

CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, May 30, 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, 3rd Floor Conference Room, Cumberland, Maryland, on March 30, 2023.

Authority Members Present: Janice Keene; Rebecca Ruppert, Ray Morriss, Jeremy Bender, Bradford Nixon, Al Feldstein, and Stu Czapski.

Staff Present: Deidra Ritchie, Executive Director; Nicole Gray, Financial Manager; Adam Snyder, Legal Counsel.

Others Present: Representative, WCBC Radio; Josh Nolen, National Park Service.

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 open session minutes of the March 28, 2023, open session (Attachment #1) be approved as submitted.

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

Miss Gray reviewed the Expense report (**Attachment #2**), and the Revenue report (**Attachment#3**), for the months of March and April 2023 and stated the notable expenses were for increase payroll due to 3 pay periods in March, an HVAC issue, the first payment to Acorn Hill, and state payments for legal counsel and for the Department of Internet Technology (DoIT). The Revenue for the reporting period remains steady and Miss Gray noted one tenant has submitted payment for arrears in rent and is anticipating the full balance be paid before the end of the current fiscal year.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Morriss.

RESOLVED, that the Financial and Revenue statements for March and April FY23 be approved as distributed.

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

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ritchie highlighted her Executive Director's Report (**Attachment #4**), by stating:

- Traveled to Southern Maryland for the National Heritage Area Celebration and also met with the new State of Maryland Secretary of Planning, Rebecca Flora, who is looking forward to a visit to Canal Place.
- Met with the Women's Civic Club regarding grant potential.
- DGS has spent quite a bit of time at Canal Place assessing brick replacement, tree mitigation, carpet replacement and repaving repairs of parking lot.
- Attended Community Legacy Advisory Committee meeting with the City of Cumberland.
- Participated in County United Way Day of Sharing & Caring.
- Simplee Kountry has vacated their space at the Shops at Canal Place.
- Attended the Wheelsup ribbon cutting ceremony.

IV. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE

Mr. Nolen reported that the Visitor Center is now open on Friday, Saturday and Sundays, and they are looking for ways to try to extend their hours. New interns are being onboarded to assist with staffing the Visitor Center. Ian Gray is the first permanent hire since Ranger Rita Knox retired. NPS intends to remain a strong presence in Cumberland to include volunteer and educational programs in Allegany County. A plan is in place to resurface the towpath from Paw Paw to Spring Gap this year, Spring Gap to the Terminus in 2024, and 15 Mile Creek to Paw Paw in 2025. Ms. Ritchie asked about the C&O Canal Museum and some the equipment there not working properly. Mr. Nolen reported that they are working to get those items repaired.

V. OLD BUSINESS

- **River Park Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the engineering, design, and permit is in process now and the preliminary report is due in July. Ms. Ritchie and city engineer, Bobby Smith, spoke with CEC and anticipate that 30% of the report is done. Ms. Ritchie also noted that Canal Place was awarded the \$1.5 million match for the earmark, however, it cannot be spent until a Capital Budget request is submitted and goes through the review process. The \$6 million will remain on hold as well until the Department of Budget Management (DBM) approves the request. An RFP has been created to hire a Project Manager, but that position cannot be put out to bid until the \$1.5 million has been approved.

- **PWPHA Expansion Update**

Ms. Ritchie thanked everyone who attended the kickoff meeting back in March with Acorn Hill for the expansion. Ms. Ritchie and Jessica Sainz of Allegany County Tourism met with Allegany County GIS staff to assist with the mapping of the expansion. The next board meeting will be held on Thursday, July 13 at 9:30 a.m. and an expansion meeting with Acorn Hill will immediately follow. Ms. Ritchie noted a larger space may be needed for the next meeting. A conversation ensued regarding an alternative meeting space.

- **Parking Updates**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the parking kiosks are to be delivered in July. Canal Place staff spoke with AT&T local representatives to acquire equipment needed for the arriving kiosks. Placement of the kiosks will be in both the Station Square and Harrison Street lots.

- **Removal of Building C & Concrete Structure**

Ms. Ritchie stated that discussions have been had about the removal of Building C and the concrete seating structure in the Shops plaza area. A letter was sent to Maryland Department of Planning Clearinghouse requesting the demolition of these structures. Canal Place should have a response within 60 days of the request. Building C will not be removed before a replacement building has been constructed. Ms. Ritchie reported that Allegany County government has taken lead on the removal of those structures. The State of Maryland is not looking to construct a building on Canal Place property but to submit an RFP for a potential developer to create and develop the building to suit with Canal Place receiving ground rent. Allegany County has agreed to pay for the demolition.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- **Wills Creek Bridge Removal**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the Department of General Services (DGS) has been on-site at Canal Place several times this year. At one visit DGS representatives discussed both the removal and remediation of the bridge. Ms. Ritchie stated the reason for bringing this subject up so that an open discussion could be had. A discussion by the board members ensued regarding the pros and cons as a result of the bridge removal. Mrs. Keene suggested that the bridge removal be discussed with Jim Christie of CEC so that a professional opinion from a design perspective can be given. An agreement was made for further discussion at the next board meeting on the matter once it has been discussed with to Mr. Christie.

- **Potential New Tenants - Shops at Canal Place**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the National Railway Historical Society (NRHS) will be vacating their space in Building C on June 30. There has been a discussion of moving some memorabilia to the

2nd floor of the train station or potentially at the Frostburg Depot. Chuck Park of Charis Winery would like to move Elaia Oil & Vinegar Shop into the newly vacated space. Simplee Kountry vacated their space in Building C on May 31 and a new tenant would like to occupy that available space. Ms. Ritchie noted that the business would be an ideal attraction to the location.

- **Managing for Results (MFR) Changes**

Miss Gray indicated that the MFRs are a part of the annual budget requirement and are there to calculate goals. Due to changes in the current acquisition of data Miss Gray request approval of modifying the current goals. An overview of the current goals and changes was made by Miss Gray and asked for approval to make those changes to the current MFR report.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein

RESOLVED, that the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority agrees to the changes for Managing for Results FY25 and be approved as discussed.

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

- **Tim Martin Contract Renewal**

Miss Gray stated that the current maintenance contract with Tim Martin Home Improvements, is up for renewal and a letter has been received by Canal Place requesting the renewal for FY24 with a 5% increase that would total \$157, 500.00 an increase of \$7,500 over the previous year. The request of the increase is due the increasing cost of supplies and payroll. Mr. Bender agreed that supplies and payroll are increasing and are necessary and Mr. Bender believes the request for the increase is fair. Additional board members agreed that Mr. Martin does a great job and is faced with many challenges on Canal Place property. Ms. Ritchie stated that Mr. Martin is reliable. Miss Gray requested approval for the renewal of Mr. Martin's contract for FY24.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Felstein

RESOLVED, that the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority agrees to the contract renewal for Tim Martin Home Improvements with a 5% increase for FY24.

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

- **Frostburg First Mini-Grant**

Ms. Ritchie stated that she sent out a summary of the Brownsville Park Avenue Research Project for the Frostburg First mini-grant. Board members have already approved this mini-grant and her intent is to have it ratified during this meeting.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Felstein

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RESOLVED, ratification of vote for the approval of the Frostburg First Mini-Grant for FY23.

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

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Canal Place Authority is scheduled for Thursday, July 13, 2023 at a place to be determined at 9:30 a.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bender and unanimously approved.
The meeting adjourned at 2:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janice Keene, Chair