



**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD MEETING
First Baptist Church, Crofton
April 17, 2023 – 7:00 PM**

Present:

Board Members: Anna O’Kelly, Marsha Perry, 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 next Saturday, April 29, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church. This is the final Saturday of the Winter market. The Summer Farmer’s market begins Saturday May 13th from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM at its new location at the Crofton Public Library.

The Greater Crofton Chamber of Commerce will host its annual Spring Festival on the Green from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM at the Crofton Country Club’s north parking lot. There will be over 100 vendors, a crafter’s corner, an inflatable obstacle course, music, food, and fun for the whole family. The CCA will have a booth at this event.

The next CCA Board and General Membership meeting is scheduled for May 8th at 7:30 PM at the First Baptist Church, Crofton. Special guest speakers are Senator Dawn Gile and Delegate Stuart Schmidt. Our newest legislators will update us on their first session of service in Annapolis.

The 30th 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. There will be an after party at Town Hall in the backyard with music, food, drinks, and activities for kids. Veterans and First Responders are encouraged to participate. Please contact Town Hall if you are interested in joining our parade.

The Greater Crofton Chamber of Commerce will host a Community Shred Day on May 13th from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at their offices located at 2126 Espey Court, Crofton.

The Crofton Village Garden Club will host its Select Garden Tour on Sunday May 21st from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This is a self-guided tour of eight private gardens in their community. Tickets are \$25 and may be purchased from their website at Croftonvillagegardenclub.com.

On June 3rd, the CCA will partner with the Crofton High School PTSO for the first Crofton High School graduation parade in honor of the inaugural graduating class of 2023. Details of this even will be

provided as the event gets closer. Please save the date and come out to support our Crofton graduates.

The annual Crofton Kiwanis/Team Surlis 10K/5K event will take place on June 10th at 8:00 AM, near the Crofton Country Club. Participants may register on the Kiwanis website at CroftonKiwanis.org.

The CCA Summer Concert Series begins on Sunday June 4th at the Crofton Country Club from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The series runs Sunday evenings through July 23rd. Please bring a blanket or a chair to sit on as there is no seating provided on the grass.

The Crofton 60th Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee has been established. Marsha Perry and Debbie Risher are Co-Chairs of this committee. There was an organization meeting on April 5th. The kick-off meeting is scheduled for April 24th at the First Baptist Church at 6:30 PM. Anyone interested in joining this committee may contact Town Hall at info@CroftonTownHall.org.

Approval of Minutes –

The minutes from the January 17, 2023, CCA Board and General Membership meeting, distributed to the Board on March 1st, the CCA Board meeting of February 13, 2023, distributed to the Board on March 2nd, and the CCA Board meeting of March 6, 2023, distributed to the Board on April 4th, each require Board 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 that our double events on Saturday were successful. The Easter Egg Hunt and the Cherry Blossom Festival had a large turnout. He thanked everyone who assisted, and the Board members who came out to man the CCA tent.

The CCA's request of the \$350,000 bond initiative was passed with the assistance of Senator Gile and Delegate Schmidt, fully funding our playground equipment. Martin will begin the filing of the grant documentation. Rob, Anna, and Martin met last week regarding the design plans. The final design proposal will be available for the Board to review soon. Martin has begun receiving quotes on the grading improvements for Swann Park from the play area to the sidewalk.

Regarding the \$95,000 grant from Rebuilding Together and the Department of Housing and Community Development, they are working out the details and requirements and will have an update soon.

The office of Forest Conservation provided an update on the easement purchase. The transaction will be completed in June, at which time we will receive \$100,000 in payment from County. The contracted appraisal of the land verified that we did not overpay for the property. The parcel was appraised at \$3,023,060 which is \$366,810 more than the community paid.

Martin and Jim attended an Emergency Preparedness meeting at the Office of Safety Management in Glen Burnie to prepare for a national disaster. They are interested in community outreach and can offer free presentations by Zoom. They also offer CPR classes. They may attend the Parade party to hand out literature.

Martin received information from the County Executive's office regarding the infrastructure update. The permit issues have been resolved with the Village Green Board. There are stakes in the median along Crofton Parkway which are related to this infrastructure improvement project.

Martin has finalized the draft of the printed May Advocate. Instead of the usual one-page document, we were able to provide a larger edition at a slight cost increase, which is off-set by the advertising. This edition along with our new E-advocate allows us increased outreach throughout the community.

Comptroller's Report – James Harvey

Jim reported that as we head into the third quarter, we are running a surplus in income of \$23,065. This is due in part to an increase in income from interest earned on savings and that will continue to grow for the rest of this fiscal year. We are running some expense deficit of \$295,091.05. This is due to some open positions and some cost-saving measures. Overages include trees, legal expenses, and office supplies. He has created a set of recommendations for the FY25 budget planning for the Board to consider.

Jiffy Lube Fleet cards have been distributed for each vehicle. We have declined the County's Paymode-X service since it was discovered that they take a percentage of the payment.

