

CA Report to Dorsey's Search Village Association: 7/14/21

Reopening

CA is back in business! The Customer Care Team has managed a very large surge in customer inquiries and communications, averaging over 300 customer interactions (phone and email) per business day. Sport and Fitness saw 855 new memberships sold as compared to a 5-year (FY16-20) average of 560 and opened 15 outdoor pools, which saw over 6,800 visits the first nice weather weekend.

The sublease of the Haven on the Lake space was signed on June 1, and as a result, we will begin realizing income for the space that was not budgeted for in FY2022. We had conservatively budgeted for no sublease income in FY2022. Staff believes that this positive developments should allow us to plan to open two more outdoor pools for this season assuming staffing is available.

Routine business

- A BGE easement in Hickory Ridge was approved.
- Nominees to CA RAC were approved.

Advisory Committees

Tomorrow, the Board will meet with our Citizen Advisory Committees to receive and review their annual reports. The Board greatly values the contributions these committees make and is seeking ways to increase their influence in Board decision making.

Symphony Woods

We are forming a committee to prepare for negotiations with Inner Arbor to review the easement. I have already drafted a negotiation strategy, but it does not appear to have yet gained traction. We'll see what happens.

The second (east/west) SW pathway is currently under construction. This one is being paid for by the County and will prevent damage to the lawn when heavy equipment is being used to install events like Wine in the Woods.

To date, IA has held 15 events, including 9 public performances. and made the Chrysalis available for community music groups to hold Covid-safe outdoor rehearsals. The long-awaited joint use restrooms are now open. IA and Howard EcoWorks have been working closely with CA staff to coordinate the install of 12,000 square feet of conservation landscaping this summer. Pending final estimates from BG&E, pathway lighting is estimated to be installed in early fall. 15 picnic tables painted by local artists have been installed and have been immensely popular.

Town Charette/Board Position Statement

A position statement was drafted by several other Board members and me and later approved by the full Board for submission to the County. Meanwhile, the HoCo by Design consultants held a charette of proposals for Columbia development that met with mixed reviews.

Board Operations

The Board has a strong interest in streamlining our meeting protocols to become more effective and efficient. We've made several procedural changes and put time limits on members' speaking. Efforts appear to be working – we've actually been able to adjourn by 9pm on two consecutive occasions.

Development Tracker

Staff agreed to continue to monitor Dorsey Overlook proposals.

Capital Projects/Open Space Updates

The following projects have been completed:

- Fairmead Lane tot lot refurbishment
- Red Branch Road bridge replacement
- Columbia Art Center lobby upgrade
- Hobbit's Glen tennis court irrigation system protection
- Other Barn HVAC and trash enclosure
- Bamboo removal
- LED lighting in Columbia Athletic Club and Sports Park
- HVAC units installed at Columbia Gym and Fairway Hills

President/CEO Evaluation Process

A top priority has been to develop an evaluation and bonusing procedure for our new President/CEO. It appears that a draft proposal will be approved in the next Board meeting.

CA's Purchasing Policy for Women/Minority/Disabled-Owned Businesses

CA has a Minority Business Enterprise Program policy for promoting business with certified minority business vendors (including women owned and disabled owned business enterprises). The program is modeled on Howard County Government's Equal Business Opportunity program. Despite a rigorously pursued policy, results have been a disappointing ~ 10% over the past few years versus a goal of 12% of total expenditures. Staff will be doing further analysis for Board review. On a positive note, several of the businesses we have previously included in the program no longer qualify because they have successfully grown to a point where they are no longer classified as small businesses or have been acquired by other firms.

Budget

For many years, the management contract between CA and each village has specified the amount of cash reserves that can be retained by each village (currently 20% of operating expenses), with any excess beyond that threshold returned to CA. This enables the villages to receive funds needed for operations while retaining reserves for unexpected expenditures.

Given the impact of the pandemic on operations, the CA Board recognized that the villages were concerned about the adequacy of their FY21 cash reserves and approved a resolution in April enabling the villages to retain funds beyond the threshold specified in the management contract.

Staff has noted that despite the pandemic, total village cash reserves have exceeded previous years, although these overages have been concentrated in only three villages and recommends that those sums be returned to CA with the commitment by CA to redirect the returned money back to the applicable villages in the form of environmental project spending such as bio retention ponds, rain gardens and reforestation. None of this applies to Dorsey's Search, since we have a record of managing to avoid overages and spending our funds on projects that enhance our village. The Board will vote on the staff recommendation later this month.

Meanwhile, Staff, at the Board's request, is proposing ways to increase community participation in the budget planning process. We are awaiting further details.