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Oakland Mills Community Association Village Board Meeting Minutes

The Other Barn ~ 5851 Robert Oliver Place ~ Columbia, MD 21045

Board Members: Jonathan Edelson, Chair ~ Lynn-Steven Engelke, Architectural Committee Chair
Bill McCormack Jr., Vice-chair ~ Rebecca Bryant ~ Rashida George ~ Rena Ross
Bageshwar Verma ~ Virginia (Ginny) Thomas, Columbia Council Representative

February 23, 2021

Link to YouTube recording of the February 9, 2021 OMCA Board Meeting:

<https://youtu.be/I1tdTJ75hLw>

OMCA Regular Board Meeting

This meeting was conducted via Zoom remote virtual conferencing due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Edelson called the regular meeting of the OMCA Board of Directors to order at 7:02 p.m.

Present: Jonathan Edelson, Board Chair; Bill McCormack, Board Vice-chair; Lynn Engelke, Architectural Committee Chair; Ginny Thomas, Columbia Council Representative; Rebecca Bryant; Rashida George; Rena Ross; Bageshwar Verma; Sandy Cederbaum, Village Manager; Amy Carpenter, Administrative Assistant

Quorum Present: Yes

Also Present: Howard County Council District 2 Aide Ashley Alston

Opening of Meeting

- **Ms. Thomas** motioned to approve the February 9, 2021 OMCA Board meeting minutes (ATTACHMENT A). **Mr. McCormack** seconded, and the motion passed (7-0-0).
- **Ms. Thomas** motioned to approve the February 23, 2021 OMCA Board meeting agenda (ATTACHMENT B). **Mr. McCormack** seconded. **Mr. Edelson** asked that the agenda be amended. The Board voted to approve the amended agenda (7-0-0).

Mr. Verma spoke regarding his resignation from the Board and thanked the members of the Board. **Mr. Edelson, Mr. McCormack,** and **Ms. Cederbaum** spoke concerning Mr. Verma's good character and thanked him for his service. **Mr. Verma** also mentioned the Climate Change Essay Contest that he and Mr. Edelson had been working on before the pandemic.

Old Business

CA Proposed Summer Pool Openings

Mr. Edelson shared a draft letter from OMCA regarding CA's proposed summer pool openings (ATTACHMENT C). Previous to the meeting, Ms. Bryant had drafted the letter with input from Mr. Edelson. A discussion ensued. The Board agreed on the letter as revised during the discussion. Mr. Edelson, Ms. Bryant, and Ms. Cederbaum would review the letter for readability and grammar before sending it to the CA Board.

Board Vacancy Discussion

Mr. Edelson asked if the Board wanted to fill the seat left vacant by Mr. Verma's resignation. A discussion ensued. There was no second to a motion to fill the vacancy. The vacancy would remain unfilled.

Board Chair Report

Mr. Edelson reported on the CA Board's work session held February 18th which he and other village board chairs and managers attended. During the meeting, CA staff presented recommendations and options for village cash reserves. He thanked Ms. Thomas for ensuring that the village board chairs and managers had the opportunity to speak during the meeting. In response to a comment made during the CA Board work session, Mr. Edelson shared a list of items that demonstrated the value that OMCA provided to the village as well as Columbia. He also shared ideas for solutions regarding cash reserves, the CA/Village management contract, and the cap on villages' excess cash.

Mr. Edelson shared stats on percentages of students returning to in-person vs. virtual learning at HCPSS schools.

Columbia Council Representative Report

Ms. Thomas reported that the discussion on cash reserves at the CA work session on February 18th was the beginning of the process and that there would be more opportunities for village/resident input. She also discussed CA budget and income/expense processes and issues. She reported on CA's search for a new President. She said that there continued to be a lifeguard shortage for summer pool openings.

Village Manager Report

Ms. Cederbaum reported that OMCA's 3rd Quarter financials would be available at the next Board meeting. She reminded the Board and community that the OMCA Board Elections Candidate Information Session held virtually on March 1st. She reported that OMCA Facilities & Events Coordinator Brigitta Warren had put together a wedding package for 50 or less guests, in line with current County Covid regulations regarding indoor gathering capacities. Ms. Warren was also working on organizing the annual OMCA Plant Sale to be held in late May.

