

TA01-2021

Sayers, Margery

From: Walsh, Elizabeth
Sent: Saturday, October 24, 2020 1:43 PM
To: Ray Donaldson
Cc: Marshall Cynthia; CouncilMail; Ball, Calvin; Toby Orenstein- Toby's Dinner Theatre; Miller Paul; Betty May; Little, Cristiana
Subject: Re: [BULK] TAO1-FY2021 Legislative Public Hearing, and more!

Good afternoon, Ray: Please pass along my warmest regards to your wife. I did read your whole note, and I've copied in D1's District Aide who will help me make sure you get that documentation I promised you pronto. Sorry for any delays on my part.

For me, as I said before, it's about ensuring we're exercising our best, informed judgment on whether and how to spend finite public funds, right now and for decades into the future. This project—theater and parking garage—arrived on the Council's lap during budget sessions earlier this year as the single largest, by far, bust in what had been projected in prior years. In fact, no "New Cultural Center" appeared at all in prior years' capital budgets because it was never intended until quite recently to be paid for by County taxpayers and general funds. I'm fairly certain everyone would agree at this point that what was represented to us during this year's hurried budget pitch lacked several material terms, like how the project realistically could be paid for.

I am not deferring to my colleagues Deb or David so much as respecting their methodical diligence. We are ensuring we're doing what's right here by our entire community, including those in need of affordable housing. The sum total affordable units proposed at the commingled project here is just 82, right? And I agree with you: my colleagues' questions remain valid and necessary. Likewise, my continued scrutiny here does not reflect on the persona that is Toby and this community she's built; that's not at issue.

In short, speaking for myself, we're not there yet. We might get there if we could restore some sizable funding gaps on both the capital and operational sides, but that hasn't been accomplished yet. At least not so far as I've seen. And I'm looking, Ray. I'm still looking.

Liz Walsh, Council Member
Howard County Council
Serving District 1

3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043
410.313.2001

From: Ray Donaldson <rtdonaldson@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, October 24, 2020 1:06:36 AM
To: Walsh, Elizabeth <ewalsh@howardcountymd.gov>
Cc: Marshall Cynthia <path.iaf@gmail.com>; CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; Ball, Calvin <cball@howardcountymd.gov>; Toby Orenstein- Toby's Dinner Theatre <ap@tobysdinnertheatre.com>; Miller Paul <ecplm@aol.com>; Betty May <bettymay@mac.com>
Subject: [BULK] TAO1-FY2021 Legislative Public Hearing, and more!

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“Will the **arts access**, **community amenities**, and **housing** that the New Cultural Center will bring improve your quality of life in Howard County?”

You did not mention these three **benefits** in your conclusion about the **cost** of this project.

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- You did not mention the **housing** component of this project. You seem to be willing to walk away from \$64 million dollars pledged toward low-cost housing because “someone” has suggested that Toby Orenstein is not a good businessman; “a private dinner theatre” ... [then does] “not appear particularly viable.”
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Toby’s is a direct continuation of the “**risk**” James Rouse took to develop Columbia and the “**risk**” the county commissioners took to approve the “new town zoning” needed for Columbia to be developed over more than 50 years.

It was difficult for the people who had been here many years to adjust to the new arrivals who came because of James Rouse's **vision** of a new city welcoming to all. What was the **vision** of the county leaders in the 1960s? What **risks** were they willing to take as they considered the future of their county?

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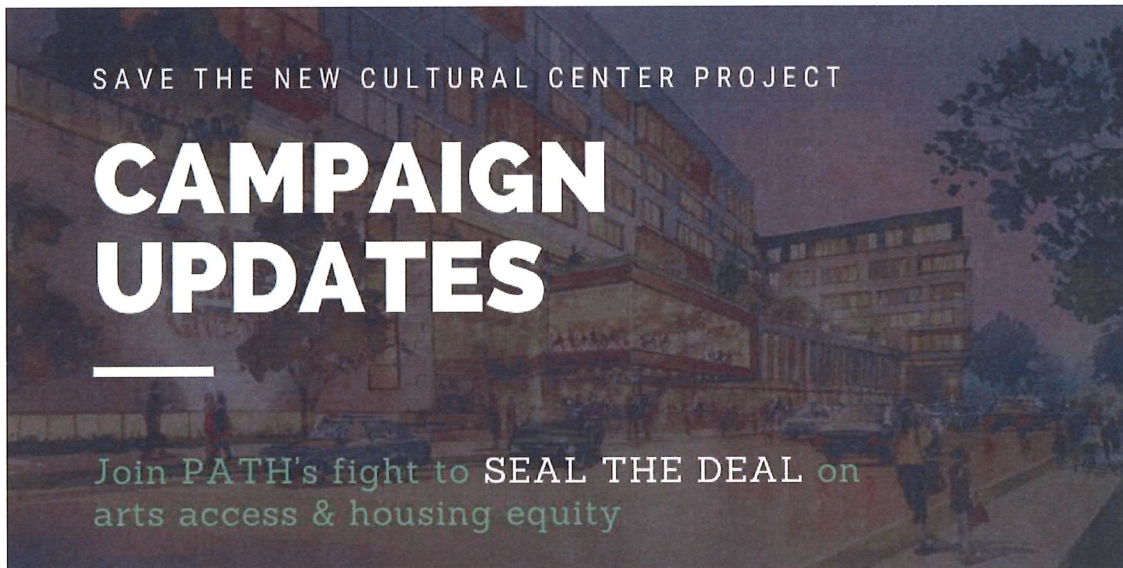
From: Cynthia Marshall (PATH) <cynthia@pathiaf.com>

