

CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Tuesday, September 29, 2020, 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 Tuesday, September 29, 2020.

Authority Members Present: Janice Keene, Chair; Rebecca Ruppert, Leanne Mazer, Jeremy Bender, Stuart Czapski, Al Feldstein, Ray Morriss, and Tina Cappetta.

Staff Present: Deidra Ritchie, Executive Director; Eric Harman, Financial Officer; Paul Cucuzzella and Nicole Gray, Administrative Specialist.

Others Present: Greg Larry, Cumberland Times-News; Bryan Gowans, WCBC Radio.

I. CALL TO ORDER & CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Mrs. Keene called the meeting to order at 1:39 PM.

II. REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES AND FINANCIALS

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein:

RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the July 28, 2020 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. Feldstein:

RESOLVED, that the closed session minutes of the July 28, 2020 closed session (Attachment #2) be approved as submitted.

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

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein:

RESOLVED, that the open session minutes of the August 27, 2020 open session (Attachment #3) be approved as submitted.

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

The following motion was offered by Mrs. Ruppert:

RESOLVED, that the closed session minutes of the August 27, 2020 closed session (Attachment #4) be approved as submitted.

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

Mr. Harman reviewed the Revenue sheets (**Attachment #5**) and the monthly Financial reports (**Attachment #6**). Mr. Harman reported that for June FY20 there was a lot of activity due to the need for accruals and carry over into FY21 due to COVID payment issues. For FY21, July and August do have accruals as well, but as payments come in there will be a reduction of that number and board members will be able to see that on the future spreadsheets.

The following motion was offered by Mr. Feldstein:

RESOLVED, that the Financial and Revenue statements for June of FY20 and July and August of FY21 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 #7**), by stating:

- Staff continues to telework due to COVID-19 restrictions and are only in the office on Wednesdays to complete duties that cannot be done through telework.
- Attended a meeting with CEDC, CEC Inc, and Robin Summerfield of Senator Cardin's office to discuss status of River Park at Canal Place.
- Initiated informational meeting regarding the next phase of the River Park at Canal Place project with CEC Inc, American Rivers, and Maryland Department of Natural Resources Fish Passage Program.
- Participated in the FY21 Maryland Heritage Area Grants Orientation webinar.

IV. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UPDATE

Tina Cappetta, of the National Park Service, reported that the NPS is currently still in a holding pattern due to COVID but reported that the Deputy Secretary of the Interior recently visited the area and was very excited by the visit. The NPS is positioning itself for funding under the Great Outdoors Act through which there is \$1.3 billion available each year; funding will enable the NPS to fund projects that have been deferred. Mr. Feldstein asked if either of the visitors from the aforementioned visit showed any interest in biking or hiking the Great Allegheny Passage to Pittsburgh. Ms. Cappetta responded that she was not present for the visit but was sure that Deputy Superintendent Noel did explain the connection to the canal, that those visiting were avid bikers, hikers and campers, and that if they had time would certainly do so. Mr. Czapski asked what the plan was for the NPS visitor center as far as reopening given that this is a very busy

time of year for the area and that having the center closed is a dampener to the visitors coming to the area. Ms. Cappetta responded that visitation to the park is up about one million people though she was unsure how that was translating to the Canal Towns or specifically for Cumberland. Mr. Czapski offered that Cumberland's visitor center has been equipped with plexiglass guards and other accommodations to protect workers. Ms. Cappetta stated that she would discuss usage of the visitor center with staff and that she understood that it is impacting destination visitation by having the center closed. Mr. Czapski asked Ms. Cappetta to look at it from the business perspective as the businesses in the area send prospective home owners, business owners, and visitors to the visitor center for additional information and with the center being closed these potential additions to the area are missing out on getting information and the community is thereby missing out. Ms. Cappetta responded that there is more flexibility with Maryland requiring masks being worn and she appreciated Mr. Czapski bringing his thoughts to her attention.

V. OLD BUSINESS

• Ethics Reporting

Ms. Ritchie reminded everyone to make sure that they had completed their annual State ethics reporting. Miss Gray noted that all filings had been completed and that only one file needed an adjustment. Miss Gray also stated that filing for the calendar year 2020 starts the first Monday in January 2021 and will continue through until April 30, 2021.

• Loopnet

Ms. Ritchie reported that, acting on the Board's advice to get the Western Maryland Railway Station rented, she had consulted with Michael Joy of Footer Building Development on options. Mr. Joy suggested a commercial website called Loopnet. Ms. Ritchie had Miss Gray contact and set up an account and a listing. Miss Gray reported that the process was fairly simple, that now pictures can be added and changed to keep the listing fresh, and that there have been several inquiries for spaces. In an effort to keep the listing cost effective the entire building was put in as one unit with those interested having to contact Canal Place staff to get specific information for each unit.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

VIII. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting of the Canal Place Authority is scheduled for Tuesday, November 24, 2020 at 1:30 PM.

Mr. Feldstein made a motion to enter into closed session under General Provisions Article § 3-305(b)(4) to consider a preliminary matter that concerns the proposal for a business or industrial organization to locate, expand, or remain in the State, relating to leases at Canal Place.

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

Closed Session Attendees: Janice Keene, Chair; Rebecca Ruppert, Leanne Mazer, Jeremy Bender, Stuart Czapski, Al Feldstein, Tina Cappetta, Deidra Ritchie, Eric Harman, Paul Cucuzzella and Nicole Gray.

IX. RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Authority returned to open session at 2:40 PM.

The following action was taken in closed session:

RESOLVED, that the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority maintain the current contract as is written and reject the alternative payment plan of the Fairfield Inn.

X. ADJOURNMENT

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

The motion was seconded by Mr. Czapski and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:42 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Janice Keene,
Chair