

Testimony of Roger J. Cochetti on the topic of

Clarksburg Gateway Service Plan: COMSAT HISTORIC SITE

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My name is Roger J. Cochetti. I am and have been a resident of Montgomery County for almost 40 years, during which time I served as an executive with high tech companies COMSAT, IBM, VeriSign and CompTIA. I helped raise a family in Montgomery County and am proud that some of my family also lives in Montgomery County.

I firmly believe that as much as possible of COMSAT LABS, particularly its historic entrance, should be preserved as an historic site. After serving as a Jimmy Carter appointee in the Department of State, I joined COMSAT in 1981 as its Director of Public & Investor Relations. Because of my foreign policy background, I was quite aware of the international importance of COMSAT and COMSAT LABS: leaders around the world remembered that when President Kennedy made his famous “man on the moon speech”, he also committed the United States to share this advanced technology with other countries by creating a global communications satellite system. This commitment led to the creation of COMSAT, INTELSAT and COMSAT LABS, which built and operated the worlds first global satellite communications capability.

These organizations brought modern communications, including television and data transfers, to places that could not be served by undersea cables like Africa, South Asia, East Asia, South America and much more. In doing so, these organizations changed the world like nothing before them: live TV and instant telephone everywhere! As a matter of Geopolitics, they played a vital role in America’s eventual success in prevailing over the Soviet Union and global Marxism because they showed nations everywhere that the United States shared its most valuable technology with even the most underdeveloped countries. This was among the most important things that led leaders and everyday people everywhere to admire the United States.

But COMSAT and INTELSAT alone were not much more than an assembly of diplomats, lawyers, financial experts and administrators. The beating heart of John Kennedy's global communications satellite system was COMSAT LABS! It was in COMSAT LABS that the technology of communications satellites was invented, designed, advanced and made practical and everyone in the world knew it. Senior government officials and business executives from many countries and satellite engineers from almost every country asked to see COMSAT LABS and it was my privilege to help them do so. As they drove along I-270, few people in Montgomery County realized the global impact and changes that were taking place in that building...but the Council must not make the mistake of failing to recognize it today.