



Town Center Community Association

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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January 19, 2021

Columbia Association (CA) Board of Directors
6310 Hillside Court
Columbia, MD 21046

RE: FY 22 CA Draft Budget

Dear CA Board of Directors,

We are pleased that 2020 has ended but still see significant challenges ahead of us in terms of financial uncertainty, service delivery in the community and maintaining the vibrancy and connectedness of the Columbia Villages and overall community. We realize that you as a Board have been challenged in balancing both the FY 2021/FY 2022 operating and capital budgets as well as fulfilling your mission of serving all constituencies at all your touch points, e.g., pools, fitness centers, art centers, neighborhood, and village centers and before and after care programs.

We understand that funds are NOT unlimited. We also realize that business decisions need to be made for the greater good of all Columbia residents. However, we strongly believe that certain programs and amenities should not be sacrificed.

Below are our initial thoughts on programs, amenities, and initiatives after reviewing the FY22 Budget:

1. **Pools**: Town Center should have at least two pools that are kept open to serve a growing community. How did the CA staff arrive at the recommendation to close certain pools and keep others open? Was it based on usage statistics, Census data and/or estimated household population? The closest pools to Town Center are **Running Brook** (recommended by CA staff to close) and **Wilde Lake** (Faulkner Ridge to remain open). Faulkner Ridge is far away from Town Center with limited parking. As population has grown to approximately 6,000 in Town Center there is more of a need for larger pools and not “dipping pools” as are currently in the new apartment complexes.
2. **Inner Arbor Trust Concept Design**: the new design is exciting, vibrant, and makes maximum use of the land footprint in and around



Merriweather Post Pavilion. The concept as envisioned is relatively low cost, fairly easy to implement and an amenity that, once built, will attract, and engage the community as Columbia's equivalent of Central Park. We would ask that this project be "**fast tracked**" and not put on a 5-year completion schedule. The pandemic has shown us that people have re-engaged with parks like never before and, attendance has achieved record levels in local, state, and federal parks during the COVID pandemic.

3. **Golf Courses:** even though Fairway Hills has had operating losses in year's past the pandemic has resulted in a positive net asset value year over year during this golf season (May-November 2020) as people have found "safe outdoor activities" to engage in during the pandemic. Rather than closing Fairway Hills CA staff should explore possible alternatives such as a lease/management arrangement with someone like Indigo/Golf Partners (or a similar type company) that will manage the operation and use their extensive buying power to lower operating costs while delivering excellent services and programs.
4. **Haven on the Lake:** if the CA Board decides to close the Haven on the Lake, we would ask that the Howard Hughes space be used for the greater good of the community with amenities, programs and/or retail space that reaches the broadest number of Columbia's residents. This prime lakefront real estate is critical to Town Center and should be a showcase on the Lake.
5. **Open Space Areas/Parks in General:** Town Center asks that CA have a broader outreach program with Villages to build up a grassroots network of volunteers (unpaid) to assist CA in maintaining the open space and/or adding to the community, e.g., planting trees. These are our parks and our open space, and your new Communications Team should be able to engage the entire community to build up a network of volunteers to become UNPAID "tree and park huggers"! This can only benefit Dennis Matthey and the Open Space Team!
6. **Art Center Equipment and Supplies:** As a frequent user of the Columbia Art Center, and a potter, I feel the center is a jewel in a much-neglected area. I understand that operation of the Center is not a revenue producer but provides great creative outlets for our community with a broad offering of programs. Kilns are in need of being rebuilt and/or maintained and have been allowed to deteriorate over time.

Why not allow for alternate means of revenue, e.g., fund-raising for the Center as is done at Clayworks, or making it known to community artists that they could use the center for a fee, or reaching out to corporate sponsors? Revenue generation should be a creative process also. There should be some creative options to the liability restrictions imposed on the art center as a facility of CA that could be tweaked in order to accommodate the needs of the community.



We foresee that the beginning of FY22 will remain challenged in terms of event revenue and people's willingness to fully return to "normal activities". We will do our part to control expenses and oversee Town Center operations. We ask that you do your part to continue to support the overall mission of engaging the community, offering amenities and benefits that reach the broadest audience and continue to support diversity and understanding across all generational groups.

Thank you for considering our thoughts and suggestions.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions at lfoehrkolb@yahoo.com.

Sincerely,

Lynn Foehrkolb

**Lynn Foehrkolb
Village Board Chair
Town Center Community Association**

CC: Board of Directors of the Columbia Village Community Associations