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Date: October 13, 2020 at 12:54:09 PM EDT

To: Roy Donaldson <rtdonaldson@gmail.com>

Reply-To: Cynthia Marshall (PATH) <cynthia@pathiaf.com>



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County Executive Ball has pre-filed legislation to save the New Cultural Center project

And YOU helped make this happen! Our phone calls, emails, and other efforts to raise awareness and pressure him to take action were effective. Together, we pushed County Executive Calvin Ball to pre-file before the deadline of September 24.

The pre-filed legislation will now head to a **legislative public hearing** on **October 19** before it proceeds to a full council vote on November 2. At the moment, **we are still unsure of how the full council vote on November 2 will go**; we need one more YES vote on County Council to move funding for the project out of contingency.

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We want our county officials to know how their decisions affect the lives of everyday Howard County residents. Your presence at the press conference helps strengthen our message!

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If so, then sign up to **testify virtually at the October 19 Legislative Public Hearing** to urge the Council to restore funding for the project. The hearing will take place immediately following the PATH press conference at 7PM.

Your testimony can be as short as 1-2 sentences! It is important that our County Council members hear from Howard County residents directly about our desires and vision for our community.

To sign up, click the button below. Select "Legislative Public Hearing - October" > Next > TAO1-FY2021 > Next. Complete your registration using the HoCo Citizen's Login system.

SIGN UP TO TESTIFY

Plan to attend the hearing virtually as a PATH representative

More information to come, but PATH will be attending the legislative hearing together on October 19 immediately following the press conference. Stay tuned for details on how to register for a PATH watch party and to make our presence known to County Council!

**HoCo Legislative Hearing
Monday, October 19 @ 7:00PM**

BACKGROUND



From 2014-2017, PATH leaders and partners fought for and won **900 units of affordable housing** in Downtown Columbia.

These units would be spread throughout several exciting mixed-use developments projects as part of a landmark development agreement. Today, **the first of these projects scheduled for construction (New Cultural Center) is at risk**, and along with it, the hundreds of units of affordable housing for Howard County families.

Read on at the link below for a few ways you can take action with PATH to call on county leaders to **take fiscal responsibility** and utilize \$64 million already set aside for the project that will bring a trove of cultural riches to our community and pave the way for hundreds of Howard County families to live and thrive in Columbia.

LEARN MORE



GET OUT THE VOTE IN SWING STATES

PATH's sister organizations in Ohio, Wisconsin, and North Carolina are on the ground in these critical swing states, making sure that voters are equipped and informed on their rights to exercise democracy at the polls in November. And they can use our help from Maryland!

Join them for virtual **phone banking sessions** in these final weeks before the election. Never phone banked before? No problem! You won't be doing it alone. We'll gather on Zoom for training, make our calls together, then end with a debrief.

View their schedules and register to get out the vote by clicking the button below.

LEARN MORE & SIGN UP TO PHONE BANK



pathiaf.com | metro-iaf.org

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5885 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045

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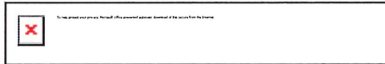
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If so, then sign up to **testify virtually at the October 19 Legislative Public Hearing** to urge the Council to restore funding for the project. The hearing will take place immediately following the PATH press conference at 7PM.

Your testimony can be as short as 1-2 sentences! It is important that our County Council members hear from Howard County residents directly about our desires and vision for our community.

To sign up, click the button below. Select "Legislative Public Hearing - October" > Next > **TAO1-FY2021** > Next. Complete your registration using the HoCo Citizen's Login system.

[SIGN UP TO TESTIFY](#)

Plan to attend the hearing virtually as a PATH representative

More information to come, but PATH will be attending the legislative hearing together on October 19 immediately following the press conference. Stay tuned for details on how to register for a PATH watch party and to make our presence known to County Council!

**HoCo Legislative Hearing
Monday, October 19 @ 7:00PM**

BACKGROUND

x

From 2014-2017, PATH leaders and partners fought for and won **900 units of affordable housing** in Downtown Columbia.

These units would be spread throughout several exciting mixed-use developments projects as part of a landmark development agreement. Today, **the first of these projects scheduled for construction (New Cultural Center) is at risk**, and along with it, the hundreds of units of affordable housing for Howard County families.

Read on at the link below for a few ways you can take action with PATH to call on county leaders to **take fiscal responsibility** and utilize \$64 million already set aside for the project that will bring a trove of cultural riches to our community and pave the way for hundreds of Howard County families to live and thrive in Columbia.

