



**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD and GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
First Baptist Church, Crofton
May 8, 2023 – 7:30 PM**

Present:

Board Members: Renee Speer, Brain Riley, Daria DeLizio, Charles See, Stephen Tull, Robert Kendall, and Hal Sheldon.

Staff: Martin H. Simon, James Harvey, Sgt. Jason Jett and Tara Gottschalck.

Renee Speer opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements by Treasurer Renee Speer:

Renee announced that this meeting is being recorded to assist the secretary with transcribing the minutes.

The Crofton Farmer's Summer Market begins Saturday May 13th 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM, at its new location at the Crofton Public Library parking lot on Riedel Road. At the Market on June 24th, the CCA and Crofton Kiwanis will sponsor the 8th annual pie bake off from 10:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Slices will be sold during the Market. Proceeds will go to Crofton Christian Caring Council Food Pantry.

Our 30th CCA Annual Armed Forces/First Responders Parade is Saturday May 13, at 10:00 AM, and will run from Crofton Woods Elementary to Town Hall. Please come out and support our local heroes! Join your neighbors afterwards at the Town Hall backyard for music, food, drinks, and kid activities. We encourage all veterans, active duty and first responders to participate. Please contact Town Hall if you are interested in joining our parade.

Also on May 13 is the Greater Crofton Chamber of Commerce's Community Shred Day, 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, at the Chamber's office at 2126 Espey Court, Suite A.

Volunteers are needed at Swann and Willows Park for Spring Clean-up Day Saturday May 20th beginning at 9:00 AM. We are looking for volunteers to help remove weeds and invasive vines, trim back foliage, and help spread some mulch in the play areas. Please wear appropriate dress and bring gloves, gardening tools, and shovels. If interested, please sign up on the sign-up sheets here, or contact Town Hall at info@croftontownhall.org.

The Flags for Heroes display returns to Lake Louise from May 20th to June 3rd in honor of Memorial Day. There are 100 flags on display, 81 of which have personal dedication tags for veterans and service men and women. The Flags for Heroes display is put on by the Crofton Kiwanis Club with assistance from the CCA. Proceeds from the program go towards Crofton area charities and community programs.

On May 21st, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM, the Crofton Village Garden Club hosts its Select Garden Tour. This is a self-guided tour of eight private gardens in the Crofton community. There will be light refreshments, a raffle basket, and a native plant giveaway. Tickets are \$25 and may be purchased from their website at Croftonvillagegardenclub.com.

On Monday, May 29th, Town Hall is closed for Memorial Day.

On June 3rd, the CCA will partner with the Crofton High School PTO for the first ever CHS Graduation Parade, in honor of the inaugural graduating class of 2023. The Parade will begin at 10:00 AM and will travel along Crofton Parkway from Urby Drive to Duke of Kent Drive. Please come out to support our Crofton graduates.

The CCA Summer Concert Series begins on Sunday June 4th at the Crofton Country Club from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The series runs Sunday evenings through July 23rd. June 4th features easy listening music by *Pocket Change*. Please bring a blanket or chair to sit on as there is no seating provided on the grass.

The annual Crofton Kiwanis/Team Surlis 10K/5K event will take place on June 10th at 8:00 AM, near the Crofton Country Club. Participants may register on the Kiwanis website at CroftonKiwanis.org.

The next CCA Board meeting is scheduled for June 12th at 7:00 PM, here at the First Baptist Church.

The Crofton Pride Parade will be held on June 17th along Crofton Parkway. Details to follow.

Special Guest Speakers –

Martin introduced the guest speakers Delegate Stuart Schmidt, Senator Dawn Gile, and James Kitchin. He commented that the General Assembly has now completed 445 legislative sessions. Martin thanked Senator Gile and Stuart Schmidt and Senator Rosapepe for sponsoring the bond initiatives to replace our playground equipment.