Committee Reports

Architecture Committee

Ms. Engelke gave an update on RAC applications and meetings.

Public Space Advisory Committee

See ATTACHMENT D.

Board Bulletin Board

Ms. Thomas, Ms. Ross, Ms. Bryant, Ms. George, and Ms. Carpenter thanked Mr. Verma for his service on the Board.

Ms. Cederbaum said that if new Board members Ms. George and Ms. Ross needed information regarding OMCA, that they could contact her.

Mr. Edelson said Howard County's Racial Equity Taskforce would be holding a public hearing on March 4th. He encouraged anyone interested in speaking at the hearing to sign up.

Mr. Verma again thanked the Board and community.

Mr. Edelson adjourned the regular OMCA Board meeting at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Amy Carpenter, Administrative Assistant



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Bill McCormack Jr., Vice-chair ~ Rebecca Bryant ~ Paul Verchinski
Bageshwar Verma ~ Virginia (Ginny) Thomas, Columbia Council Representative

February 8 & 9, 2021

Link to YouTube recording of the February 9, 2021 OMCA Board Meeting:

https://youtu.be/M_LtPGFPH2Y

February 8, 2021

OMCA Board Vacancy Interview (held February 8, 2021)

This meeting was conducted via Zoom remote virtual conferencing due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Edelson called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Present: Jonathan Edelson, Board Chair; Bill McCormack, Board Vice-chair; Lynn Engelke, Architectural Committee Chair; Ginny Thomas, Columbia Council Representative; Rebecca Bryant; Paul Verchinski; Sandy Cederbaum, Village Manager.

Absent: Bageshwar Verma

Quorum Present: Yes

Ms. Thomas motioned to open the interview meeting. **Mr. McCormack** seconded, and the motion passed (5-0-0).

The candidates, Rena Ross and Rashida George, introduced themselves, and the Board conducted the interview.

Mr. Edelson adjourned the Board vacancy interview at 7:00 p.m.

February 9, 2021

OMCA Regular Board Meeting

This meeting was conducted via Zoom remote virtual conferencing due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mr. Edelson called the regular meeting of the OMCA Board of Directors to order at 7:02 p.m.

Present: Jonathan Edelson, Board Chair; Bill McCormack, Board Vice-chair; Lynn Engelke, Architectural Committee Chair; Ginny Thomas, Columbia Council Representative; Rebecca Bryant; Paul Verchinski; Sandy Cederbaum, Village Manager; Amy Carpenter, Administrative Assistant

Absent: Bageshwar Verma

Quorum Present: Yes

Also Present: Columbia Association Aquatics Director Marty Oltmanns; Howard County Council District 2 Aide Ashley Alston; Samuel Hahn, Executive Director of Oakland Mills United; Michael Golibersuch, Owen Brown Board Chair; see resident list

Opening of Meeting

- **Mr. McCormack** motioned to approve the January 26, 2021 OMCA Board meeting minutes (ATTACHMENT A). **Ms. Thomas** seconded, and the motion passed (5-0-0).
- **Mr. McCormack** motioned to approve the February 9, 2021 OMCA Board meeting agenda (ATTACHMENT B). **Mr. Verchinski** seconded. **Mr. Edelson** asked that the agenda be amended. The Board voted to approve the amended agenda (5-0-0).

Resident Remarks

Resident Alex Hekimian spoke regarding proposed CA outdoor pool summer closures. He asked that CA open all 23 outdoor pools and suggested strategies for re-opening all outdoor pools. He asked that the Board support reopening all pools.

Howard County District 2 Aide Ashley Alston provided updates on Board requests.

Owen Brown Board Chair Mike Golibersuch said he was visiting other CA village board meetings to observe and find ways to work together as villages. He asked that anyone looking for funding or advocating for Oakland Mills schools to reach out to the Owen Brown Board since many students from Owen Brown attended OM schools. Mr. Golibersuch answered Board questions about Owen Brown's position on CA outdoor pools.

New Business

CA Aquatics Discussion

CA Aquatics Director Marty Oltmanns updated the Board on CA Aquatics. The CA Board would decide on how many pools to open with the CA Staff recommendation of opening 15 outdoor pools for the 2021 season. There was a projected lifeguard shortage. Pool users would need sign in online to register for pool time due to Covid-19 capacity limitations. A discussion ensued.