LEARN MORE



GET OUT THE VOTE IN SWING STATES

PATH's sister organizations in Ohio, Wisconsin, and North Carolina are on the ground in these critical swing states, making sure that voters are equipped and informed on their rights to exercise democracy at the polls in November. And they can use our help from Maryland!

Join them for virtual **phone banking sessions** in these final weeks before the election. Never phone banked before? No problem! You won't be doing it alone. We'll gather on Zoom for training, make our calls together, then end with a debrief.

View their schedules and register to get out the vote by clicking the button below.

LEARN MORE & SIGN UP TO PHONE BANK

x

x

x

pathiaf.com | metro-iaf.org

PATH
5885 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045

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PATH · 5885 Robert Oliver Place · Columbia, MD 21045 · USA



Sayers, Margery

From: Robyn Yakaitis <robyn1313@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2020 3:11 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: TA01-FY2021 Testimony

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

To Whom It May Concern -

I am a local voice teacher, performer, and director in Howard County. I grew up in Columbia and now reside in Ellicott City for over 10 years. The arts have always been a huge part of my life and now are an even larger part of my family's lives.

Having been a professional performer in New York, I used to depend on the arts for a career. There are so many individuals that need the survival of arts to continue to succeed in their careers and lives. The arts also sustains a large part of our local community and will thrive again once we are able to move past this pandemic.

Now, being a teacher and director locally, I see the power the arts have over the younger generations. It is often a safe place for kids to discover who they are and who they want to be. It teaches kids to be confident and to work hard. Having worked with 6th graders through 8th graders at Ellicott Mills Middle School for over 7 years, the growth I see over these years is unbelievable. The arts help children who often have communication problems or self-confidence problems, find their own voice. I pride myself in knowing that the kids I work with know who they can be and believe in themselves.

I am also in the middle of college applications with my Mt. Hebron High School senior who will be applying to musical theater programs all over the country this fall. She was "raised" in this area from age 5 within the theater community. Between DLC, CCTA, and the Young Columbians, my daughter has received a strong education in the arts which will only help her to succeed on this path she has chosen. Without this well-rounded arts education, she would be struggling to keep up within the local theater talent and the talent outside of our community.

Please understand, without the arts, there is a gaping hole in our neighborhood. Do not let the arts die. It would be a huge mistake. So many people need the arts to survive, economically and spiritually. We all are sitting waiting patiently for everything to begin again, so we all can live again through the arts we love.

Thanks for listening,
Robyn Yakaitis
Performer, Teacher, Director of the Arts

Sayers, Margery

From: Pamela Henry <pvhenry6@verizon.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 22, 2020 2:20 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: Yes to fair housing and toby's (TAO1)

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

I am Pamela Henry, a retired public educator from Baltimore County, I moved here in 2016 with the belief that everyone here lives a creative, safe life of opportunity and respect in this racially mixed community. I was so excited when I learned that \$65,000,000.00 of state and federal credit would be given to begin this project! This is an opportunity to develop affordable living space, Toby's (creative) Dinner Theater, as well as artist units all intertwined! However, as power would have it, limited, short sighted thinking threatens to block the way for this incredible vision. Columbia has been a national example of forward vision for over 50 years! This block will destroy Columbia's legacy if it is not passed!

TA01-FY2021

Testimony October 19, 2020

The housing associated with the New Cultural Center project will provide much needed housing for a number of low income seniors. The added benefit of this housing is offering classes, entertainment and activities to help expand and enrich a senior resident's quality of life and will be just an elevator ride away. And of course for seniors that no longer drive, the close proximity to retail and grocery shopping, restaurants and transportation for medical and personal appointments will increase our capacity to live independently.

The New Cultural Center will be a start on chipping away at the immense and desperate need for senior housing in the County as over 8,000 Howard County seniors* are currently living between poverty and just survival levels. Even more significantly, delaying the New Cultural Center project puts at serious risk the Downtown Columbia Plan-promised Banneker senior housing initiative, a project already slated for too far down the road.

Our County has an obligation to take advantage of every opportunity to ensure that there are housing options for the exploding numbers of low income Baby Boomer seniors who are joining the ranks of my friends and neighbors each year. Please. Pass TA01-FY2021 on November 2.

*According to the United Way ALICE Project for Howard County 2018 stats for survival level LI senior pop. (up 2,000 LI senior pop. from 2016 stats)

**Phyllis Zolotorow
8720 Ridge Road apt 208
Ellicott City, Md 21043**



Town Center Community Association

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lynn Foehrkolb
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Kevin Fitzgerald
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COLUMBIA COUNCIL

Lin Eagan

October 19, 2020

Ms. Deb Jung
Council Member
District 4
George Howard Building
1st Floor
3430 Courthouse Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

Dear Deb,

Thank you for attending the **Town Center Community Association (TCCA) Board Meeting** on October 14, 2020. Your extensive presentation on the New Cultural Center (NCC) was highly informative and comprehensive. We appreciate the amount of time that you spent in reviewing the more than five year history of the project, how it evolved to its present state, who the stakeholders are and what the risks are for the citizens of Howard County.