Stuart Schmidt

Delegate Schmidt talked about his first legislative session. He commented that the remarkable thing about Anne Arundel County is that it has representation from both parties. Delegation Leader Heather Bagnall who recently represented District 33B, helped him go through the process. With her assistance Senator Gile was able to get \$603,000 back to district 33B for programs such as the Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, the infrastructure for Elks Youth Camp Barrett, the county Behavioral Health Crisis Center, and the playgrounds in Swann and Willows Parks for play equipment here in Crofton. He commended the delegation for getting these done.

He sponsored three bills that were not able to get through this year. He spoke about the importance of work-force and affordable housing for people to live and work here in Crofton, as well as working to retain Maryland retirees. He co-sponsored a bill closing loopholes in legislation regarding child pornography, he met with legislative representatives of EMS and fire fighters, and has met with the Arundel Volunteer Fire Department regarding their needed renovations. He has \$62,000 in scholarship money that will be going out to 60 recipients beginning tomorrow.

James Kitchin asked what it means to sponsor a bill and when a bill is co-sponsored. Delegate Schmidt responded that the person sponsoring a bill carries it throughout the process from start to finish. Having other Delegates or Senators co-sponsoring can help get the bill through the legislative process. It is also helpful when co-sponsors sit on the committees where the bills will be voted on.

A resident asked about the bill to provide tax exemptions for pensions. Delegate Schmidt reported that there is a bill still in progress.

Delegate Schmidt announced that he has a special official citation from the Maryland General Assembly to present to Sgt. Jett recognizing his recent promotion to Sergeant and his efforts in keeping the Crofton community safe. His End of Session letter is available here and on his website.

With no other questions, Martin introduced Senator Dawn Gile as an honorary citizen of Crofton given all she has done for the community already.

Senator Gile announced that it has been her honor to represent her constituents. There is a lot of bipartisan work that is being done, and at least 95% of bills in the house are passed. She finds this encouraging the way that differences are managed respectfully.

She spoke about some of the legislative projects they are working on. The budget is balanced. There are approvals for some capital improvements in the county and legislative bond initiatives such as the Anne Arundel County Fairgrounds, \$200,000 to a county food bank, funding a new 911 center, and state funding to decrease emergency room wait times for Luminous Medical Center.

Of her 8 sponsored bills, 7 were passed, such as a bill for Telehealth access for behavioral health care, an audiology bill allowing greater access to hearing aids, a Veterans and Military Funds Trust that would provide emergency services to veterans and help with things such as assistance for mortgage payments, utility payments, and childcare options. A bill allowing Maryland wineries and distilleries to continue shipping to Maryland consumers, a bill for the Michael J. Fox foundation to expand Parkinson's disease research and a bill protecting tenants from eviction for using emergency services. In addition, she provided a summary of recent bills being passed or on the ballot. She encouraged constituents to please reach out regarding any bills or ideas for bills. People may also sign up for her newsletter on her website.

Martin introduced James Kitchin, Director of Research and Special Initiatives, Anne Arundel County. James reported that the County Executive has introduced his budget to the County Council which has until June 15th to approve and pass.

James provided updates on projects in the County. The County Executive provided \$315,00 last year to the Village Green for infrastructure projects for areas targeted for revitalization. There were supply delays, however the project is now moving forward. This will allow restaurants to occupy the Village Green.

James reported that the first set of area region plans are changing zone maps. Three regions are in the planning stage now.

With the assistance of the state the county has purchased the Lothian Grain Elevator from Perdue. Perdue planned to close the grain elevator, which would drastically affect the local farmers dependent on the facility for crop purchases. The County Council passed a resolution supporting local farms and allowing the purchase of the site and supporting local agriculture.

The County Executive introduced a bill concerning public campaign financing that would allow a public matching system. Allowing public campaign financing to a candidate in a county office would reduce the large private contributions during the election process and instead encourage small, private donations. This will give people more of a voice and the ability to run campaigns on smaller contributions.

To provide transparency, the County has developed a QR code that will take the user to a website which explains in detail where tax dollars are being spent.

