



**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
First Baptist Church, Crofton
March 6, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

Present:

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

Staff: Martin H. Simon, James Harvey, Sgt. Jason Jett, Kathy Lavin, and 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 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 Ann Seton Church on March 18th and April 1st, 15th and 29th.

Crofton Kiwanis will host its Monthly Membership Meeting on Wednesday, March 8th, at the Crofton Public Library, at 7:00 PM. The guest speaker is Lisa Knoll of Annapolis Salvation Army Corp.

On March 9, from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM, the Crofton Chamber of Commerce will host a Blood Drive at its offices located at 2126 Espey Court, Crofton, MD. Participants may sign up on the Chamber’s website at croftonchamber.com.

On April 1st at 12:00 PM, the CCA will have its annual Easter Egg Hunt at the Crofton Elementary School’s field and wooded area. The Easter Bunny will be there with 10,000 stuffed eggs, prizes, games, crafts, and light refreshments. The rain date is scheduled for April 8th.

On April 8th the CCA will have its 2nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM on Crofton Parkway from the Crofton Country Club to where Beaver Creek crosses under the road by Farnborn Street. 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, vendors, face painting, music, and a community yard sale. A map detailing the activities and locations is available on our website at www.croftoncommunity.org. This event is rain or shine and will be cancelled only in the event of severe weather.

The next CCA Board meeting will be on April 17 at 7:00 PM at the First Baptist Church, Crofton.

The CCA Annual Armed Forces and First Responders Parade is scheduled for May 13th at 10:00 AM. The parade will run along Crofton Parkway from Crofton Woods Elementary School to Town Hall.

The Crofton Chamber of Commerce will host a community shred event from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM on May 13th, at their offices at 2126 Espey Court, Crofton, MD.

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

Martin reported that our intern Stefan has completed the first resident interview in support of the 60th Anniversary celebration of Crofton. He asked the Board members for any additional suggestions for candidates to interview outside the existing list. These interviews will eventually be compiled into a book or multi-media presentation.

After completing presentations on our playground renewal last month to the Anne Arundel County House of Delegates and Chairman Zucker of the capital budget sub-committee, Martin sent a personalized email to each member of the delegation along with a copy of the presentation asking for their support of our projects. We hope to get some news by mid-April.

Martin reported on his meeting with representatives from Rebuilding Together. They have been awarded money from the Department of Housing and Community Development. We are hoping to hear back from them in early March. This together with possible money for the bond initiative and our savings would mean we can begin our park improvements this year.

Martin reported on his follow up with the building contractor regarding an ADA compliant addition to Town Hall. The estimates given were between \$330,000 to \$350,000 depending on design. Two were proposed. The construction costs are approximately \$230 per square foot. A standalone structure was proposed, which would be less costly. The proposed structure will be 2,000 square feet located behind the garage, saving yard space for Town events. He will meet with an architect on Thursday. He has been in consultation with Michelle Corkadel of the Anne Arundel County Board of Education, who has experience with these types of projects. He will continue to gather information, as well as investigate the possibility of using the CCA property by Good Hope Drive.

Martin attended the meeting on the Chesapeake Terrace Rubble Landfill in Annapolis on February 23rd. Anna and Pat Huecker were also in attendance along with residents of Woodwardville and Two Rivers. Surrounding area residents expressed grave concern to the Maryland Department of the Environment's tentative approval of allowing this landfill to be constructed so close to 5,000 new residents, as well as a new elementary school currently under construction. The addition of hundreds of trucks per day on MD Route 3 and Conway Road is highly worrisome just from a public safety perspective. Martin intends to send a letter of objection from the CCA Board of Directors. He will circulate a draft of this letter next week. The deadline has been pushed back until May. Details of this project can be found on Maryland.gov.

