to the County's tax base. It will complete the picture of a vibrant arts and entertainment district and be a prized first class music hall of which we all can be proud. Most importantly, it represents the fulfillment of a longstanding State and County promise of investment in Silver Spring. This is a critical economic development initiative for the County and for our community for which we have been made to wait years.

We, the businesses and residents of Silver Spring--the truly vested parties--want The Fillmore now. We expect our public officials to show the grit and resolve to see this project through and to do what is best for the County and our community.

Do not let it become a bureaucratic casualty and be responsible for another 10 years of blight on Colesville Road. Keep your promise to Silver Spring!

— Barry Soorenko
Silver Spring, MD