Vacant Board Seat

Mr. Edelson said **Mr. Verma** would be moving out of the village and would be resigning his position on the Board, effective February 28th. **Mr. Verchinski** then announced that he was resigning from the OMCA Board, effective after the February 9th OMCA Board meeting. **Mr. Edelson** discussed options, and members of the Board thanked Mr. Verchinski for his service to the community.

Old Business

CA Proposed Summer Pool Openings

The Board discussed CA's proposed summer pool openings and closures (ATTACHMENT C). After discussion, the Board agreed to table the issue until the February 23rd Board meeting. **Ms. Bryant** volunteered to write a draft letter for the Board to discuss.

Board Vacancy Discussion

Mr. Edelson shared options for the vote, given the additional Board vacancy announced by Mr. Verchinski earlier in the meeting. **Mr. Edelson** motioned to appoint Rashida George and Rena Ross to fill two vacant Board seat positions, effective February 10, 2021. **Mr. McCormack** seconded. The vote was conducted by electronic secret ballot, and the motion passed (5-0-0).

OMCA Board Elections Candidate Nomination Petitions

Mr. McCormack motioned to include a proposed by-law amendment, if the 2021 OMCA Board election was contested, on the ballot to eliminate the requirement of candidate nomination petitions and replace with a Candidate Application Form. **Ms. Engelke** seconded, and the motion passed (5-0-0). **Ms. Cederbaum** said she would work on the wording for the by-law amendment and present it to the Board for approval.

Oakland Mills United

The Board agreed to become a partner with Oakland Mills United.

Board Chair Report

Mr. Edelson reported that Oakland Mills High School Principal Jeffrey Fink would be contacting Howard County Public School System Grounds personnel and the Watershed Stewards Academy to find ways to address erosion, invasive species, and aesthetic concerns on the hill behind OMHS located along Thunder Hill Road.

Mr. McCormack requested Board involvement and asked to be included in the process.

Mr. Edelson updated the Board on village center business vacancies.

Columbia Council Representative Report

Ms. Thomas discussed County subsidies of CA programs. **Mr. Edelson** suggested that Ms. Thomas bring the subject back to the board as New Business at a future Board meeting and include specific details.

Village Manager Report

Ms. Cederbaum gave an update on operations, rentals, and elections. She reported that OMCA would be conducting a monthly food donation drive for the OMHS Food Pantry.

Committee Reports

Architecture Committee

Ms. Engelke gave an update on RAC meetings and thanked Ms. Cederbaum for ensuring that RAC meetings were streamlined and effective.

Board Bulletin Board

Ms. Cederbaum thanked Mr. Verchinski for his service on the Board.

Ms. Carpenter also thanked Mr. Verchinski.

Mr. Edelson also thanked Mr. Verchinski. He welcomed new Board Members Rena Ross and Rashida George.

Mr. Verchinski reported on airport noise dome updates and the BWI Roundtable. **Mr. Edelson** asked that Mr. Verchinski contact him about continuing in his OMCA committee roles.

Mr. Edelson adjourned the regular OMCA Board meeting at 9:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted: Amy Carpenter, Administrative Assistant



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**Oakland Mills Community Association
Village Board**

The Other Barn ~ 5851 Robert Oliver Place ~ Columbia, MD 21045

Board Members: Jonathan Edelson, Chair; Bill McCormack Jr., Vice-Chair

Lynn-Steven Engelke, Architecture Committee Chair;

Rebecca Bryant, Rashida George, Rena Ross, Bageshwar Verma

Columbia Council Representative: Virginia (Ginny) Thomas

**Oakland Mills Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, Feb. 23, 2021 7:00 p.m.**

Time: Feb 23, 2021 07:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85304839930>

Meeting ID: 853 0483 9930

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,85304839930# US (Washington DC)

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

Meeting ID: 853 0483 9930

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kbmejorTkg>

7:00 p.m.

Opening of meeting

Approve Minutes from February 9, 2021 Board Meeting

Approve Agenda for February 23, 2021 Board Meeting

7:05 p.m.

Resident Remarks, 3-minute remarks (10 min)

Please note that meeting attendee's audio is muted. If you wish to participate in Resident Remarks please "raise your hand" which is one of the options available for participants and appears as an icon on the screen.

