



**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
First Baptist Church, Crofton
July 10, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

Present:

Board Members: Anna O’Kelly, Marsha Perry, Brian Riley, Daria DeLizio, Charles See, Stephen Tull, and Hal Sheldon.

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

President Anna O’Kelly opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements by President Anna O’Kelly:

Anna announced that the meeting is recorded to assist with the transcribing of the minutes.

The Crofton Farmer’s Summer Market continues Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM, at its new location at the Crofton Public Library parking lot on Riedel Road. The Market features local and regional produce, food, drinks, food trucks, and much more.

On Saturday, July 15th from 2:00 PM to 4:30 PM, Historic Linthicum Walks will present a Behind the Book Lecture Series for children. Children will get to rotate through three sessions, one with each author: Jenn Ginn, Julia Inserro, and Cindy Freland. There will be face painting, colonial games, and a scavenger hunt. Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased on their website at Historiclinthicumwalks.org.

There are two shows remaining in the CCA Summer Concert Series on Sunday evenings from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Crofton Country Club.

- July 16th, blues music with Moxie Blues
- July 23rd, rock & soul music with 40 Dollar Fine

Please bring a blanket or chair to sit on as there is no seating provided on the grass.

On Tuesday, July 18th, from 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM at the Village Commons Community Center located in The Village at Waugh Chapel, The Greater Crofton Council will host representatives from the State Highway Administration who will present their plans for Route 3 improvements, north of St. Stephen's Church Road, both north-bound and south-bound. A County representative, as well as at least one member of the Anne Arundel State Delegation, will be present.

On Tuesday, August 1st, 5:00 PM - 8:00 PM, National Night Out will be held at Crofton High School in the parking lots. This is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police/community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring places to live. The Crofton PD will be participating in this event. Please come out and show your support for our local First Responders. Enjoy the evening filled with food, music, police K9 demonstrations, and more. This is a free event.

On Monday, August 7th, the Crofton Country Club will host the 24th annual “For the Kids” Charity Golf Tournament, For more information, email mthomas@lighthouse-insurance.com.

On Saturday, August 19th, learn about beekeeping from the folks at Hansel Hill Farm from 10:00 AM to 12:20 PM at Historic Linthicum Walks. Again, tickets may be acquired from Linthicum Walks’ website.

Town Hall will be closed September 4th for Labor Day.

The CCA Ice Cream Social is scheduled for Sunday, September 10th from 12:00 PM to 2:00 PM at Town Hall’s backyard. There will be a bounce house, face painting, balloon twisting, a popcorn machine, music, and of course lots of ice cream.

Crofton’s 8th Annual Dog Show and Dog Pie Eating Contest sponsored by the Crofton Civic Association and Higgins and Friends Pet Sitting, LLC will be held in conjunction with the Higgins Pet Fair, which will take place at the Village Green in Crofton from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM on Saturday, September 16th. The dog show starts at 1:30 PM. Medals and prizes will be awarded for: Best of Show, Runner Up, Most Tricks, Most Original Trick, Best Costume, and Pet/ Pet Owner Look Alike. There will also be a dog pie-eating contest. The first to finish their pie will win a prize. Registration for participants can be found on the Higgins and Friends website at higginsandfriends.com. This is a free event.

The next CCA Board and General Membership meeting is scheduled for September 11th, at 7:30 PM at the First Baptist Church, Crofton.

Approval of Minutes –

The May 8th, 2023 Board and General Membership Meeting were previously distributed to the Board. There were no additional amendments. The minutes were filed.

The June 12th, 2023, Board meeting minutes were previously distributed to the Board. There were no additional amendments. The minutes were filed. The approved minutes will be posted to our website.

Town Manager’s Report – Martin H. Simon

Martin reported that he, Marsha Perry, Cpl. Sims, and Sgt. Jett all attended the Kiwanis meeting last week at the Crofton Library which featured our new Sheriff, Everett Sesker, as guest speaker. Sheriff Sesker spoke about the history of the Sheriff’s Office, and his plans for refining and improving its mission. He promised to keep an eye out for retiring officers who may wish to work for the Crofton police.

Martin reported the June 17th Crofton Pride Parade was well attended. Crofton PD provided traffic safety along with Anne Arundel County Police. Martin thanked all police for their assistance at this event.

