



THE FOREST HILL COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD Minutes

April 27, 2021

Online Zoom Meeting

Members & Representatives in Attendance

Bernie Schweigman – Chairperson

Thom Ellenbecker - Secretary

Elena Skittle-Watson – Board Member

Cathy Ohler – Board Member

Nancy Reynolds – Board Member

Daniel Sekowsky – Board Member

Sherrri Wiczorkowski – Board Member

Larry Richardson – Policy Director for Office of the County Executive Barry Glassman

Carl Brooks – Captain, Northern Precinct, Harford County Sheriff's Office

Aurora Kahoe – Legislative Aide to Councilman Shrodes

Erik Robey – Director of Legislative Affairs for the Harford County Sheriff's Office

Minutes

Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bernie Schweigman at 7:04 pm.

March minutes accepted.

A crime report for Forest Hill was presented by Captain Brooks for the period of March/April 2020 versus 2021.

- Crime Low – Suspicious incidents is the biggest area of reported
- Carloo Watson – Trial going on this week for the driver of the Shop Rite truck on Rt 24 that killed Tripp Johnson and Andrew Klein.

Guest Speakers: Erik Robey, Director of Legislative Affairs for the Harford County Sheriff's Office – Maryland's Police Reform Legislation

- A lot of changes from 4 bills that passed the general assembly. Erik provided an overview of these and the perceived impact at this point.
- HB 670 - Changes the disciplinary process for law enforcements officers in the state. Ended LEOBR (Law Enforcement Officer Bill of Rights. Put in place a new process:
 - If external complaint, goes to local agency for investigation and a charging committee appointed by local government consisting of civilians with 40 hours of training which will decide if to hand down a charge to a police officer. If charged, sent back to agency, officer can elect to accept decision or go to a trial board. Trial board will be a retired judge, a police officer and a civilian to make a final

decision. What this does is set up a system where police officers will be reluctant to be proactive out of concerns of charging decisions.

- Separate process of internal complaints (60% of complaints) were not defined in this law. HCSO will continue to use existing processes for this.
- SB 71 – Use of Force
 - Changed the wording of Supreme Court standard for use of force.
 - Sets a statewide use of force.
 - Police officers and deputies found to violate policy may be charged with a misdemeanor
 - Mandate body cameras by 2023 – Fully support this and pleased that Harford County is funding this year.
- SB 419 – Search Warrants
 - Ends use of no-knock warrants between 8am and 7pm.
 - 20 second waiting period for any warrant after knock for serving any warrant.
- SB 599 - Surplus military equipment (1033 program) bans were not relevant to the equipment that HCSO or any agencies in the state need/use/obtain (e.g. grenade launcher).
- SB 626 – Officer qualifications
 - Marijuana use will no longer be a disqualifier for hiring police candidate vs previously any use in 3 years was disqualifying. Failure to disclose Marijuana use in background (lying) is still disqualifying. Once hired, still a standard that cannot use Marijuana.
 - Changed training standards and requirements (Maryland State Police Training Commission) board no longer all law enforcement: now 9 members are law enforcement and 10 civilians.
 - Tests for police officer – physical fitness every year, fitness for duty (psychological eval) every 2 years, Unconscious bias test (no real known standard).
- Looking at the implementation timelines and impacts of these bills on Harford County Sheriffs Office:
 - Implementation dates pushed back to 2022 (1 ½ years from now) except for police shooting involving deaths or serious bodily injury, which will be investigated by the state, cooperating with local offices beginning in 2021.
 - Work group through the Chiefs and Sheriffs Association this summer to review legislation and seek further clarifications from the State Legislature in next years sessions.
 - Concerns for retention - Lucky for us, Harford County has outspoken Sheriff, expect that progressive jurisdictions police officers may seek to do lateral moves to Harford County. More officers have already put in paperwork to retire (6 vs 3 in a normal year). Expect it will be harder to recruit younger people to make a career for police officers.

- Expect that requirements will need to see corresponding higher levels of pay and compensation to improve recruiting and retention. Namely because of the expanded skillsets and extra testing that will be required of the police force. HCSO may be in a good starting point based upon the support from the County Executive to address base pays and compressed bracketing but there will likely be further impact.
- Administering fitness for duty and physical test annually will likely require \$750k/year to administer to the full HCSO force.
- Invitation to Board– Reach out to Erik schedule Vertra use of force training.

Other updates from officials:

Larry Richardson –

- County budget proposal:
 - Full funding of body cameras in the county budget.
 - Full funding of requests for wage and pension enhancements in the county budget.
 - Full funding of HCPS request (\$294M, up \$17M)
 - 3% increase to community college and libraries
 - Historic \$700k for first responders
 - Adjustments to tax rates to be flat to last year despite higher assessed values of properties in the county.
- State Tort Claims act: County liability caps of concern because Harford County is self-insuring – current level of \$400k stays the same, but for law enforcement cap doubled to \$890k (increasing \$15k/year in perpetuity) kicks in Oct 1, 2021.
- Board of Ed bill to stagger terms between elected and non-elected – nothing happened, board of ed terms expire at the same time.
- EMS reimbursement bill did not pass, but wanted it.
- Lots of federal and state money coming in due to COVID – resulting in broadband funding, tax credits to help the county in the long-run: cybersecurity / information technology, tax credits for entities that hire veterans
- The Grove will be doing 4th Fridays events all summer, first was last month (~100 attendees).
- Ground Breaking for Kayak ramp on Walters Mill Rd, looking to have done by July
- Looking to gradually open Senior Centers by appointments at this point (call)
- Vaccinations – Klein’s has available appointments at all locations (called county today), Ripkin stadium is open.
- Q: What happened with Kirwin Commission / Covid impact: Pandemic reduced enrollment in HCPS, affected formula to less funding – Kirwin Fix put monies into the budget to address county shortfalls using federal funds to offset the funding loss. Still a year or 2 before Kiriwn requirements really come into effect. Not clear where this goes districting may have impacts

Aurora Kahoe –

- ThinkBig holding session with phase 1 residents with questions.

Local events:

- Serenity Health in Aberdeen offering free vaccines to anyone over 18 tomorrow.
- Harford County dental clinic May 7 & 8 at HCC – free clinic set up appointments 443-512-8703
- Harford County Library – may mental health month, several virtual lectures set up this month

Vote - Sherri Wiczorkowski added as board member (congratulations!) – tabling other board member applications until they can join us.

Meeting adjourned by Chairperson Bernie Schweigman at 8:28PM

Next Meeting: Tuesday, May 25, 2021 at 7pm – virtual meeting, Guest Speaker: HCPS Budget (Deborah Judd) – Also request that someone join her for the balancing enrollment questions.

Respectfully Submitted, Thom Ellenbecker

The Forest Hill Community Advisory Board is a forum for the area residents to inform the Office of the County Executive on matters of interest and/or concern within the Forest Hill community. This Board will host regularly scheduled public meetings that educate attending residents on local government services, plans and initiatives, along with various state agencies and other organizations. All meetings are open to the public. Resident involvement is critical to the success of this community board!

Forest Hill Community Advisory Board Members:

Bernard Schweigman II - Chairperson
Thom Ellenbecker - Secretary
Catherine Ohler
Nancy Reynolds
Elena Skittle-Watson
Daniel Sekowski
Sherri Wiczorkowski

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