



OBserver

6800 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045

Official newsletter of the Owen Brown Community Association



BECOME A CANDIDATE FOR THE OB VILLAGE OR CA BOARD!

On April 20th, village residents will have the opportunity to elect **two** Village Board members and **one** Columbia Council Representative for a two-year term, beginning in May of 2024. These elected volunteers represent the interests and concerns of the Owen Brown community to both the Columbia Association (CA) and the County. Candidate Packets will be available at the Owen Brown Community Center or by email beginning **March 1, 2024**. Requests for an electronic Candidate Packet should be sent to manager@owenbrownvillage.org Deadline for submission is **March 21 at noon**.

Cosmic Adventures
Traveling Planetarium
presents

11 A.M. **THE SKY TONIGHT** **12 P.M.**

WEDNESDAY MARCH 27TH

LEARN ABOUT OUR EVENING SKY, INCLUDING CONSTELLATIONS, MOON PHASES, VISIBLE PLANETS AND THE UPCOMING APRIL SOLAR ECLIPSE.

FOR AGES 6 AND UP
MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN
ALL PARTICIPANTS NEED A TICKET.

Limited to Owen Brown Residents

Tickets Available March 1st

Receive a FREE pair of Eclipse Glasses

QR CODES FOR 11 A.M. and 12 P.M.

LIMITED TO 25 GUESTS

HOWARD COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

Getting Your Garden Ready for Spring

Spring into the Gardening Season with helpful tips for a full range of Gardening, from Vegetables to Natives.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 6TH
11AM

Registration Encouraged but not required
www.OBSpringGardening.eventbrite.com or 410.381.0202
Light Refreshments Served

QR CODE



Howard County Master Gardeners

PLANT THIS, NOT THAT!

Native Alternatives to Invasive Plants

WEDNESDAY APRIL 10TH
1pm

Learn which Native Plants will Thrive in your Garden and support local Wild Life.
Registration Encouraged, not Required

events@owenbrownvillage.org
410.381.0202

QR CODE

OB DATES TO REMEMBER

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| OB Board Meeting | March 5, 7pm |
| Getting Your Garden Ready for Spring | March 6, 11am |
| OB RAC Meeting | March 13, 7:30pm |
| OB Board Work Session | March 19, 7pm |
| Cosmic Adventures | March 27 |
| OB Board Meeting | April 2, 7pm |
| Plant This, Not That | April 10, 1pm |
| OB RAC Meeting | April 10, 7:30pm |
| OB Board Work Session | April 16, 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 | <i>Observer</i> Editor |
| Joann Allen | Facility Assistant |
| Logan Carneric | Facility Assistant |

Village Board Members

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Michael Golibersuch | Board Chair |
| Brad Butler | Board Vice-chair |
| Robert Golibersuch | Board Member |
| Mae Beale | Board Member |
| Linda Ortiz-Byrd | Board Member |
| Andrew Stack | 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, Michael Golibersuch

The Owen Brown Board of Directors held our monthly meeting on February 6th at the Owen Brown Community Center. We discussed several topics.

We were joined by two representatives from Howard County Recreation and Parks who shared updated plans for the East Columbia Park (near the library). These plans incorporated feedback they received from our community over the past several months. The new plans addressed our greatest concerns: they removed the two lit, synthetic turf baseball fields as well as the pickleball courts which would have created light and noise pollution in nearby neighborhoods. Instead, the park will consist of two (reduced from three) natural turf, multi-use fields; a new playground; a picnic pavilion; two lit basketball courts (set back from the nearby homes); new trees; and an enhanced pathway. The fields will be graded to reduce the current incline and crowned to help drainage. The county will also repair the privacy fence between the park and the abutting neighborhood. Construction for the park will begin in January of 2025 with the basketball courts opening that September and the athletic fields being ready in the spring of 2026 (after the new grass has had time to take root).

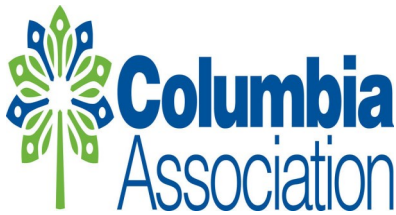
We believe this park design is a substantial improvement over the initial design and is much more tailored to supporting our community rather than being a regional destination. We appreciate all our residents who took the time to share their feedback with us and the county and we appreciate the county staff's attentiveness and incorporation of that feedback.

Our Board also appointed three residents to serve as our election committee: Michael Baum, Rachel Petroff Kessler, and Carole MacPhee. If there is a competitive election for our board seats this year, our election committee will oversee the voting and tallying. We appreciate their willingness to volunteer their time and provide this service to the community.

We also discussed a potential green project near Lake Elkhorn. Columbia Association (which owns and maintains the lake) is applying for a grant that would fund the construction of a string of rain gardens along Broken Land that would mitigate the runoff from the parking lot there. This area would create a visually pleasing feature, a modest amount of habitat for pollinators, and reduce the negative effects of stormwater running off the parking lot into the waterways. We hope this grant is approved and appreciate our Owen Brown CARES group for participating in the application process.

Finally, we discussed two properties with covenant violations and referred them to CA for legal action. We only take this step after several months of attempting to resolve the violations with the property owners.

