

Hickory Hillside Hive!

September 2024 Report

Office Hours

Tuesdays at 5:30 at Mad City. Come have coffee and chat with neighbors!

Cancelled for 1 October to encourage people to attend County Executive Ball's presentation at HCC at 6pm

Meetings and Events

[CA Board meetings](#) – we discussed progress on the Strategic Plan* and the FY26 Budget (at a high level, basically a discussion).

12 September - The CEO's goals were approved. A discussion on DEIB was tabled. A work session will be held on board policies.

26 September – see below* plus the Minority Business Report, the IAT Report (the park with the Chrysalis [the big green thing]) and Emergency Cash Reserves

CA Audit Committee meeting, 23 September

Met individually with CA leadership on the strategic plan

Attended Village Story Time and Village Happy Hour

In progress:

Bridge replacement in Clarys Forest on Skilift

Path work in Clarys Forest, Bright Passage (Howard County)

Toured the CA Horse Center

In the midst of our leafy green suburbia lies a large plot of land inhabited by 60 animals too big to be pets but not too big to ride! Columbia is inordinately lucky to have this amenity – a horse center! Especially for the children (and for those who board their horses). Situated on 85 acres, with 14 acres of pastures, the Horse Center (HC) is located on Gorman Road in Laurel across Route 29 from the Applied Physics Laboratory.

Around 2020, the HC came under new management, Morningside Stables (with two other facilities in Anne Arundel County). At that time, the horse population decreased from 120 to a more environmentally manageable 60. The trailer residences were removed and two houses built on the property for the 24-hour personnel.

The Horse Center is located on dedicated Open Space so cannot be sold (it is on hugely valuable property since townhouses and single-family homes have sprung up in former agricultural fields).

Horses are incredibly popular: summer camps tend to sell out in four days! The site is also host to equine events on weekends.

And finally, the Center is home to four cats who work for a living. Now, if only a dog were to wander in to make it his home and keep the foxes and deer away! Maybe they can borrow a geese-chasing border collie from the Hobbits Glen Golf Course!

Goals:

1. Clarification of grant and donation policy before it becomes an issue – progress made
2. AARs (After-Action Reviews)
3. Monthly townhall meetings

Looking Ahead to October

CA board meetings, including the Risk Management Committee, 2nd and 4th Thursdays at 7pm, in person and remote

5 Oct – Weed Warrior Training (HCC) and Breakfast Bingo (Hawthorn Center), 9am

7 Oct - Community Engagement Committee meeting – Hawthorn Center, 7pm

9 Oct – Groundbreaking for Patuxent Commons (outparcel), 10 am

14 Oct – Village Board Meeting, 7:30pm, remote

19 Oct – Village flea market, 9-11am

26 Oct – CA Plein Art

28 Oct – Village Board Meeting, in person, 7:30pm, Hawthorn Center

October Village Story Time – stay tuned for dates

***Strategic Plan** (notes from the 26 Sep board meeting) - Revised approximately every 5 years: below is the 2024 Plan.

Phase One: study previous Plans, study the two recent drafts, interview stakeholders (and board members individually) – nearly completed

Phase Two: Draft a new Mission and Vision statement, refine the focus areas, draft the Plan by Jan '25

Results of first survey sent to about 60K people with a return of nearly 300:

People value the most - the pools and gyms, then school-age services (before and after care)

The least – archives, golf, the international and multicultural program

People value Open Space and the paths, then tot lots, sustainability and watershed programs

Events at the Lakefront like Lakefront Live, renovations and major maintenance over the grants program

Want to keep the Invasive Plants program and the volunteers.

Want things to be accessible and affordable, especially for youth and teens

Have difficulty understanding what CA is responsible for compared to the county

The 2019 Strategic Plan had the following as focus areas:

Identity

Resource Stewardship

Environmental sustainability

Leadership Development and
Advocacy.

And it was developed using the following steps:

1. Study the context
2. Gather information
3. Assess the information and identify issues
4. Engage stakeholders
5. Outline the Plan and present it to the Board
6. Refine and submit the Plan to the Board

The 2024 Draft Strategic Plan

Focus Areas:

DEIB
Identity and Community Engagement
Environmental Stewardship/Ecological Health
Financial Responsibility and Risk Management
Technology and Information Systems

Input was derived from the CA Board, Senior Leadership and CA staff, the villages, and community partners

Another Draft Strategic Plan developed during a board retreat this fiscal year included the following focus areas:

Community Engagement
Modernization
Wellness
Environment and Resource Sustainability
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Financial Sustainability

Remember, We are all Hickory Ridge!