Martin attended the Growth Action Network (GAN) Board meeting. Pat Huecker is a member of this board. Julie Hummer, Anne Arundel County Council District 4 representative was the special guest. She commented that it was absurd that the Chesapeake Landfill project has been ongoing for 30 plus years. She suggested a statute of limitations be put on the granting of special exceptions. The new west county elementary school has a capacity of 600 students. This is not in Crofton's jurisdiction and therefore would not help with any overcrowding in Crofton schools. She predicted Crofton High School will need an addition soon. All county schools are overcrowded. She is not in favor of increasing the definition of maxed out from 95% to 120% which has been suggested. She believes there is some leeway in that conversation. Currently there is an overall 87% capacity of County schools. She thinks that bussing is a real possibility.

Comptroller's Report – *James Harvey*

Jim provided the following report:

Finances – We received and deposited a check in the amount of \$428,699.33, the second installment of tax income from A.A. County. We were due \$409,729.07 as per our FY 2023 budget request. The County has also asked us to consider accepting future payments through a third-party service called Paymode-X. There is no cost to use this service for accepting payments. We will sign up for the service, but are waiting to hear from Shore United as it may be a service that is provided through the bank. We also received a refund of \$9,853.00 from Chesapeake Employers Insurance for the reclassification of employees under our Workman's Compensation policy and the removal of Earl Fox. We are meeting with representatives of Shore United and they will be providing us with information on a prospective construction loan for an addition to town hall and establishing a line of credit for operations. We expect to provide information on both options at the next BOD meeting.

Miscellaneous Financial Matters – We've been initially declined for the Wex Fleet Card, as they have record of another EIN number, probably for the CCA, rather than the CCD. Clarification has been provided and the sales representative is trying to get it sorted out. Tara's new laptop failed and has been sent to the HP maintenance depot. It's repair or replacement will not cost us anything. We will be doing an eight-page printed Advocate in May as a self-mailer. With improvements to our labeling, the cost will not be much more (~\$300) and will be offset by advertising.

Insurance – We added additional Volunteer Insurance that covers factors such as car accidents to/from/during Crofton events. The cost is just \$179 per year. Maryland has a Paid Family Medical Leave act/requirement that takes effect on October 1st. Having under 15 employees we are not required to make an employer contribution (that is up to the BOD) but are required to enable employees making more than \$15 per hour to withhold the State designated employee percentage, which we would pay into the program on their behalf. It is being set up like the workman's compensation program and details will not be available from the State until June 1st. This will impact on the FY24 budget and must be accounted for in FY25 budgeting. I have contacted both The Hartford and The HILB Group to ask for information on their programs as soon as possible.

Disaster Recovery – The Town Manager and the Comptroller are enrolled in the Anne Arundel Crisis Emergency Response Training certificate program, taking online portions now and in-person training in September. Sergeant Jett and Officer Sims are already CERT certified. This is necessary to be in the loop with the County in the event of a disaster. We are also planning on visiting the AA County Emergency Response center in March and discussing points of coordination.

Website/Social Media – The Crofton Civic Association, Inc. Facebook page is up and ready to be announced to the public. Martin, Tara, and Jim have access to the Meta Business Suite and can make or schedule postings to both Facebook and Instagram simultaneously. We are working on a plan to incorporate or subsume the Crofton PD Facebook page. We are also seeking to establish a "Crofton Social Media Network" by collecting contacts with neighborhood private pages so that we can improve communication and better spread priority messages such as public safety alerts. We have asked Facebook to take down the old Crofton Civic Association page.

The first E-Advocate is out and was well received and the second is scheduled to be released on March 15th. Improvements include a full community events calendar and recent home values. We have established "non-resident" and "local business" distribution lists as well. We have started reaching out to Crofton Organizations about contributing content occasionally to the newsletter.

Cherry Blossom Festival – See the attached Flyer for details. The event is widely posted online. We have also added BSA Troop 115 as a late participant, but have lost Kindness Grows Here, as they do not have volunteers available that day.

Body Cameras – We paid \$260.00 to Axon to reinstate our start-up training. There was a charge of \$1,260.00, but due to not implementing the program in a timely fashion we had a \$1,000.00 credit on account. Thank you to Sgt. Jett and Ofc. Sims for getting this back on track.

Signs – Jim distributed a draft of replacement signs in the community to replace the current broken and damaged signs. They will be placed at Lake Louise (facing the townhouses), Swann Park, and the park at The Willows. These are required for insurance purposes. Rob suggested that we add our website to the signs.

