

CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, May 28, 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, 3rd Floor, Cumberland, Maryland on Tuesday, May 28, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Others Present: Chris Stevens, National Park Service; Representative for Tina Cappetta

I. CALL TO ORDER & CHAIRMAN’S REMARKS

Mrs. Keene called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND FINANCIALS

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein.

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the January 30, 2024, open session (Attachment #1), be approved as submitted.

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

The following motion was offered by Mr. Nixon.

RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the February 16, 2024 (Attachment #2) be approved as submitted.

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

The following motion was offered by Mr. Nixon.

RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the March 6, 2024, open session (Attachment #3) be approved as submitted.

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

Miss Gray reviewed the Expense report (**Attachment #5**), for January, February, March and April 2024 (FY24), and the Revenue report (**Attachment#6**), for January, February, March, and April 2024 and stated that there were three (3) pay periods in January, and two (2) pay periods in February, March, and April. Due to a credit card issue in December 2023, payments were delayed until January and February which inflated those expense totals. An overcharge on the Verizon phone bill is shown as a credit for the months of March and April and a portion of May. Notable expenses include payments to DoIT, Office of the Attorney General, budget software, State Treasurer's Office for insurance payments, down payment for upcoming audits, the final payment to WVU for the Impact Study, snow removal, and mini-grants. Revenue updates include all tenant rents are paid on time, and one (1) tenant is past due. Jasmina Hair Salon expanded from Space C-2 to include Space C-3 which took effect on May 1, 2024, but she paid her rent and security deposit for Space C-3 had paid in advance on April 8, 2024. Miss Gray stated that ParkMobile revenue is consistent, and we currently have 7 paying parking permit holders in our Harrison Street Lot, and we have an additional 20 parking spaces available for rent. Miss Gray stated we are hoping to rent those spaces out as well.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein.

RESOLVED, that the Financial Expense statements and the Revenue statements for January, February, March and April 2024 (FY24) be approved as distributed.

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

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ritchie highlighted her Executive Director's Report (**Attachment #7**), by stating:

- Congratulations to Kim Folk, our Marketing and Media Director, for becoming an official State of Maryland employee effective July 1, 2024. Kim was originally hired as a contractual employee and has since been assigned a pin position here at Canal Place.
- Fiber has successfully been installed on the outside of the building, but we are having difficulty replacing the original vendor who was to install the fiber inside the building. We have had several vendors look at the job, and are awaiting an answer from them to find out if they are interested in taking on the project.
- March, April and May have been spent on preparing MHAA project grants, which include updating the management plan goals and objectives, along with reviewing other applicants' project grants.
- The main parking lot and the satellite parking lot at Canal Place has been freshly seal-coated and striped. New speed bumps will be installed.
- HVAC continues to be installed at the Shops at Canal Place.
- Met with James Hortskamp in regards to installing solar throughout the CPPDA grounds.
- Notice the Events Calendar for events taking place on Canal Place through the end of July.

IV. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE

Chris Stevens stated that the C& O Canal Trust is exploring adding additional historic structures to its Canal Quarters Program west of Lockhouse 49, which is the current most westernmost quarters. Additional properties are being looked at in Oldtown and a location near Hancock. A project is underway at the park to plan for the stabilization of the Evitts Creek Aqueduct. The current stabilization measure was installed in the 1970's, and have not been stabilized since the time of installation. CEC (Civil Engineers and Consultant held a River Park presentation on April 17th. Jim Christie and Colin McCardle with CEC were both in attendance

for this presentation, and Mr. Stevens believes the information presented was well received by attendees.

V. OLD BUSINESS

• River Park Update

Ms. Ritchie stated the John DiFonzo with the City of Cumberland has written the Request for Proposal (RFP) for sediment testing and it will be ready to send once all appropriate state documents are attached. It is expected that the RFP for the sediment testing will be sent out the week of June 3rd.

• PWPHA Expansion Update

Ms. Ritchie stated that Acorn Hill consultants are moving along with the management plan update and the heritage area expansion. Surveys and interviews have been conducted with board members and stakeholders. On July 30th we will be holding our board meeting prior to Acorn Hill presenting to the board the management 5-year plan strategy update. We are currently working under a three (3) year management plan. Ms. Ritchie stated that she cannot emphasize the importance of all board members being present for this meeting so that Acorn Hill can complete their management plan for the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area. This meeting will take place at the Evergreen Heritage Center and there is no connectivity at this location, therefore, Zoom will not be available for this meeting.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

• Maintenance Contract Renewal

Miss Gray stated that Tim Martin d/b/a Tim Martin Home Improvements requested a five (5) percent increase to renew his maintenance contract with Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority. The request for FY25 is \$165,375,00, which is an increase of five (5) percent over last year (FY24). Mrs. Keene asked if there were any questions, to which there were none, and asked for a motion to approve Mr. Martin's request.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein.