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CA FY-2025 BUDGET PROVIDES FOR MANY POPULAR AMENITIES WHILE NOT RAISING ANNUAL CHARGE RATES

From the desk of Andy Stack, OBCA Columbia Council Representative

By the time this article is published, the CA Board will have approved the FY-2025 budget. It is basically a continuation budget which keeps the Annual Charge rate the same as last year. Highlights from the Operating Budget include:

- full staffing for most programs and services, even though staffing continues to be very challenging;
- no long-term debt issuances and no use of the short-term line of credit;
- opening all 23 outdoor pools and providing for a full season of CNSL swimming;
- increasing funding for trash pick-up, aquatic vegetation harvesting and maintenance at CA's three lakes;
- expanding funding for tree planting, reforestation and invasive plant removal;
- supporting a full program of Lakefront Live, Festive Fridays and other free programs in CA's Open Space, as well as the expanded July 4th celebration;
- providing \$80,000 for the Howard County Veterans Memorial to be constructed at the Lakefront;
- renovating the Columbia Art Center which may require closing it for two months;
- providing School Age Services at various sites (will be able to host up to 30 children at each morning and afternoon session); and
- providing for modest increases in both membership rates and growth in total members.

Highlights from the Capital Budget include:

- \$1,000,000 – Art Center and Stonehouse Phase II renovations;
- \$1,643,000 - Pathway, pedestrian bridges and boardwalk renovations and replacements;

- \$1,500,000 – Lake Kittamaquondi dredging;
- \$1,136,000 – Other Open Space-related projects, equipment and vehicles;
- \$1,350,000 – Community Programs and Services projects, including aquatics regulatory compliance upgrades, Phase III renovations for Supreme Sports Club, golf course bridge replacements and pond improvements;
- \$900,000 - Building energy retrofits, watershed and water quality improvements and “going green” projects;
- \$565,000 - Outdoor Pool projects;
- \$617,000 - Village community association projects; and
- \$1,425,000 - Additional Open Space projects.

The CA Board is on schedule to select the next CA President/CEO by the end of April 2024. See columbiaassociation.org/news/ca-begins-search-for-next-president-ceo/ for further information.

The new County East Columbia 50+ Center (located next to the East Columbia Library) is scheduled to open March 7th. It will be a great addition to our village.

Don't forget to check out CA Blog articles at www.columbiaassociation.org/blog/. Interested in a career with CA? Please visit www.columbiaassociation.org/about-us/careers/. For questions or comments, please contact me at andrew.stack@ca-board.org or obvbcarep@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

OBCA BOARD HIGHLIGHTS...continued from page 2

As you may know, Howard County has kicked off the Master Planning process for Columbia Gateway. When complete, this master plan will guide the development of Gateway for the next several decades. The county is advertising a vision to create a vibrant “innovation district” but many details still need to be worked out. The county's intent is to complete and have the master plan approved within a year - this means any community input will need to be shared with the county soon if it is to be incorporated into the planning process. More info can be found here: <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/gateway>. While this plan is important to all of Owen Brown, it will be particularly im-

portant to our Gentle Shade and Solar Walk neighborhoods due to their proximity to Gateway.

At our March 5th meeting, we will be joined by our County Council Representative, Christiana Rigby, and the CEO of the Howard County Economic Development Authority, Jennifer Jones. We will be discussing recent business closures at the Owen Brown Village Center and whether any opportunities for increasing investment exist. This is a good opportunity to share thoughts and concerns with our county council representative and we encourage people to attend.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, you can email the board at obvillageboard@googlegroups.com.

Owen Brown Community Association

6800 Cradlerock Way, Columbia, MD 21045

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

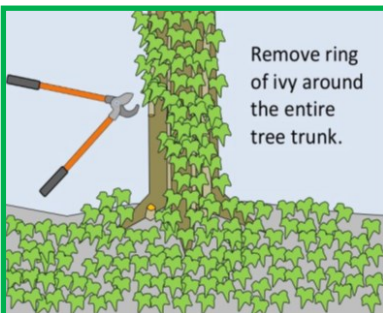


Owen Brown CARES*

*Community Action and Resources for Environmental Stewardship

We have all seen trees in our neighborhoods being smothered in English ivy or strangled by large vines. Winter is the easiest time to remove invasive ivy and other vines on your property. Most of the surrounding foliage has died back, leaving these vines exposed.

English ivy is a vigorous growing vine that impacts all levels of disturbed and undisturbed forested areas, growing both as a ground cover and a climbing vine. As the ivy climbs in search of increased light, it engulfs and kills branches by blocking light from reaching the host tree's leaves. English ivy is an evergreen climbing vine that attaches to the bark of trees, brickwork, and other surfaces by way of small rootlike structures which exude a sticky substance that helps the vines adhere to various surfaces. Older vines have been reported to reach 1 foot in diameter. Branch dieback proceeds from the lower to upper branches, often leaving the tree with just a small green "broccoli head". The host tree eventually succumbs entirely from this insidious and steady weakening. In addition, the added weight of the vines makes infested trees much more susceptible to blow-over during high rain and wind events and heavy snowfalls. Trees heavily draped with ivy can be hazardous if near roads, walkways, homes and other peopled areas. On the ground, English ivy forms dense and extensive monocultures that exclude native plants. English ivy also serves as a reservoir for Bacterial Leaf Scorch (*Xylella fastidiosa*), a plant pathogen that is harmful to elms, oaks, maples and other native plants.



Think about removing the invasive English ivy from your property. Manual, mechanical and chemical control methods are all effective in removing and killing English ivy. Employing a combination of methods often yields the best results and may reduce potential impacts to native plants, animals and people. When cutting and removing vines, use the standard method of cutting the vine in two areas. Only pull vines that are physically near you. Do not attempt to pull vines out of trees as they might bring weakened branches down on your head. If you have any questions send message to: owenbrowncares@googlegroups.com.