Crofton 60th Anniversary Fundraising Concept – Jim distributed a flyer outlining a Hometown Heroes Banner Fundraiser concept. Banners can be hung on poles beneath the existing flags. There may be two sponsorship options. The first is \$350 for three years. The second is \$650 for permanent placement.

Committee Reports

Planning & Zoning – *Marsha Perry*

Marsha reported additional information regarding the recent GAN meeting. Marsha thanked Martin for his attendance. Pat Huecker, who is on the Planning and Zoning Committee, just sent her an email regarding the potential school redistricting, stating the following:

“Elementary schools and middle schools over 95% capacity, and high schools over 100% capacity are considered to be closed to new development. The Bill with these requirements sunsets in May. Proposed Bill 923 that is before the County Council will extend the deadline to September. By September the school sub-board is supposed to have completed its report. The last meeting of the school board was cancelled and there has been no notification of rescheduling. There has been no public discussion on this yet. Marsha and Pat will stay on top of this issue and the County Council. Allowing higher capacity figures for the developers will affect all of West County. A Bill introduction by the County Council would be required for this. Pat is listening in on the Council’s meeting where Julie Hummer’s Bill 11-23 is being discussed. Pat has submitted questions, but there has not been any response yet.

Marsha commented that counties outside of Anne Arundel have well-functioning planning commissions. Our County Planning Advisory Board is not sufficient. Pat made this presentation to GAN. They have suggested this over the years to every County Executive’s office. The Planning Advisory Board for the Crofton area will not be in session for at least one year from now.

There is a bill before the legislature Senate Bill 470 and House Bill 631 which would allow a revolving loan fund for stewardship of land. It is currently known as the Maryland Beautification of Land bill. This would establish a conservation law in MD. It will affect what is being put in landfills, such as recyclable plastics.

Marsha also attended the last meeting on the Capital Parks Project for Millersville Park, commenting that the central focus was on the possibility of, and number of pickle ball courts that will be allowed.

Public Safety Committee – *Brian Riley*

Brian reported on the meeting last Monday of the Police Accountability Board. There was a listening session at the library that he attended with Martin, Jason, and eight Board members. The overall turnout was low. The takeaway was that the board is up and running and they will establish procedures for how complaints are handled.

Brian reported on his meeting with Martin, Jim, and John regarding the establishments of Neighborhood Watch groups in the community. John will discuss the process with any residents who are interested in starting up a group. Anyone interested may contact Town Hall. A notification will be added to the March edition of the E-Advocate.

Finance Committee – *Renee Speer*

No report.

Recreation Committee – *Daria DeLizio*

Daria had nothing to report. Kathy added that the annual Easter Egg Hunt is scheduled for April 1st with a rain date of April 8th. She is reaching out to Crofton High School, the Girl Scouts, and Boy Scouts for volunteers. The Armed Forces and First Responders Parade is scheduled for May 13th. Louie is coming. She is reaching out to the Chamber, and Judy is helping to coordinate.

Kathy reported that the CCA Summer Concert Series has all been booked for June and July. The grant application for the County Arts Council is due in May. She is planning an art event for teens (ages 8 to 13) spearheaded by Daria for June or July. She is coordinating with an art director on this.

Kathy reported on the Crofton 60th Anniversary event. A committee has been established, and the kick-off meeting will be in April. Marsha Perry and Debbie Risher will be the committee's Co-chairs. She is reaching out to the elementary school PTAs for volunteers. Kathy asked the board what type of events they would like to have so that she can add these to the upcoming meeting. There will be a need for volunteers for fundraising.

Kathy reported that Crofton High School marching band is not supporting our parade this year. The band leader is on paternity leave. Arundel High School's marching band will attend. She has not yet heard back from South River High School's marching band.

Martin asked for volunteers for the CCA tent during the Cherry Blossom Festival which will be located on the Parkway by Martin's home.

Greater Crofton Council – *Chuck See*

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

Covenant Review Committee – *Stephen Tull*

Stephen reported the committee approved a fence on Rochester Court.

