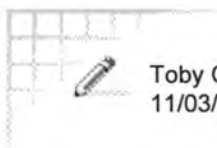


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Prez vs. GOP on Hil's
Pet Music Museum

By TIMOTHY J. BURGER
Daily News Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON

resident Clinton is battling GOP budgeteers for \$3 million in pork for a new music museum that might house the archives of Frank Sinatra and Duke Ellington — a pet project of First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, GOP aides said yesterday.

Administration officials lobbying for the seed money to start the National Museum of American Music have said the First Lady "wanted this for her legacy to the people of the District of Columbia," a House GOP aide said.

"We've got that Rock and Roll Hall of Fame ... and many others. ... Mrs. Clinton should put our parents' Social Security before her own effort at a legacy. Isn't that why she's running for the Senate anyway?" another GOP leadership aide said.

Spokeswoman Marsha Berry denied that "this is anything she's looking at as a legacy.

"Mrs. Clinton lent her support — and Bob Dole did as well — to have a place to house the music treasures of this country."

The museum would be built with about \$60 million to \$70 million in private funds after taxpayers kick in \$3 million or so for design and other work. Republicans fear it will cost far more and need more federal funds.

Last year's federal budget provided \$300,000 in seed money, but White House budget director Jack Lew reportedly was lobbying yesterday for the \$3 million.

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RAW POWER

FEDERAL CITY COUNCIL STICKS IT TO MAYOR WILLIAMS

The fine print on the American Music Museum

When Anthony Williams ran for mayor last year, he gained crucial backing from members of the Federal City Council (FCC), the all-reaching, private group of business and civic leaders who play a powerful role in D.C. affairs, often with public money. After the FCC went behind D.C. officials this fall to try to gain congressional approval of its plan to build a music museum on the land now occupied by the Washington Convention Center, Williams may be wondering: with friends like these, who needs enemies?

Congress last year handed the FCC \$300,000, tucked away in the FY99 D.C. appropriations bill, to develop a proposal for a "National Museum of American Music" to be built in downtown D.C. Since the feds build and maintain national museums in the nation's capital, no one saw the need to run this project by the mayor and the D.C. Council.

The idea of the music museum, patterned after Cleveland's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, quickly became as popular as mom's apple

pie. Nancy Sinatra offered to donate her father's personal papers and recordings to the museum. And First Lady Hillary Clinton led the choir of voices singing out for the project.

But the proposal the FCC developed calls for taking the entire site of the current convention center for use as a "music museum complex" that would include a major hotel, a smaller boutique hotel, a Kennedy Center-like concert hall/theater, and, lastly, the music museum itself. The only problem is, the city, not the federal government, owns the valuable site, and city officials hope to sell the land to the high-

est bidder for much-needed cash once construction of a new convention center a few blocks away is completed.

The FCC's lobbyists quietly went back to Capitol Hill this past September seeking an additional \$3 million from Congress to "complete the planning phase for a National Museum and associated complex." Some saw this as the private group's power play to take control of the site away from the District government.

"When this thing went up, it became so clear they were trying to hijack the site," said a federal official who spent the fall searching through spending bills to figure out where the project was hidden. "This is a \$200 million piece of city-owned land they are messing around on, and



Illustration by Philip Chalk

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there's never been any public airing of their plan."

Finding the \$3-million project in the huge federal spending bills was like trying to find the pea under the shell. Backers couldn't put it in the D.C. appropriations bill because it would be too obvious there. And D.C. Congressional Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton didn't want anything in the bill that would stir up more controversy, and further delay approval of the District's annual budget.

So, with support from the White House, the \$3 million request got tucked away in the Department of Interior spending bill as the very last item in a long list of projects. The bill depicted the music museum as "an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institution," even though it will not be a Smithsonian Institution museum, once completed.

Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham, a member of the House D.C. appropriations subcommittee, objected to the request in the Interior bill, stating that the project should be funded through the mayor's office rather than a private group. After Cunningham, a California Republican, raised his objection, the

Interior appropriations subcommittee yanked the item from its bill.

But the FCC's lobbyist refused to bring down the curtain. At the 11th hour, they debuted their proposal in the mammoth spending bill for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and various related agencies. Rep. David Obey, ranking Democrat on the labor appropriations subcommittee, put the project in the bill at the request of Delegate Norton.

The price tag was slashed to \$2 million, and the description changed so that the money would go for the planning of "a museum in Washington, D.C.," to disguise and hide the project. However, the mayor's office soon learned of the proposal's rerun, and the request got yanked from the spending bill before it went to the House floor for passage.

Norton claims she was unaware that the FCC plans to use the current convention center site to build its proposed American music museum complex.

"If that's the case, that's a total surprise to me," she said in a recent interview. "Certainly no one can build or

propose to build on D.C. land without the city's permission."

Federal City Council officials are keeping mum about their plans to revive the project, but they haven't given up. The involvement of Host Marriott Corporation president and CEO Terence Golden, a key FCC backer of the music museum complex, raises speculation that a Marriott Hotel will be rising from that site one day.

And since the White House has assured Congress that no federal funds will be spent to build the museum, the developer will have to provide the money for the museum and concert hall/theater. That means the city will be expected to give tax breaks, or turn over the land for little or no cost, to see the project to completion.

"There are going to have to be freebies right on that site, and they (FCC officials) don't ask the city for any input," one city official notes with amazement.

The private group apparently feels it can stiff arm the city if it has the White House and Congress on its side.

—Ken Cummins

BUSINESS YIDDISH

Sometimes you find gems of wisdom in the darndest places. Recently, a microphone we planted over a year ago in the men's room of a McLean motorcycle club suddenly burst to life. Boy, were we shocked when we overheard this exchange:

"You'll never believe what that little *shlepper* [a jerk, a loser; rhymes with "pepper"] tried to pull on me. He told me that if I wanted to rent his building, I would have to sign personally. I told him that he could kiss my *tuchis* [a behind, a rear end; rhymes with "ruckus"]."

"You really showed that *putz* [a jerk, a yokel; rhymes with "ruts"] that you're no *schlemiel* [naive, gullible; rhymes with "reveal"]."

"You're darn right. In fact, I was so angry that I nearly *plotst* [exploded, infuriated; rhymes with "Watts"]!"

"You showed him. Now, let's *shlep* [travel; rhymes with "pep"] over to the deli for a corn beef on white bread with ketchup." [No translation possible.]

—WAR



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file
music
Museum

October 28, 1999

Jo-Anne L. Coe
Chief of Staff
Senator Bob Dole
901 15th Street, NW, Suite 410
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Jo-Anne:

Thank you for your letter regarding the National Music Museum. I appreciate learning of Bob's support for what sounds like a very interesting project.

As you know, we are in the final throes of hammering out a budget deal with the President. I really rely on Slade and Ralph Regula in the House to figure out the spending priorities in the Interior Appropriations bill. They are short on funds and long on projects.

If the Administration makes this a demand in its negotiations with us, that might change the dynamic. Otherwise, I'm afraid this will have to wait until next year.

With best wishes,

Cordially,


TED STEVENS

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