

**CROFTON CIVIC ASSOCIATION
BOARD and GENERAL MEMBERSHIP ZOOM MEETING
September 20, 2021- 7:30PM**

Present:

Board Members: Martin Simon, Anna O'Kelly, Brian Riley, Renee Speer, Daria DeLizio, Charles See, James Harvey, Robert Kendall and Hal Sheldon.

Staff: Larry Schweinsburg, Susan Myers, Chief Earl Fox, Tara Gottschalck

Larry Schweinsburg opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Announcements by the President:

On September 25 the Crofton Chamber will host the Fall Festival on the Green from 10 AM to 4 PM at the Crofton Country Club. There will be a DJ, food, crafts, and a petting zoo.

On October 2 Crofton Kiwanis will host its annual 5/10K race beginning at 8 AM at the Crofton Country Club. Registration information can be found at Croftonkiwanis.org.

On October 4 the next CCA Board meeting will be held at 7 PM via ZOOM.

On October 11 Town Hall will be closed for Columbus Day.

On October 20 the Crofton Kiwanis will hold its Chili Cook-off at Seton Parish parking lot from 4:30 to 7:00 PM.

On October 30 Crofton Kiwanis will have its annual Halloween Parade, followed by the CCA Halloween Party at Town Hall. Details will be available closer to the date of the events.

On October 18, 25 and November 1 the CCA Board will hold its FY23 Budget Meetings at 7 PM via ZOOM. Final Budget approval will take place on November 8, if necessary.

On November 3 from 6 PM to 9 PM, the Crofton Chamber of Commerce will host its annual Community Awards Celebration at the Blue Dolphin in Gambrills. Ticket information can be found at croftonchamber.com.

November 6 through 20 the Flags for Heroes display will be located at the front entrance to Crofton on Route 3 North. Information for flag sponsorship can be found at CroftonKiwanis.org.

Martin announced the passing of John Barrella last month. John was a former CCA Board member who served as the representative of District 4 for several years.

Approval of Minutes:

A motion was made by Anna to approve the minutes from the CCA Board Meeting of July 12. The motion was seconded by Daria. The minutes were unanimously approved.

Guest Speaker:

Martin introduced the guest speaker, Reece Peak, Community Engagement Officer, Anne Arundel County. Mr. Peak provided an update on County projects.

Reece provided his contact information and links to the County Survey on Policing, and the Green Infrastructure Plan. Reece worked with DPW on the scheduling of tree removal and stump grinding around Crofton Parkway.

Reece mentioned working with Verizon regarding a cell service disruption area within the community. Verizon has identified an area in the T section where service has degraded. Verizon has made repairs, and is waiting to hear back from customers to see if the issue has been corrected.

Melanie Smith asked if the speed limit in the area of District 5 could be lowered from 25 MPH to 15 MPH. The area including Patrice Circle, Urby Drive, and Good Hope Drive is used as a pass through for travelers off Route 3. She states that it has become a serious safety concern. Reece asked her to email him. He can facilitate communication with someone in Traffic Management.

Jennifer King commented that residents investigated this same issue on Layton Street where the County conducted a traffic study. Residents were told by the County that the minimum speed limit for Maryland is 25 MPH. County traffic planners suggested that they participate in a State program which allows the installation of traffic cameras in areas with a close proximity to schools.

Joi Howard asked if any special considerations for residents of the CSCBD are needed for contributing to the Green Infrastructure Plan with regard to their proposals. Reece said there are none.

Committee Reports:

Operations and Maintenance Committee – Rob-

Rob reported on the recent meetings of the Parks Rejuvenation Committee on July 27 and September 2. The next meeting is scheduled for September 30 via ZOOM. Anyone who wishes to attend may register at Town Hall.