We support your decision to "**table the project**" until such time as the property owner, developer, project manager and County Government can provide answers to the questions that you have raised on critical areas such as the following:

1. **Business Plan Needed:** The project planner has not provided a Business Plan for 2021 and beyond that addresses the entire scope of the project.
2. **Pro Forma Statements Needed:** The project planner has not provided any Pro Forma financial statements (1-year, 3-year, 5-year, or more). The Pro Formas should outline the scope of the project by business unit including the Dinner Theater, Affordable Housing, Parks and Rec rentals, any garage/other revenue and the projected NOI (Net Operating Income) for the life of the project or at least up to 5 years.
3. Project planner has not provided any of the operating, or other, contracts associated with the entire project.
4. Assessed value of land is approximately \$1.1 million. Why should the County pay \$6 million or \$7 million? Additional property assessments are needed.



5. Why are there not competitive bids for the entire project now that the scope has changed since Orchard Development got involved?
6. Is this project the best use of taxpayer funds? Should we be spending \$150 million + on this project during a pandemic? Is this the RIGHT PROJECT at the WRONG TIME?
7. The nation's top theater consultant said more than one year ago that dinner theaters are passé.

We will follow the County Council's progress on the NCC with great interest. Please feel free to share any new information on the project that has a material impact on whether the project is approved or disapproved.

On another subject that you raised in the meeting, the TCCA Board strongly supports building affordable housing within the Town Center as well as the overall Columbia community. We appreciate your efforts in working with developers in ensuring that all citizens are treated fairly and, that all residents have equal access to affordable housing within Columbia for all new new-build construction as well as renovations.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions at lfoehrkolb@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Lynn Foehrkolb

**Lynn Foehrkolb
Village Board Chair
Town Center Community Association**

10715 Autumn Splendor Drive, Columbia 21044

October 19, 2020

Howard County Council

Delivered by email councilmail@howardcountymd.gov

Dear Chair Jung and County Council;

I write to you in support of moving ahead with the New Cultural Center, which will provide affordable housing and arts space for Howard County. Our county has been a national leader in good governance, civility, and embracing the full cultural spectrum of our residents.

As our county emerges from the Covid-19 and economic crisis, it will be paramount to position ourselves as a commercial magnet for the Washington-Baltimore area, as well as serving the residents of Howard County. With Toby's, two black box theaters, artists studios and classrooms, these will serve as a hub which draws people into downtown Columbia. As a regional attraction, people are more likely to visit a downtown restaurant and stop in to the Columbia Mall. In other words, we need the commercial activity that the New Cultural Center will generate.

Affordable housing is a commitment of the Howard County Council, following the contentious deliberations of a few years ago which resulted in the County Council committing to build 900 units of affordable housing in the downtown area. We continue to need housing that our essential workers – teachers, firefighters, police and retail workers – can afford.

In this situation, the Howard County planners have identified \$65 million in federal and state tax credits for this mixed-use development project. If you still don't understand where this figure comes from, I implore you to do due diligence in meeting with county financial and zoning specialists. It would be shameful to turn this opportunity down; there is no commitment that Howard County can qualify for future federal and state funding again. Yes, there is an outlay (approximately \$54 million) for Howard County; investment is at the center of development.

At UCLA, in a graduate course on housing policy, my daughter reported that Howard County and Columbia were a center point in the curriculum on fair housing. Yes, Howard County is on the map. How will it be viewed 10 years from now – as a national exemplar of fair housing planning or as falling from grace?

Thank you for your thoughtful deliberations and great care of our beloved Howard County residents.

Sincerely,



Jill Christianson

Sayers, Margery

From: howard.aisha01@gmail.com
Sent: Tuesday, October 20, 2020 5:07 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: New Cultural Center

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Good afternoon,

I urge the County Council to approve the New Cultural Center because it will provide affordable housing in Columbia that is critically needed. This housing will be located near transportation and jobs. I was homeless for about 2 years before the Bridges Program. I left my husband that was very Abusive mentally and physically. I just got up one night, took my son and left. In the middle of the night. I ran and never looked back. That's all because of this program. It gives not only a physical place to live but also provides other resources for you mentally. With out these programs a lot of families would be homeless. I thank this program and other like them for giving moms like me the opportunity to better ourselves.

Sent from my iPhone

Good Evening, my name is Alex Franco Tuten and I served as Managing Director at the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts from 2014-17, before that in 2008 and continuing today my 4 sons have performed at Toby's Dinner Theatre and attended CCTA camps and classes; and even before that, starting in 1976, I was a student at the Columbia school for theatrical arts where I shared a stage with movie actor, Edward Norton, NPR reporter, Michelle Kelemen, musician/composer, Peter Salett, and other successful artists.

When I was a child, CCTA had a building gifted by Jim Rouse. It was a hub of activity and a second home to many of us, a center where we not only developed our artistic talents but learned the lasting values of hard work and teamwork while creating enduring friendships. As an insecure youth, CCTA infused me with the confidence to achieve my goals. CCTA and theatre arts did that!

