

INTERAGENCY COORDINATING BOARD
Minutes of July 26, Meeting

Board Members Present:

Marvin Mills, Laurence Pitsenberger, Dr. Debra Muge, Fariba Kassiri (alternate for Richard Madaleno), Seth Adams (alternate for Dr. Monifa McKnight), Pravin (Pete) Mistry, Artie Harris, and Brenda Wolff.

Board Members Absent:

Marlene Michaelson, Principal Lakeisha Lashley, and Principal Cary Dimmick.

CUPF Staff:

Ramona Bell-Pearson, Ron Maxson, Eric Rasch, William Polman, Victoria Smith, David Park, Michelle Bean, Derek Ross, and Evelin Chavez.

Guests:

Riley Robin (REC), Mike Riley, Haviz Adejo, Kristi Williams, Melanie Sasse, Haviz Adejo, Dan Melnick, Martha Kyrillidou,

Proceedings:

- Virtual Meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m. by Director, Ramona Bell-Pearson.
- Roll call of Board members was performed to determine a quorum.
- Minutes of the May 3, 2023, Meeting were approved.
- Agenda for July 26, 2023, Meeting was approved.

Chair's remarks:

- Thanked member for attending the quarterly meeting. Notified members that the Vendor that will conduct the fee study has been selected. The company is QualityMetrics and they appear to be very well qualified and eager to work with CUPF. QualityMetrics intends to prepare a thorough and informative study which will well equip CUPF to make sound fee setting decisions.
- Informed members that former Board Chair Derek Ross is now on staff with CUPF. Derek is CUPF's Outreach Communication Specialist and has hit the ground running by creating a communications plan that will make CUPF more accessible and provide strong messaging and informative outreach.

Director's Report:

Staff Update

- CUPF has hired several additional staff members to build the staff that was lost during and after the pandemic.
- Silver Spring has hired a part time Principal Administrative Aide.
- Silver Spring is awaiting Human Resources finalization of the applicant list for the Event Monitor position to conduct interviews.
- Silver Spring hired a new booking agent that started on June 20, 2023.
- Core Services is preparing for the Program Specialist II who will supervise the part time event monitors and the permitting process for the Wheaton Plaza, Veterans Park, and 2nd floor conference room. Marta Martinez join Core Services on July 31, 2023.
- CUPF is hiring for two part time Event Monitors who will manage Wheaton events is under review with Human Resources.
- Ramona will be defending 11 appeals against her decision to approve telework schedules for staff of no more than 3 days of telework and two days in person in the office. The Union would not agree to consolidate the appeals even though all 11 employees are the same grade, on the same team and have asked for the same relief. Therefore, Ramona will have to attend 11 separate meetings to argue about a difference of 1 day because staff wants to telework four days each week and her operational needs can only support three telework days each week.
- CUPF staff attended a Team Building Event on June 29, 2023, at the TopGolf facility in Germantown. There was plenty of food and practice golf swings. Everybody had a good time and enjoyed each other's company.

Additional CUPF Updates

- QualityMetrics in collaboration with Attain Partners and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) will conduct an external review within the six months established in the RFP. QualityMetrics and Attain Partners will look their past data review and cost analysis experience conducting extensive cost studies in libraries and universities to determine the indirect costs for sponsored research and utility rates.
- Attain Partners is one of the current manifestations of an earlier consulting firm known as KPMG that helped the county in 2002 with a market research study on its fee structure. QualityMetrics and Attain Partners staff have been active in the market and financial analysis of services and buildings including comprehensive library cost studies that include building utilization for over two decades.
- QualityMetrics recruited Nathalie Kirsch and Isaac Matthias, the two interns that completed the Community Use of Public Facilities comparative study in the summer of 2022, as consulting advisors. This will bring up-to-date knowledge regarding the specific needs of CUPF. The proposed work extends the August 2022 market research study as requested in the RFP and outlined in the proposal.

