



**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
Crofton Elementary School, Crofton
March 11, 2024 – 7:00 PM**

Present:

Board Members: Anna O’Kelly, Marsha Perry, Renee Speer, Daria DeLizio, Charles See, Stephen Tull, Robert Kendall, and Hal Sheldon.

Staff: Martin H. Simon, Jim Harvey, Chief Jason Jett, Tara Gottschalck.

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

Announcements by President Anna O’Kelly:

Anna announced that this meeting is being recorded to assist the Administrative Assistant with the transcription of the minutes.

The Crofton Winter Farmers Market returns Saturday March 23rd and April 6th from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Crofton Library. The winter market will continue every other Saturday through April 20, 2024. The market features local and regional foods, crafts, and artwork. See Croftonfarmersmarket.com for details.

March 12, 7:00 PM, the Greater Crofton Council and Traffic Committee host Council members Shannon Leadbetter and Julie Hummer and AACPD Capt. McFarlane of Western District to discuss traffic safety of Riedel Road and Johns Hopkins Road, at the Village Commons Community Center, 1326 Main Chapel Way, Gambrills.

March 16, 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM, Mary Margaret Revell-Gordon, President & CEO of the Maryland Museum of Women’s History in Centerville, Historic Linthicum Walks. Tickets \$10.

March 19, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Luminis Health Blood Drive, Greater Crofton Chamber of Commerce, 2126 Espey Court, Crofton.

Crofton Library Events, 1681 Riedel Road, Crofton, for a full list of events see www.aacpl.net/events

- March 14, 7:00 – 8:00 PM, Crofton Library Concert Series, featuring Alexander Peters
- March 23, 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM, Piscataway Nation Singers & Dancers
- March 29, 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, American Red Cross Blood Drive

The Annual CCA Easter Egg Hunt is March 23rd at the Crofton Elementary School Field, 1405 Duke of Kent Drive, Crofton. Please arrive by 11:30am as the hunt kicks off promptly at 12:00 PM. The Easter Bunny will be on site with over 10,000 eggs stuffed with candy and prizes. The rain date is March 30th.

The Annual CCA Cherry Blossom Festival is March 30th, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM, on Crofton Parkway between Eton Way & Eton Way. There will be food trucks, live music, a community yard sale, kid's activities, and our own amazing Cherry Blossom Tress along Crofton Parkway. The rain date is April 6th.

The next CCA Board meeting will be Monday, April 8th, at 7:00 PM, at the Media Center, Crofton Elementary School, 1405 Duke of Kent Drive, Crofton.

Approval of Minutes –

The minutes from the CCA Board meeting held on February 12, 2024, require approval. There were no additional comments or revisions needed for these previously distributed minutes. The minutes were filed.

Town Manager's Report – *Martin H. Simon*

Martin reported the County Council's bill 12-24 regarding the Maryland Open Meetings Act, sponsored by Lisa Rodvian of District 6 was pulled from the working session last month. Shannon Leadbetter says it is likely it will be revised and resubmitted.

As a follow up to address resident parking complaints, DPW has responded to the Chief's report of problem areas. They have responses for the six areas, and changes that can address the other three. Mr. Terry of DPW will present the options to the Board at the next meeting in April.

Renee asked about the implementation of a biking lane around Crofton Parkway to provide safety for bike riders. Martin responded that there was a past recommendation from DPW for a biking lane. Mr. Terry can discuss this at the next Board meeting.

Martin mentioned the sidewalk extension project from Staples Corner to Bell Branch Park. He encouraged residents to email the county at budget-comments@aacounty.org in support of this project. Renee asked that this be published to the website for residents to participate.

Martin reported the Elections Committee Chair Nancy Kervin has begun the process of preparing for the Board elections scheduled for May 13th. The Declaration of Candidacy Forms are due by close of business on March 29th. The Committee will meet this Wednesday evening for a planning session. The Committee would appreciate notice of intentions from standing Board members at the soonest opportunity so that they may plan the recruitment of candidates accordingly.

Martin reported this week he is finalizing a plan with the Eagle Scouts Troop 115 for the refurbishing of a picnic table and two benches at Hardy Field.

Martin spoke on the planning and zoning concerns on Route 450 as reported by Pat Huecker, specifically from the Family Vet area to Staples Corner. The recent variance hearing for three properties failed. All properties are all zoned SB (small business). Last month's County Council Bill 92-23 made changes altering requirements of architectural appearance, setbacks, signage, and accepted uses. There is an amendment to the bill, 14-24, scheduled for the next session that would amend the appearance closer to the roads, such as electric signage, and facades that appear more residential than

commercial so that it doesn't look like Route 3. Pat believes this is good legislation and encourages residents to support it.

Martin provided a police overtime report. There were 5.25 regular overtime hours paid. Ofc. Gable had 1.75 hours for a late service call, and 3.5 hours for Sgt. Sims for a warrant and a court appearance. There was no special event overtime.

