



**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION  
BOARD MEETING  
First Baptist Church, Crofton  
February 13, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

**Present:**

**Board Members:**

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

**Staff:** Martin H. Simon, Sgt. Jason Jett, Ofc. John Sims, and Tara Gottschalck.

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

**Announcements by the President Anna O’Kelly:**

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

The Crofton Winter Farmer’s Market continues select Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at St. Elizabeth Anne Seton Church on February 18<sup>th</sup>, March 4<sup>th</sup>, and March 18<sup>th</sup>.

Town Hall will be closed on February 20<sup>th</sup> for President’s Day.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 5:00 PM the Chesapeake Terrace Rubble Landfill public hearing will be held at the Double Tree by Hilton located at 210 Holiday Court, Annapolis in the Coastal room lower lobby. This meeting provides citizens the opportunity to formally comment on MDE’s tentative determination to approve the proposed landfill.

The next CCA Board meeting will be on March 6 at 7:00 PM at the First Baptist Church, Crofton.

On March 9, 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM, the Crofton Chamber of Commerce will host a Blood Drive at their offices located at 2126 Espey Court.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> at 12:00 PM, the CCA will have its annual Easter Egg Hunt at Crofton Elementary School field and wooded area. The Easter Bunny will be there with 10,000 stuffed eggs, prizes, and light refreshments.

On April 8<sup>th</sup> the CCA will have its 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Cherry Blossom Festival from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Crofton Parkway. The inner loop will be closed to traffic in the section between Eton Way and Eton Way for a block party area. There will be food trucks, face painting, music, and a community yard sale. A map detailing the activities will be available soon.

**Approval of Minutes:**

Anna announced that the minutes of the January 17<sup>th</sup> Board and General Membership meeting have not yet been completed.

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

Martin reported that Anna, Brian, Rob, Jim, and he met with State Senator Dawn Gile and State Delegate Stuart Schmidt on January 29<sup>th</sup>. He gave them a tour of Swann Park and the park at The Willows. Both are co-sponsoring a legislative bond initiative for \$350,000 for updated park equipment and improving the accessibility at Swann Park for those with disabilities.

Next week, Martin will be providing on-line testimony to the Anne Arundel County Delegation, requesting support for the bond initiative. The following week, he will do the same during a meeting with State Senator Craig Zucker, Chairman of the Senate's Capital Budget Sub-committee. This meeting was arranged by Senator Dawn Gile.

Thursday of next week Martin will meet with representatives of Rebuilding Together of Anne Arundel County regarding potential grant money for our parks. He will be giving them a tour of the parks. He is hopeful that with this group, the bond initiative, and what we have budgeted so far, the park improvements can begin this year.

On Friday, Martin invited Senator Dawn Gile and Courtney Buiniskis, the new County Engagement Officer, to Town Hall. He gave them a tour of the facility and introduced staff. It was a positive meeting.

Martin met with a builder for an estimate on an ADA compliant addition to Town Hall, or a stand-alone structure to house community meetings and functions. The stand-alone option is more cost effective.

On Wednesday, Martin and Sgt. Jett will meet with Crofton High School representatives regarding a graduation parade for the class of 2023 scheduled for June 3, at 10:00 AM along Crofton Parkway.

**Comptroller's Report** – *James Harvey (Martin reported for Jim in his absence.)*

To streamline the Listserv announcements, Jim has created the first draft of an on-line newsletter tentatively called *The E-Advocate*. It will be an e-book format containing embedded links allowing the reader to choose the information they may be interested in. This newsletter will be produced monthly, or as needed to provide the latest news to the community. The completed draft will be shared with Board members later this week.

Martin reported that Jim is investigating a redesign of our website. He has charted and catalogued the current data structure of the website. He had spoken the Board members regarding their ideas for content and has registered for the domain name croftoncommunity.com. This website will be used for testing until the new website is approved. Content will be managed in WordPress. The website will be optimized for cell phone and tablet use.

Martin reported that a disaster recovery test with our IT provider was completed on January 24. The test was successful, all files were recovered without issue.

Martin reported that staff continues to use the Buddy Punch time clock system for payroll accounting and internal controls with success. It is going well so far.

Martin reported that Jim continues to revise the Procedures and Policy Manual. The most recent draft has been forwarded to Martin for his review. Once completed it will be ready for Board review in March or April.

Martin reported that Jim has updated the employee benefits overview to sync with 2022 changes made by the Board for use in police and staff recruitment.

Martin reported that Jim has successfully moved the SEP IRA program from Invesco to Schwab. The first contributions were successfully applied.

Annual premium and interest on the commercial loan for the front yard property was paid in January in the amount of \$236,233.51.

