

**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
First Baptist Church, Crofton
July 11, 2022 – 7:00 PM**

Present:

Board Members: Anna O’Kelly, Marsha Perry, Brian Riley, Renee Speer, Daria DeLizio, Charles See, James Harvey, Robert Kendall, Hal Sheldon.

Staff: Martin H. Simon, Chief Earl Fox, Cpl. Jason Jett, Tara Gottschalck.

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

Announcements by the President:

Anna announced that this meeting is being recorded in order to assist the Secretary with transcribing the minutes.

The Crofton Kiwanis will have a General Membership meeting on August 10, 7:00 PM, at the Crofton Library. The theme is A Taste of South America; Ecuador, a travelogue by the Kavanaugh’s.

The CCA Summer Concert Series continues Sundays from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Crofton Country Club. July 17 features Moxie Blues (Blues), July 24 features the Sandra Dean Band (Classic Rock), July 31 features Wicked Olde (Pop/Folk).

The Crofton Farmer’s Market continues through July 20 and 27, on Wednesdays from 3:00 PM-7:00 PM, at the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church parking lot on Route 424. July 27, 4:00 PM-7:00 PM, Crofton Kiwanis will host its Annual Pie Bakeoff. The CCA Town Manager will be one of the judges.

National Night Out is scheduled for August 2 from 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM, at Crofton High School. The Crofton Police Department will participate.

Anna asked if the Board members are in agreement with not holding a Board meeting for the month of August. All Board members were in agreement.

The next CCA Board meeting will be held in conjunction with the General Membership meeting. This meeting is scheduled for September 19 at 7:30 PM. The location is to be determined.

Approval of Minutes:

Anna asked if there are any additional corrections needed for the minutes of the Board meeting of June 13, distributed electronically on July 8. No corrections were needed. The minutes were filed.

Committee Reports:

Covenant Review Committee - Anna-

Anna reported that the committee approved a fence on Rochester Court, and a shed on Tyrone Street.

Finance Committee - Renee-

Renee reported that progress has been made on hiring a Comptroller. Fiscal year 22 has ended, and FY23 has begun. She is preparing records for the annual audit. The auditor who has worked with the CCA for many years has moved on, and a new auditor has been hired.

Public Safety Committee - Brian-

Brian has been looking into whether the CCA is eligible to participate in the Maryland retirement system. He will be in contact with someone this week. There is an application fee of \$5,000-\$6,000 that needs to be avoided if the CCA does not qualify. Renee commented that this is due to a new law in Maryland which would require an employer to offer a retirement program or participate in the State's program. The CCA does offer a program; however, there may be additional or new legislation that needs to be followed in accordance with the State program. Marsha offered Brian her assistance with this.

Recreation Committee – Daria-

Daria had nothing to report.

Maintenance and Operations – Rob –

Rob reported that the Parks Rejuvenation Committee had its last meeting on June 28. There were several topics discussed such as the repairs to the front entrance, the irrigation system, the recent auto accident, and strategies for near term improvements and repairs. They were denied the grant that was applied for last year. They will apply for available grants again this year.

Rob stated that the next committee meeting is scheduled for July 26, however he would like to postpone this until July 28.

Rob reported that the pollinator garden cleanup day led by Littany, Joi, and Susan on June 25 was a success. People came out with their families to paint rocks. The next clean-up day is

scheduled for July 24 at 1:00 PM at Swann Park. There is another scheduled for August 27, at 10:00 AM, at Swann Park.

Greater Crofton Council - Jim-

Jim had nothing to report. The GCC cancelled their meeting in August.

Education Committee – Hal-

Hal had no report.

