

Kemp Mill Civic Association Meeting Minutes for March 21, 2023

Virtual Meeting from 7:36 – 9:25 PM

***Thank you to our speakers: Commander David Smith from MCPD 4<sup>th</sup> District and Rashid Abramov, Daniel Sheridan, and Michael Mercado from MCDOT.***

KMCA President Alan Felsen called the meeting to order at 7:36 PM.

- The posted agenda and minutes of the previous meeting were approved without objection.
- Treasurer Anna Waller shared that we currently have 120 active members (the largest number in quite a while), \$6672.01 in the checking account, and a total of \$3158.96 in CDs.

**Speaker: Commander David Smith from MCPD 4<sup>th</sup> District**

**Contact Information: 4DCommander@montgomerycountymd.gov**

We welcome Commander Smith who assumed his new post in October of 2022 and we appreciate and thank his taking the time to meet with the KMCA! Commander Smith is in his 20<sup>th</sup> year with MCPD, most recently serving as a personnel director. He served in districts and special operations groups and was Deputy Commander in Silver Spring. Kemp Mill is part of the Lincoln Sector area of our district.

Following is a summary of the roles he sees for our district:

- Focus on problem oriented policing by deep diving to identify root causes and try to solve problems through collaboration and feedback
- Community Outreach and engagement such as pop up events in communities
- Constant recruitment efforts as we are currently down 129 officers and are currently hiring in all areas of law enforcement
- Officer wellness, both physical and mental

Commander Smith presented information about different areas and issues involving law enforcement in our area. He began by saying he has a long history with the tight-knit Kemp Mill community. During the six months ending in August of 22 there were several serious incidents: two assaults, one of which was a threat, and several incidents of larceny, mostly auto larceny from unlocked cars.

In the wider area of our district there has been an increase in crime ranging from carjacking, auto theft, and theft from autos. Recently a man from DC rode up on Metro and attempted to carjack several people, shooting one, and then attempting to break into several houses before

being apprehended. Currently carjacking, auto theft, and theft from autos along with gun violence (often committed with ghost guns made on 3D printers) and fentanyl are the main areas of concern.

MCPD is increasing its presence at Wheaton Plaza by actively engaging with Metro and providing overtime details to increase their active presence. A camera has been installed on a high pole near Metro and LA Fitness that records in real time and another may be added. To avoid theft from autos – lock your cars! The county is encouraging Kia and Hyundai owners to take advantage of the software fix to deter theft. The next planned phase will be education within individual communities to lower crime levels and improve engagement. The Glenmont business community is involved in a project with MCPD to reduce crime.

### **Q&A Summary**

- Q: Please explain catalytic converter etching. MCPD is working with several area dealerships to implement this service. The etching will be highly visible and let the prospective thief know the converter will not be marketable. People have been seen checking under cars with flashlights and moving on to an easier target when they see the etching. Replacement converters are not as valuable as new ones so they are less often stolen.
- Q: What is proactive policing? Commander Smith knows about the proposed bill in the legislature that will prevent police from making routine stops for offences such as expired temporary tags, missing lights, etc. He maintains that this is a poor piece of legislation that will cause serious bad outcomes. For example a recent traffic stop at a McDonalds yielded an illegal gun and narcotics and a search of the person's home yielded 1800 fentanyl pills. Recovery of illegal guns, narcotics and other illegal items often occur during routine arrests.
- Q: What is being done for recruitment and have the bonus offers increased the number of candidates? There has been an increase in the number of candidates since the \$20K signing bonus was instituted. MCPD has begun a pre-hire program that begins 3 – 5 months before the academy. It uses zoom meetings to help recruits prepare for the academy along with week-end programs. Recruiting has been de-centralized and mentors are provided. After successfully completing the program recruits are brought in at full salary before they begin the academy.

