



MID-COUNTY CITIZENS ADVISORY BOARD

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Ana L. van Balen
Director

December 20th, 2012

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Dear Mr. Leggett:

I am writing to express the views of the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board (MCCAB) regarding the design and construction of a new combined regional Wheaton library and recreation center. The MCCAB recommended that this project be included in your proposed FY13-FY18 capital improvement projects (CIP) budget. The MCCAB is encouraged that the County Council approved funding for the project and that County staff have made this project a high priority. As the design process moves forward, we strongly encourage you to maximize public engagement in the design and construction of this vital community resource.

At the MCCAB's October 16, 2012 meeting, Mr. Greg Ossont, deputy director of the Department of General Services (DGS), informed the MCCAB that there would be a competitive bidding process to select an architectural firm to design the new library and recreation center. As part of this process, DGS was planning to convene a quality scoring committee that would rate the proposals and play a key role in selecting the winning bid. Mr. Ossont asked the MCCAB to nominate a community representative to serve on this committee. However, at our November 20 meeting, Mr. Ossont said that the County had decided against having a competitive bidding process in order to accelerate the project schedule. DGS selected a firm with whom the County has an open contract (Grimm + Parker) to design the new facility. Mr. Ossont asked the MCCAB to nominate a representative to serve on a design project committee that would advise Grimm + Parker.

Given the importance of a new library and recreation center to the mid-county area, we are concerned that an architectural firm was selected without input from a community representative. Residents and businesses in the community have a major stake in a new facility and want to be involved in the design process.

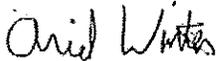
Moving forward, we encourage you to fully engage the community in designing and constructing the new library and recreation center. We make the following specific recommendations:

- DGS and Grimm + Parker should organize charrettes with the community to get feedback on design concepts and options. The timing and location of these charrettes should be clearly communicated to the public well in advance. DGS and the architect should also solicit public input via email.

- DGS and Grimm + Parker should create a website that describes the design process, design options, and opportunities for public input.
- There should be a design project committee that provides ongoing feedback to Grimm + Parker on the facility design. In addition to representatives from County government, this committee should include representatives from MCCAB, the Wheaton Redevelopment Advisory Committee, the Mid-County Recreation Advisory Board, and the Wheaton Library Advisory Committee.
- To facilitate the participation of volunteers from County advisory committees, the design project committee should hold its meetings in the evenings because many volunteers work during the day.

The MCCAB looks forward to working with you and your staff to design and build a new Wheaton library and recreation center that will serve mid-county residents for many years to come. The MCCAB appreciates the opportunity to share its views with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Ariel Winter
Vice-Chair
Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board

CC: Mr. David Dise, Director, Department of General Services
Ms. Nancy Navarro, President, Montgomery County Council