Martin reported the drinking water service at Town Hall has been replaced with a new vendor providing a cost savings of about \$300 per year.

Jim has applied for Wex Fleet cards which will replace current Sunoco and Exxon cards. The Fleet cards provide more spending flexibility to multiple gas stations and Jiffy Lube and provide a reduced fuel tax saving of \$0.15 per gallon.

The Workman's Comp reclassification of employees from the recent audit will provide a cost savings of \$4,071 annually.

The police department has purchased six new tasers costing \$15,469.60. The amount will be paid over five years at zero interest. This is a cost savings of \$4,698.99, versus the original plan that was to purchase three now and three later.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Planning & Zoning** – *Marsha Perry*

Marsha reported she has been keeping in touch with County Executive Pittman's office regarding his commitments to protect the environment.

Marsha urged people to attend the public information meeting on the landfill on February 23<sup>rd</sup> in Annapolis. The Patuxent River is one of the nine scenic rivers that are under special protections by the State of Maryland. All surrounding communities are not in favor of permitting this landfill to be built in this area. This will allow pollutants to contaminate the Patuxent River.

She is drafting a letter stating the CCA's position regarding this landfill site. Landfills up to 1990 were not lined. The construction materials and debris thrown into the landfill makes its way into the ground and drinking water. They also catch fire due to methane gas. This meeting is run by representatives from the Land and Materials Administration division of the Maryland Department of the Environment.

Marsha mentioned a lawsuit in the 1970s by Maryland counties south of Crofton, who sued Crofton and won. The suit was filed because a new sewer treatment plant was built in Crofton which sent pollutants downstream in the Patuxent River to neighboring counties. She mentioned this because there is a possibility that it could happen again.

She is in touch with the Patuxent Riverkeeper, the Sierra Club, and the Governor's office. The Forks of the Patuxent has been bearing the financial burden for this for many years. Marsha stated the need for our State legislators and the County Council representatives to assist us in this fight.

Marsha reported that the Versa Tile property development and other small projects along Route 3 are of ongoing concern. She is in contact with the new staff of County Planning and Zoning. She will report back on these issues at the March 6 meeting.

Martin commented that he has her draft letter, and that he will make revisions with her and send it out by the deadline.

### **Maintenance and Operations** – *Rob Kendall*

Rob mentioned the importance of the legislative bond initiatives for playground equipment in our parks. He thanked Martin for submitting those.

### **Recreation Committee** – *Daria DeLizio*

Daria reported that the Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 1<sup>st</sup> with a rain date of April 8<sup>th</sup>. They will reach out to Crofton High School Students to volunteer.

Daria reported that the invitations for the CCA Armed Forces and First Responders Parade have gone out. The Parade is scheduled for May 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM. The Anne Arundel High School band has committed. The Crofton High School Band cannot commit because their music director will be on paternity leave that day. She asked if anyone knows of a replacement to please contact her.

Daria reported that the bands for the Summer Concert Series have been booked. The series begins on June 4<sup>th</sup>, at the Crofton Country Club.

Daria stated that the Recreation Committee needs volunteers for the Crofton 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (2024) celebration planning committee.

Martin commented that he is in coordination with Cynthia Johnston at Crofton High School regarding finding a replacement for the high school bandleader to coordinate the C.H.S. Marching Band's participation in the AFD Parade. He will report progress on this.

### **Greater Crofton Council** – *Chuck See*

Chuck reported that he will attend the next meeting of the GCC on March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 PM at the Waugh Chapel Community Center.

### **Covenant Review Committee** – *Stephen Tull*

Stephen had nothing to report.

### **Education Committee** – *Hal Sheldon*

Hal reported on activities at area schools. Crofton High School- There is a Bundtster cake sale through 2/18; the Crofton Cardinals present Funny Girl, 2/24-3/4.

Crofton Woods Elementary School- The Drama Club will perform on 2/17; there is a PTA family pasta night Thursday 3/9; the Dance Club will perform at South River High School on 2/23. The Art Department is looking for empty egg cartons, toilet paper tubes, and paper towel tubes. Donations can be made to Mrs. Fiaschetti and Mrs. Schultz.

Crofton Middle School- The Drama Club will present *Seussical the Musical* from 3/17 through 3/26; there is a field trip scheduled for Hershey Park; the eighth-grade promotion ceremony is scheduled for June.

Schools continue to reach out to fill vacancies for bus drivers, crossing guards, custodians, food service, and instructors.

School Superintendent Mark Bedell's \$1.68 billion fiscal year 2024 operating budget recommendation will be scheduled for voting on 2/15.

All Anne Arundel County Schools will be closed on 2/20 for President's Day.

