



## THE SENATOR COMMUNITY TRUST, LLC

*Preserving a Baltimore Legacy*

April 10, 2009

Johns Hopkins, Executive Director  
Baltimore Heritage  
11 W Chase Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
Via e-mail: hopkins@baltimoreheritage.org

RE: CHAP Interior Landmark Hearing and The Senator Theatre

Dear Johns,

I am writing to express The Senator Community Trust's concern about the CHAP Interior Landmark Hearing in mid-April concerning the imposition of Interior Landmark restrictions on the The Senator Theatre. I understand that your Board Meeting is scheduled for Monday, and I would like to suggest that you include this important issue on your agenda.

As an architect, I am a firm believer in preservation controls and landmarks, however, in this case, I do not have enough information to know if the CHAP Interior Landmark is a benefit or not, from an owner or community point of view. This unique situation and rushed procedure has raised some serious concerns by The Senator Community Trust:

- The Senator is privately owned, not a public building.
- The owner did not request and was not involved in any discussions or the decision to initiate such an interior landmark designation.
- We understand that the rules for interior protection are not even developed yet. Developing such regulations and guidelines would seem to be a prerequisite to initiating such a designation. The hearing date was posted one working day before the Senator Theatre's Town Hall Meeting about transitioning to a nonprofit and the Landmark Hearing is scheduled one week before the scheduled foreclosure Auction of the Senator Theatre, which is being initiated by the same governmental entity which is pushing the Interior Landmark designation.

As far as I am aware, CHAP has not designated any other interior in the City for such Interior Landmark status, even though any number of architectural interiors in the City could be considered more significant and worthy of protection.

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All of this raises red flags as to the good faith and motivation for the designation and the Hearing timing. As you know, the closure of The Senator Theatre, for any amount of time, has immediate negative consequences for many, especially the surrounding businesses and residences, and the surrounding communities, the City of Baltimore and the State of Maryland.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to obtain clear information from our City representatives about what is intended, exacerbating the trust issue. In fact, the City's Steering Committee has not included community representation, and instead our information is that the City is not working toward keeping the doors open, nor do they expect to consult with community representatives about what use may be made of the building after the City forecloses.

Thank you for your timely attention to this matter, and please feel free to contact me about these concerns. I am traveling through Monday evening and my cell phone number is 410-978-2432. In the case that I am not available, Sean Brescia may be available to discuss this with you (CELL 202-420-0673), as he has been more involved with the discussions between The Senator Theatre's owner and the City and may be much better at answering specific questions.

Respectfully,

Laura Penza  
*on behalf of*  
The Senator Community Trust

cc. Sean Brescia, Clearpath Management  
The Senator Community Trust

***About The Senator Community Trust***

*To foster the vision of The Senator Theatre as a community-based non-profit organization, a group of local community and business leaders has organized The Senator Community Trust. The Senator Community Trust has as its mission the preservation, protection and restoration of Baltimore's cherished landmark, the historic Senator Theatre. The Senator Community Trust (SCT) is working with theatre management toward a community-based change in ownership, with the potential for community ownership, of the theatre building.*

*The SCT recognizes the need for the community to take leadership in implementation of the vision establish The Senator as the premiere community-based entertainment and educational venue in the area and we intend to do everything in our power to see that the vision comes to fruition. The Senator Community Trust has applied for 501(c)3 status and donations made to The Senator Community Trust will be provisionally tax deductible pending our approval of our 501(c)3 status by the IRS (application currently pending; please check with your tax advisor).*

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