7:15 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS

CA proposed summer pool openings, board discussion (10 min)

Discussion of upcoming vacant board seat, board discussion (10 min)

7:35 p.m.

Board Chair Report, Jonathan Edelson (10min)

Report out on CA/Village cash reserve discussion

8:45 p.m.

Columbia Council Rep. Report, Virginia (Ginny) Thomas (10 min)

Vice-Chair of the Columbia Association Board of Directors

Update on the search for a new CA President/CEO

7:55 p.m.

Village Manager Report, Sandy Cederbaum (5 min)

Financial and Operations Update

8:00 p.m.

Committee Reports (5 min)

Architecture, Lynn Engelke, Chair (5 min)

8:05 p.m. Board Bulletin Board (5 min)

8:10 p.m. Adjourn

The Oakland Mills Community Association (OMCA) Board of Directors reviewed the staff recommendations to the Columbia Association (CA) Board of Directors for summer 2021 pool operations. Within Oakland Mills, the proposal would open the Thunder Hill and Stevens Forest pools while keeping the Talbott Springs pool closed for the second consecutive year.

OMCA understands the financial constraints CA faces as a result of the pandemic. However, we want to ensure that CA is doing all it can to serve its residents and at least maintain membership levels at what many Columbians consider a top amenity – the pool system.

~~CA has asked residents several times over many years what their priorities within Columbia are, and the top answers remain the same each time: open space and pools. These are resources that make Columbia unique to other subdivisions and cities. A connected network of pools, with at least one pool right within the majority of resident’s neighborhoods. The importance of these neighborhood pools cannot be stressed enough. The pools provide the community gathering spot when schools are closed for the summer. Pools are not like the gyms. The gyms are for adult members, who are used to and capable of driving to. Pools are for families for wander down the street and gather with their neighbors.~~

~~Granted this year, gathering will look different than years past. But allowing some form of normalcy, within the context of Covid safety is essential for the mental health of Columbia families. Columbia families who pay CA fees and have repeatedly prioritized the pools.~~

~~This year, more than ever, opening fewer pools will ultimately hurt CA financially and cause a rift in an already tenuous relationship with residents who have come to expect certain resources. By opening only 15 of the 23 pools, and with those 15 pools for pandemic safety reasons will only be open at 50% capacity, CA will severely cut the number of hours of swim time available to members.~~

~~This will make the pools unusable to many families, especially working families who only have the ability to swim on high demand weekends. Members will certainly drop their memberships knowing it is unlikely that they’ll get their money’s worth. This will further ~~tailspindamage~~ the CA finances.~~

~~At \$508,000 to open all 23 pools, the cost seems worth it to keep all residents invested.~~

~~Outdoor swimming pools are one of the few “safer” options for social distancing, lending themselves to the perfect safer activity during the pandemic. As noticeable from the gym memberships versus golf memberships, more CA residents are willing to participate in outdoor activities versus indoor activities. This will not change this summer. Obviously, CA doesn’t want to close several pools but finances are what they are. Some other considerations are:~~

~~1) Increasing the rates for the pools (for those who are able) to better align with actual costs. Private pools in the area charge from \$700-900 / family membership plus \$250-450 initiation fees.~~

~~2) Temporarily pausing the Multicultural Programs. This is a luxury that does not affect that many residents and is not an expected CA service. It is a lovely benefit but not one that people move to CA property to enjoy. A new program manager should not be hired in the fall. The specific cost for this is not provided in the budget, but is assumed to be one person’s salary or roughly \$75,000.~~

~~3) Close one of the gyms. The indoor gyms are not universally safe and memberships have dropped precipitously. It seems reasonable to close one of the three gyms until the pandemic is over and membership returns to previous years. In most years, the gym memberships pay for themselves but~~

Commented [JE1]: Suggest removing this. Older villages were built this way, but newer ones were not. For example, River Hill has one large pool rather than neighborhood pools. Also, pools are not the same neighborhood amenities that open space is. Anyone can gather on open space. Pools require a membership. I think we have to be careful, especially given the fact that the one pool closed in OM is within walking distance of another. I’d stick with an argument that having the full network of pools gives everyone all the options they are paying for.