Rob reported on the progress at the front entrance. The area is being redesigned after two cars crashed into it last summer. The Committee has met with three contractors so far and evaluated their landscape design proposals. One contractor, Ballard Landscaping Enterprises, requires a design fee up front, which then gets credited to the account if they are chosen for the project. Rob would like to move forward with this, and has submitted the information to the Board for their review. The cost is \$1,875.

Rob made a motion to move ahead with the design agreement with Ballard. Jim seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. The Committee is hoping for a fall planting.

Marcia Richard asked if a fence was included in the design. Rob stated there is no metalwork in any of the designs, and described the design as a mix of native plants, keeping the Japanese maple, which needs pruning, and pulling plantings off the road. Claudia West commented on the balance of the plantings, asking if there are taller plants positioned behind them.

Anna commented on the overall design. Since the gate stopped the sight line at the entrance, the new plan is to have a more open design, so that the sight line travels up the hill to the large cedar tree. The holly trees that were crowding it have been removed. Additional trees will be added for balance. Rob will send Marcia the proposed design.

Rob has met with a park equipment supplier regarding Swann Park. He gave an equipment estimate and provided some ideas on how to improve the park as they continue to determine what needs to be upgraded and how to pay for it. There may be funding opportunities from the County from covid relief funds. Committee members were able to obtain a \$450 grant to add a 100 square foot pollinator garden in Swann Park.

The Park Rejuvenation Committee is planning a fall clean up day for late October or early November. This will be scheduled once the pollinator garden group obtains their supplies.

Rob reported that the shore trimming at Lake Louise has been completed. Larry reported that the mowing of the front area of the new property has been completed, and now will be included in the regular mowing rotation.

Claudia West suggested that pollinator garden volunteers use overgrowth plantings from the rain garden at the front entrance, since it will need to be thinned out anyway. Rob commented that the focus for the pollinator will be humming birds and butterflies as opposed to any insects with stingers.

Covenant Review Committee - Anna-

Anna reported that the Committee approved two replacement fences. One violation notice was issued. Anna published a document on the history of the covenants and the procedures to investigate violations. It was distributed to the community on the Listserv and posted to the community website.

Jennifer King asked about covenant enforcement as it relates to the CSA. Martin responded that it is not the policy of the Board to discuss open violations in a public forum because of confidentiality concerns. He offered to address any general concerns or questions. Jennifer King expressed concern that the published covenant protocols were not being followed with regards to transparency or documentation of violations. Martin responded that if she wishes to comment on a specific covenant issue he will recognize her later in the meeting during citizen comments.

Stacey Briles asked what the process is once a resident receives a violation, and what is the difference for reporting a violation to an HOA. Anna responded that an HOA will have their

own covenants versus the separate set of CCA covenants. Residents with a separate HOA would go through them first. Stacey asked about the process if the Committee receives a complaint. Anna responded that the Committee will investigate the complaint. If the Committee comes to a consensus verifying the violation, a violation notice is then sent. Stacey asked if there is a written report. Anna said no.

Megan Burden asked if the Board has revisited rewriting the covenants which were written in the 1960's. Martin responded that there have not been any recent discussions by the Board, though it was investigated a few years ago. There is a level of difficulty with regards to getting community approval with a majority vote, and the cost and number of covenants that would need to be revised individually. He suggested if anyone has interest in revising their set of covenants, they can do so by getting a list of all the residents of that section, and fundraise for the legal fees. He commented further that CSCBD tax dollars cannot be spent on covenants. Megan asked how she can identify the residents in her area. Anna directed her to the book on file at Town Hall. Jim Harvey offered to digitize the material to publish to our website. Anna commented further that the book at Town Hall is compiled by plat numbers and area break downs by the County.