Communications Update

- CUPF has been working on a robust Communications Action Plan that includes an update to the existing social media platforms. In addition to Facebook, Twitter, and Blogger, CUPF can also be found under Threads, Instagram, LinkTree, YouTube, and LinkedIn.
- Under the handle @montgomerycupf, CUPF will continue to establish a presence in social media, making sure the content is available to all current users, meanwhile attracting new customers. The information provided through the content that will be created and presented through its platforms will include keywords and Search Engine Optimizations (SEO). CUPF anticipates a strong uptick in followers, which will entice more organizations to utilize its services in the community.
- While updating the social media platforms, CUPF's Communications and Outreach, Program Manager will continue to add sleek colors and images to banner's, making them all extremely inviting to visitor's and more importantly followers of CUPF platforms.
- The outreach goals of CUPF will continue to evolve internally by being active with departments and teams that include the Office of Community Partnerships, Public Information Office, and VSI Communications. One of the primary goals of CUPF's communications department is to collaborate with other agencies such as the Montgomery County Public Libraries, making sure the information attained is properly displayed on social media platforms, the CUPF Website, and through future newsletters and correspondence at various locations.

Core Services Team Update

- **Cross training for all staff:** As unfamiliar staff were hired onto the team, a clear plan was established to complete full cross training of all existing staff as well as new hires by December 2023, so that all staff will be able to do any task assigned within their job category/ grade level across the entire Core Services Team. This is helpful when staff are on leave or if vacancies occur, as all staff will be able to fill in for any other team member. Core Services training is approximately 40% complete. The interest, participation, and commitment of staff has been remarkably positive.
- **User guidebooks continue to be a momentous success:** CUPF's user guidebooks first published March 1, 2023, has increasingly become more useful to customers, partners, and staff. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. CUPF is beginning to see that customers are more informed, have fewer basic questions, and are understanding expectations and processes. CUPF's Communications Program Manager has started assisting with increased awareness of these tools for residents and businesses desiring to use public facilities.
- **Successful opening day for outdoor facilities, Saturday, July 15:** Three staff worked on Saturday, July 15th to provide support to customers reserving outdoor facilities for dates of use August 16 through November 30. There were few issues. A total of 416 reservations were created online with a total of 3,129 bookings, in the amount of \$35,443.67.

- **Upcoming opening day for indoor school facilities, August 15:** Opening day for indoor school facilities for the 2023-2024 school year begins at 6:30 a.m. on August 15, 2023. CUPF has alerted the software vendor that they expect significantly high site traffic on this date, so they may provide additional support. At this time, CUPF's high-volume priority use has been scheduled. The department continues to receive request from PTAs and schools.
- **User groups are increasingly requesting multiple accounts for use by their organizations.** Groups believe that due to the slow process of booking multiple dates online, they are losing out on opportunities to secure space required for their activities. Years ago, the Board agreed that CUPF should limit all organizations to one single account for reserving space online. CUPF has continued to enforce this to the best of our ability. At this time, groups do believe that this is not suitable or equitable. Most groups requesting changes are asking that an account be set up for each of their specific sports, specific area coordinators, etc. CUPF recommends that the Board discuss whether this guideline should remain.

