



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Department of Parks and Recreation

6600 Kenilworth Avenue Riverdale, Maryland 20737

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April 30, 2009

Mr. Thomas J. Slezak, President
University Hills Area Civic Association
3433 Stanford Street
Hyattsville, Maryland 20783

Dear Mr. Slezak:

This is in response to your April 7, 2009, correspondence regarding the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's annual Hispanic Festival held at Lane Manor Park. I reviewed the ten surveys that were attached to your letter and have forwarded copies to staff who organize the festival.

The Commission strives to celebrate the County's rich diversity. Special events such as the Annual Hispanic Festival, the South County's Philippine Celebration in August and this weekend's Asian Pacific events allow us to embrace and celebrate the resources and talents of many Prince George's County residents.

The two major concerns highlighted in your letter were the size of the festival and the parking/accessibility issues. Our goal is not to increase the attendance of the festival but instead to provide a venue for residents to honor and share their culture in a safe and festive setting. Over the past ten years, the attendance at the festival has remained steady and even declining in years when the weather has not cooperated. Additionally, surveys have confirmed that the majority of festival attendees are not only Prince George's County residents, but neighbors who reside in the Hyattsville area. Thus, the Lane Manor Park location seems to be the best fit for this festival's size and attendees.

We have, and will continue to work each year on improving parking and access to the park. In 2008, we worked with both the Maryland-National Capital Park Police and the Prince George's County Police to only allow vehicular traffic in the surrounding neighborhood to residents. Additionally, "NO PARKING" signs were put up along other roads where traffic could not be limited in order to alleviate parking issues.

Please contact Northern Area Division Chief, Joe O'Neill to set up a meeting with the Department staff and the University Hills Area Civic Association to address any other issues you may have in preparation for this year's festival scheduled to be held on Sunday, September 20, 2009. Mr. O'Neill can be reached at (301) 445-4500.

Mr. Thomas J. Slezak, President

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Again, thank you for sharing your comments and we look forward to working with you collaboratively to resolve your concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ronnie Gathers", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the left.

Ronnie Gathers, Director

Department of Parks and Recreation

c: Julie Forker, Deputy Director
Joseph O'Neill, Division Chief
Chris Robinson, Program Superintendent