The ICS program had money in the Silicon Valley Bank, and we received a phone call within twenty-four hours stating that our money has been restored after the SVB closure.

Jim has ordered new checks and stationery for the Crofton Community District and the CCA so that there will not be any future confusion with our EIN usage with vendors and accounts.

The E-Advocate is popular with residents and has been viewed many times. Jim is working on expanding our Social Media network and has been gathering contacts of administrators for neighborhood pages. There is an article on the Police Accountability Board and how to use the program. There is also information on our website for those who wish to send compliments to the police.

Jim mentioned some additional information regarding the Crofton's 60th Anniversary celebration. The committee decided to manage no more than ten events including fundraisers and "signature" events. Additional programs for the year will include programs organized by other Crofton organizations or "Allied" events. The committee has a golf outing fundraiser scheduled for May 20, 2024. They are also looking at a Hometown Heroes fundraiser program.

Jim has made up fliers for the Armed Forces parade and is reaching out to local vendors and schools to post them.

Jim commented that there were about 1,000 people that attended the Cherry Blossom Festival. The block party section was the most popular area, so moving forward next year we will hold all events in this area.

Committee Reports

Recreation Committee – Daria DeLizio

Daria reported that the Easter Egg Hunt was very well attended. The Girls Scouts filled 10,000 eggs. Many of the volunteers were from Crofton High School. The weather cooperated.

Greater Crofton Council – Chuck See

Chuck reported that he attempted to attend the last meeting. No one showed up. He has contacted other members and has had no response. He will report back once the meeting has been rescheduled.

Covenant Review Committee – *Stephen Tull*

Stephen reported the committee approved an addition on Shaftsbury Avenue.

Maintenance and Operations – *Rob Kendall*

Rob reported that he is concentrating on the park refurbishment. He thanked Martin for all his work on the bond initiative. Rob is working on the design. Martin commented that there is an issue with the fence which lies on Crofton Country Club property. Therefore, the area will be smaller for the new park redesign. Rob said he is happy with the recent design for The Willows. He announced the next park clean-up day is scheduled for May 20th.

Education Committee – *Hal Sheldon*

Hal reported that Kindergarten registration begins on April 12th for Anne Arundel County Elementary Schools. Orientation is scheduled for May 25th. All Anne Arundel County schools are closed Friday, April 25th for Ed Al Fitr. Due to the lack of unused snow days, the last day of school for the County has been revised to June 13th. Eighth grade will hold promotion ceremonies the first week of June. Crofton High School will hold an athletic orientation for 8th graders wishing to participate in high school sports on Monday, April 24th at 6:00 PM. Anne Arundel County schools continue to experience personnel shortages.

Public Safety Committee – *Brian Riley*

No report.

Finance Committee – *Renee Speer*

No report.

Planning & Zoning – *Marsha Perry*

Anna prepared a report for Marsha who joined the meeting by Zoom. Stuart Schmidt distributed a report on the recent session to District 33 voters. The report on legislation bills regarding environmental issues was not included. Marsha asked Stuart to forward it to her. He will send her a separate report.

Tonight's County Council agenda contains the plastic bag bill 19-23.

The affordable housing Village of Patuxent along Route 3 continues. There is not much information on this as the offices of Planning and Zoning continues to be closed.

Region 2 planning continues, and the committee will meet next in May. School adequate public facilities recommendations are not yet finalized. They are coming soon. The three strategies the County is recommending are to evaluate and reform, if needed, performance bond and maintenance requirements under the forest conservation ordinance, consider creating a flexible forest conservation requirement for workforce and affordable housing projects so that existing multifamily houses can yield more units, and to evaluate reforms to the forest conservation ordinance for flexibility to re-plant areas that are under development, in addition to previously developed communities, such as Home Owner Association open spaces.

The MD 3 Industrial Park, located at 749 Rt 3 North parcels six lots. Developers are proposing two large warehouse buildings, approximately 394,000 square feet. There are impacts to wetlands and wetland buffers. There is a public meeting scheduled for April 20th at 7:00 PM at the Crofton Library. They are asking for modifications for the wetlands.

At Two Rivers – Dawn, developers are requesting modifications to change the forty-nine non-age restricted units to age restricted units in order to satisfy the requirements. The hearing will be held on April 26th at the Crofton Library.

Marsha added that Pat will attend this meeting, and it is important since this may set a precedent on how future developers plan to build in the County. Regarding the new development on Route 3, she commented on Planning and Zoning not allowing public access, and how this never used to be the case. She hopes that they will understand that in order to save the Bay, you need to save the land around it. She believes the County is in crisis allowing excessive modifications to the conservation laws.

Marsha thanked Jim Harvey and Kathy Lavin for the Crofton 60th Anniversary steering committee meeting. The committee would like to reach out to all Crofton residents, including those outside the CCA.

