

CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, September 26, 2023 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 in person at Western Maryland Railway Station, 3rd Floor Conference Room 302, Cumberland, Maryland on September 26, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

Authority Members Present: Janice Keene; Rebecca Ruppert, Bob Smith, Stu Czapski, Ray Morriss, and Jeremy Bender.

Staff Present: Deidra Ritchie, Executive Director; Nicole Gray, Financial Manager; Adam Snyder, Legal Counsel (via phone), 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 Ray Morriss.

RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the May 30, 2023, open session (Attachment #1) be approved as submitted due to not having a quorum during the July 2023 meeting.

The motion was seconded by Bob Smith and unanimously approved.

The following motion was offered by Bob Smith.

RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the July 13, 2023, open session (Attachment #2) be approved as submitted.

The motion was seconded by Rebecca Ruppert and unanimously approved

Miss Gray reviewed the Expense report (**Attachment #3**), for May, June 2023 (FY23), July, and August 2023(FY24), and the Revenue report (**Attachment#4**), for the month of June (FY23), and July and August 2023(FY24).

Miss Gray stated that there was an increase in expenses due to the State of Maryland budget items that include insurance payments that occurred at the end of FY23. Beginning FY24 we had several HVAC expenses here in the train station, and had our annual fire, emergency exits, sprinkler systems, and elevator inspections as well. Miss Gray concluded her reporting stating hat we have received our Capital Appropriations Earmark money.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Bender.

RESOLVED, that the Financial Expense statements for May, June, July and August 2023, and the Revenue statements for June, July and August 2023 be approved as distributed.

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

III. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Ritchie highlighted her Executive Director's Report (**Attachment #5**), by stating:

- The FY24 Mini Grants are now available, and this year they will be offered on a first come, first served basis.
- In accordance with Governor Moore's new budget strategy plan, Nicole and I have been working on numerous budgets including aligning both capital and operating budgets.
- Attended the MACo Conference in Ocean City representing the Maryland Heritage Areas Coalition.
- Attended the Appalachian Forest National Heritage Area Tourism Summit, and was a guest speaker for the heritage area segment of the summit.
- Tenant meeting scheduled for Oct 4th to update tenants on upcoming events at Canal Place.
- Canal Place is collaborating with the Downtown Development Commission to hold a Winter Festival/Marketplace on December 2 and December 9, and

CPPDA was able to award them a mini grant to assist with the cost of presenting this festival.

- The Canal Towns meeting will be held at City Hall in Cumberland on November 8, and following that meeting they plan to visit Canal Place.

IV. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE

Chris Stevens represented the National Park Service (NPS) for this meeting. Mr. Stevens was asked by NPS Superintendent, Tina Cappetta, to share some of the park service's goals. NPS would like to increase their staff and volunteers, increase interpretive and educational programs, improving the condition and safety of park resources in Cumberland and Allegany County, and provide technical advice to the City of Cumberland, Allegany County, and County Commissioners as needed. Mr. Stevens added that the NPS would like to be part of the River Park Project.

V. OLD BUSINESS

River Park Update

Ms. Ritchie stated that the preliminary engineering report (30%) has been delayed, and we are expected to receive it by November. This report will include costs, permits needed, property owners to be affected by the project, sediment testing, and the next steps moving forward. Canal Place received approval to hire a Project Manager, and that contractual position has been posted on Indeed. The funding will be provided by the capital budget match.

- **PWPHA Expansion Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that Acorn Hill Strategies is in the process of generating a survey for Canal Place to send out to board members, stakeholders and various other organizations, and that it will be distributed soon.

- **Department of General Services (DGS) Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that DGS has been working on several projects at Canal Place including tree trimming and brick replacement for a cost of \$100,000. Upcoming

projects include paving and resealing the parking lots which will happen in November. Carpet replacement on the 3rd and 4th floors beginning in mid-January. The paving and carpet replacement will cost \$100,000 each to complete. HVAC replacement at the Shops at Canal Place will take place soon at a cost of \$250,000, and the roof replacement is also on the agenda at a cost of \$500,000. Ms. Ritchie credited DGS for their financial support on these projects. A projected one million dollars is the cost to replace the Wills Creek Bridge and replace all the light poles.

- **Parking Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the original plan was to install parking kiosk, but due to underlying costs not presented in the beginning from Flash Parking, Canal Place has opted to go with the same parking company as the City of Cumberland for their downtown parking plan. Canal Place has been negotiating with Park Mobile and expects to sign a contract and be operational in the near future. Mr. Morriss believes Canal Place being consistent with their downtown parking choice, will be beneficial to patrons who visit the downtown Cumberland area.

- **E-Bike Charger Update**

Ms. Ritchie stated that Mountain Maryland Trails has taken the lead on installing the E-Bike chargers, and they have offered to assist with the cost of electricity. These charges will be located near the Shops at Canal Place.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- **Canal Place Priority Projects**

Ms. Ritchie stated that the following are those items that are being considered as priority projects. The River Park, proposed new stage on the festival grounds, The heritage area boundary expansion, public relations/marketing, shop expansion, canal re-watering, partnerships, property expansion, and events. Ms. Ritchie confirmed that these are not listed in any particular order. A discussion between board members ensued. Ms. Ritchie was notified by our maintenance supervisor, Tim Martin, that AHEC West has been distributing clean injection needles to our homeless population on Canal Place property. AHEC has suggested that they would like to install sharps disposal containers in our public restrooms. Ms. Ritchie believes this is enabling those with substance abuse issues to remain on

Canal Place property and poses a potential threat to visitors on the property. A discussion ensued with board members and some of their concerns for those who visit Canal Place and their safety.

- **Ratification of Online Votes for the Approval of Winter Festival for Downtown Development Commission (DDC)**

The following motion was offered by Mr. Morriss.

RESOLVED, ratification of online votes for the approval of mini grant for DDC for Winter Festival for \$5K

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

- **Ratification of Online Votes for the Approval of Mini Grant for ACHS for \$5K**

The following motion was offered by Mr. Morriss.

RESOLVED, ratification of online votes for the approval of the mini-grant for ACHS for \$5K for Heritage Days

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

Approve WVU Economic Impact Study for River Park (\$24,866.93)

The following motion was offered by Mr. Morriss

RESOLVED, the approval of the WVU Economic Impact Study for River Park.

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

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT- No public comment.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Canal Place Authority is scheduled for Tuesday, November 28, 2023 at a place to be determined at 1:30 p.m. Further details to follow.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Morriss made a motion into closed session at 2:40 p.m. The closed session is to consider a preliminary matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State.

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

Closed Session Attendees: Janice Keene; Rebecca Ruppert, Stu Czapski, Ray Morriss, Jeremy Bender, Bob Smith, Deidra Ritchie, Nicole Gray, Adam Snyder (via phone) and Crystal Lloyd.

IX. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Authority returned to open session at 3:01 p.m.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Ruppert and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 3:01

Respectfully Submitted,
Janice Keene,
Chair