

**CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**Tuesday, January 30, 2024 Meeting Minutes**  
**Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority**

Pursuant to notice distributed to members of the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority, posted in the main entrance of the Western Maryland Railway Station, and circulated to the press, a meeting of the Authority was via Zoom from the Western Maryland Railway Station, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Cumberland, Maryland on Tuesday, January 30, 2024 at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom

**Authority Members Present:** Janice Keene; Rebecca Ruppert, Michael Mudge, Brad Nixon, Stu Czapski, Al Feldstein, and Ray Morriss.

**Staff Present:** Deidra Ritchie, Executive Director; Nicole Gray, Financial Manager; Adam Snyder, Legal Counsel, Kim Folk, Administrative Specialist/Marketing Director, and Crystal Lloyd, Administrative Aide.

**Others Present:** Chris Stevens, National Park Service; Representative for Tina Cappetta, Bill Atkinson, Allegany County Commissioner; Melinda Kelleher, Downtown Development Commission; Laurie Marchini, City of Cumberland; Eugene Frazier, City of Cumberland; Nikki Shields, WMSR; Mandela Echefu, Wheelsup Adventures; and a representative from WCBC Radio Station.

**I. CALL TO ORDER & CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

Mrs. Keene called the meeting to order at 1:35 PM.

**II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND FINANCIALS**

The following motion was offered by Al Feldstein.

**RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the November 28, 2023, open session (Attachment #1) be approved as submitted.**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Mudge and unanimously approved.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Morriss.

**RESOLVED, that the closed session minutes of the November 28, 2023, closed session (Attachment #2) be approved as submitted.**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Feldstein and unanimously approved.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein.

**RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the December 19, 2023, open session (Attachment #3) be approved as submitted.**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Nixon and unanimously approved.

Miss Gray reviewed the Expense report (**Attachment #4**), for November and December 2023 (FY24), and the Revenue report (**Attachment#5**), for November and December 2023 (FY24).

Miss Gray stated that expenses for November and December were elevated due to payroll for our new hire Kim Folk. Included in those totals are a new computer and items for her office set up. Canal Place went through the annual inspection of the fire extinguishers, emergency lights, and the sprinkler system, and Crabby Pig had their annual exhaust system inspection which was a sizable expense. A second payment was made to WVU for the Economic Impact Study (\$14,000), and Acorn Hill Strategies received their second payment (\$5,200.00). Miss Gray noted that at this time we only have one tenant who is late on their rent payments. Miss Gray noted that Canal Place revenue is elevated due to the two MHAA grants that were received. One in the amount of \$45,000 which is the first installment for sediment testing, and one grant in the amount of \$38,000.00 for additional items that Ms. Ritchie will discuss during the River Park under old business items on the agenda. ParkMobile app is live, and we have begun to receive revenue for hourly parking and for the purchase of parking permits for long term parking. Ms. Gray noted that additional permits are available for purchase at the Harrison Street lot.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein

**RESOLVED, that the Financial Expense statements for November and December 2023, and the Revenue statements for November and December 2023 be approved as distributed.**

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ruppert and unanimously approved.

### III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ritchie highlighted her Executive Director's Report (**Attachment #6**), by stating:

- FY24 mini grants are now being accepted on a first come first served basis until funds are no longer available. Please visit our website at [passagesofthepotomac.org](http://passagesofthepotomac.org) for more information.
- Staff volunteered at the Winter Festival that was held in cooperation with the Downtown Development Commission and Canal Place. The festival was so successful that we will be holding a second winter festival in 2024.
- HVAC systems are being replaced at the Shops at Canal Place.
- Attended several Maryland Heritage Area Coalition meetings as well as Maryland Heritage Areas Authority meetings.
- Participated in a meeting with the Mayor of Ridgeley, State Highway Administration, and Koontz Electric to discuss cost of lights of the Blue Bridge.
- Attended Maryland Tourism Council's Legislative meetings.
- Breezeline fiber installation work continued through December and early January, at Canal Place. We are now awaiting the next phase of the fiber installation.
- Attended Tourism Day in Annapolis on February 9<sup>th</sup>.
- Budget testimony scheduled for February 22, 2024 in Annapolis.

#### **IV. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE**

Chris Stevens stated that the NPS has received Maryland's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding for 2024. The procurement process will begin for the resurfacing of the last 12 miles of the tow path which will occur towards the end of 2024. Graffiti violation signs have been ordered for the Paw Paw and the Cumberland Visitor Centers. Mr. Stevens requested an update on the River Park Project. Ms. Ritchie noted she would discuss the River Park under old business items on the agenda.

