

Late Night Safety Policy for Business in Downtown Silver Spring

What the County Executive proposes comes with too many concerns. I am concerned that by turning the already undermanned police force into administrators requiring them to provide oversight of negligent business owners seems profoundly unproductive. There are owners who have obeyed the law and there are owners who have violated county regulations for years now and have no history of demonstrating a change of strategy. Why are you giving them a second chance when you know that intoxication and 24 hour "unregulated" businesses serving smoke and alcohol promote disturbances, noise, loitering, and violence. ABS has done a dismal job in overseeing many of these establishments and has fostered irresponsible management of some owners by conducting hearings at sub-standard levels of investigation and thoroughness. It is the wild west in DTSS with excessive permissiveness attracting criminal elements and at risk youth. Raise the standards of performance of ABS and enforce the law and close all establishments at 2am.

How are the police going to ensure that the quality of their proposed solutions...technology, security guards, cameras..will be uniform and meet their standards. There will be owners who pose their buddies as security guards with a dismal level of training. Why does the County not care about the health of young people promoting drinking and smoking 24 hours? Where is the common sense here. What good happens after 2am? Why did you all articulate decades ago a vision for the downtown area where residents, businesses and employment centers could co-exist peacefully next to a regional transportation center when your actions demonstrate no regard for the welfare of the residents. It was a false vision and we are paying the price. Your so called First Step will put the residents at risk for a few more years and prolong the criminality occurring there. Residents suffer from sleep deprivation from being awoken at early morning hours at noise, guns shots, and disturbances. Families feel unwelcomed in the DTSS due to the unwholesome nature of so many bars and lounges. What major corporation would take up residence there looking at the unwholesomeness of the built environment and the crime problem? This is the best the county council could do in bringing in quality "entertainment". I think it is time the Council owned up to its poorly thought out decisions that created this mess. Only by doing that, are you going to bring to the table a long term, comprehensive solution. By piecemealing incrementally a solution you are demonstrating weakness, lack of courage, a certain effort to deceive the electorate, and fear of not pleasing everyone to support your progressive agenda.

For a business owner to operate 24 hours, he or she is dependent on the behavior of a majority of high risk youth and felons congregating to make the economies of scale that owner targets to make profits. You are not solving the problem. You are supporting the magnates that attract the elements that make up the problem.

The solution that demonstrates intelligent thinking, comprehensiveness in resolution, common sense, effectiveness and efficiency is closing all establishments at 2am. We need elected officials to act more like public servants than imperial monarchs, to demonstrate courage and to think deeply on what is the right ethical decision to promote well-being, harmonious living and justice.