For these reasons, I enrolled my boys in CCTA. I was saddened to discover they no longer had a building, but thrilled to find their programs still thriving! My oldest son, born with dyslexia and dyspraxia, found school difficult and sports defeating. He was ridiculed by peers and even, adult coaches. He found a place to belong at CCTA. He would go on to teach in CCTA's special needs programming where he had a young student with selective mutism begin the year completely nonverbal and finish the year singing a solo for her entire middle school! This experience prompted his successful completion of bachelor degrees in theatre and psychology, and he now works professionally helping children with autism live their best lives. CCTA and theatre arts did that!

My second son was too afraid to set foot on stage. In fact, he had anxiety issues that I feared would limit options for his future. Knowing what theatre did for me, I insisted that he audition for a musical. Fast forward a few years, and this child had the lead in his school musical, a lead in a CCTA production and sang and played the piano at Merriweather for graduation. Most importantly, fear would no longer dictate his life decisions. CCTA and theatre arts did that!

As Managing Director, I can't begin to share all the ways I observed CCTA positively impacting lives, so I will share just a few:

1. A parent coming to me in tears of gratitude because her special needs child was invited on her very first playdate.
2. A middle school principal expressing overwhelming appreciation because our theatre program was the one bright spot in a student's day--a student who struggled with health and learning challenges but overflowed with musical talents.
3. An entire high school student body giving a standing ovation to their differently-abled peers after they performed a musical.
4. A child writing that they will "never give up" or "never bully anyone" after seeing our Jackie Robinson play.

5. A student receiving a full-ride to a music conservatory, another, being cast in a national tour and another, a lead in a Broadway musical.

And the list goes on and on. CCTA and theatre arts did that!

However, if you asked me to share the challenges, it would boil down to one: the lack of a building. Every year, we'd compete for space in public schools, knowing that even if we were able to reserve space, it could be taken away from us at the last minute. At least twice, we arrived to find our space had been double booked or we were moved to a different location inconveniencing families. And without a doubt, the highest cost in any program, was the price of the space we had to rent. And each year the competition for space increased as did the price. In conclusion, a permanent home, an arts building in the center of Columbia, would allow CCTA's programming to grow and increase its positive impact on this community. And you and your vote can do that! Thank you!

Sayers, Margery

From: lauren@valleybrookstudios.com
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 7:05 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: CCTA Admin; info@cctarts.org
Subject: TAO1-FY2021

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Council Members,

I am writing to you in support of the New Cultural Center project (TAO1-FY2021) and as the parent of children who have greatly benefited from the arts, specifically, programs run by Toby Orenstein and the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts.

My daughter and son are both 2018 graduates of Glenelg High School and were both involved in CCTA's Broadway Connections, a program that was created by CCTA for special needs students to work alongside their peers to create a theatrical production. Although my daughter participated as a peer, my son Alex participated as a special needs student. Alex has a rare, degenerative disease which has left him deaf/blind and in a wheelchair. Although his cognition is normal, his physical disabilities prevented him from participating in any extracurricular activities during his time at Glenelg, with the exception of Broadway Connections. It was the only program offered to him in high school that allowed him to participate with his peers and actually feel like an equal member of the student body. CCTA's Broadway Connections was the highlight of his years in high school, so much so, that he went on to found and direct the drama program at Camp Inclusion. I cannot emphasize enough what an incredible opportunity this was, not only for my son, but for the peers who also benefited greatly from working alongside individuals with disabilities. My son continues to keep in touch with the friends he made in that program; students who might have otherwise passed him by were it not for the opportunity to work with him in Broadway Connections.

My daughter, Allison, also spent many years in CCTA's programs. She participated in summer theatre camps, was a member of the Young Columbians, and has worked with CCTA on various theatre productions. For students like her who are excellent academically but not athletes, having these arts opportunities are crucial for developing self-esteem, friendships, becoming a team player and building character. These experiences were so life-changing for her, that she is currently pursuing a Bachelor of Music at the Catholic University of America, in large part due to the tutelage of Toby Orenstein and her arts programs.

I understand that some of you may feel that the arts are dead. I can say without question that not only are the arts alive and well but will likely be one of the first things to thrive following the pandemic. With so many of us deprived of concerts and theatre these past months, many of us will be turning to the arts to celebrate a return to normalcy and enjoy those activities we had taken for granted; activities such as dinner and a show at Toby's or a children's theatre production through CCTA. A recent piece in USA Today stated that arts and culture are "one of the three key sectors that power innovation and economic growth. More than gross domestic product or economic power, the true measure of a nation's vitality and resilience is its cultural and technological creativity." As you are likely aware, cultivating a thriving arts community was an integral part of Jim Rouse's vision for Columbia. Therefore, a vote against the Cultural Center Project is a vote against the spirit in which Columbia was founded. It is a vote against our community, against better days that lie ahead, and a vote against our young people who depend on these important arts programs for their social and emotional development and well-being.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lauren Fitzgerald



My son Alex (left) with his friend Jake in a Broadway Connections Production of High School Musical



**Testimony in Support of TAO1-FY2021
County Council Public Hearing
October 19, 2020**

The Howard County Housing Commission (HCHC or the Commission) fully supports TAO1-FY2021. The legislation would transfer funds from contingency, allowing the New Cultural Center and the 187 units of mixed-income housing that is associated with it, to move forward.

