



OBserver

Official newsletter of the Owen
Brown Community Association

6800 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045

Owen Brown Community Association

SNACKS WITH SANTA

DEC 7 2024 **9:30-11 AM**

YOUR PARAGRAPH TEXT

Tickets on Sale Nov 11th

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN!
PARENTS DON'T FORGET TO BRING
YOUR CAMERA!!
ONLY CHILDREN VISITING WITH SANTA
REQUIRE A TICKET.

THIS EVENT IS FREE FOR
OWEN BROWN RESIDENTS.
LIMIT 4 TICKETS PER
HOUSEHOLD

Owen Brown Community Association

WINTER SOW WITH MILK JUGS

**WEDNESDAY JANUARY 15TH
6:30PM**

TRANSFORM YOUR MILK JUGS INTO
MINI GREENHOUSES

The Howard County Master Gardeners
will show a creative upcycle for your
Milk Jugs. Get a jump on Spring by
sowing seeds.

**Registration Opens
December 1st**

LIMITED TO OWEN BROWN
RESIDENTS
REGISTRATION REQUIRED

6800 Cradlerock Way
Columbia, Md 21045
410.381.0202

OB Residents Got Creative at a Winter-themed Paint Night in November!



OB DATES TO REMEMBER

Snacks with Santa	Dec. 7, 9:30-11am
OB Board Meeting	Dec. 10, 7pm
OB RAC Meeting	Dec. 11, 7:30pm
Holiday Dinner	Dec. 11, 6:30-8:30
OB Board Meeting	Jan 7., 7pm
OB RAC Meeting	Jan. 8, 7:30pm
Winter Sow w/milk jugs	Jan 15, 6:30pm
OB Board Work Session	Jan. 21, 7pm



OWEN BROWN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

Office Hours

Monday-Friday	9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon

Village Office Staff

	410-381-0202
Craig Barton	Village Manager
Susan Sloan	Covenant Advisor
Kelly Kalal	Facility Coordinator/ Event Planner
Nick Bechetti	Asst. Covenant Advisor
Kelly Carney	OBserver Editor
Joann Allen	Facility Assistant

Village Board Members

Brad Butler	Board Chair
Linda Ortiz-Byrd	Board Vice-chair
Robert Golibersuch	Board Member
Mae Beale	Board Member
Adil Ahmed	Board Member
Michael Golibersuch	CA Board Rep.

Check us out on the web and Facebook at:
www.owenbrownvillage.org
www.facebook.com/owenbrownvillage

OBCA BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

from the desk of Board Chair, Brad Butler

Happy Holidays! If you've taken a walk around Lake Elkhorn recently, or along the path between the Community Center and Cradlerock Elementary, or through the woods along Sandchain Rd, you'll notice dozens of newly planted trees. Many thanks to the CA Open Space team and our Owen Brown CARES group for making this happen.

Also, you may notice some work being done on the roof of the Community Center. CA is installing solar panels, which will offset about a third of the energy usage of the Community Center.

There is a wonderful series of events planned at the Community Center throughout the holiday season, including our crafts series, Santa, and the ever-popular Holiday Dinner. Keep an eye on this newsletter or our website for details.

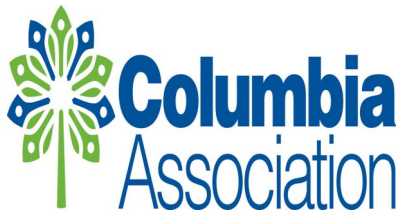
The village board met just once in November. We approved donations to Talbot Springs ES PTA and East Columbia Preschool. Our modest donation budget predominately supports organizations that support Owen Brown students and residents. We closed two cases with CA's Architectural Resource Committee. We do this when a homeowner who had previously been referred to CA has addressed their maintenance or other architectural issues. Owen Brown made several changes to our architectural and maintenance processes a few years ago, which has resulted in a steady decline in resident complaints. Kudos to our covenant staff for making that happen.

We also sent input to the Columbia Association and to Howard County outlining Owen Brown's priorities for both organizations' budget planning and heard updates from both CA and Howard County. Our CA Representative's newsletter on the other page will have important updates from CA.

From Howard County, we learned that construction is planned to begin in the Spring on both the Dobbin Road pathway and the East Columbia Library Park. The solar farm at the library is nearly complete! Phase I construction of safety improvements to Cradlerock Way is planned to start during 2025 as well, and future phases will require continued community support to secure funding. Howard County's first public budget hearing is scheduled for December 9th. Community support during last year's hearings certainly made an impact in securing funding for Phase I.

Lastly, we have begun interviewing candidates for our Village Manager position. We are also still looking for a board member to serve the remainder of the current term. If you know of good candidates who are interested, please reach out.

Have a wonderful holiday season!



CA ROLLS OUT NEW PORTAL TO SUPPORT MEMBERS; PLANTS TREES NEAR LAKE ELKHORN AND THE GARDEN PLOTS

From the desk of Michael Golibersuch, OBCA Columbia Council Representative

Because of the timing of board meetings and the print deadlines for the *OBserver*, I wasn't able to provide an update in November and I need to cover topics from two meetings (October 24 and November 14) in this December article.

