

Name That Tune

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Council members got their first crack at County Executive *Isiah Leggett's* deal to bring a music club to Silver Spring during a briefing Tuesday on the agreement with music producer Live Nation. The session was at times testy, humorous and probing.

Patrick Lacefield, a spokesman for Leggett (D), said the administration was "very pleased by the council's reaction and we're moving ahead. It seemed like we found good support."

The administration appeared to have the general backing of council members Duchy Trachtenberg, Valerie Ervin, [Nancy Floreen](#) (D-At Large) and [Phil Andrews](#) (D-Rockville-Gaithersburg), who called it a "moneymaker for the county."

But at least three other members -- Marc Elrich, [Roger Berliner](#) (D-Potomac-Bethesda) and [Marilyn Praisner](#) (D-Eastern County) sounded unconvinced. Elrich and Berliner criticized Leggett for not seeking other proposals to ensure the best deal for taxpayers before signing on with Live Nation.

Elrich also questioned the benefit to downtown Silver Spring, accusing the administration of "hyping the economic benefit of this project," an assertion county Chief Administrative Officer [Timothy Firestine](#) disputed. Firestine also warned of the risk that the property could remain "vacant for another 13 years" if the council rejects funding for the project.

The most heated exchange of the afternoon came when Berliner took up the cause of [Seth Hurwitz](#), the owner of the District's 9:30 club, who lives in Berliner's district and wanted a shot at running the music

club planned for the old J.C. Penney site on Colesville Road. Berliner and Firestine volleyed back-and-forth with stern words. "Why would you ignore a prominent member of our community? Why wouldn't you pick up the phone and say, 'Talk to us. I'm serious,' " Berliner asked Firestine.

"Why didn't you ask that question when we brought this to you twice before," Firestine responded.

To which Berliner replied, "I'm sorry, I'm not negotiating on behalf of the county executive."

On a lighter note, the discussion also revealed the musical preferences of some of the council members. Leventhal, who described himself as "on the fence" about the deal, recalled fondly his days of attending shows at the 9:30 club "when I was young, single and cute."

Looking on from the front of the hearing room was *Bruce H. Lee*, president of Lee Development Group, the Silver Spring company that intends to donate the land for the project. Seated in the back row was Hurwitz, dressed uncharacteristically in a coat and tie, with his spokeswoman and two lawyers. After the briefing, Hurwitz said, "The conclusion today was that there was no process. The question is, will they go back and correct it?"

In Hurwitz's view, "there is plenty of time to go back and correct this."

Just before the briefing began Leggett got a boost from the real estate development partnership behind the revitalization of downtown Silver Spring. In a letter to council members and Montgomery's legislative delegation, developer *Bryant Foulger* called Live Nation an "iconic presence" that he said would bring notoriety to Silver Spring. "Live Nation will add to the wonderful reality that is Silver Spring," wrote Foulger, principal of Foulger-Pratt Cos. "Let the music play!"