The new budget invests heavily in public schools. In an effort to address the employment shortages within our schools, the County will implement an 8% COLA for teacher salaries, a 10% increase for contracted bus drivers, a \$2,000 bonus for special educators, and a \$5.00 per hour rate increase for substitute teachers. They intend to add 45 additional Pre-K positions, 14 ELA positions, 15 Emotional Health resource personnel, and 23 new positions for van drivers for special education students. This will address the school bus driver shortage, allow personnel with CDL's to drive the school busses.

There is also a heavy investment in public safety. There will be an increase in police officer and firefighter positions. The County is working on a new updated 911 center. The Department of Detention Facilities is upgrading inmate re-entry resources in order to maintain successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.

Resident Pat Huecker asked if Planning and Zoning has re-opened to the public. James was uncertain, but he will find out and follow up with her.

Sgt. Jett asked what is being done regarding the shortage of school crossing guards. James responded that he will find out and follow up.

With no additional questions or comments, Renee announced that the regular Board meeting will begin.

Approval of Minutes –

The minutes from the April 17, 2023, CCA Board meeting require approval. There were no additional comments or revisions needed for these previously distributed minutes. The minutes were filed. Renee announced that the approved minutes will be posted to the website tomorrow.

Town Manager's Report – Martin H. Simon

Martin had a few announcements to add to the calendar.

Saturday May 20th at 11:00 AM, Historic Linthicum Walks presents it's Behind the Book; An Author series, featuring Stephanie Verni. Tickets may be purchased on their website at historiclinthicumwalks.org.

On May 24th from 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM at Crofton Woods Elementary School there is a meeting regarding the Crofton Golf Stream Restoration Project. The stream also known as Beaver Creek runs from Route 424 to Crofton Parkway has been targeted for restoration improvements to approximately 1,300 linear feet. There is no word yet on what the plans are for the interior portion of the stream that is part of the Crofton Country Club golf course.

On June 26th from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM, the Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management will provide a presentation by Zoom for Crofton residents. The Zoom link is posted to our website, and the OEM will have literature at a table during our Parade after party at Town Hall on Saturday.

The CCA Armed Forces and First Responder's Parade will begin line up from 10:00 AM to 10:45 AM and will travel on Crofton Parkway to Duke of Kent Drive. There will be an after party at the Town Hall backyard featuring free food from Mission Barbecue, and Chick fil a, patriotic ice pops, water and refreshments. There will be make and take crafts for kids and a Jurassic Park bounce house.

Martin thanked Crofton Police officers Sgt. Jett and Cpl. Sims for their attendance at the Spring Festival on the Green, and for the upcoming First Responder's Parade. Attendees stopped by the CCA tent and signed up for our Listserv, volunteering, and neighborhood watch.

Martin mentioned that the work is not yet completed at the Village Green. He has asked Magnolia Plumbing if they can stop work on Saturday for the Parade, which they agreed. They also fixed the pothole in the middle of the road, avoiding a tripping hazard for the parade participants.

Comptroller's Report – James Harvey

Jim reported that today there is \$106,000 in the checking account and we have ended the year with \$950,000 scheduled reserves and surplus. Decisions need to be made about what to do with portions of the reserves. There is a Finance Committee meeting next week on May 17th at 3:00 PM at Town Hall.

On May 12th at 1:00 PM, Schwab will provide an investment presentation for staff regarding their SEP IRA.

An E-Bike purchased for the police department was delivered today. Cpl. Sims will obtain the certification required.

The May edition of the E-Advocate was released last week and has been posted to Facebook and Instagram. People have responded positively to the format, which includes listing events outside of the triangle. The newsletter has reduced the number of emails sent out and increased our website traffic, which is now up by 48% , and by new users to 38%.

The next meeting of the Crofton 60th Anniversary Committee is scheduled for May 24th at 6:30 at the First Baptist Church. We have been looking into adding a shopping cart function to the website through Wix to sell items for the 60th Anniversary such as t-shirts and postcards and any other related

merchandise. We can also have Square® terminal access apps for purchases outside of the website. The plan is to have this up and running by the fall.

Jim reported that in order to increase community outreach we will be posting banners for the Parade and upcoming events in all of Crofton, not just the triangle.

