

**CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**Tuesday, March 28, 2023 Meeting Minutes**  
**Via Zoom Western Maryland Railway Station, Third Floor Conference Room**  
**Cumberland, Maryland**

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 held via Zoom at the Western Maryland Railway Station, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Cumberland, Maryland, on March 28, 2023.

**Authority Members Present:** Janice Keene; Rebecca Ruppert, Ray Morriss, Jeremy Bender, Bradford Nixon and Al Feldstein (by phone), Bob Smith (by phone).

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

**Others Present:** Bryan Gowans, WCBC Radio; Melinda Kelleher, Downtown Development Commission; Anthony Bates, National Park Service; Ian Gray, National Park Service.

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

Mrs. Keene called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM., and asked that the meeting minutes (open and closed minutes) from the last board meeting of January 31, 2023 be reviewed for any questions or concerns.

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

The following motion was offered by Bob Smith.

**RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the January 31, 2023, open session (Attachment #1) be approved as submitted.**

The motion was seconded by Mayor Ray Morriss and unanimously approved.

The following motion was offered by Rebecca Ruppert.

**RESOLVED, that the closed session minutes of the January 31, 2023, closed session be approved as submitted.**

The motion was seconded by Mayor Ray Morriss and unanimously approved.

Miss Gray reviewed the Revenue sheet (**Attachment #3**), and the monthly Financial Expense report for the months of January and February 2023 (**Attachment#4**), and noted that the only out of the ordinary expenses on this report is the travel related costs for the Mountain Maryland Pace Reception held in Annapolis in January and the cost of building and road repairs and janitorial supplies based on the work being done at WheelsUp Bike Shop. Miss Gray anticipates that we should be receiving the bill for the flooring that was replaced at WheelsUp as well. On the revenue side, Senator Edwards office remains vacant, and we continue to advertise the vacancy on LoopNet. We have two (2) tenants who are late on their rent and they have indicated that they will be caught up by the end of March. Mr. Bender inquired about which tenants were late and Ms. Gray looked to our legal counsel, Adam Snyder, for approval to disclose the tenant names. At this time, Charis Winery and Dig Deep Eatery are the two (2) tenants who are late on their rent to Canal Place.

The following motion was offered by Jeremy Bender and unanimously approved.

**RESOLVED, that the Financial and Revenue statements for January and February FY23 be approved as distributed.**

The motion was seconded by Rebecca Ruppert and unanimously approved.

### **III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Ms. Ritchie highlighted her Executive Director's Report (**Attachment #5**), from the January and February 2023 Executive Directors report by stating that things the past couple months here at Canal Place have been busy. Staff has been busy with time-sensitive reports due to the state. Ms. Ritchie stated that the majority of her focus has been with grants for the Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA). The grants review committee will meet on April 5 to assess and score the submitted grants. The management grants and the mini block grants are not due until the end of April and that they have been complete and are ready for

submission. The 5-year management plan for the heritage area were due the middle of March and an extension was requested. A request for a 2-year plan has been successfully completed. Ms. Ritchie met with Rocky Gap regarding a shuttle service from Canal Place to Rocky Gap that will begin in April. Canal Place received notification of the \$250,000 award for the engineering, permitting, and design of the River Park. In addition, Ms. Ritchie stated she attended several Maryland Heritage Area Coalition meetings and the contract was signed for the electric car charging stations and the parking kiosks.

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

Mr. Anthony Bates reported that the park is going to apply for Transportation Alternative Program grant for 15-mile creek to the Paw Paw tunnel. The Paw Paw tunnel project should be completed by the Summer. The towpath is still closed downstream and updates will be posted on the park service website. The visitor centers in both Cumberland and Williamsport are now open Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Mr. Bates introduced the new park ranger, Ian Gray, who is on the call today. Mr. Gray indicated that he has been with the park service for 2 months and is from the central Pennsylvania area and is somewhat familiar with this area.

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

- **River Park Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that Comptroller Brooke Lierman visited Cumberland for the ground-breaking ceremony for the renovations known as Reimagine Cumberland on Baltimore Street and then was able to tour Canal Place property. She added that we are in the process of working on the preliminary engineer reports for the dam removal project courtesy of the City of Cumberland. This report is due in July. In the meantime, Ms. Ritchie mentioned that she has applied for 3 additional federal earmark grants for the removal of the dam, and has written another grant through the Maryland Heritage Area Authority for sediment testing totaling \$200,000. A funding meeting was held between the City of Cumberland, Allegany County and Canal Place and the consensus is that all agree that there will be enough money for the entire engineering and design work for the completion of the River Park. Ms. Ritchie went on to say that the plan is to hire a consultant to oversee the River Park project with a background in engineering and grant writing projects. A meeting was held with the State Highway Administration (SHA) representatives to determine the scope of work and how the \$6 million earmark was going to be

spent. The earmark requires a \$1.5 million match and a request will be made through the supplemental budget FY24. A request was submitted that a match be put in with our operating budget so that we can move forward with the project.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

- **Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area Expansion**

Ms. Ritchie stated that we have been meeting with Acorn Hill Strategies, LLC over the past several months in relation to the county wide heritage area expansion. At this time, the heritage is 1.67 miles and our goal are to expand by adding all the significant resources in that will tell the story of our Allegany County heritage. Meeting and luncheon tomorrow at the Allegany Museum for stakeholders, followed by on-site visits to include 2 on-site visits on Thursday, March 30.

- **New Rates for Events at Canal Place**

Ms. Ritchie stated that research was done with local vendors to determine their rates for renting out their facilities for various local events. She added that we certainly welcome the opportunity to have the festival grounds and other property here at Canal Place utilized to capacity, but we don't want to lose money in the process. Maintenance staff rates have increased approximately 5 percent, and the increase of the Consumer Price Index has caused an overall increase in the supplies we use to keep up with the maintenance of our property. No questions were brought up and Mrs. Keene suggested the board members vote on this subject.

### **Ratification of Vote for the Approval of Proposed New Rates for Events at Canal Place.**

The following motion was offered by Bob Smith.

#### **RESOLVED, ratification of vote for the approval of proposed new rates for events at Canal Place**

The motion was seconded by Al Feldstein and unanimously approved.

## **VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Al Feldstein asked about the Friday After Five concert series and heard they would continue to be held on the mall. Melinda Kelleher from the Downtown Development Commission confirmed that they would take place near Mezzo's located on South Centre Street to help ensure that local shops won't lose business during the mall renovation. She also brought up the Farmer's Market that would be held at Canal Place every Thursday beginning April 27<sup>th</sup>. Spring Fling to be held at Canal Place on April 8<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Keene called to adjourn meeting if there were no further questions.

#### **VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE**

The next meeting of the Canal Place Authority is scheduled for Tuesday, May 30, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

#### **X. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Ray Morriss offered a motion to adjourn the open session.

The motion was seconded by Jeremy Bender and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:56 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Janice Keene,  
Chair