



SILVER SPRING CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

September 10, 2013

Mr. Isiah Leggett
County Executive
101 Monroe Street 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Ms. Nancy Navarro
Council President
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Ms. Valerie Ervin
5th District Councilmember
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

RE: Recommended changes to the Community Access Pilot Program

Dear Mr. Leggett, Ms. Navarro and Ms. Ervin,

The County Executive and the County Council created the Community Access Pilot Program (CAPP) to ensure that community-based organizations have access to the very popular Silver Spring Civic Building and Veterans Plaza. During the program's first year in FY 2013, CAPP offered deeply discounted rates to successful applicants and thereby achieved its purpose of expanding access to the facility.

A rule change for FY 2014, the second year of the CAPP program, has greatly diminished the usefulness of the program. Applicants to the CAPP program can no longer confirm a rental date until after their application is processed; processing is a minimum of 45 days. This change is a major concern for large events that use the prime space like the Great Hall, which are booked far in advance.

One example involves the Gandhi Brigade, a nonprofit that works with area youth. When the Gandhi Brigade applied for CAPP funding in July 2013 for its May 2014 Youth Media Festival—ten months in advance—there was only one weekend in May that was still available. Unable to risk waiting another 45 days and losing the last remaining May date, the organization withdrew its CAPP application and asked Councilmember Valerie Ervin to sponsor the event.

Holding event sponsored by a Montgomery County official the Gandhi Brigade is liable for \$1,300 in fees (for personnel and technology). By way of contrast, last year the organization was accepted by the CAP Program and was assessed a total of \$393. The Youth Media Festival is a free event, open to the public and one of the few at the Civic Building that is focused on youth; it is precisely the kind of activity the CAPP program was designed to encourage.

The solution we recommend is a simple one: **allow community users to lock down a date through a standard booking or through a County sponsored booking, then let them also apply in parallel for a reduced CAPP rate for the same date.** The user will always be required to first post a deposit to assure their commitment to the date, knowing that there is no guarantee of CAPP funding - but at least the user has the certainty that the date is good. The County has the deposit as assurance of the user's good faith commitment to the date.

In consultation with members of the Silver Spring nonprofit community, including representatives from the Gandhi Brigade, Class Act Arts and Silver Spring Town Center Inc, the process we recommend is the process that worked well when the program began in FY 2013. It is for that reason we recommend it be used again and in future years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Evan Glass". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Evan Glass

Chair, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board

CC: Ramona Bell Pierson, Assistant CAO

Ginny Gong, CUPF Director