



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB  
October 8, 2015  
Item 9

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board and Parks Commission

**VIA:** Mike Riley, Director of Parks   
Mitra Pedoeem, Acting Deputy Director of Administration 

**FROM:** David Tobin, Community Partnerships Manager   
Kristi Williams, Chief, Public Affairs and Community Partnerships Division

**RE:** Quarterly Briefing - Community Partnerships

---

The breadth and diversity of the facilities and programs in the Parks are made possible in part by the creativity and dedication of our 20 public/private partnerships. Our partners, which are listed and described in part on attachment A in your packet, vary widely in their make-up and missions but have the following in common which distinguishes them from our traditional leases or license agreements with third parties. Our partners operate or manage, under a long term legal agreement, a facility on Park property that is consistent with the MISSION of M-NCPPC.

Our partners come to us solicited or unsolicited either as part of a land acquisition (Callithea Farm, Potomac Horse Center, Great and Small at Rickman Farm), by recommendation of the County Council, County Executive, or a State Legislator (Second Chance Wildlife), as an unsolicited proposal (GoApe, Soccerplex), or as a directed partnership (Tennisplex). No two are exactly alike. They differ widely in the composition of their leadership, planning processes, funding, financial management, and philosophical approaches to their work but they are all led and staffed by dedicated employees and volunteers who are committed to service to park users and the general Montgomery County public.

The Community Partnerships office works closely with our park managers, regional offices, the Facilities Management Division (including the Property Management Office), Enterprise Division, Legal, and all divisions within the Parks Department.



The following principles help guide the work of the Community Partnerships office.

**We have a stake in their success**

**The success of our partners contributes to the success of Montgomery Parks**

We contribute to their success by:

*Subsidizing certain costs*

*Providing maintenance services*

*Keeping rents reasonable while still recovering a portion of public costs.*

*Insuring that our partners are equipped to succeed.*

I'm pleased to introduce to you today three representatives of our partners from the National Capital Trolley Museum, GoApe, and Red Wiggler Community Farm.

### **National Capital Trolley Museum**

The National Capital Trolley Museum preserves and interprets the heritage of electric and interurban railways of Washington, DC and environs for the benefit of present and future generations. To fulfill this mission, the Museum acquires and manages collections of objects related to the history of electric street railways, operates an electric railway for interpretive purposes, and publishes histories of electric street railways.

The Museum is located in Northwest Branch Park. The museum opened to the public in 1969 and its mission is to preserve and interpret the history of Washington's electric street railways. The collections consist of 17 streetcars from Washington D.C. and other cities. Many of these are operated on a one-

mile demonstration railway. In addition, there is an O-scale model layout representing a Washington streetscape from the 1930s, a film program, and traditional exhibits of street railway artifacts and photographs. See also attachments B and C.

### **Red Wiggler Community Farm**

Red Wiggler Community Farm (RWCF) is a tax-exempt non-profit founded in 1996 for the main purpose of providing meaningful employment for adults with developmental disabilities through a unique horticulture program that uses organic agricultural practices. The Grower Program employs adults with developmental disabilities to cultivate certified organic vegetables on seven acres and then sell or donate this produce to a diverse population through Community Supported Agriculture Programs. In 2013, 855 youth and adults, with and without disabilities, participated in on-farm educational and service learning. With an annual budget of approximately \$500,000, RWCF grew and distributed over 34,000 pounds of produce in 2013, 47% of which was distributed to low income households through the RWCF Farm to Food Bank and Farm to Group Home programs. RWCF integrates environmental education, awareness and action throughout their programs and organization through certified organic farming practices, reforestation and wetlands work, and environmental education. Beginning in 2005, RWCF leases 12 acres within Ovid Hazen Wells RP. RWCF is one of the Montgomery Parks most successful community partnerships. In the years since forging the partnerships between Montgomery Parks and RWCF, RWCF has invested approximately \$1.3 million in capital improvements to the park, including an 800 square foot solar house which serves as residence for RWCF employees, and a 3000 square foot building that houses offices and a greenhouse. See also attachment D.

### **GoApe**

Now in its 5th year at Rock Creek Regional Park, Go Ape owns and manages the Treetop Adventure course, while Montgomery Parks shares in the revenue derived from all ticket sales. Go Ape estimates that 70 – 90 percent of its guests are new park visitors. Go Ape has been successfully partnering with public parks around the country since 2010, bringing additional park visitors and a healthy financial boost to the parks they serve. Last year alone, Go Ape drove more than \$160,000 in revenue to its park partners. Go Ape Treetop Adventure courses support both park partners and local communities by taking part in park cleanups, non-native invasive plant removal, and donating free and discounted tickets to underserved and special needs groups. Last year, Go Ape donated more than \$620,000 in free and reduced-price tickets to local community groups. See also attachment E.