

BALTIMORE HERITAGE

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Executive Director

March 11, 2010

The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor, Baltimore City
City Hall, Room 250
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, MD 21202

Re: Historic Preservation Experience Needed on the BDC

Dear Mayor Rawlings-Blake:

I want first to convey our enthusiasm for your new administration and offer my assistance and the assistance of Baltimore Heritage wherever we can be helpful. We are partnering with various city agencies to support the proposed Red Line transit project, housing and community development initiatives in Harlem Park, and many efforts by the city's preservation commission and planning department in neighborhoods throughout Baltimore. I would be eager to talk to you further about these or other areas of potential partnerships.

I am writing today, however, to share one concern that we have with the structure of the Baltimore Development Corporation, namely that there are no representatives from Baltimore's historic preservation community on the organization's board of directors. The BDC is charged with working in historic areas and on historic buildings throughout the city, and this lack of preservation experience has resulted in decisions and decision-making processes that are unnecessarily controversial and we believe often imprudent.

The Senator Theater is a recent example of where the lack of preservation perspective is ham-stringing the BDC. Letters to you from the Theatre Historical Society of America and the Friends of the Senator Theater request

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that the city add someone with experience in redeveloping historic theaters to the review panel that will decide on the competing proposals. We support these requests and concur that someone with preservation and historic theater experience is a necessary component to review proposals for this historic landmark.

The Superblock is another ongoing example of where the BDC would benefit from having a board member with historic preservation experience. For too long this critical area downtown has languished as proposals have ignored the preservation requirements for the site and its redevelopment potential based on preserving the historic buildings. A leadership team that includes a preservation voice would help get redevelopment on the site going.

As you formulate and implement the programs and priorities for your administration, I urge you to examine the composition of the BDC board and work to add a voice for historic preservation. I firmly believe that this will improve the integrity of the decision-making process and help speed preservation and redevelopment projects that the BDC handles every day.

Sincerely,



Johns Hopkins
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Jack Young
Mr. M. J. Brodie
Ms. Kathleen Kotarba
Mr. Tyler Gearhart