Committee Reports

Planning & Zoning – *Marsha Perry*

Pat Huecker prepared a report for Marsha who was unable to attend.

The affordable housing project known as The Village at Little Patuxent along Route 3 south continues. This is the area across from Wendy's, in front of the Gambrills Veterinary Center. This will be a four-story workforce/senior apartment, a day care center, and a fast-food restaurant. There is not much information on this as the offices of Planning and Zoning continues to be closed.

Pat attended a meeting on the development located on Route 3 north and Church View Road. There are two warehouse distribution centers that will be constructed, with 300 parking spaces. A new traffic light will be installed at this intersection on the northbound side. There were many modifications that were requested that were not available for the public to review. There are many specimen trees, and it is a wetland area. They have not yet received approval from the State for their road. This is a project we need to pay attention to.

Pat reported on Anne Arundel County's committee to study adequate public facilities for schools. The redistricting plans have now been dropped since it is up to the State and not the County. The other plans are for changing the adequate facility rules. It had been proposed that elementary and middle schools will now need to be between 100% to 110% capacity (up from 95%), and that High Schools can be 100% to 115% (up from 100%). If a school does not have these utilization rates, then development is considered open in that area. Seven days were given to respond to these recommendations. This did not leave enough time for the CCA to respond. GAN responded individually. This is genuinely concerning.

Public Safety Committee – *Brian Riley*

Brian had nothing to report.

Finance Committee – *Renee Speer*

Renee reported that the next meeting of the Finance Committee is scheduled for May 17th at 3:00 PM, at Town Hall. The agenda will be to develop a plan for the surplus budget. Anyone interested may can attend.

Recreation Committee – *Daria DeLizio*

Daria had nothing to report.

Greater Crofton Council Liaison – *Chuck See*

Chuck reported that the next meeting of the GCC is tomorrow at 7:00 PM at the Waugh Chapel Community Center. This meeting is open to the public.

Covenant Review Committee – *Stephen Tull*

Stephen had nothing to report.

Maintenance and Operations – *Rob Kendall*

Rob reported that the committee is excited to work on the redesign of the parks. There will be a park clean-up day on May 20th.

Education Committee – *Hal Sheldon*

Hal thanked the parents in the community that assist him in reporting on area schools; Johanna Olexi, Anna Peters, Sheilah Bradley, and Littany Hollerback. Hal reported that Crofton High School will perform a free concert on May 16th at 7:00 PM, and a chorus performance on May 18th at 7:00 PM. Crofton Elementary will have a Ledo's fundraiser on June 12th. Promotion ceremonies for 5th grade are scheduled for June 12th. The last day for Anne Arundel County schools is Tuesday June 13th. This will be an early dismissal day.

Police Chief Report – *Sgt. Jason Jett, Acting Chief*

Sgt. Jett reported on the police statistics for April. There were 584 calls for service, 301 patrols checks, 2 reports taken, 50 traffic and parking enforcements, 1 adult arrest by warrant, 78 school crossings, 235 of administrative duties.

Sgt. Jett reported that there has been an increase of parking complaints in the community. This includes RV's, work vehicles, and cars not parked right side to right curb. Beginning May 22nd, he will be notifying the community by social media that one day per week the department will be focusing on these violations. According to Anne Arundel County Parking Laws, section 12-3-102 E states that "a vehicle that is stopped or parked on a two-way roadway shall be stopped or parked parallel to right hand curb in the direction of authorized traffic movement." There are minor exceptions to this rule such as parking on a cul-de-sac. He asked that residents report parking complaints to Town Hall and they will be addressed in a timely manner.

Sgt. Jett reported on the school crossing guard shortage in our county. There is no indication whether there will be relief for Anne Arundel County and Crofton police officers once schools are back in session next fall. There have been complaints from the community that police should be policing and not be covering crossing guard duty. Sgt. Jett agrees, however, feels it is important to ensure the children of the community get to school safely during this county personnel shortage. Any complaints should be forwarded to Anne Arundel County Government. This is a county wide problem.