Commented [JE2]: Consider cutting this sentence as this could also just indicate that golf is more popular than gyms. Outdoor being more popular than indoor is a hard conclusion to jump to unless we can demonstrate that outdoor activities across the board are more popular than similar indoor activities.

Commented [JE3]: Alternatively, we could recommend that CA not cut the two most popular things they do – pools and open space, and find the \$508,000 from other parts of the budget without getting specific about where, given we don’t necessarily know how our residents feel about everything else.

Commented [JE4]: See comments above about removing the neighborhood gathering argument. If we increase rates, this makes pools more exclusive (with exceptions for those with incomes at low enough levels to qualify for reduced memberships). We have to be careful about simultaneously arguing for the public good of the pools while making the cost to enter more prohibitive in the same letter. I’m fine with higher rates, as long as they are implemented progressively so that no one who can afford the pools now finds themselves unable to afford them later. Otherwise, we’ve defeated the purpose of having 23 pools near almost anyone.

Commented [JE5]: Be careful – the only thing universally safe that CA could do from a COVID perspective is close everything.

during the pandemic the gyms are expected to lose \$1,059,000 (or confusingly Supreme Sports Club alone loses \$1,690,000?). Gyms are also slated for \$400,000 in capital improvements, which could also be cut at this time. I expect the impact on memberships would be minimal, because fees charged for CA Fit memberships are still on par with single gym memberships, while offering much more even with only two open gyms and the understanding that the third gym closure would be temporary.

4) Reconsider the pay increases for the Office of the President. At a time when CA is in financial distress as well as amid a pandemic, it is truly difficult to justify to residents a cost of \$377,000 for two salaries. We recommend a stay on the pandemic pay cuts to FY21 levels, saving \$80,000.

Before making a final determination on which pools will be open and what programming will be offered at the pools that are open, we recommend that CA assess members' intentions toward using the pools this summer, given the current state of the pandemic and vaccination roll out. For example, how many members will likely retain their pool memberships if capacity and number of pools are limited? How many members will plan to return to the Columbia Neighborhood Swim League? How many members will plan to attend aquatics and aerobics classes at pools? This information should drive decisions about pool openings, schedules, and programming. CA does not want to hurt its long term position due to short term financial stress. If members do not see adequate opportunities to attend a pool this summer due to limited facilities and limited capacity within facilities, they may not see the value in starting or continuing a membership.

We strongly encourage you to reach out to all members whose membership includes access to pools to get a clearer picture of intent. During this outreach, please be as transparent as possible, based on what you know today, about what the pool situation may look like this summer. If pools will require pre-registration and time limits on attendance due to capacity limitations, share this information and assess how many members feel the membership is still worth the price if they do not have the access they once had. You may find that closing some facilities to save money actually costs money in cancelled memberships.

Thank you for your consideration. As always, we are committed to a partnership between OMCA and CA to address short-term financial issues and the longer-term viability of our organizations and the amenities and activities we offer.



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Oakland Mills Community Association Public Space Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 19, 2021

Attendees:

- Warren Wortman, chair
- Casey Bryant
- Jim Caffey
- Mike Westendorf
- Marc Klein
- Bob Marietta

Discussion(s):

- **Non-compliant ADA curb cuts.** No update
- **Bike lockers at the OM Village center.** Warren Wortman talked with Wilde Lake Village Board Kevin McAliley about bike lockers at Wilde Lake. Mr. McAliley finds the 2 sets of bike lockers useful but poorly maintained and would not recommend getting them. He did note that a bike room for condo residents is both secure and convenient, providing space for more than 200 bikes.
- **Active Transportation Open House:** Howard County is conducting this virtual open house from Feb 19th at 12pm - Feb 26th at 5pm. Staff will be available to chat and answer questions at the times notes:
 - Tuesday, February 23, 1pm-2pm
 - Wednesday, February 24, 6pm-7pm
 - Thursday, February 25, 6pm-7pm
 - Friday, February 26, 11am-noon.
- **Lift e-scooters** will be coming to the west side of Columbia on July 1st, 2021, according to Bob Marietta.

Action Items:

- Attend an office hour of the Active Transportation Open House with questions prepared.

Next Meeting: March 16th - 7:00pm - 8:00pm