

August 17, 2015

Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee
2424 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

County Executive Isiah Leggett
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Leggett,

At the July 2015 meeting of the Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee (WUDAC), we received an arts & entertainment update from Jewru Bandeh. Jewru noted that County officials will soon be making a decision as to whether the County will pursue Wheaton's application to be re-designated as a Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC) Arts & Entertainment District. We strongly urge you to ensure the County's commitment to pursue Wheaton's recertification as a MSAC Arts & Entertainment District.

For the past year, WUDAC has operated under the assumption that the County would be applying for Wheaton's MSAC A&E recertification. It was only at the July 2015 WUDAC meeting that we were informed that this might not be the case. In recent months, we have performed significant outreach to both County and State officials, as well as to the community. We spoke with Councilmembers Navarro and Leventhal about the community's desire to jumpstart the arts in Wheaton. We also spoke with Senator Richard Madaleno, who sits on MSAC, about ensuring that Wheaton remains an Arts & Entertainment District. All three officials were supportive of our pleas to keep Wheaton's MSAC designation.

At the same time, a number of WUDAC members participated in community meetings, including the Arts and Humanities Council's three community meetings regarding cultural arts grants. We also had an opportunity to meet with the renowned artist Matthew Mazzotta, who we hope will be creating a unique social space for Wheaton.

In short, WUDAC and its members have been active in the arts & entertainment discussion. We recognize that a vibrant arts scene is the necessary third leg to compliment Wheaton's residential and business development. The MSAC Arts & Entertainment District designation is an important tool for Wheaton's revitalization. Perhaps most importantly, the MSAC designation could help Wheaton secure what it most desperately needs, a proper arts & entertainment venue.

To those who say that the existing designation has not had big impact in Wheaton, we would remind them that Wheaton redevelopment was essentially on hold for a dozen years or more, which stifled development of arts and entertainment in our urban center. The timing of

re-designation could not be better: with support from the Arts and Humanities Council grants, Wheaton art's community is coming together with renewed vibrancy. At the same time, losing the designation would set Wheaton back years with its revitalization. The time is now.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at 703-945-9479 or through the Director of Mid-County Regional Services Center.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Devala Janardan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D".

Devala Janardan, Chair
Wheaton Urban District Advisory Committee
cc: Montgomery County Council