Comptroller's Report – *James Harvey*

Jim provided a handout to Board members and reported on the financials through February. The early final payment from County arrived March 1st. We are over on income for the year, due to interest. Currently we are 1.5 % over income with 2.5% expected by the end of the year.

Expenses are 40% under budget for the entire fiscal year with one third of the year remaining. The two largest payouts were for insurance in October and the property loan in February. Currently we are on course for 15% left over. This is due to the vacancy in police department.

Jim reported that Ofc. Gable is on three weeks administrative leave for Coast Guard Reserve training. Sgt. Sims has reached his employment anniversary and his step increase on 3/5/2024 is the last time the old step increase program is used.

Jim renewed our USPS bulk mailing permit, and the CCA's SAM renewal is in progress. Renee commented that they are validating information across every agency. Jim has been using the new Maryland Tax Connect system which has been very problematic. The January sales tax filing is completed.

Jim reported all staff on duty have completed ADA/Harassment Diversity training. Jim has completed his Certified Emergency Response Training. Renee asked about ethics training specific for non-profits. Jim was unable to find a program specific to non-profits.

Jim reported the March E-Advocate is in layout. There are two new advertisers.

Jim reported the 60th Anniversary has six sponsors for the year. Brand Boosters is a barter sponsor. The total billed for year-long sponsorships is \$8,000. Renee mentioned they may have to be reported on the N990 tax form. Jim will investigate this. Jim explained that at present there is \$15,000 paid or billed. Expenses are \$3,000, paid or dedicated. We have what is needed to cover both the Summerfest and the Kid's Festival. There is one golf sponsorship. The committee needs to get on this, and Jim asked if the Board members can help. Sponsorships must be received by the end of the month.

Jim reported the Crofton Salutes Our Heroes program has sixteen sponsors for banners so far. This is more than enough to cover the parade route. There has been a favorable response from residents.

There are contracts in progress for staging and lighting for Summerfest. The contract for the golf event is in hand. There was a suggestion from a resident for the high school to run a design contest for an official Crofton flag. Jim is waiting to hear back from the high school.

There are twenty-two participants in the Cherry Blossom Festival. The inner loop of Crofton Parkway will be closed for the festival from 10:00 AM to approximately 2:30 PM. The promotion for the event has begun in the March E-Advocate. The dates have been set for other Crofton events such as the pie bake off, the chili contest, and the dog show.

Renee found an error in the handout, on page 6 of the 500 section which shows there is a notation for premiums that should be eliminated. Jim agreed and will revise the report.

Renee asked what is included in the employee recruitment for police. Jim responded it includes background checks, and psychological and physical evaluations. Each officer must go through these before they can receive an offer of employment.

Renee asked about the funds transferred from the police equipment reserve for the laptops for the police cars. Jim confirmed that the Board approved this transfer of funds, though at the time the sign off verification policy may not yet have been in place. The overage includes other things such as the purchase of armored vests, the upgraded tasers, and the monthly charges such as the police cell phones. Moving forward Body Cameras will be rolled into the Police Equipment Fund, so there will no longer be a separate category.

Renee asked about a park equipment expense for \$177.59, which was for a new trashcan for Willows Park. The Park expenses are separated from Maintenance which covers grounds maintenance. Moving forward it will be covered in the Maintenance category.

Renee requested a balance sheet for the CCA to include all land, police cars, and everything the CCA owns. Jim said the balance sheet does include the land. He is not sure that other things are included in the inventory such as police cars, furniture, etc. Jim will investigate putting together an inventory for all of Town Hall. Regarding the money back for the laptops, \$1,400, may be considered income on a CCA asset. Renee is concerned on how this is to be reported since it was a "sold" CCA asset and considered income. Jim will ask our accountant how to report this. He will also check with the County Finance Officer.

Other Business –

Anna mentioned the County Council's bill for the Open Meetings Act which would require Board officers who oversee a special tax district to participate in training from the Attorney General's Office. She asked if it was acceptable to the Board that she pass along the Board member comments and questions to Shannon Leadbetter to send to the bill sponsor. The Board agreed.

Committee Reports

Planning & Zoning – *Marsha Perry*

Marsha thanked Martin for presenting the report from Pat Huecker. She is pleased with the CCA Board's outreach to neighboring communities in West County, bringing support to areas of concern such as storm water management and wetlands preservation. She feels that County Executive Pittman and his planning and zoning office is paying attention to these concerns.

Marsha reported the GAN long range planning report has been completed. The results focus on housing, transportation, and community outreach. Crofton Colony is an example of this, however, she reported that the Planning Advisory Board dismissed the requests made by Crofton Colony in January.

Marsha reported the recent County Council working sessions where Annapolis residents are highly concerned with the proposed rezoning of Ridgely Avenue from small business to C1 commercial.

She thanked Pat Heucker for all her research on these planning and zoning concerns.

Marsha reported on the purchase of the Johns Hopkins Home which was sold to a couple from Montgomery County who promised to refurbish the property. The property is now for sale at twice the purchase price. Marsha will monitor this closely.

