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October 6, 2012

Joan Braciak
Erie County Department of Environment & Planning
95 Franklin Street – 10th Floor
Buffalo, NY 14202

To Whom It May Concern:

As you are aware, in November of 2011, Springville Center for the Arts, Inc. received a grant of $25,000 for capital projects. The contract required information on how the grant monies were spent and photos by the end of 2011. Due to complications with State funding and contracts we are still waiting to be able to proceed with this project.

Our capital project is very complicated and historically sensitive. The grant centered around the installation of a new roof at our facility at 37 North Buffalo Street as well as other related exterior work. Upon receipt of the contract I spoke with Mr. Darren Kempner of the Department of Environment & Planning and informed him that given the late time in the year it was not possible to have the work accomplished by December 31st. This was both due to the weather at the time and the ability to secure the highly specialized historic preservation contractors with enough lead-time. We were advised to proceed as it became possible and a letter was sent to the Department explaining our predicament on December 27, 2011.

Springville Center for the Arts puts a lot of pride in using our contributions in the absolute way they were intended. Our original proposal and testimony before the legislature described the funds as part of a State Historic Preservation Office matching grant under the Environmental Protection Fund. Last year, two weeks before the EFP grant was due, the Governor made sweeping changes to the funding process that even SHPO staff members were surprised by. This new program, associated with the Regional Economic Development Council and under the Consolidated Funding Application Process, made fairly significant changes to the scoring of the applications, and to the surprise of SHPO officers, we were not successful.

The organization decided that the work had to proceed regardless and we went so far as to spend a small portion on architectural documents and receive quotes on the work. Within a few weeks, the State, in another surprising move, set another, earlier date for SHPO applications and at the very strong encouragement from the SHPO, we applied. An email, dated May 15 expressed our concerns about holding the County funding until this process could be completed but no advice was received.

The project was recently announced as a Priority Project by the Regional Economic Development Council. Empire State Development Funds were awarded to the project and we are awaiting the results from other agencies, which should be announced by the end of the month. Based on all available

information, the SHPO funds for this project are also highly likely to be received. No work may proceed until the contracts with the State may be issued.

It is our full intention to carry out the work as soon as is allowable by the State Historic Preservation Office. The County grant funds will be used exactly as originally described. The balance of these funds are being held in a restricted account. We are truly appreciative of this grant which allowed us to leverage so many more outside funds, albeit at a slower pace than anticipated.

Please contact me at 716-592-9037 if you have any concerns about this matter and if further action is needed at this time. We expect the work related to this grant to be completed within six months and a full report will be submitted at that time.

Sincerely,

E. Seth Wochensky
Executive Director