Background

The New Cultural Center and the mixed-income housing that is to be built above it has been part of the County's plans since 2016. Like all of the affordable housing and public facilities in the Development Rights and Responsibilities Agreement (DRRA), which details many of the terms for the redevelopment of downtown Columbia, the Housing Commission was tasked with carrying out the development plan. In the case of the NCC, which was to be built on land owned by Toby's Dinner Theater and was to replace that theater, this obviously required the active participation of the owners of the Dinner Theater and Orchard Development, the developer they had chosen to work with. This was all known in 2016 when the project was included in the DRRA.

Like three other projects in the DRRA, the mixed-income housing was conceived as being built in conjunction with a public facility. This public-private partnership is baked into the DRRA and provides an excellent means for the County to achieve its long-term development goals. A new fire station, a new library, and a new arts center, all for the coming decades, are part of a far-sighted, well researched and reviewed plan for Downtown Columbia.

The funding for the New Cultural Center was placed into contingency during the budget process for FY 2021. The Council was interested in more time to ask questions and learn about the design, programming, and funding for the project. Three detailed sessions and a public hearing were held on the plans for the NCC, addressing many questions and laying out an improved financing plan. While there can always be more questions looking for more detail, there is clearly sufficient data on the Center for the Council to approve funding at this time.

Housing Need

Here are two excerpts from some of the email I received over the last weekend:

"I am looking to get information on how to go about receiving low income housing in Howard County. I am a single mom of two elementary aged boys. We recently moved from our home in Ellicott City, and need to find something within the next month. I am working as much as possible while they have virtual schooling, but am unable to afford the high costs of an apartment or townhome in the area on my own."

"I'm in the beginning of a divorce and am trying to apply for housing assistance. I am currently living in a household in which all financial responsibilities fall on me. Please let me know what needs to be done to be able to be approved of housing assistance in Howard County."

These emails arrive every day. Perhaps more than the statistics we regularly point to, they bring home the reality of the high cost of housing in Howard County. There are thousands of similar cases – individuals and families who are struggling to remain in the County. According to the most recent Rental Housing Survey conducted by the Commission, there is a shortage of more than 5,000 rental homes that are affordable to households earning \$50,000 or less.

We respond to each one of these requests, but unfortunately, because our resources are fully utilized, that response generally does not lead them to affordable housing.

The 87 affordable units planned for the NCC site and the 87 market rate units will be one step in addressing that problem. It will provide homes for 87 of those email senders and the additional market rate units will add to the overall stock, which might in turn help lower housing costs more generally.

These homes are needed urgently. They are needed now.

Benefits to County

Much of the focus in the debate over the NCC has been on risks to the County. While there is some risk in every project, the primary risk to the County, as the project is currently underwritten, is about \$250,000 per year, which would be at stake if the Columbia Center for the Theatrical Arts (CCTA), the non-profit party that will be leasing space at the NCC, pays nothing on its lease and the County is unable to obtain any revenue for that space. This is highly unlikely given the documented need for theater space in the County, but even if it were to occur, \$250,000 is about 0.02% of the \$1.18 billion general fund portion of the operating budget. It is less than 0.015% of the overall operating budget.

In exchange for this risk and general funds of about \$1.4 million per year, which will be used to pay all operating costs of the DRP facilities and the building as a whole, the County gets the following public goods:

- Ownership of a prime parcel of land in downtown Columbia.
- A state-of-the-art cultural center, with black-box theater, studios, and classrooms for the Department of Recreation and the Howard County Arts Council, and potentially for use by any other arts or cultural organization in the County.
- A permanent home for CCTA, which provides children's theater classes and productions, along with many related activities that support the County's schools and education

goals. CCTA strives to make these services available to as many members of the community as possible.

- A new, much needed home for Toby's Dinner Theater, which will be donated to CCTA. Toby's has been a part of the County hosting sold-out shows for over 40 years.
- As underwritten, a surplus on the operations of the NCC of \$600,000 annually.
- 187 new apartments with 87 affordable homes to help ease the County's crises-level shortage of affordable units.
- \$65 million of funding for the housing, with a cost to the County of \$0.
- A new public parking garage that will generally service the NCC but will be available for other parking needs as well.
- New income taxes from new residents and other tax income.

NCC Economics

The NCC, as underwritten, will not be built with any funds from the County. The County will issue bonds that will cover most of the costs of construction, however, those bonds will be paid not by County general funds, but rather by the lease from CCTA, program income generated by the Department of Recreation and Parks (DRP) as it operates its program, and tax increment revenues that are already being generated by the other new development in Downtown Columbia. As underwritten, these sources produce over \$600,000 annually above the actual cost of repaying the bonds. Since the tax increment revenues are already in place, it is only if DRP or CCTA fall short that any of this \$600,000 might be needed to help cover the debt.