Sgt. Jett addressed the chatter on the local Nextdoor.com app. The comment area lists complaints regarding the Crofton police. There seems to be confusion as to the jurisdiction of the Crofton police versus Anne Arundel County police. While the jurisdiction of the Crofton PD covers the Crofton Special Community Benefits Tax District, the department does assist Anne Arundel police at times they are overwhelmed by calls. Outside the tax district is the jurisdiction of Anne Arundel County Police.

There were also complaints that the Crofton police do not patrol in the evenings. This is the case currently as the two man police department is covering school crossing during the day. The department is still looking for qualified candidates. After the end of the school year beginning on June 19th, the Crofton police will begin covering some evening shifts in order to address the recent criminal activities within the community. The department will do everything possible until current vacancies can be properly staffed.

Sgt. Jett reported the replacement tasers have finally arrived. They are now operational. They are mirrored to the body cameras. The cameras will turn on as soon as the taser powers up. While the old tasers are being phased out, there is a company willing to purchase them for up to \$4,000. Sgt. Jett will provide updates on this.

Sgt. Jett reported on a stolen vehicle on May 3rd. During the overnight hours, a black Dodge Challenger was stolen from Severna Park. The same stolen car was seen on several ring cameras in the community between the hours of 3:00 AM to 4:00 AM. Three suspects can be seen pulling up on Urby Drive, Farlow Avenue, and other locations in the community. The three suspects would leave the vehicle, enter different driveways, pulling on car door handles attempting to gain access. Some property was recovered and returned to the owners. The stolen auto was recovered in Pasadena. The car was returned to its owner.

Sgt. Jett reported that the Crofton PD Bike Patrol Unit has been relaunched. In an effort to better engage with the community and be more approachable, Cpl. Sims had one of our two bikes repaired by the Family Bike Shop. While investigating trends in law enforcement for bike patrols, Cpl. Sims recommended the department purchase an E-bike. These bikes can go off road while a patrol car cannot. Officers riding E-bikes do not have to worry about becoming fatigued as they would on pedal bikes. They can pedal manually or by motor. Look for Cpl. Sims riding this bike around the community soon. The E-bike was purchased with the remaining FY23 budgeted money for Police Equipment.

Sgt. Jett provided an update on candidates for hire. Currently there are encouraging applicants for the police department. The background investigations have begun. He is hopeful to have increased staff by this summer.

Sgt. Jett reported that the Spring Festival on the Green was a success. He thanked all who stopped by the CCA tent to show their support. This Saturday May 13th the Crofton police will participate in and provide traffic safety for the Armed Forces/First Responder's Parade, the Crofton High School Parade on June 3rd, the Kiwanis 5/10K race on June 10th, and the Crofton Pride Parade on June 17th. All events will take place on portions of Crofton Parkway.

Sgt. Jett reported that he personally donated \$150.00 to the Anne Arundel County Department of Detention Facilities on behalf of the Crofton Police Department in honor of National Correctional Employee Appreciation Week. He commented further that these men and women work very hard, are understaffed, and often overlooked.

Sgt. Jett announced to the community that he has an open door policy regarding any concerns, compliments, or complaints. Once the department is properly staffed, he will begin hosting events for

the community and police staff to get to know one another and to better serve residents in the community.

Citizen Questions or Comments

Jim Harvey commented on the crossing guard shortage, saying that in hopes to recruit additional personnel, Anne Arundel County has raised the hourly rate for crossing guards to \$20 per hour. They are also allowing personnel to choose when they wish to work. Rather than having one crossing guard all day, they can now flex the days to just mornings, or just afternoons.

A resident commented on the trails removed from Crofton Park. James Kitchin responded that this was due to the construction of the high school. The Board of Education has an MOU with the County. They are looking to restore some of the areas of the park.

With no other questions or comments, the meeting was adjourned for an Executive Session to discuss a legal matter.

Meeting minutes completed by Tara Gottschalck, Administrative Assistant (June 21, 2023)

MS/JH/JJ(tg)