Sherlin Larsen commented that the way the Board enforces covenants borders on selective enforcement which is wrong, and asked why there isn't someone assigned to do this to ensure that everyone is being examined equally instead of relying on the neighbors to do this themselves. Anna responded that the CCA does not have the legal authority to do this, as HOA's do, and may only act on complaints submitted. Sherlin stated that this is not legal. Martin commented further that this puts the onus on property owners that are part of your neighborhood, and that these are the covenants we all agreed to when we purchased our homes. Sherlin stated repeatedly that she considers this selective enforcement which is illegal. Martin responded that he has no knowledge that the Covenant Review Committee is doing anything against the law, and asked that she provide documentation that states this so that the Board can have the evidence examined by CCA legal counsel. Sherlin replied that emailed messages to Town Hall are unanswered. She continued stating that because the current procedure has been followed for a long time does not mean it is right. Martin responded that if there is evidence presented to the contrary it will be examined by the Board.

Education Committee – Hal –

Hal reported that there are now four volunteers on the Committee. So far there has been one confirmed covid case last week in Crofton Middle School. Close contacts were notified. There have been problems with the school bus contractors, causing some delays and overcrowding of busses. Some busses are making two trips to deliver students to area schools. Schools were closed on September 16 for Yom Kippur. Crofton Middle School will have a fundraiser at Chick-fil-a on September 21. Crofton Middle School parents are fundraising to provide air purifiers to improve air circulation inside the school. There is a new Assistant Principal at Crofton Woods. This evening there is a Chick-fil-a fundraiser for Crofton Woods Elementary. Jim Harvey added that Friday October 1 is the first homecoming game at Crofton High School.

Recreation Committee – Daria-

Daria reported on the Ice Cream Social that was held on Sunday September 12 at Town Hall. There was a band, face painting, and balloon twisting. The usual bounce house and popcorn

machine were eliminated this year due to covid restrictions. It was well attended, though not as much as previous years.

Greater Crofton Council- Jim-

Jim reported that the GCC met last week. The Board members nominated Andrew Pruski as GCC Citizen of the Year. The next regular meeting will take place on January 11, 2022. The special guest speaker will be the Commissioner of the State Highway Administration who will discuss the \$40 million improvement plan for Route 3. This meeting is open to all members. The GCC is continuing its monthly blood drive every first Wednesday of the month at the Waugh Chapel facility. Participants may donate by registering with the Red Cross on their website.

Finance Committee – Renee- No report.

Planning & Zoning – Chuck -

Chuck asked Marsha Perry to report on the latest Planning and Zoning issues in the County.

Marsha reported on the property at Millersville Road and the intersection of Route 3 North. Hyatt Commercial Real Estate has requested an application to join two parcels of land, and has applied to the County for a use variance. The Millersville Community Association has requested the assistance of the CCA and Crofton First to help fight this request. The property is currently zoned RLD (rural low density). Hyatt wants to use both parcels for commercial retail development and has requested a variance. Changing property zoning is complicated and time consuming. Variance requests do not require community input. Marsha was granted permission by the Crofton First Board, and the Planning and Zoning Committee of the CCA, to speak at the zoning administrative hearing. Marsha spoke of the inevitability of the variance request leading to a re-zoning of the property. Their variance request was denied. Marsha pointed out that all of this information can be found on the County's website under Planning and Zoning.

Marsha reported on the unexpected shut down of Route 3 on July 30 due to the reopening of the Capital Raceway. Marsha was contacted the next day by the Forks of the Patuxent Improvement Association, the Woodwardville Preservation Society, and the Greater Crofton Council for assistance. The raceway had been closed in 2019. Marsha contacted Sgt. Rob Rice of Western District who reported that the police were not given any notice of the re-opening. The County Executive's Office and Planning and Zoning were contacted and advised they were not given any notice either. Many local businesses complained as traffic was blocked and parking was encroached. As a result the County Executive will have a meeting with Capital Raceway owners, local association heads and local business owners regarding the operating hours and traffic procedures of this business. The head of the Forks of the Patuxent and the Greater Crofton Council will also attend.