On Saturday June 22nd Martin assisted the Crofton Pie Bakeoff as a judge. It was a very well-attended event with 18 pies entered into the contest.

On June 26th the CCA co-hosted a seminar with the Office of Emergency Management on Emergency Preparedness for natural and man-made disasters. This presentation will be posted to our website. OEM will also attend National Night Out on August 1st at Crofton High School.

Comptroller's Report – James Harvey

Jim reported on June 30th there was an unexpected payment from the County in the amount of \$17,246 for property taxes. There was no explanation by the County, but he believes the property assessments were higher than what was used in budgeting. We will not know until they give us our numbers in September. Prior to June reconciliation, we ended the year with \$910,766.46 in restricted reserves with an additional \$205,249.71 in surplus income. This is largely attributed to the staffing shortage. This surplus will be used as income towards the FY25 budget, then held in reserve at the end as discussed last month so that it will not be double counted in future budgets.

Jim will meet with the auditor on August 10th. The Finance Committee will meet the week of July 24th to conduct a trial close and review of records prior to the auditor's arrival.

Jim reported the Finance Committee met on June 30th to discuss the proposed wage ranges, merit increases, and bonuses that will replace the steps that end with the FY24 year.

Jim reported he has implemented the 5.9% COLA increases into payroll.

Jim reported a refund from our overpayment of group health insurance from AMWINS was received in the amount of \$112.00.

Jim reported via Kathy that we have received the grant from the Arts Council for summer concerts in the amount of \$2,500.

The July edition of the E-Advocate will be released this week. It will contain articles on GAN, the plastic bag ban, and the Crofton Golf Stream restoration project.

Jim reported we have received our ASCAP license for the concerts. This will cover our artists who perform at our Summer Concert Series.

Jim reported the Crofton 60th Anniversary Facebook page was updated with the new catch phrase #Cheersto60years.

Jim reported that website traffic has increased last month. There were over 1,000 new visitors, which is an increase of 30% over the previous month.

Jim reported that the 60th anniversary committee met on June 29th to discuss the Crofton History Project. The next meeting is scheduled for July 27th and will focus on the fall and early 2024 fund raising events. Jim has a list of 97 restaurants and 28 fitness companies that he will be contacting for events.

Jim reported the Crofton Pie Bakeoff was a success with 18 pie entries which raised \$822 for the Crofton Christian Caring Council Baby Pantry.

Jim reported concerns with using Wix as our email Listserv. Wix is arbitrarily dropping contacts. He suggested we switch to Constant Contact for our email Listserv. This would be an additional expense that was not included in the budget. The cost is \$924 per year, which includes up to 30,000 emails per month. We will keep Wix for now since it is our website host and shopping cart. He is also exploring other website hosts.

Stephen motioned to approve the use of Constant Contact. Daria seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Committee Reports

Recreation Committee – *Daria DeLizio*

Daria had nothing new to report. She did attend the concert last night and remarked that it was very well attended. She suggested that Tara send Listserv announcements for the upcoming concerts on the Fridays before the last two concerts.

Greater Crofton Council Liaison – *Chuck See*

Chuck reported he will attend the next meeting of the GCC tomorrow. He will also attend the upcoming meeting on the 18th, featuring SHA representatives who will present plans for Route 3, specifically the area north of St. Stephen's Church Road, on both the North and Southbound portions of the highway.

Covenant Review Committee – *Stephen Tull*

Stephen reported the committee approved a fence on Swinburne Avenue.

Education Committee – *Hal Sheldon*

Hal reported that he will soon distribute a letter searching for parent volunteers to assist him with reporting on local schools.

Finance Committee – *Renee Speer*

Renee discussed the letter received by the CCA Board of Directors from the auditor last year regarding the breach of internal controls, especially as it related to approvals of overtime. Based on her experience in accounting, auditing, and process engineering, she volunteered to investigate the matter by meeting with Town Hall staff and to see what may have led to this lack of internal controls. In doing so there were numerous other areas of non-compliance within the organization. It was discovered the procedures and policy manual was 25 years out of date. Since then, progress has been made, the police manual has been revised and new procedures implemented; payroll has been automated and digitized, two sign offs are now required on timecards, all over-time is approved by the Town Manager, the IT contractor has been replaced who conducted a test-fail over the ability to retrieve data in case of a malware attack. Our technology was severely out of date.