Maintenance and Operations – *Rob Kendall*

Rob reported that the park renovations are the main focus of the committee. Anna asked about plans for Earth Day April 22nd. Rob will be scheduling a spring cleanup day, date to be determined.

Education Committee – *Hal Sheldon*

Hal reported on events at area schools.

Crofton Woods will have a Ledo's fundraiser on March 14th. The PTA will host a silent auction March 5th through 10th to support the PTA. There is a talent show scheduled for April 20th.

Crofton High School is hosting a community yard sale on April 15 from 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Parking spaces may be rented at \$25 for one space, or \$50 for two spaces. There will be a free PRISM concert on March 16 showcasing various types of music.

Crofton Elementary School presents their production Moana, Jr. on May 6-7, and 12-13. CES clubs for spring are Drama, Girls on the Run, Seaperch, and Dance.

Crofton Middle School will have a county band adjudication in March as part of a trip to Hershey Park. The 8th grade promotion ceremonies are in June. The French class went on a trip to Canada. The Spanish class will take a trip to Washington D.C. The Social Studies class will take a trip to Mt. Vernon.

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

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

Sgt. Jett reported that he is working on revising the reporting of police statistics to provide more transparency to the community. In February there were 471 service calls, 262 patrol checks, 5 reports taken, 15 traffic stops, and 59 school crossings. There has been a significant amount of time devoted to administrative tasks due to the Chief's absence.

Sgt. Jett reported on the recent theft from autos in the community. On February 28th two residents reported thefts at Mayfair Place and at The Orchards. A cell phone that was stolen from a vehicle was traced to Waugh Chapel Center, however, it was found on a bench with no suspects nearby. These thefts occur after midnight. He has been working closely with County police. They believe it is the same suspect, and there does not seem to be a pattern to the incidents. He is investigating the possibility of doing overnight assignments.

Sgt. Jett reported that the Body Cameras are up and running, however, the Crofton PD is currently on its own separate cloud storage system for camera evidence. He has been in contact with County police so that our police department can join their cloud storage system. There are some logistical challenges and possibly additional costs. While setting up our own storage system, he is investigating these concerns to join the County system. He will keep the Town Manager updated, and Martin is also invited to their next meeting, which is not yet scheduled.

Sgt. Jett reported that the new tasers are on a two-week shipping delay. Once activated, they will be integrated with the body camera system.

He reported that the department has received their new uniforms.

Sgt. Jett has contacted Lexipol, a company that writes general orders for law enforcement. He received an estimate of \$19,000 and the project would take one year. Sgt. Jett does not believe that this is necessary. He is confident that subtle changes to the current County police policies would be suitable for our police department.

Sgt Jett attended the PAB meeting. The meeting was mostly for the public to speak. A few citizens complimented the Crofton Police Department for having no complaints against them.

Sgt. Jett reported his completion of supervisory training in February for his promotion to the rank of Sergeant. He has also signed up for two administrative classes scheduled for June.

Sgt. Jett reported that he has interviewed six candidates for the open positions in the department. Five have been dismissed for past conduct concerns or were not Maryland certified. He spoke to Martin about revising job advertisements. Applicants seem confused about the requirements. One candidate has made it to the background process. Cpl. Sims is taking care of this.

Sgt. Jett announced the promotion of Ofc. Sims to Corporal and thanked him for his one year of service at the Crofton Police Department. There will be a small ceremony at Town Hall on Wednesday at 9:00 AM.

Other Business

No other business was presented for Board discussion.

Citizen Questions or Comments

Eric Boltz, asked about the possibility of a bike trail in the community that could be attached to the B&A trail. Rob responded that there are plans to do this by the County. It is part of the 2040 GDP and the Move Arundel Plan. He will speak to him after the meeting on this.

Erica Boltz asked if there will be a Pride Parade this year. Martin responded that the resident in charge of that parade has not been in touch with Town Hall about running it for this year. We provided support for the last parade. Sgt. Jett said he will provide contact information for her. Jim would like to add this event to our calendar.

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 (March 28, 2023)