

CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, September 24, 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 held at the Western Maryland Railway Station, Cumberland, Maryland Room 304 on Tuesday, September 24, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Others Present: Cece Donovan, EcoLogix Group; Bob Agee, EcoLogix Group; Chris Stevens, Representative for Tina Cappetta of the National Park Service; Robin Summerfield, Senator Cardin's Office; Hannah Fout, WCBC Radio; Jennifer Walsh, The Greater Cumberland Committee; Brian Hensel, Cintas; Jeff Simcoe, Outdoor Recreation Economy Institute; and Bob Summers and Jeff McKee, EcoLogix Group (via Zoom).

I. CALL TO ORDER & CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

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

II. REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND FINANCIALS

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein:

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

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

Miss Gray reviewed the Expense report (**Attachment #2**), for June, July and August 2024, and the Revenue report (**Attachment #3**), for June, July, and August 2024 and stated that notable expenses for the close out of FY24 were mini grant awards totaling \$13,032.28, and a second payment to our auditors in the amount of \$10,000.00. The notable expense for July and August 2024 were elevator inspections totaling \$7,000.00, and the first payment from our capital funds to project management for the River Park Project. The revenue report for the end of FY24 shows that all tenants are paid up with the exception of the National Park Service (NPS) due to an accounting issue on their end. Parking revenue for July and August was over \$5,000.00, and a MHAA grant in the amount of \$25,000.00 was received. FY25 rents are paid up to date and several tenants have paid their rents through November 2024.

The following motion was offered by Mrs. Ruppert:

RESOLVED, that the Financial Expense and Revenue statements for June 2024 (FY24), and July and August 2024 (FY25) be approved as distributed.

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

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

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

- The CPPDA received \$20k in Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area funding to supplement the Augmented Reality History Trail to be located throughout Allegany County.
- Attended the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area Summit in Romney, West Virginia.
- Set up a display and participated in the Heritage Days Festival, which was a successful event. Thanks go out to Dave Williams, Becky McClarran, and all the volunteers that coordinated the event.
- Wiring for new fiber optics inside the Western Maryland Railway Station is being completed. Tenants in the station who wish to connect to the new fiber optics network should contact the CPPDA office.
- Finalized several MHAA grant reports.
- Kim Folk will be participating in Leadership Allegany, hosted by the Allegany County Chamber of Commerce.
- Nicole Gray continues to participate in Canal Towns meetings and provided information for the Canal Towns Art Trail. Thank you to the C&O Canal Association for funding repairs on "The Cumberland" C&O Canal Boat Replica. And thanks go out to the volunteers from the Canal Association for conducting tours on Heritage Days weekend.
- All spaces in the Western Maryland Railway Station are occupied with the exception of one office space.
- CPPDA will attend the Joint Evaluation Committee meeting for the River Park on September 25th, meet with elected officials from West Virginia, Maryland, as well as other project participants on September 26th at Canal Place, Lifegoers Presentation at Allegany College on October 3rd, and the Outdoor Recreation Summit at Rocky Gap Resort October 9th through October 11th.

Mr. Feldstein mentioned the passing of a colleague Leanne Bodes (formerly Mazer), the Executive Director of the Tri-County Council for Allegany County, and a former board member of Canal Place.

IV. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE

Chris Stevens stated that the Natural Resources Program will be identifying rare and endangered plants in the Spring Gap and Paw Paw area of the C&O Canal in the next two months in order to restore the plants in their natural habitat.

V. OLD BUSINESS

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

Ms. Ritchie stated that the Board of Directors and Staff Workshop held on July 30th at Evergreen Heritage Area with Acorn Hill Strategies Consultants was very beneficial for the Passages of the Western Potomac Heritage Area expansion despite it being a lengthy meeting and workshop, and that she was very appreciative to all of those in attendance. Mrs. Keene added that her personal opinion is that the expansion will make a positive impact on Allegany County.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- **Golden Ticket Promotion**

Mrs. Folk stated that Canal Place will be collaborating with WMSR to roll out a “Golden Ticket” promotion during the Polar Express Train rides. A variety of businesses will be participating with the promotion, and those presenting the “Golden Ticket” will be offered special deals and discounts from those businesses who have opted to participate. At this time, ten local businesses will be able to honor a variety of discounts for this promotion.

- **Celebration of Lights & Holiday Market**

Mrs. Folk stated that Canal Place will be holding a “Celebration of Lights and Holiday Market” on November 30th in conjunction with “Small Business Saturday”. A winter event was held last year with the City of Cumberland’s Downtown Development Commission (DDC), but due to date conflicts, the DDC will be holding their own event this year on the mall. The Canal Place event will be similar in nature with food and craft vendors. Children activities will be offered along with the chance to visit with Santa, and Santa has offered to do pictures with the kids and pets as well.

- **EcoLogix Group**

Ms. Ritchie introduced the members of EcoLogix Group as they will be overseeing the River Park Project. Ms. Cece Donovan is the Principal Project Manager for this project. Ms. Donovan introduced Bob Agee who will be serving as the Public Community Outreach representative on this project. Ms. Donovan continued on with a brief discussion on the items that the EcoLogix team have been working on and presented the information that will be shared in the coming days

to the Joint Evaluation committee and to West Virginia Delegates, Gary Howell and Rick Hillenbrand as well as additional elected officials in Ridgeley, West Virginia. It is imperative to create a partnership with West Virginia and to confirm their support of the River Park Project. Mr. Feldstein stated that the River Park Project will complement the Great Allegheny Passage (GAP) Trail. A further discussion ensued regarding where Canal Place would be applying for additional grant money. Ms. Ritchie stated that Canal Place will apply for any and all grants that are offered to complete this project including funding requests from the capital budget. A discussion ensued between attendees regarding the portion of the Potomac River that belongs to West Virginia.

The meeting concluded with all attendees introducing themselves and stating their affiliation.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was seconded by Mr. Feldstein and unanimously approved. Mrs. Keene adjourned the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janice Keene

Chair