RESOLVED, the request to renew the maintenance contract between Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority and Tim Martin d/b/a Tim Martin Home Improvements.

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

- **Ratification for approval of the Mini Grant for Allegany Tourism for Mountain Maryland Museum Week (\$4,149).**
- **Ratification for approval of the Mini Grant for Emmanuel Episcopal Grand Opening Wills Creek Museum (\$4,000).**
- **Ratification for approval of the Mini Grant for Handel's Messiah (\$2,875.00).**
- **Ratification for approval of the Mini Grant for ACHS-Wills Creek Muster Living History Area at Heritage Days 2024 (\$5,000).**

The following motion was offered by Mr. Nixon.

RESOLVED, the approval of the following mini-grants for Allegany County Tourism, Emmanuel Episcopal Grand Opening Wills Creek Museum, Emmanuel Episcopal Handel's Messiah, and the ACHS Wills Muster Living History Area at Heritage Days.

The motion was seconded Mr. Feldstein and unanimously approved.

- **RFP for Project Manager for The River Park at Canal Place**

Ms. Ritchie stated that due to the lack of qualified candidates applying to the River Park Project Manager posted on both the Maryland State Online Employment Center the Indeed Job Board. Ms. Ritchie stated that Canal Place highly recommends The Eco Logix Group (Attachment # 8) to become the project management team to lead the River Park Project at Canal Place. This team is skilled and accomplished at effectively managing complex construction projects, as well as managing multiple sources of project funding and utilizing them to the advantage of the project. They have worked with elected officials on projects, managed sediment and water quality sampling and analysis, fisheries studies, bathymetric studies, and have performed public meeting management.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Czapski.

RESOLVED, the approval for The Eco Logix Group to become the project management team for the River Park at Canal Place.

The motion was seconded Mr. Mudge and unanimously approved.

- **MHAA Project Grants for FY25**

Ms. Ritchie stated that she has submitted a request for a \$100,000 Maryland Heritage Area Operating Grant. In addition, applicants will no longer be required to match the block grants dollar for dollar as they have in the past. Ms. Ritchie turned the discussion over to Mrs. Folk regarding the Augmented Reality Experience App (VisitWidget) that allows visitors to access an interactive mapping tool that provides a personalized experience. Allegany County Tourism is already using this tool, and plans on sharing it with Canal Place and the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area. A discussion ensued among the board members and Mrs. Folk.

- **Marketing Strategies Update- Kim Folk**

Mrs. Folk stated that there have been numerous updates made to our website and suggested board members check them out. The first annual National Road Cruise-In and Art & Craft Show event hosted by Canal Place will take place this upcoming weekend, June 1 and June 2. The National Road was the first major improved highway in the United States built by the federal government and since was are located at mile marker 0, and she believes that Canal Place and the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area should be involved with the celebration given the construction of the National Road began here in Cumberland and is located here on Canal Place property. Governor Moore has launched Service Year Option, the first-in-the-nation public service year program for high school graduates. In collaboration with Maryland Corps, the program will allow young adults to develop soft and hard skills while earning \$15 per hour with host employers. Canal Place will be hosting two (2) of these students who will begin working in September of this year. It is the first year for this initiative, and Mrs. Folk stated it will be a learning curve for all involved, and she plans on introducing them to the marketing world and intends for them to take on administrative tasks as well. Mrs. Folk further stated that our first promotional video has been shot, and

will be ready to view in a couple of weeks. An MHAA application grant through Allegany County Tourism has been submitted to request funds for online advertising, she has applied to the City of Cumberland, and requested a \$35,300.00 ARC grant that funds will solely be dedicated to the River Park Project. A discussion started by Mr. Feldstein about the ARC grant ensued between members attending the board meeting.

- **Charis Winery Financial Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that Chuck Park d/b/a Charis Winery is in arrears for his rent payment which began at the end of 2023. He has been sent letters stating that he needed to pay off the balance due up by June 30, 2024, and we have received several payments but nothing close to what is due. A question was directed to our legal counsel, Adam Snyder, regarding our action going forward. Mr. Snyder stated that upon his earlier advisement, letters have been sent to Mr. Park requesting payment in full by the end of June 2024. Canal Place has complied with notification contained in the letters sent to Mr. Park that he needed to make the payment otherwise his lease would be terminated. Mrs. Keene stated that perhaps we could set up a payment plan which may assist with questions arising from auditors. A discussion ensued between board members regarding Canal Place's next course of action.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT None

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Keene concluded the meeting noting that the next board meeting will take place at Evergreen Heritage Center on July 30, 2024 at noon and lunch will be served.

Mr. Mudge offered a motion to adjourn the open session.

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

Mrs. Keene adjourned the meeting at 2:33

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Keene

Chair