Marsha thanked Jim Harvey for attending the GAN meeting. The CCA are members and able to attend. The County Director of Planning and Zoning was invited to this meeting which was not recorded. The Greenway Infrastructure Plan survey results showed over 75% of those responding wanting small parcels in communities preserved. This is important because the County is moving forward with Plan 2040. Constituents may go to the County website and view the Green Plan in draft form. Public comments are accepted until September 26, 2021.

Marsha mentioned the upcoming Halle Landfill meeting. She will report on this after attending. The Checkers restaurant in Crofton has requested the joining of their two lots. The owners have stated that the purpose is for parking, not building.

Joi Howard asked if Marsha would distribute a summary of the topics she discussed. There were some technical difficulties during Marsha's report. Marsha agreed to do so. Martin suggested she send them to Tara to include in the meeting minutes.

Public Safety Committee – Brian-

Brian reported that the next Public Safety meeting will be scheduled in October. The Public Safety budget for FY23 will be discussed.

Police Chief Report – Chief Fox –

The Chief reported on a personnel matter within the Crofton Police Department. An officer was suspended without pay on November 3, 2020. This personnel issue has resulted in criminal charges against the officer. This situation is being handled by the States Attorney's Office and the officer's attorney. Because the case is open, he cannot comment further.

The Chief announced that the CPD will provide traffic safety services for the Kiwanis annual 5/10K race around Crofton Parkway on Saturday October 2. There will be no road closures, but there will be disruptions in the traffic.

The CPD will also assist with road closures and safety on Crofton Parkway for the Kiwanis annual Halloween Parade on October 30. The parade begins at 11 AM at Crofton Woods Elementary School and ends at Crofton Elementary School. No Parking signs will be posted in areas on Crofton Parkway. The parade usually takes about one hour.

The Chief reported on statistics for the Department through 2021. All statistic updates will be provided to Tara for uploading onto our website. The following totals are through August 2021: 223 patrol checks, 66 written reports, 486 traffic stops, 10 adult arrests, 3 juvenile arrests, and 11 emergency petitions. The Chief will break down service calls that were outside of the Tax District and report these to Brian. After review by the Public Safety Committee it will be determined if the current Memo of Understanding with County Police will need to be revised.

Town Manager's Report – Larry-

Larry reported that DPW was working on tree trimming and removal this summer throughout the community. The original item list grew to over three times the amount of tree work being completed, increasing community safety. A great deal of tree removal and trimming on CCA property has already been done this year. Additional tree work is scheduled for this week, weather permitting, in the areas of Village Green, Usher Place, Crossgate Drive, and Regime 5, mostly in the W and F sections.

Larry reported that DPW has completed the re-paving and traffic line painting of Duke of Kent Drive before the start of school.

Larry reported that BGE will install a new natural gas line at Town Hall that will be run under Crofton Parkway. There will be no cost to Town Hall for this upgrade. The old one will be closed down. A new meter will be located near the front of the garage.

Larry reported that Susan is working diligently on the annual audit with our CPA for completion and submission to the County by the end of this month.

Larry reported on the FY23 Budget. He and Susan have gone over the Operations Overhead component of the budget. He also met with Brian, Martin, and the Chief last week to discuss issues related to the Public Safety budget. Chief Fox is revising the Public Safety portion accordingly.

The proposed FY23 budget should be submitted to the Board by October 4 or 5. Budget meetings will begin on October 18. The meetings will be held via ZOOM. The Public Safety and Recreation budgets will be discussed.

Melanie Smith asked why the meetings will not be held in person. Martin responded that keeping ZOOM allows for an expanded outreach to the community. There are some technical challenges to having a hybrid option. We hope to have something figured out soon.

Martin asked if Board members agree to extending time for the meeting since the one and a half hour limit has been reached. All Board members agreed to continue the meeting.

CCA Fundraising:

Jim Harvey reported on some fundraising options to support the 60th Anniversary of Crofton celebration as well as for new playground equipment.

The first option is a Ledo Pizza night. The dates available are October 25, November 8, or 15. Jim proposed either of the November dates. Martin suggested November 15, since there is a Board meeting scheduled for November 8.

