

LCA General Membership Meeting
October 22, 2007
7:30 pm
Yeshiva School

Call to order: 7:33 pm

B. Warren opened the meeting, welcoming the LCA guest speakers:

Gary Stith, Director, Silver Spring Regional Center
Bruce Lee, President, Lee Development
Ryan Shay, Live Nation
Tom Harmon, MCPD, Traffic Division

I. Special presentation on the impending Live Nation-Fillmore Music Venue, Downtown Silver Spring

A. Bruce Lee, President, Lee Development

Mr. Lee summarized the history of his company, Lee Development, noting that the downtown Silver Spring based business was started in 1920 by his grandfather. The Lee plaza is located on the corner of Colesville and Georgia. In addition, Lee Development owns the surrounding properties including the old JC Penny's building. Several years ago, County Executive Douglas Duncan approached Lee Development requesting that they consider developing the properties to upgrade the area. Duncan's focus was on the public amenity that he wanted constructed prior to additional development to aid the economics of this area. Thus began the negotiations with Birchmere, a process that took over 5 years and did not lead to an agreeable contract.

Mr. Lee then approached Live Nation who has recently signed the agreement with the County to lease/run a music venue (The Fillmore). The Fillmore will be housed in the JC Penny's building post reconstruction.

Normally, as a condition of this type of large development project (development of the Lee property surrounding the Lee Plaza), a public amenity (20% of the site) must be constructed (i.e. pocket parks). The use of a music venue to satisfy this public amenity will require a zoning amendment.

B. Gary Stith, Director, Silver Spring Regional Center

Mr. Stith provided a presentation highlighting the anticipated facility and its characteristics. He noted that the 10,000 ft² lot has been donated by the Lee Development Company (value of 3.5 million). Both the State and County will each contribute 4 million dollars. Live Nation will provide the interior furnishings and sound systems. The completed facility will seat approximately 500-900 people or can hold 2000 standing. It will not have a full service kitchen but will serve light refreshments. Patrons are expected to flow to neighboring Silver Spring restaurants, thus increasing the economic benefit. The facility will be multi-use and will host concerts, comedy, and film festivals (in partnership with the adjacent AFI). Music will cover the spectrum of rock, pop, country, jazz, salsa, etc.

Mr. Stith noted that the metro is located 2 blocks away and there are also 3 parking garages (3500 capacity) that are underutilized during the evening hours. He emphasized that this was an economic development project within an arts and entertainment district. The original “art deco” façade of the JC Penny’s building will be preserved and enhanced while the building will be constructed “green”. The venue is expected to attract people from all areas to the downtown Silver Spring, enhancing the economic spillover. The Fillmore will tentatively open in 2010.

The website for additional information is: silverspringdowntown.com

C. Ryan Shay, Live Nation

Mr. Shay noted that Live Nation was the largest venue operator in the country and the largest concert producer in the world. However, the company is a collection of local acquisitions such as “Cellar Door Productions”. Therefore, venues are operated by local management.

With respect to programming the facility, Mr. Shay discussed coordinating concepts with AFI, in addition to the music (rock, country), comedy presentations, and community events. There is a requirement in the lease that some nights be available for community events such as catered dinners and award presentations.

Mr. Shay emphasized that Live Nation is not in the restaurant business. Only light refreshments would be provided at the Fillmore.

D. Questions (Q), Answers (A) and Comments (C):

Q: How many programs are expected per week?

A: That depends upon the market and the venue. This is a very competitive market. If, for example, there were 3-4 shows per week, these might vary in attendance. Some shows might have larger crowds (2000) while others might have more intimate crowds (450).

Q: How will this facility be policed?

A: The facility will have private security for each event. The number of security personnel will be based on the type of show and expected crowd. Live Nation will also work with the local police force.

Q: Do you steer away from types of music that might attract more “rowdy” crowds?

A: It is not profitable to have problematic shows. However, there could be challenges on some types of shows.

C: This is an issue. It is important to recognize that the MCPD is limited and that there is a need to plan ahead of time, continuing to discuss with the County Council the need for funding an increased police force.

Q: What will be the impact of the construction?

A: It is expected that the sidewalks will remain unobstructed and that there will be a construction bridge.

Q: The donation of the lot will be “banked” against the future development of the additional area?

A: Yes. This is actually a risk for Lee Development. We are providing the public amenity in advance of the development of the surrounding property. Our request is that

this will provide protection for Lee Development such that what can be built now will be allowed in the future, even if the construction regulations change. Right now the rental/lease rates are not sufficient to make construction economically viable.