### **Public Safety Committee** – *Brian Riley*

Brian reported that he met with Sgt. Jett, Ofc. Sims, Jim, and Martin regarding upcoming Public Safety Committee meetings. They discussed how to reach out to neighborhoods and communicate information faster than a newsletter or the listserv, perhaps using social media and the Police Department Facebook page. Brian is planning the next meeting for late March or early April.

### **Finance Committee** – *Renee Speer*

Renee reported that the Finance Committee has decided that meeting monthly was no longer necessary. Moving forward they will meet on an as needed basis, at least twice per year. The next meeting will take place before the audit in June or July. This meeting will be at Town Hall and is open to all.

Anna announced that as of January 23<sup>rd</sup> Earl Fox is no longer with the Crofton Police Department. Sgt. Jason Jett will serve as Acting Chief during this transition period. He will provide the Police Chief report.

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

Sgt. Jett reported that moving forward he will be revising the way the monthly police statistics are presented. He will be including more information and communication to the public. Since the community has asked for more information, he stated that once any police information is allowed to be disclosed to the public, he will do so. He reported the statistics for the month of January 2023. There were 416 calls for service, 212 patrol checks, 11 traffic stops, 9 warnings, 2 repair orders, and 1 arrest. Both he and Ofc. Sims continue to cover school crossing for both the morning and afternoon sessions.

Sgt. Jett provided an update on the burglary suspect that was apprehended last month. His name is Robert Renquist. He is identified as a white male, 52 years of age, with no fixed address. He was recently indicted on multiple first-degree charges of theft in connection to the burglaries in the community. There are additional warrants for destruction of property and theft under \$25,000. He is under investigation by multiple districts for similar crimes. He is currently being held in the A.A. Co. detention center without bond. Renee asked about reports of his accomplice. Sgt. Jett responded that

there was another suspect in a car in North Forest Apartments. He was questioned since he was driving Renquist's car. There was no information released on this person.

Sgt. Jett provided an update on the residents at 1417 Knightsbridge Turn. In the past there has been a high amount of police activity at this address including drugs, parking violations, and warrant service. The Crofton police conferred with the new owners of the property, have evicted the tenants who were claiming squatters' rights, and had their vehicles towed. The street has been quiet since then.

Sgt. Jett reported on a suicide from a self-inflicted gunshot wound near Carlyle Drive. The resident was found during a wellness check by Anne Arundel County police. The name and address will not be disclosed.

Sgt. Jett reported on the status of the theft from autos concentrated in the Crofton Woods section of the community. Resident Ring camera videos have shown that it is more than one suspect. The thefts are taking place in the evenings. The Crofton police are working closely with Anne Arundel County Police on this investigation. He reminded residents to be vigilant and lock your vehicles.

Sgt. Jett reported on the status of the new tasers which will be ready later this month. They will be coordinated with their body cameras. Data will be stored by Anne Arundel County police. The data provides information of taser usage, time, date, length, etc. He thanked Sheriff Sesker the A.A. Co. Sheriff's Department for their training on the tasers and body cameras which has been completed.

Sgt. Jett is investigating with Axon the merge of body camera evidence with the County's evidence system through Anne Arundel County police. The County police have this automatically sent to their County evidence system, but the Crofton Police Department does not. The body cameras are due to launch in March.

Sgt. Jett reported that he has interviewed three candidates for police officer vacancies in the department. One candidate went back to their previous employer. The remaining two were not eligible due to past employment records.

Sgt. Jett thanked the Board for entrusting him as Acting Chief. He acknowledged Ofc. Sims as an outstanding officer who is dedicated to assisting him through this transition. They are both committed to serving the community.

### **Other Business**

Anna spoke about the proposed idea to name the front property area after Dick Lahn. Jim had sent information regarding Dick Lahn's service to the community to Anna and the Board members. The feedback from the Board is that it is premature to name the area. At present there is no access to the area and no walking paths. The Board members are not in favor of signage in the area. This idea will be tabled for now.

### **Citizen Questions or Comments**

Scott Chismar proposed a fundraising idea to Martin. It is a dog calendar that was used successfully in a New Jersey town. Martin asked Scott to meet with him to discuss details.

Pat Huecker spoke of her concern regarding the amount of new development on Route 3 that is not being reported on. She expressed frustration regarding the inability to access Planning and Zoning.

She spoke about the new structures planned for Route 3 South across from Wendy's. This will be four structures containing apartments, a restaurant, and a daycare facility. She has been unable to retrieve any information about this project from the County. She would like to follow up with the County Executive.

Martin mentioned that he and Pat both attended the Budget Town Hall at Arundel High School. There were good speakers. Pat stated that she hopes Pittman listens to the resident's concerns.

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, Administrative Assistant (February 27, 2023)*

MS/JH/JJ(tg)