Marsha is also monitoring the Region 2 area, which includes Maryland City, Jessup, Laurel, and parts of Fort Meade. There is proposed rezoning that will greatly affect the small business and commercial zoning. The Councilwoman representing these areas will oppose all proposed up zoning. Most are in favor of providing increased housing for essential workers without sprawl or deforestation.

Marsha reported that a recent study by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation concluded that bay pollution was the result of streets and parking areas that cause immense storm water discharge into the bay, and not necessarily the development for housing. They will be paying closer attention to land use in the area.

Marsha reported that editor Mark Smith will soon publish another article on the Tolson Landfill.

Marsha expressed her appreciation to the Board and Town Hall staff for their assistance on these important issues.

Public Safety Committee – Brian Riley

Brian was absent and submitted no report.

Finance Committee – Renee Speer

Renee had nothing additional to add.

Recreation Committee – Daria DeLizio

Daria had nothing to report.

Greater Crofton Council Liaison – Chuck See

Chuck reported the GCC met on February 20th about Riedel Road safety concerns. Nestor Flores from County Traffic and Engineering was present and put together a survey for residents regarding the increase of safety on Riedel Road from Hampton Court to Route 3. Jim put this out on the Listserv with the link to the study. There is another meeting tomorrow, with Representatives Julie Hummer of District 4 and Shannon Leadbetter of District 7 at the Waugh Chapel Community Center.

Covenant Review Committee – *Stephen Tull*

Stephen reported there were no submission to the committee this month.

Maintenance and Operations – *Rob Kendall*

Rob had nothing to report. He mentioned the shopping cart in Lake Louise that needs to be removed. Martin provided an update on the Goldstar Memorial placement. Originally, it was to be placed on Route 3 North near where the Flags for Heroes display sits. There were concerns of it being struck by traffic in that location. Additionally, it was not an ideal setting for the dedication ceremony. The committee decided it will be placed on the median on Crawford Boulevard. This location will also better accommodate the ceremony. Rob thanked Keith for the recent power washing of the front bricks. Martin mentioned that Keith has eliminated the graffiti on electric box at the entrance to The Grove. Members of the community expressed their appreciation.

Education Committee – *Hal Sheldon*

Hal had nothing to report.

Police Chief Report – *Chief Jason Jett*

Chief Jett reported on February statistics. He commented since warm weather is approaching it increases pedestrian and bicycle traffic. He reported the police department continues to slow down motorists and enforce traffic violations. During February, there were 74 traffic stops resulting in the issue of citations and warnings. The first two months of the year there were about 200 traffic stops, one resulting in an outstanding bench warrant. The Chief credits Ofc. Gable for the bulk of the traffic stops.

There were 557 calls for service, which is slightly lower than the previous month due to court appearances and warrants, which resulted in thirty nine counts of fraud and identity theft.

The Chief reported he has increased patrols at the Crofton Center and walkthroughs at Ace Hardware. They were able to identify four suspects. Three were charged, one younger individual made restitution with a formal apology.

Chief Jett reported on the first Coffee with the Chief on February 21st. There were five participants who discussed crime and traffic concerns. He would like to make this a quarterly event and will decide on a date for next session soon.

Chief Jett reported his submittal of an area map of the community showing areas of concern to DPW department of Traffic Engineering. Eric Terry of DPW will present his suggestions to the Board at the next meeting.

Chief Jett reported that Ofc. Gable will be on administrative leave for three weeks for US Coast Guard Reserve training. He reported that Ofc. Redding remains on medical leave but is recovering and plans to be back in early April for duty.

Chief Jett reported there is a viable applicant for the open position in the police department. The candidate is a retired county police officer. Sgt. Sims has begun the background check and does not anticipate any problems. He hopes to be at full staff by June 1st.

Chief Jett reported on the Police Accountability Board complaint against Sgt. Sims. The complaint is regarding a wellness check conducted by Sgt. Sims. The Chief investigated and has found no wrongdoing. The complaint is that the officer did not follow proper procedures when entering the apartment and the way in which the wellness check was conducted. When no one answered the door, the officers let themselves in with a key provided by the apartment leasing office. The address on the MVA files showed the address of the individual they were checking on. It was discovered after entering the apartment that the individual no longer resides at that address. The current resident of the apartment was at home at the time and did not answer the door and was upset that police had entered the apartment. The Chief will provide updates from the Police Accountability Board.

Citizen Questions or Comments –

Resident LuAnn Dobbs asked what the main three areas of concern with regards to parking that are on the list for DPW. The Chief responded they are Urby Drive, Galaxy Drive, Walleye Drive, where people are parking outside of their assigned areas. The area at the front gate will also be addressed. The area on the parkway by Town Hall was not considered an area of concern. This can be discussed further at the next meeting with Mr. Terry.

With no other questions or comments, the meeting was adjourned for an Executive Session to discuss Legal Matters.

Meeting minutes completed by Tara Gottschalck, Administrative Assistant (March 26, 2024)