Silver Spring Civic Building at Veterans Plaza Update

- **Hired new Booking Specialist – Ms. Sanjukta Sil Upadhyay. Start Date: June 20, 2023** – There is a new addition to the Silver Spring team, Sanjukta Upadhyay, joined CUPF as the new Booking Specialist.
- **VSI trainings** – Staff spent more time on training to be able to assist at many levels in the VSI system; booking, reporting; updating and making changes to reservations; processing payments.
- **Automated Installment Billing** – Sanjukta Sil Upadhyay, Booking Agent, will be working with the finance division to automate installment billing.
- **Job Offer of PAA** – Macire Dabo has been offered and accepted a job to work part time in the Principle Administrative Aide (PAA) role. This role will support the Welcome Desk operations and all that entails and some administrative functions. The role will be Monday-Friday and hours will range from 20-30 hours per week. The start date for the new staff person is July 31, 2023.
- **Applied for and won Grant Funding from the State of Maryland (Governor's Office)** – Asked for and won \$20K grant to support youth programming on Veterans Plaza through partnerships with youth oriented non-profit organizations.
- **Potential opportunities for youth programming.** The skate house might present an anchor or hub for activities. Working with SSRSC and HHS. A follow up inquiry was made, and work continues to explore the possibility of the skate house as a possible permitted space by SSCBVP/CUPF.
- **Television interview about Veterans Plaza and the Civic Building.** Ahead of Memorial Day 2023, a television station went to interview Eric Rasch, Operations Manager about Veterans Plaza and the Silver Spring Civic Building. The tv spot

aired to a wide audience and [showcased the Civic Building, what kind of activities take place here, and how people could reach out for more information](#). The video is on SSCBVP's webpage and highlights how to get in contact with CUPF.

- **Community Access Program (CAP FY24) – \$150k.** The County Council and County Executive approved \$150k in CAP funding for Fiscal Year 2024. At the time of this report, SSCBVP had received 37 applications for funding with many more expected. The CAP Review Committee plans to meet in the month of August and anticipates having approximately 60 applications to review for potential funding during that meeting.
- **More positive coverage of Veterans Plaza –** Attached are links to two news stories that highlighted Veteran's Plaza and the event hosted. The event organizers gave praise to all staff as they learned to navigate a successful event in downtown Silver Spring. They said that they will return for 2024 and expressed gratitude for CUPF's exceptional support and assistance and for making it a seamless experience.
 - <https://youtu.be/jUJ-CjFck9U>
 - <https://youtu.be/YeYy9TRxaP8>
- **Parking Garage 61 – Pricing Change (Pay for Parking on Saturdays).** Since the parking garage next to the Silver Spring Civic Building opened, guests at the SSCBVP have experienced free parking on Saturdays. As of July 8, 2023; however, parking in Parking Garage 61 is [no longer free](#) for guests.
- **Working Parents Assistance (WPA) Program – HHS.** The operations manager met with HHS management and staff to help them highlight the Working Parents Assistance Program. They plan to produce content to share online and connect with the many community events that take place in the Civic Building and on Veterans Plaza. For more information about that program, visit: [Montgomery County - Department of Health and Human Services - Children, Youth and Family Services - Child Care Subsidy Program \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](#)
- **Social media communication –** Several events and promotions have been posted online. Community groups have also asked for their messages to be posted on the two Jumbotron in downtown Silver Spring which have been approved and are in rotation.
- **Twilight Tuesdays.** There have been weekly Twilight Tuesday events with the largest event taking place recently – the Nigerian Party on the Plaza – where vendors and entertainment came together. Complimenting the event was a promotion in partnership with Round House Theatre a Civic Building partner and

tenant. Twilight Tuesday events have been successful and typically draw crowds of 100+ throughout the event.