Act Now

For a number of reasons, the time to approve the NCC is now. As the stimulus funds at the national level, approved overwhelmingly by both parties demonstrates, when the public is facing unemployment and financial distress, the government must act rather than retrench. The NCC will create jobs, both short and long term, and provide badly needed educational opportunities. Like many projects undertaken during the depression, it will create value for years into the future while assisting the County's economics today. Now is the time to take action to help the County whether the pandemic. The NCC will do so with no immediate cost to the County and operating costs only beginning in FY 2023 to FY 2024.

The Housing Commission succeeded in winning low-income housing tax credits and other State funds in 2019. We have already deferred these credits once and deferring them any longer risks the loss of them entirely. Without this State funding, the housing cannot move forward, and the County will lose \$65 million of outside funds to help with its housing crisis.

If this comes to pass, because the Commission was not able to use the awarded tax credits, it stands to be penalized by the State in all future funding requests. This penalty would effectively eliminate the possibility of State funding for the balance of the Downtown housing developments: the Central Library project, the Banneker Fire Station Development, the old Central Library site, and the Transit Center. The majority of affordable housing units planned under the DRRA will not be possible.

The DRRA itself will be called into question as the County will not fulfill its obligations, causing problems for the entire Downtown plan, and risking the future tax revenues that are to be generated for the County from the balance of the project.

The time to approve the funding for the NCC is now. The public benefits to be reaped from the project far outweigh the costs and the risks. The harm to the County, the Downtown, the Commission, and the citizens of Howard County from failing to approve the project are far too large.

The Housing Commission urges the Council to approve TAO1-FY 2021 in the strongest terms.
Thank you.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Peter Engel, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

the Howard County Housing Commission to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding TAO1-FY2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Peter Engel

Signature: 

Date: 10/14/2020

Organization: Howard County Housing Commission

Organization Address: Columbia, MD 21046

Columbia, MD 21046

Number of Members: N/A

Name of Chair/President: Elizabeth Homan

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.

Sayers, Margery

From: Joan Driessen <joan.driessen@acshoco.org>
Sent: Monday, October 19, 2020 2:50 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: SUPPORT funding for New Cultural Center/Artists Flats

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

Dear Council Members,

I am writing on behalf of the Association of Community Services and its over 170 member organizations and community advocates. I strongly urge you to approve the funds for the development of the New Cultural Center. Failure to move forward with this project would do long-term damage to Howard County.

Howard County is woefully in need of the 87 affordable housing units that the NCC will provide. Prior to the COVID crisis, the shortage of affordable units was estimated to be between 5,500 and 6,000. This number has surely increased.

We were extremely fortunate to receive a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit for this project. Failure to move forward on this project in the next few months would not only jeopardize this funding for this project, but for future projects as well. As you know, LIHTCs are very competitive. Our failure to use this tax credit would seriously undermine our ability to secure future awards that will be needed for the library, fire station and transit center.

We would be in breach of the DRRA that the County agreed to originally. Howard County has a reputation for being deliberate and for meeting its obligations. Future public-private partnerships rely on strength of this reputation. A breach of the agreement will jeopardize what was a painstakingly crafted plan for Downtown Columbia.

The New Cultural Center also promises to provide a much-needed venue for the entire community, not just those who can afford tickets to concerts. The programming provided by the Department of Recreation and Parks as well as the Columbia Center for Theatrical Arts is accessible to those of all incomes and honors the vision of this community to provide opportunities for all of its residents.

The NCC space also promises to be an excellent venue for the many fundraisers that are critical to our nonprofit community. It will provide much-needed beautiful and flexible space for a wide variety of events that will be attractive to both donors and sponsors.

I understand the need for fiscal restraint. However, the need for this project far outweighs the risk involved. It has been carefully crafted. Failure to approve this project will result in the loss of \$2 million that has been spent on predevelopment and the loss of the cornerstone of the Downtown development.

Show your commitment to providing opportunities for all of our residents. Honor the County's agreement and the faith that the State has shown. Create a truly beautiful and functional cornerstone to Downtown Columbia by supporting the funding for the New Cultural Center/Artists Flats

Thank you.