Moving forward, the organization needs to continue to improve technology; the accounts payable process is still using unsecure hard copy checks by mail. Present day mail fraud and bank fraud requires that we need to ensure we are up to date with fraud protections and technologies.

This initiative begins with our ethics and code of conduct and the Board of Directors. The ethics section of our policy manual is not current. It's referred to as "Tone at the Top." This is the basis of ethical standards of any organization. Renee distributed an article on this to the Board. The failure exhibited in the past by the Board not reacting or intervening as soon as it should have was a result of not knowing what to do. Establishing a code of ethical conduct to be followed by example is essential so that there are processes in place that address what to do when ethics are violated.

Brian asked what the first steps would be to implement this process. Renee is looking at drafts from other organizations, and will create a draft with everyone's input, then finalize. She suggested that other Board members look at what is used at their companies as a platform to draw from. Martin commented further that going through the current manual section by section so that it is not too daunting a task; see what is written, does it still apply, if not how to revise it. There is a core mission statement regarding the mission of the Board of Directors, which is stated in the Articles of Incorporation. Renee responded that this should be more obvious and user friendly for both the Board and Town Hall staff.

Public Safety Committee – *Brian Riley*

Brian thanked Cpl. Sims and Sgt. Jett for all their extra work on things going on in the community. He did not have anything additional to report.

Planning & Zoning – *Marsha Perry*

Marsha reported on the 60th Anniversary Committee activity.

She has created sample letters to send out to the community for contributions for the 60th anniversary celebration. The committee decided that they need the responses back by the end of October. While the celebrations will begin in January it was agreed that they will end at the Coming Home Weekend, celebrating the day Crofton was born, October 4, 1964.

Marsha explained that only lead Board members can belong to GAN as members of the CCA and have privileges of serving on committees. Marsha explained that she has her own personal membership to GAN and was given an invitation to participate on the legislative committee in order to be more involved in the legislation of wetland protections.

She reported that the next issue before the County Council is solar panels. The Sierra Club is also submitting amendments to the bill along with GAN. The issue is the storm water runoff, especially of the larger commercial panels. The runoff of water from the panels does not have the opportunity to be absorbed by the ground and runs off into the rivers. There is concern since many of the farmers would qualify. There is a higher return for commercial solar panels over crop raising.

Marsha mentioned the developing area on Route 3 North by St. Stephens Church Road, is where developers wish to "move" the wetland to the other side of the road and pave the other side so they

can park their trucks. Marsha mentioned that because of the Supreme Court decision that no longer allows the EPA to enforce wetland protections, she feels that states and counties will follow.

Resident Fran Harwood asked about the owner who is selling the land located on Route 3 south past Riverwalk. Marsha was unsure. Martin said he will investigate it. Fran commented that there are wetlands back there as well.

Maintenance and Operations – *Rob Kendall*

No Report.

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

Sgt. Jett provided a brief overview of statistics for the month of June. There were 631 calls for service, 411 patrol checks, 3 reports taken, and 37 traffic enforcements.

Sgt. Jett has extended a conditional offer of employment to Eric Redding with a start date of July 21. After training and firearms qualification, and two weeks field training with Cpl. Sims, Ofc. Redding will be ready for patrol by early to mid-August.

Sgt. Jett is conducting a final stage interview with Mr. Gable. Sgt. Jett is hopeful that Mr. Gable will complete the required testing and have a mid-to-late August start date. Sgt. Jett thanked Cpl. Sims for conducting the background investigations of both officers.

Sgt. Jett reported that the department has begun its one day per week parking enforcement initiative. Violations and warnings have increased but not substantially. There were 5 more violations in June than in May. The department will continue to focus on parking enforcement one day per week, however normal calls for service and administrative duties will take precedence.

Sgt. Jett commented on the County's proposal for the increased hourly rate of \$20 to \$22 for school crossing guards. It appears that this did not pass. He expressed concern that the shortage remains, and that the police department will continue to cover morning and afternoon crossing guard duties for district schools. While this will take time away from police work, it is important to ensure the safety of children arriving and exiting schools.