The Board reviewed and renewed CA's Emergency Cash Reserve Policy. The COVID pandemic had a large financial impact on CA and highlighted the need to establish a reserve fund. Previous boards established the cash reserve policy in 2021, and CA has been gradually building it since. It is currently on track to reach its target level of around \$19M in 2028. The reserve will serve to mitigate the impact future shocks may have on CA and make the organization more resilient as a whole and better able to serve the community.

CA is working through the options for the future of our headquarters building. CA currently leases the headquarters building but has an upcoming opportunity to purchase it. The Board, with input from the staff, will need to evaluate the impact various options will have on CA's ability to serve the community. Because this involves a contract negotiation that could be jeopardized if terms are discussed in open meetings, most of these discussions will take place in meetings closed in accordance with Maryland law. We aim to reach a final decision at an open meeting in January.

CA is developing its budget for next fiscal year (which starts May 2025). In support of this, the Board identified six priorities: Open Space, Sustainability, Value to Lean Payers, Reducing Resident Costs, Information Technology, and Data Collection/Decision Support/Knowledge Management. These priorities align with feedback gathered from residents. They are also consistent with priorities selected by the board in previous years with a greater emphasis on improving data and knowledge management capabilities. Using these priorities - and keeping in mind constraints such as supply chain issues, price increases due to sustained inflation, and tight labor markets - CA staff is creating a detailed budget which we aim to finalize in February.

CA also continues to work on a new strategic plan to guide the organization over the next five years. The strategy is beginning to take shape and tentatively has four strategic focus areas: Community Engagement, Wellness, Sustainability/Environment, and Resource Stewardship. We aim to have this strategy approved in January.

On November 19th, the new CA Portal was launched. I'm writing this article before that date, so I don't know how the roll-out went but this has been a major effort by CA and the team is prepared for possible growing pains with such a large change. This is a new tool (including a new app) that is intended to make it easier for members to manage their membership, sign up for classes, and get infor-

mation. It should be a significant improvement over CA's current system and many members of CA's team have worked hard to implement this change. If you have a membership, you can learn more at ColumbiaAssociation.org/upgrade.

CA's Vice President of Community Programs and Services, Mr. Dan Burns, provided a very informative presentation on that division. If you don't know, Community Programs and Services (CPS), is the half of CA that provides services that actively engage the community such as the gyms, pools, art center, archives, after school services, multicultural programming, sports center, racket sports, and so on. It is the counterpart to Community Operations, which is the half of CA that provides the infrastructure that we all use including the open space, facilities, and capital projects. Dan's presentation provided an overview of all the services and amenities they provide as well as a thorough rundown of the financial support provided to qualified residents. Key highlights include: over 55,000 current members, generating 2.4M visits last year, 135k visits to children's programs, and at least \$1.4M in financial support to help residents afford access.

Recent operational highlights from CA include:

- CA's sustainability success in offsetting 100% of CA's electricity consumption with on and offsite solar and wind renewable energy certifications.
- The annual Community Chess Day at the Youth & Teen Center on October 12th
- Upcoming planting of over 400 trees along the Elkhorn branch trail in an area that was devastated by emerald ash borers (in between the garden plots and Dobbin road)
- Planting dozens of trees around Lake Elkhorn to combat tree loss over the past few years
- Fall events including Trunk or Treat and Halloween Movie Night at the lakefront
- Multiple charity drives to collect coats and other essentials for families in need
- Work by the financial team to engage insurance brokers and work towards procuring favorable terms for CA's excess general liability coverage

Also, Supreme Sports Club recently finished a major renovation including improved classrooms, cycling studios, and free weights room. There's a nice archival display near the weight room as well that takes a walk down memory lane and shows how Supreme (and fashion styles) have changed over the years. As always you can contact me at michael.golibersuch@ca-board.org, stop me to say hello as I walk my brown and white dog around the lake, and you can probably catch me in the newly renovated gym on weekend mornings.

Owen Brown Community Association

6800 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045

Office: 410-381-0202 Fax: 410-381-0235



Owen Brown CARES*

*Community Action and Resources for Environmental Stewardship

Owen Brown CARES has been busy this fall. We attended the Village Carnival in September and handed out native plants to those who visited the CARES table (*left photos below*). The plants were provided by Columbia Association. It was great seeing everyone enjoying the wonderful fall weather. Great turnout! Thank you to everyone who came out and helped with the giveaway.

On October 26 we hosted a community tree planting at the Dasher Green/Leafy Screen adopt-a-spot. Thanks to a grant received from the Maryland Urban and Community Forestry Council and Howard County Office of Community Sustainability, we were able to plant 17 native trees and shrubs in the open space sur-

rounding our adopt-a-spot. The area is coming together nicely, and this Spring we should see it flourish (*right photos below*).

Thanks to all of the volunteers who participated and to the CA Open Space crew who donated a few hours of their time on a Saturday morning to help our cause. We are very lucky to be living in Owen Brown among such caring and giving neighbors. It was especially great seeing our neighborhood children out helping their parents.

If you're interested in learning more about OB CARES, or would like to participate in our next event, contact Linda Byrd at linda96ort@gmail.com.