- **Partnership with WorkSource Montgomery (American Job Center) AJC mobile job center on Veterans Plaza** as a partnership with the Silver Spring Regional Services Center and the Silver Spring Urban District. The program is called “Workforce Wednesdays” and encourages young people to apply for work in Montgomery County; 18 youth took advantage of their services their first day on the plaza.
- **Summer Concert Series “Silver Swings”** – Thursday night concerts are back on Veterans Plaza and each week the performers attract a wide variety of people including youth, families, and seniors. The events are in partnership with the Silver Spring Regional Services Center.
- **Farmers Market** – The farmers market is looking to expand their operations by offering grains at the market. The operations manager connected the farmers market to local businesses in downtown SS to help them see this plan come to fruition. The farmers market takes place nearly every Saturday and attracts hundreds of residents weekly.
- **Veterans Plaza Festival Schedule in downtown Silver Spring.** The months of May, June, and July have been successful with festivals taking place on a weekly basis on Sundays. Silver Spring Veterans Plaza will also host two festivals on Saturdays: 1) Silver Spring Jazz Festival 2) PanaFest 2023
- **Produced banners for festival promotion** – Since the banners returned for 2023, SS has received widespread positive feedback from the public about the banners. The banners help to market downtown Silver Spring and Montgomery County as a vibrant destination for our residents and visitors to MoCo. In addition, the operations manager created digital banners to share online and via social media.
- **New Chamber Initiative – SSCBVP Joined the Silver Spring Safety Alliance** – the operations manager attended the kickoff event for the Silver Spring Safety Alliance and signed the SSCBVP up as an official partner. Event attendees included the County Executive, Police Chief, Silver Spring Chamber, Silver Spring Urban District, and business partners throughout downtown SS. [Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce - Greater Silver Spring Chamber of Commerce \(gsscc.org\)](#)
- **Two New SSRSC Program Managers at the SSCBVP.** Two new program managers were hired to support SSRSC operations.

- **SSTCi – Working remote indefinitely** - Silver Spring Town Center, Inc. has relinquished their working space / office. SSTCi is committed to providing events to support SSCBVP operations and SSTCi remains official partners.
- **LITY Nights, PRIDE Festival, and international events on Veterans Plaza** - the LIYT Nights and the PRIDE Festival on Veterans Plaza were both successful.
- **Marijuana is legal – as of July 1, 2023.** Messaging and administrative outreach and support is required to ensure Veterans Plaza is not a destination for outdoor recreational smoking.
- **Skateboarding on Veterans Plaza** - skateboarding on Veterans Plaza remains strong and popular among the youth that frequent downtown Silver Spring.
- **Silver Spring Urban District (SSUD) staff – have been treating Veterans Plaza very well** with regular check ins to remove trash, spot power wash, remove graffiti, and make minor repairs. We are grateful for their ongoing support.
- **New Security Contractor as of July 15, 2023** – The SSCBVP is working with a new security contractor – BTI has been awarded with the contract.

Finance & Budget Report

- The FY23 fiscal year ended on June 30. CUPF closed the year with revenues of \$9,175,653, which was 23% of FY22 revenues received. Last year CUPF ended with \$7,410,437 in revenues. Thankfully, CUPF is seeing a gradual increase in revenues.
- Typically, it takes the county a few months to completely close out the budget, CUPF should receive the fund balance this winter.
- For FY24, CUPF has projected that revenues will be gradually increasing to pre-covid levels. The revenue budget for FY24 is \$11,900,248.
- For CUPF's operating budget, it has budgeted to have a full personnel complement, which includes 29 full time positions and one part time position.
- The FY24 operating budget has increased by 2% from the FY23 operating budget which is closer to the pre pandemic budget.

Subsidy Programs

- CUPF's budget for its CAP program was budgeted at \$150,000. At the end of the fiscal year, the CAP program had utilized the full \$150,000 in subsidy awards.
- For FY24, the CAP fully funded budget is \$150,000. The SSCB has already received CAP applications and will be review within the next few weeks.

- A resolution was adopted by the County Council on May 19, 2022, to grant CUPF \$125,000 through the American Rescue Plan Act for youth sports. By the end of FY23, CUPF has been able to award the full \$125,000 to 47 groups.
- For FY23, CUPF budgeted \$75,000 for FFAP. By the end of the fiscal year, CUPF had utilized the full \$75,000. For FY24 the budgeted amount for FFAP is \$75,000.

Childcare

- MCPS has developed a new Procurement process for the School Age Before and After Care selection process. The process is being run through the MCPS Facilities office. They have concluded their preliminary pilot selection and providers for four schools are awaiting final approval by the school board.
- There are currently 114 elementary schools and one middle school with before and after school childcare programs. With the addition of the four new placements when the school year starts in August CUPF will have 119 permits in place for Before and After Care programs.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 a.m.