Sgt. Jett announced his completion of the First Line Administrative Training class through the MPTC program. As Acting Chief, this a mandatory class for any promoted or acting administrator and must be attended within one year of taking on the new role.

Sgt. Jett reported that the Crofton Police Department has received its first complaint on June 28th, 2023. The complaint was directed toward Sgt. Jett. The complainant stated that Sgt. Jett was using his cell phone while leading the Crofton Pride Parade on June 17, 2023. Cpl. Sims handled the investigation and replied to the complainant via email and by phone. Cpl. Sims advised the complainant that his complaint is not one of misconduct and did not violate department rules and regulations. Emergency Vehicle Operators are exempt from the state law that governs the use of cellphones. This case is closed and listed as unfounded. All copies of our correspondence to the

complainant were forwarded to the Police Accountability Board. They also did not view this as a legitimate complaint or misconduct.

Sgt. Jett reported that the month of June was very busy for special events; The Crofton High School Seniors Parade, the Kiwanis 5/10K race, and the Crofton Pride Parade. All events were successful, with no concerns or problems during the events. Sgt. Jett thanked Anne Arundel County Police for the traffic assistance at these events. Sgt. Jett added that the Crofton PD will participate in National Night Out at Crofton High School on August 1st.

Sgt. Jett provided an update on the theft from auto suspect, Demar Caldwell. He has been arrested many times for crimes in our community in Crofton and in surrounding communities. In April he was arrested on seven warrants and other charges related to his crime spree. In late June he was released on the condition of attending drug court. Caldwell did not appear in court, which prompted a warrant for his arrest. Over the 4th of July weekend he was captured on surveillance video, provided by Brian, in the area of Old Willow Way attempting to gain access to vehicles. He was able to access one vehicle, stealing a wallet, credit card, and prescription sunglasses. The same stolen credit card was unsuccessfully used at Royal Farms on Route 3 north by a Christie Jelich. Jelich is a known associate of Caldwell's. Jelich was captured on video surveillance attempting to make purchases with the stolen credit card. With the assistance of Anne Arundel County Police, Sgt. Jett was able to obtain a warrant for Caldwell and a criminal summons for Jelich. Sgt. Jett and Cpl. Sims worked an overnight shift from midnight to 8:00 AM on July 6th in an effort to catch Caldwell attempting to access vehicles. Their shift ended with no sightings of Caldwell in our neighborhood. In the early morning hours of July 9th, Caldwell was again captured on video surveillance attempting to gain access to vehicles in Cheney's Grant off Davidsonville Road. A vehicle was reported stolen from that area around the same time. Sgt. Jett has provided all information and surveillance footage to Anne Arundel County Police for further investigation. Sgt. Jett reminded everyone in the community to please lock your vehicle doors and remove valuables and garage door openers. Sgt. Jett thanked the community for its vigilance and sending information related to criminal activity. The surveillance videos aided in identifying and ultimately seeking charges for these individuals.

A resident asked for a description. Sgt. Jett responded that he posted photos to the Crofton Police Department Facebook page.

A resident asked Sgt. Jett if the person responsible for the recent carjacking on Walleye Drive was apprehended. According to a recent briefing, Sgt. Jett stated that the suspect was not apprehended. The original stolen vehicle was dropped and was recovered in Maryland. The vehicle originated from Richmond, Virginia.

Stephen asked if there was any new information about the person breaking into homes on the golf course that was apprehended in the community. Sgt. Jett explained that he was part of the grand jury and responded in the affirmative when asked if the suspect was guilty. The suspect is currently in Ordinance Road Correctional Center. He was indicted on at least 30 charges.

A resident asked about revising shift work for evening coverage with the newly hired police officers. He asked the Board about the hiring of a new Chief of Police, and the timeline for this. Martin responded that the plan is to have a new Chief on board as soon as the police department has filled

vacancies. Sgt. Jett commented that once the new officers complete training, there will be additional shift coverage to increase patrols in the community.

Other Business

No additional business was presented for discussion.

Citizen Questions or Comments

Fran Harwood asked the status of the Sheets gas station replacing the Nautilus Diner. Anna commented that there has been no movement since the owners were asked for a recent traffic study. Marsha commented that the diner owner is not interested in closing.

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 (August 21, 2023)

MS/JH/JJ(tg)