Planning & Zoning – Chuck –

Chuck referred to Marsha who attended the meeting about the Halle Landfill at the Two Rivers facility, featuring the County Executive and his team. This meeting was very well attended. The community concerns are focused on the location and safety. There are only a few State Inspectors for all the rubble landfills in Maryland. These landfills have a history of catching fire. Another major concern is additional trucks going in and out carrying loads of debris. There is also concern with upcoming local elections and candidates receiving campaign funding from the owners of this landfill. Martin commented further that he was also in attendance. He stated that Steuart Pittman said that it is likely the Board of Appeals will grant the two-year requested extension, but that as long as he is County Executive, he will not approve the land use variance. The Forks of the Patuxent was very appreciative of the support from the surrounding communities who attended.

Police Chief Report - Chief Fox –

Chief Fox reported that the June statistics have been posted to the website. Jason and John are the two remaining officers. They have been assisting with new ideas for recruiting. The end of the budget cycle allowed for some purchases still needed for the department. Two bulletproof vests were purchased. The two current vests are expired. Four new tires were purchased for one of the police cruisers. Two mobile data computers were purchased. The Crofton PD will participate in the National Night Out held at Crofton High School on August 2. They will have a new banner for their station and toys and games to give away.

Town Manager's Report – Martin

Martin commented further on police matters. In order to compete with other police agencies, other incentives will be needed for recruitment. A recruiting tool proposed was a take home car program. Brian and Martin have researched this option and found it to be problematic with regards to the requirements and unknown costs of wear and tear on the vehicles travelling over various distances. Renee recommended a car allowance that would be significantly cheaper. This would be a fixed figure of \$150 per pay period, or \$3,900 per year, per officer to off-set commuting costs. This would be just shy of \$20,000 per year for five officers. The program would become available for newly hired officers after a 90-day probation period. Martin feels this program is necessary to attract new officers. The Chief is ready to add this

information to the advertisements for the open police officer positions on the FOP website and ZipRecruiter.com. He would like the Board to consider this option.

Martin and Renee have been working on the winding down of the FY22 budget. There have been investments made in police equipment, and landscaping needs such as the removal of dead trees and installation of soaker hoses at the front entrance.

Martin reported on the stalled road pavement project by DPW that has been held up due to the weather. DPW will repave Crofton Parkway from Walleye Drive around to Eton Way.

Martin reported that the Crofton Pride Parade held on June 26 was successful. Participants walked from Crofton Elementary to Prince of Peace Church and back. Corporal Jett was present in addition to four County police officers. There was a resource event that took place after the parade at Crofton Elementary.

Martin attended a meeting on June 29 at the Crofton Library with new representatives of District 21, Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk and Senator Rosapepe. Though most of the CCA is part of District 33, portions of Patrice Circle and Good Hope Drive are part of District 21 due to the recent redistricting. Martin invited the representatives to a tour of the community at the end of the month.

Martin reported that he has hired a new IT contractor, Cheaper Than A Geek, for a one-year contract. The new contract will begin today. Martin thanked FoxLogic for their years of service and their assistance with a smooth transition.

Martin reported that he has begun obtaining estimates for new landscaping contracts and has received two so far.

Martin reported that the recent auto accident at the Front Entrance has still not yet been settled. He has been in contact with the motorist's insurance company. He will provide updates as they occur.

Martin has been tasked by the Crofton Kiwanis to assist them in the lighting at the front entrance during the Flags for Heroes display. Kiwanis has proposed to cover the installation of the new electrical GFI outlets at the north wall of the entrance there, and the CCA has agreed to cover the electricity costs. This was an optimal resolution, as it saves them the seasonal generator costs, and Jim from having to turn them off and on manually. Now the lights will be run on a light sensitive timer. This will allow the lighting to stay on throughout the entire evening. The Board gave permission to make the required changes.

Martin attended the Town Hall at Two Rivers meeting on July 6, regarding the status of the Halle Landfill. There were approximately 140 people in attendance. The meeting featured County Executive Steuart Pittman and staffers Lori Rhodes and James Kitchin. They reported that the Board of Appeals is likely to pass the requested two-year special exception extension. There is an August 30 deadline. However, County Executive Pittman stated that he will not issue the required zoning certificate of use during his tenure. The Forks of the Patuxent Improvement Association appealed to the group for assistance. They have been singlehandedly fighting this issue for many years.