Martin followed up on the letter he sent to the Board regarding their collective response to the Maryland Department of the Environment regarding their tentative determination to allow the modification of the Chesapeake Terrace Rubble Landfill. Martin would like all the Board members to sign the letter. Marsha motioned for the Board to approve the letter regarding the Chesapeake Terrace Rubble Landfill. Stephen seconded. All were in favor. The motion passed. Jim would like to send out the meeting details on our social media pages. Anna will send him the link with the pertinent information.

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

Sgt. Jett reported on the police statistics for this month. There were 676 calls, 390 patrols including safety checks, 5 reports taken, 27 traffic enforcements, and many hours of administrative duties including compliance regulations with other agencies. Sgt. Jett and Cpl. Sims continue to cover morning and afternoon school traffic. Sgt. Jett reported that the information published to the last E-Advocate contains additional data beyond the usual statistics in order to provide further information to the community.

Sgt. Jett happily reported that Demar Caldwell, the theft from auto suspect, was arrested in Millersville. There were ten open warrants for his arrest. He is being held without bond pending his hearing in June.

He reported a loaded handgun found by a pedestrian on the sidewalk in North Forest Apartments on March 14th. The firearm was unregistered. County police have not released any additional information at this time.

He reported that the new tasers for the department should arrive by the end of April from Axon. Usage data will be stored the same way as the body camera data.

Sgt. Jett attended the Police Accountability Board's quarterly meeting. The Crofton Police Department has received zero complaints since its inception in June. The County Executive commented that not all County agencies are compliant with PAB at this time. This is not the case in Crofton and was pointed out to the County Executive by the Town Manager. Steuart Pittman has since adjusted his comments.

Sgt. Jett reported that interviews continue for open positions in the department. None are viable candidates. There is interest from a former candidate who withdrew for medical reasons. He has since had surgery to correct the issue and can begin work as soon as June.

Sgt. Jett reported that the Easter Egg/Cherry Blossom Festival Day went well. There were no issues with traffic control and the closed portion of the street. He and Cpl. Sims will attend the Chamber's Festival on the Green on April 29th. They will add support for the Armed Forces Parade with County police who is providing five cars. They will also support the Kiwanis run. Jason will check with Crofton High School regarding their graduation parade, and the organizer of the Crofton Pride Parade. Crofton PD cannot request County police assistance until the permit process is completed. Martin commented that the permits for the high school have been submitted.

Other Business

Kathy thanked Town Hall staff for their support with all the events, and the Crofton Police for support with coordination for our events. Kathy will need assistance in getting the community to populate the parade route. She asked that people please spread the word. Kathy thanked Tina Wittelsberger who helped at the Easter Egg Hunt.

Martin discussed the plan for the Parade after party at Town Hall. The backyard party will be larger than usual in celebration of the Parade's 30th anniversary. Clear weather could bring at least 200-300 people. There are plans for a bounce house, food provided by Chick-fil-a and Mission BBQ, red, white and blue ice pops, ice and beverages, crafts for kids, and possibly live entertainment- a musical duo. These extras would increase the usual parade budget to \$3,000. Martin is requesting that this come out of the contingency fund for FY23. All Board members are in agreement of using the FY23 contingency fund for the Armed Forces Parade and Party.

Citizen Questions or Comments

Resident Eric Boltz commented that this was the second meeting he has attended. He listed reasons why he contemplated not returning and shared them with the Board.

1-Visitors feel unwelcome since there is no signage out front to identify the meeting.

2-Holding meetings at a church is not welcoming to all. These meetings should be held in a more neutral space such as a library.

3-Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of the meeting feels weird and makes people uncomfortable.

4-The seating arrangement creates exclusion since residents are seated "in the back."

5-Citizen comments should be two commenting periods. One early on the agenda so that residents do not have to sit through the entire meeting and wait until the end to provide comments and can leave early if they need to. The other can remain at the end of the meeting.

6-Allow residents to attend the Board meetings by Zoom so that people can attend remotely if they wish.

7-Contact information for the Board members is not provided on the website. You must email info@croftontownhall.org.

8-The sign-up sheet for meeting attendance feels invasive.

9-There is not enough seating.

10-There is no ability for post-meeting private discussions due to the Board adjourning for executive sessions.

11-The meeting minutes should be posted to the website.

Anna thanked him for his feedback. Stephen pointed out that we are no longer welcome to meet in the local schools due to Covid protocols. Anna explained that the meetings need to be held in the tax district. Martin explained that meetings cannot be held at Town Hall because it is not ADA compliant. He explained that the CCA is in the process of exploring the possibility of creating our own meeting space at Town Hall that would be ADA compliant. There will be more information on this presented to the Community as it is collected.

Jim explained that the sign up for attendees is for insurance purposes. It would be possible to create individual slips for meeting registrants. Martin commented that the Zoom attendance was offered throughout Covid. Once we returned to in person meetings very few people were signing up. There were also connectivity issues. It was not worthwhile. He commented further that executive sessions are unavoidable. Jim suggested taking a five-minute break before beginning the session. Martin stated that it is tradition to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. He also commented that there are many chairs available, and that no one attending would be made to stand.

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 (May 4, 2023)