The second fundraising option is an idea by a resident who suggests using Right Response Fundraising, which sells first aid kits to the public. There are various types such as a home kit, a car kit, etc. A website would be created to link from the CCA website. Jim suggests running it through the holiday season, November through January 1st. In this fundraiser 50% of the proceeds will go to the CCA.

Martin asked for a Board vote in support of the Ledo Pizza fundraiser. All were in favor. Martin asked Jim to follow up and coordinate this fundraiser. Jim will also follow up with Town Hall staff.

Martin asked for a bit more information regarding the contents of the first aid kits. Jim said he would investigate this and report at the next board meeting.

Martin mentioned additional possible fundraising projects such as apple sales, and an event Chill Axes.

Jim asked how much was spent on the 50th Anniversary celebration. Marsha Richard commented that the golf tournament raised a lot of money. It may be an idea for an additional fundraiser. Marsha commented that there may have been left over money. Martin commented that that money still remains in the CCA fund. There is approximately \$6000. Susan was unsure of the exact amount. Marsha will look through her files on the golf event and forward the information to Jim.

Martin introduced Cailey Locklair who is a Republican candidate for County Council, District 7, which includes Crofton. She has lived here for 15 years and is currently the President of the Maryland Retailers Association. She does not support walking back covid restrictions. Ms. Locklair is for controlling County spending. She supports the military and first responders. She has provided daily health and safety information on covid to Maryland businesses. She thanked everyone for meeting her virtually, and stated that she will attend the Festival on the Green this weekend and hopes to meet everyone in person. Martin thanked her for attending the meeting, and noted that the Board does not endorse candidates for any political office, but gives equal opportunity for all candidates to introduce themselves to the community.

Citizen Questions or Comments:

Jennifer King who is new to the area stated that she and her family were welcomed to this community by the Larsens and that she is supportive of the CSA which facilitates the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables. She was delighted that Peter Franchot supports this CSA and presented an award to the Larsens for supporting local farmers. Ms. King stated that this is a non-profit organization and the Larsens do not receive any income for doing this. She has never seen a traffic nuisance on their street. She would love to see the CCA supporting parks and playgrounds in the neighborhood, rather than spending money attacking neighbors. She is looking forward to volunteering her time to work on upgrades to the playgrounds, as well as the new green space that was recently purchased. She would like to see fair covenant enforcement, and the update of current covenants which are archaic.

Martin welcomed Jennifer to the community and thanked her for her offer to volunteer.

Stacey Briles asked about the covenants for Regime 5 which is where her home is located. Anna commented that the HOA rules are the ones that are followed. The Covenant Review Committee does not enforce HOA covenants, only CCA covenants.

Sherlin Larsen asked what code of ethics the Board follows. She commented that a board member, "Harvey", put out some information pertinent to this community. It was published as public discourse where he called her a name. She feels that this behavior is unbecoming of a Board member. He did not reach out to her, and she has no avenue to respond to him. His post identified him as part of the CCA. She would like to know if anything is going to be said about that.

Martin responded that he is not familiar with this issue and therefore cannot discuss it. He suggested that if she has a concern she should put it in writing and forward it to him for review. The CCA does not have a defined Code of Ethics, but all Board members have shown the highest integrity in all of the years he has worked with them. If she submits a complaint he will review it.

Ms. Larsen commented further that Martin has refused to answer her questions regarding covenant processes and procedures in the past. Martin clarified that he offered to set up a meeting with her and she refused. Ms. Larsen continued to make accusations against Jim Harvey.

Martin again explained that this is not the appropriate forum for accusations, and that if she has a legitimate complaint that she needs to submit it in writing and he will review it along with the appropriate staff.

The meeting was adjourned for an Executive Session.

Meeting minutes completed by Tara Gottschalck, Receptionist (September 29, 2021)

LS/SM/EF(tg)