

Sept. 23, 2020

Dear Mayor Hollingsworth and Hyattsville Council Members,

I have been working with an organization, Route One Community Cares, and am respectfully requesting that the City Council approve a \$10,000 donation to support providing meals to those facing hunger in our local area. There is precedent for the City Council to use its financial resources in this way. It is my understanding that there are still funds left that were allocated to the COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Grants for Businesses. While we are not a business, perhaps some of the funds allocated to this Fund could be allocated for this cause.

ROCC is made up of volunteer residents who have been working with the adjacent communities of College Park, Riverdale, and University Park to address two issues; feeding those in need and utilizing local restaurants to provide meals. Utilizing local restaurants helps with the “bottom line” that has been impacted due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. To date our group has raised approximately \$11,000, mainly from private donors through the GoFundMe site linked to GreaterRiverdale Cares & Route 1 Communities Care. Riverdale's organization, which started much earlier, has raised approximately \$40,000 from both private and corporate sponsorship. College Park Town Council recently approved a \$10,000 donation and University Park is considering a \$10,000 donation as well. We are reaching out for Corporate donations as well.

In the process of determining how to meet our objective, we contacted others in the communities of College Park, University Park, Berwyn Heights, and Riverdale. We discovered that an organization in Riverdale—Central Kenilworth Avenue Revitalization CDC (CKAR)—had already developed a working model that could meet the needs of Route One Community Cares too. CKAR's program includes fund-raising, a high-quality website, four or five local restaurants that prepare meals, and various means of delivering these meals. Fortunately, given our shared goals and location, the CKAR Board agreed to a partnership between our organization with theirs. We have also been in touch with the College Park Partnership (Eric Olson) as well as the Campus Community Connection (Andy Fellows).

We have created a website called www.feedrouteone.org which highlights the restaurants utilized and our purpose. This site includes videos and ways to action.

The Need:

There is great need within Hyattsville, which is experiencing high unemployment and local restaurants struggling to keep their doors open. This need is exacerbated by the recent withdrawal of World Central Kitchen from Prince George's County. World Central Kitchen had been providing 17,000 meals weekly to Prince George's County residents. As harsh as their withdrawal seems, it was necessitated by even greater needs elsewhere.

Goal:

Provision of 1000 meals per week (CKAR has been achieving 500 meals per week working with four or five restaurants).

Participating Restaurants:

Riverdale: Banana Blossom, Denizens, Dumms Pizza and Bar-B-Que, Riviera Tapas.

Route One (New): Emerita's Papuseria, Shortcake Bakery, Crazy Kabob, Food Factory, Marathon Deli.

Others: Contact has been underway with numerous other possible participants.

We are prepared to bring this cause to your attention at the next Council Meeting. Ideally, Council Members would discuss this request ahead of time, and prepare a motion to approve this transfer of funds to CKAR-ROCC for this designated purpose. Please let me know if the Council would like to have us speak to this letter and I will ensure I, as well as one or two others, are available.

Sincerely Yours,

On behalf of the Members of ROCC,

Jim Groves, Ward 2