#### **V. OLD BUSINESS**

- **River Park/WVU Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that she and Mrs. Folk attended the Positive Attitudes Change Everything) PACE reception in Annapolis and Civil Environmental Consultants (CEC) set up a display promoting the River Park Project. There was an overwhelming amount of positive responses from attendees. Ms. Ritchie stated she spoke at the reception presenting information about outdoor recreation portion of the seminars and was able to provide details about the River Park Project and answer questions about the project going forward. Attached to meeting documents is a new design of the River Park map. Concerns have been brought forward regarding the removal of the dam and how it will affect the water level of the river. A portion of the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) was available before the PACE event and we are awaiting the completed report from the Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Ritchie further stated that the total to complete the River Park Project is now estimated at \$25 million. The search for a project manager is ongoing. The engineering build design bid will be advertised in April 2024, and the RFP for the sediment testing will be advertised in May 2024. Ms. Ritchie concluded that the construction completion date is expected for the November 2027 timeframe. Ms. Ritchie addressed the question posed by Chris Stevens from NPS regarding how the River Park will affect the C&O Canal and the NPS. Once the draft report is presented by the CEC regarding the removal of the dam, all involved parties, (federal and state) will be contacted. Canal Place will not move forward with permits without consulting with all agencies involved. Ms. Ritchie announced a public meeting scheduled for a date in March to be announced.

- **PWPHA Expansion Survey Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that there are still some board members who need to complete the survey which is due by February 12, 2024, and noted that she has expanded the list of survey to a broader audience in Allegany County. Completion of this survey is extremely critical as information gathered will assist with moving forward with the expansion plan for the heritage area.

- **Marketing Strategies Update**

Mrs. Folk stated that the migration of the website to the new host has been completed and that numerous changes on the back end are happening as well. Most of the changes are organizational in nature. First, and foremost, there is a dedicated dropdown for the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area, and one for Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority. Mrs. Folk discussed the Map-Based Medusa online mapping tool that was launched by the Maryland Historical Trust that has enhanced searching for properties within the heritage area. Mrs. Folk noted there are many upcoming changes coming to our website to include a donation button, and she further noted that we continue to increase followers on our social platforms including Instagram.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- **Ethics Filing/Conflict of Interest Forms 2024**

Miss Gray stated that six board members have completed their ethic filing requirement and urged the remaining members to complete their filing as soon as possible. The Conflict of Interest Forms for 2024 are due as well. Miss Gray, Ms. Ritchie and our legal counsel met to potentially make changes to these forms, and those changes will be announced once they have been made.

- **MHAA Grants Open**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the MHAA Grants are open and the deadline to apply is March 4, 2024. The MHAA FY25 Grant Info Session was held virtually on January 16, 2024 due to the inclement weather.

- **Ratification for approval of the Mini Grant for Allegany Museum for the Architect Design of Creative Expression Center (\$3,350).**

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein

**RESOLVED, the approval of the Mini Grant for Allegany Museum**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Mudge and unanimously approved.

- **Ratification for approval of the Mini Grant for Frostburg Museum for the Interpretive Format Signs and Panels for Window Spaces (\$1,429).**

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein

**RESOLVED, the approval of the Mini Grant Frostburg Museum**

The motion was seconded by Mr. Nixon and unanimously approved.

- **Commissioner Bill Atkinson Presentation**

Mr. Atkinson stated a copy of the conceptual design of the proposed amphitheater to be located on the festival ground area was sent out electronically to those attending this board meeting today. Adrienne Jones, the House Speaker for the State of Maryland, visited Western Maryland last Fall, and specifically visited Cumberland and made a stop at Canal Place. Speaker Jones was impressed by the festival grounds as a potential location for the amphitheater to be named in memory of former Maryland House Speaker, Casper R. Taylor, Jr. Steve Chaney of Chaney Architects Construction & Development has presented the conceptual design of the proposed amphitheater to Mr. Atkinson for review. Mr. Atkinson noted that this is the first step for the project as it will require a funding source, a revised design, and the board of director's approval. Lastly, Mr. Atkinson stated that he has been in contact with the Department of General Services (DGS) proposing that Allegany County take over ownership of the Shops at Canal Place and give the shop owners the option of purchasing the property. A discussion ensued regarding this topic.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Feldstein stated that he believes that Interstate 68 should be viewable on the map. Mr. Stevens stated that the map that was presented was a snapshot of medusa interactive map, and that Interstate 68 is visible upon zooming in on the screen.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Keene adjourned the meeting at 2:34 P.M. and board members unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Keene

Chair