Joan

Joan Driessen
Executive Director
Association of Community Services of Howard County
9770 Patuxent Woods Drive, Suite 301
Columbia, MD 21046
www.acshoco.org
(443) 518-7701 (office)
(443-255-7427 (cell)





**HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION**

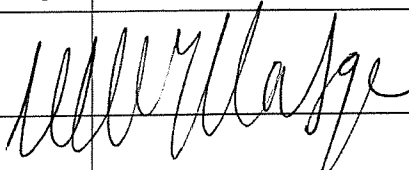
I, Hiruy Hadgu, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Howard County Citizens Association to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding CB55-2020, CB56-2020, and TAO1-2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

CB55 CB56 TAO1
support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Hiruy Hadgu

Signature: 

Date: 10/19/2020

Organization: Howard County Citizens Association

Organization Address: P.O. Box 89, Ellicott City, MD 21041

P.O. Box 89, Ellicott City, MD 21041

Number of Members: 500

Name of Chair/President: Stuart Kohn

*This form can be submitted electronically via email to
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the
Public Hearing.*

Testimony before County Council
10-19-2020

Agenda: TAO1-FY2021
Testimony of Jean Weller
Stance: For

Toby's Dinner Theater is not just a Cultural Entertainment establishment. For 48 years Toby has been the founder and director of "The Columbia Center for the Theatrical Arts". This non-profit 501c3 organization has supported youth theatrical arts programs both in and beyond the County.

They offer excellent professional theater arts training for young children through teens as well as presenting free programs for at risk and lower income youth in the Baltimore area. In addition, they offer free musical arts programs for children and young adults with Special Needs both in and beyond the schools in Howard County.

My son Paul has multiple disabilities and participated in New Horizons for a few shows, which performed once at Toby's Dinner Theater. These are designed to develop social, emotional, and language skills, and they brought out the budding comedian in him.

The Community should be thankful that Toby's Dinner Theater wants to be a major part of this Cultural Arts Center knowing it will continue to thrive for all the ways Toby has already contributed to the community in the theatrical arts in addition to the excellent Theater performances she brings to our community. The Dinner Theater gets such tremendous support from business leaders and families in our community because of the excellent performances by children, youth, and adults as well as Toby's huge artistic impact on our community and beyond.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

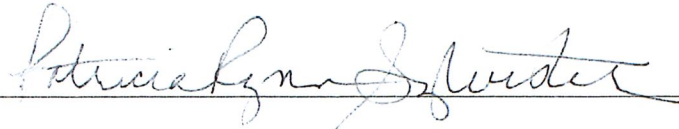
I, Patricia Sylvester, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding TAO01-2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / ~~opposition to~~ / ~~request to amend~~ this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Patricia Rynn Sylvester

Signature: 

Date: 10/19/2020

Organization: Columbia Downtown Housing Corporation

Organization Address: 9820 Patuxent Woods Dr, Suite 224 Columbia MD 21046

9820 Patuxent Woods Dr, Suite 224 Columbia MD 21046

Number of Members: 12

Name of Chair/President: Patricia Rynn Sylvester

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Rev. Mary Ka Nippard Kanahan, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

P.A.T.H. (People Acting Together in Howard) to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding TAO1-FY2021(in support) to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Rev. Mary Ka Nippard Kanahan,

Signature: _____

Date: October 18, 2019

Organization: P.A.T.H.

Organization Address: Columbia, Maryland 21045

Columbia, Maryland 21045

Number of Members: 13 organizations representing 20K residents

Name of Chair/President: Rev. Paige Getty and Rev. Tyrone Jones, clergy co-chairs

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 2 hours prior to the start of the Public Hearing.

Sayers, Margery

From: Keana Turner <keanaturner@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, October 16, 2020 3:45 PM
To: CouncilMail
Subject: [Possible Scam Fraud]affordable housing

[Note: This email originated from outside of the organization. Please only click on links or attachments if you know the sender.]

WARNING: Your email security system has determined the message below may be a potential threat.

The sender may trick victims into passing bad checks on their behalf.

If you do not know the sender or cannot verify the integrity of the message, please do not respond or click on links in the message. Depending on the security settings, clickable URLs may have been modified to provide additional security.

good afternoon. My name is Keana Turner and I am writing this email to testify the reason to approve the affordable housing project. People that live in Howard County are looking for a safe place to raise their family at an affordable rate. Howard County is home to many low-income citizens who also work in a place where transportation is needed. Approving the project would be beneficial because it will help many low income citizens be able to not only find affordable housing but are able to be close to many transportation lines. I am a single mom with 2 young kids who live in Howard County. I was homeless for some time until I found housing through bridges to housing. Now I live in Elkridge. Most housing here in Howard County requires a 2 person-income. Approving the project would be much beneficial for single parents around this county who live and work in Howard County. Thank you for your time and consideration.



HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
AFFIDAVIT OF AUTHORIZATION
TO TESTIFY ON BEHALF OF AN ORGANIZATION

I, Peter Engel, have been duly authorized by
(name of individual)

the Howard County Housing Commission to deliver testimony to the
(name of nonprofit organization or government board, commission, or task force)

County Council regarding TAO1-FY2021 to express the organization's
(bill or resolution number)

support for / opposition to / request to amend this legislation.
(Please circle one.)

Printed Name: Peter Engel

Signature: 

Date: 10/14/2020

Organization: Howard County Housing Commission

Organization Address: Columbia, MD 21046

Columbia, MD 21046

Number of Members: N/A

Name of Chair/President: Elizabeth Homan

This form can be submitted electronically via email to councilmail@howardcountymd.gov no later than 5pm the day of the Public Hearing or delivered in person the night of the Public Hearing before testifying.