Martin reported on the status of the open Town Hall staff positions. He will interview a candidate tomorrow for the Maintenance position. The update on filling the Comptroller position will be discussed during the Executive Session.

Anna opened discussion of the proposed car allowance for the Police Department. Hal asked if this money is taxable. Renee responded yes. Anna asked if it is taxed as income. Renee will verify. Anna asked if this will be a one-year pilot program. Brian responded no. Martin commented further that it is a necessary recruiting tool. Rob asked what the source of funding is. Renee responded that funding would come from the option 5 overtime. Moving forward to the FY24 budget, there will be a line item for a car allowance included in the Public Safety Budget.

Anna called for a motion for a \$150 per pay period car allowance for eligible police officers. Hal motioned. Renee seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Hal asked about the status of a bike and walking path in the County area behind Swann Park. There is a project with the County and Jonathan Seibold of the Family Bike Shop. Martin responded that this has been an ongoing project with the County for a few years. There is a proposal to make the area behind Swann Park bike and hike friendly, like the paths at Bacon Ridge. James Kitchin has advised that there may be some County funding available for this.

Hal asked about a sink hole positioned close to the island by the intersection of Urby Drive and Good Hope Drive. It is by the construction area and is about 5 inches deep. Martin said he will follow up with DPW tomorrow. Anna continued that there is a dirt refill that washed away into the road after repairs were made at the corner of Knightsbridge and Crofton Parkway. Martin will add this to the list of reports to DPW. Martin continued mentioning to the Chief that residents near the wooded area on Good Hope Drive are complaining about broken glass left behind from kids breaking beer bottles. The Chief will increase patrols in that area. Martin will initiate a clean-up once the new Maintenance person is hired.

Hal asked if the County shuttle bus service has increased usage now that it stops at the Crofton Country Club. Martin could not comment on usage rates but asked the County Executive's office for signage to be placed at the pickup location, which currently is unclear. The pickup area is located at the north parking lot.

Citizen Questions or Comments-

Fran Harwood asked for an update on the re-opening of the Sly Horse Inn. Martin reported that the new owners are working with the County regarding the new pipeline for the water delivery. Unfortunately, there are supply chain delays. They are hoping to receive it by late summer or early fall. The new establishment will be leased by Sugar Butter Love bakery and catering service.

Judy Wilson thanked the CCA for the Summer Concert Series and wished to also thank Kathy Lavin for all her efforts coordinating this event.

Marilyn Hatch asked for an update on moving Town Hall and the police department to the Village Green. Martin responded that it has been explored. There are two buildings currently available, one for lease and one for sale. The one that is leased would be more fitting than the other. A leasing option may not be sustainable over time. Martin is always in touch with the realtor. There is an ideal space that is currently unavailable. Martin is keeping tabs on this property.

Karen Nelson thanked the Board for offering a hybrid version of the Board meetings. She commented that she was happy to hear about the officers receiving updated equipment. She notified the Chief about a trailer that has been tagged for towing, but it appears that the owner has removed the sticker. She asked the Chief about the indecent exposure incident that took place on Shaftsbury. The Chief was not aware of this incident; there was no report in the system. Anna and some meeting attendees specified that it was posted on Nextdoor.com, and that it has since been deleted.

Martin reported some of the Zoom comments to the Board about speeding concerns especially on Crofton Parkway. Chief Fox commented that parked police cars do not seem to be a deterrent for speeding. He commented further that there have been 78 traffic stops made last month, mostly for speeding and running stop signs.

Jim Harvey responded to a comment regarding a bicyclist hit by a vehicle by the Methodist Church on Route 424. Jim pointed out that this is outside the Crofton PD district and would have been handled by County police.

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

Meeting minutes completed by Tara Gottschalck, Receptionist (August 19,2022)

MS/EF(tg)