Q: What are the taxpayers getting for the contribution of 4 million?

A: They are gaining an entertainment venue. Live Nation does not function in the absence of a facility. Construction of a music type space is not economically viable without public funds. The County will own the building and will lease it to Live Nation.

Q: Will Live Nation have a full liquor license?

A; yes.

Q: Do you expect big name acts playing in DC to piggyback additional shows in this venue?

A: It is possible although this depends upon the artist. It is more likely that an act might play the Baltimore and Silver Spring venues.

Q: 500-2000 is a big difference.

A: The facility will have configuration flexibility to allow between 500 and 2000 depending upon the particular entertainment. For some bands, Live Nation must sell 2000 tickets to be able to pay for the band. Other bands prefer to play smaller facilities/crowds.

Website for additional information: LiveNation.com

II. Special presentation: Tom Harmon, MCPD, Traffic Control Division

Sgt. Harmon is of the 3rd district, Tactical Traffic Squad. In addition to traffic enforcement, the squad also escorts funerals and dignitaries as well as providing event security and traffic control. There are 8 officers in each Squad. These officers represent a selected group based upon motorcycle skills, productivity in ticketing, and crash investigation skills. The number of officers (8) in each squad has not changed in 20 years and each of the 6 districts has the same number/composition squad.

Sgt. Harmon noted that he is a strong pedestrian safety advocate and is involved with pedestrian safety groups and the Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board.

Sgt. Harmon asked what were the issues that our neighborhood faced. Bill Warren indicated that the biggest issue facing the community was the impending Mixing Bowl reconstruction. In addition, issues of speeding on the straight streets, confusing traffic patterns, cut through traffic, and the level of industrial traffic were important.

Sgt. Harmon noted that the new plan for the mixing bowl will not eliminate any of these issues. When confronted with the issue of speeding Ride-On buses on Brookville and Seminary, Sgt. Harmon conceded that the police were not likely to ticket these. He suggested that LCA contact Ride-On administration to attempt to have them intervene internally.

Q: What is the status for speed cameras on Brookville and Seminary?

A: While these roads could fit the criteria for speed cameras (residential area, speed zone 35 mph or less, school zones), there was no plan to install them. However, it was possible that a mobile unit could be placed temporarily.

Q: What are your observations concerning speed on Brookville and Seminary Roads?

A: The force has been out 15 times in the last 2 months. Speeds are high on Brookville Road. On Seminary, there is never a shortage of speeders.

Sgt. Harmon noted that the squad looks at crash data, volume, and injury reports in order to focus on areas where these issues are prevalent. Three of the top 10 intersections are located within our area: Georgia--495, Georgia--Seminary, Georgia--Forest Glen. He is obligated to put his resources where there is the “best bang for the buck”.

Sgt. Harmon noted that our area really needs is traffic calming construction. He presented pictures of “choke-downs” that he felt would be appropriate on some roads. He agreed that enforcement would not be sufficient and that hardscaped controls would be required. The police force is not large enough to take a proactive type of monitoring.

C: Bill Warren noted that Sgt. Harmon has been very responsive to the Linden Community over the past years.

III. LCA general business

Nominations for 2008 LCA officers

President:

P. Olivetti nominated Bill Warren
P. Dickson seconded
Bill Warren accepted the nomination

No additional nominations were presented.

Vice-President:

T. Kristie nominated Fred Cooper
S. Dickson seconded
Fred Cooper accepted the nomination

No additional nominations were presented.

Treasurer:

P. Olivetti nominated Suellen Dickson
F. Cooper seconded
Suellen Dickson accepted the nomination

No additional nominations were presented.

Secretary:

A. Ritsko-Warren nominated Tom Kristie
S. Dickson seconded
Tom Kristie accepted the nomination

B. Nash motioned for closure of nominations.
A. Ritsko-Warren seconded.

Election Committee

Alison Beatty, Joan Jennings, and Bobbie Nash volunteered for the Election Committee.

A. Ritsko-Warren stated that nominees bios must be submitted by Friday, October 26 for inclusion in the next newsletter.

Minutes of the September 17, 2007 General Membership Meeting

Minutes of the September 17, 2007 General Membership Meeting were approved.

New business

No new business was put forth.

Treasurer's report

S. Dickson provided the treasurer's report including balance, intake funds, expenditures.

Next meeting

The next General Membership Meeting will be November 12 and will be an Election-Social.

Adjourn 9:15 pm