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OBserver

Official newsletter of the Owen Brown Community Association

6800 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045 410-381-0202

OBCA Happenings in December

Come join us for festive fun at our **Boordy & Bright Holiday Happy Hour** on Thursday, December 3rd for ages 21 and over. Meet your neighbors for ugly sweater fun, tasty food and drink, festive games and prizes.

If you are you looking for a quiet family visit with Santa, register for a private visit with Santa at **OBCA's Cozy Visit with Santa on December 5.**

Are you decorating your house with holiday lights? If so, register by **December 17** to win a prize from **OBCA's 2nd annual Holiday Light Fight.**

And if you are already planning for 2027, save the date for our popular **Seed Sowing** workshop on **January 27** or our **Gaming Across Generations** workshop on **Feb 2**.

To register for any of our events, either visit linktr.ee/owenbrownvillage, our website, or scan QR codes on ads.

Please note that we will not have a January print *OBserver*. To stay in the know for all things Owen Brown, please follow our socials or subscribe to our e-newsletter.







Owen Brown
Community Association

OBCA Meetings & Events

OB Board Meeting	December 1, 7pm
OB Holiday Event Boordy & Bright	**December 3, 5:30 pm**
Santa's Cozy Christmas (by appointment)	**December 5, starts 10am**
OB RAC Meeting	December 9, 7:30pm
OB Holiday Light Fight *(Last day to register your decorated house)*	**December 17**
OBCA Offices will be closed from	***December 24 - January 3***
OB Work Session	January 19, 2027, 7pm
Master Gardner's Seed Sowing	January 27, 6:30 pm
Gaming across Generations	February 2, 11 am
OB Board Meeting	February 2, 7 pm



Owen Brown Board Bulletin

From the desk of Board Chair, Brad Butler

The leaves are down, the holidays are close, and the community center parking lot has fresh pavement! It's a good time for an update.

Our November 3rd meeting did not reach quorum, so the Board did not convene to make any decisions. The evening was still well spent: we heard from several residents, and from Howard County and Columbia Association representatives about projects and events around Owen Brown.

We converted our November 17th work session to a meeting to catch up. As I write this, we've yet to meet. We anticipate approving a letter of support for the county's traffic calming plans on Deepage Drive and Rustling Leaf, providing input to the upcoming Howard County budget process and CA Budget process, and initiating our annual review of our architectural guidelines.

CA plans to replace the Lake Elkhorn Boardwalk (the bridge at the East end of the lake) beginning around January 4th with a wider boardwalk that will offer additional seating and ease congestion. During construction, the bridge will be closed for up to four months. Signs will be posted of the planned detour through Dasher Ct and Downdale Pl. If that bridge is part of your daily routine (as it is mine) be sure to plan accordingly.

We have reviewed how OBCA runs its elections, to ensure we are consistent with Maryland law, our own best practices, and our governing documents. A few of the changes we've identified require amending our by-laws, which members will vote on at the Annual Meeting in May. Expect more detail in the new year. If you have questions about these changes, please reach out or attend a meeting.

That brings me to an invitation. A village association runs on its volunteers, and the Board needs neighbors who can dedicate one or two evenings a month to running the association: setting organizational priorities, stewarding the association's budget and operations, and advocating for Owen Brown. A fully engaged board gets through required business quickly and puts more energy on the things that matter most to the community. Three seats will be on the ballot this spring. The best way to see if it's for you is to come to a meeting. Our next is December 1st at 7pm at the community center.

As always, reach out anytime at obvillageboard@googlegroups.com — even just to say hello. I look forward to sharing another update soon!

CA Purchases Headquarters Building; Discusses Converting an Outdoor Pool to a Splash Park

From the desk of Michael Golibersuch, OBCA Columbia Council Representative

The Columbia Association Board of Directors held a regular meeting on November 12 that covered a variety of topics. The Board approved the purchase of two buildings: 6310 and 6315 Hillside Court. The final purchase price is $8.8M which, when considering that the sellers initial offer was to sell only 6310 for $10.6M, is a great deal for our community. This will strengthen CA's long-term financial health by making CA owners - rather than tenants - of the headquarters building thus eliminating annual lease payments of almost $1M. It will also build equity, potentially generate an additional source of revenue by converting the new building into a preschool learning center, and enable CA to invest more money back into community-facing amenities and services.

As part of the budget process for next fiscal year, the Board reviewed multiple long-term trends that are driving up expenses for CA. Particularly labor and material costs (such as water treatment chemicals for the pool) both went up substantially during the pandemic and have never come back down. CA is working diligently to bring the rate at which revenue and expenses are rising in long with one another to ensure CA's long-term sustainability. As part of this, the board directed staff to switch to 3.5% merit increases (down from years of 4% increases) as a planning consideration for next year's budget.

The Board also continued discussions on whether an outdoor pool should be converted into a multi-purpose splash park. Pool attendance varies widely with some pools very sparsely attended creating an opportunity to add more diversity to CA's overall portfolio of amenities while simultaneously reducing costs. The Board also discussed the criteria that would be used to select a location for conversion including historical check-in data, suitability for a splash pad park, existing programs at the current location, and proximity to other pools. As Owen Brown already contains one of the only neighborhoods without a pool (Elkhorn) and the historical check-ins at Hopewell and Dasher Green are higher than many others, it is extremely unlikely these criteria would result in one of these two pools being selected for conversion.

CA staff also provided an annual overview of the ten villages. About 14% of the Annual Charge is given to villages as a grant. Across all ten villages there was a combined decrease of around $140,000 in net assets last year (on its own, Owen Brown had a modest increase but not enough to offset seven villages with decreases).

As always, feel free to contact me at michael.golibersuch@ca-board.org or stop me to say hello as I walk my brown and white dog (who looks like a border collie but isn't) around Lake Elkhorn.



Your place to find friendly reminders regarding property maintenance

What is Tell HoCo?

Tell HoCo is Howard County, Maryland's official online and mobile platform for residents to report non-emergency neighborhood issues and track their resolution.

Purpose and Scope: Tell HoCo connects Howard County citizens with county government by allowing them to submit reports for problems such as:

- Roadway issues: potholes, damaged sidewalks, street signs, traffic signals
- Public safety: graffiti, downed tree limbs, obstructed signs
- Utilities: sewer or water issues, street light outages
- Parks and environment: damaged trees, park maintenance needs

It is **not** for emergencies — for urgent situations, call 911 or the county's emergency number. https://www.howardcountymd.gov/tell-hoco.





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