**Speakers: Rashid Abramov, Michael Mercado, and Daniel Sheridan**

**MCDOT Team Working on Pedestrian Bridge**

**Thank you for taking the time to meet with us!**

The Pedestrian Bridge plan will connect the bottom of Kersey and Bromley Roads to Auth Lane. It has existed since the neighborhood was built as a dirt path that was not maintained and people had to walk across the creek. In the fall of 2020 a group of residents approached the county and MCDOT approved developing a plan for the project. The plan is currently about 35% through the planning process and public input is being sought through KMCA. Montgomery County owns all of the property that will be used for the project. Slides of maps of the project and different styles of bridges were presented. The team agreed to send their presentation to President Felsen to be posted on the website. Restoration of the whole stream is scheduled at some point in the future but whatever work needs to be done to stabilize the bridge will be included in this project. The full stream update is done by a different department. Please refer to the presentation for more complete details and contact information for further questions/comments. One area to note is that the current plan does not include lighting on the trail and several people commented that this is necessary because it will often be used on Friday nights and holidays.

Public hearings will be held this summer. Approximate cost is from \$100K – \$400K, depending on the final design. It will not be possible to make the bridge ADA compliant because of the steep grade of the land but strollers should be able to navigate it.

### **Nominating Committee for June 2023 Elections**

The following offices are up for election this year: President, Treasurer, and two at-large seats. Maria Lopez has graciously offered to chair the committee that will include Chris Farrell and Sam Melamed. If you are willing to serve in any of these positions or know someone who might be, please contact Maria at [maria.lopez@kempmillcivic.org](mailto:maria.lopez@kempmillcivic.org)

### **Committee Reports**

**Treasurer:** See report above.

**Beautification:** Pete Lublin reported that the daffodils are doing exceptionally well this year because of the weather after being complimented on their beauty. The water is running in the pond and the pump is working. There is a new supervisor for the park who is doing a good job.

**Membership:** Dawn Felsen reported that the committee has several new members. They are working on packets for new residents. Twelve yard signs will be purchased once wording is finalized to encourage people to join KMCA. They will rotate around the neighborhood so as to reach more people. This year's Community Day is scheduled for Sunday, June 25. There is more paperwork to complete than in the past, but hopefully most of it will not apply to our event. Dawn is seeking a Neighborhood Events Grant to support the activity as she has done in the past.

**Transportation:** Gil Chlewicki addressed several topics as outlined below:

- The refuge island has been completed at the intersection of Monticello Avenue and Kemp Mill Road. There are still safety issues with regard to crashes in that area and he has concerns about left turns now being harder to negotiate because of the island when turning toward the middle school. He encourages people to pay extra attention in this area.
- Gil has heard rumors that left turn signals will be installed at the shopping center later this spring and is monitoring the situation.
- There was a crash recently involving a scooter and car. Please drive cautiously and don't speed. Montgomery County has a political Vision Zero program to prevent all pedestrian deaths while the state of Maryland has a safe system to reduce serious and fatal crashes.
- There are two projects that have come up recently that he has been researching but not attending any actual meetings: The University Boulevard Corridor Plan and Bus Lane Pilot on University Boulevard that is part of the Bus Rapid Transit Project. Right now there is no plan to affect the right turning lane from Arcola Avenue to University Boulevard. Meetings are scheduled for both projects so look for notices and/or go to their websites.
- A question was asked about the possibility of installing roundabouts on Lamberton Drive to slow down traffic but the cost would probably be prohibitive.

**Deer and Wildlife:** Jonathan Aghion reported that the deer management project is wrapping up for the year and he will share data when it is released. Auth Lane is scheduled for sewer line upgrades this summer that should not cause tearing up any of the streets. The thermal camera is still available to borrow, although this is probably not the ideal time of year to use it since the weather is relatively mild.

**New Business/Announcements:**

Spotted Lantern Fly Traps are available. People can check out what resources from the state agriculture department at

<https://extension.umd.edu/resource/spotted-lanternfly-management-residents>

Chris Farrell noted that 700 families were served today during the Church Food Pantry and thanks the community residents for their volunteer efforts and patience with traffic slowdowns that may occur during the activity. Volunteers are always needed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Submitted by Secretary Marcia Rosenblum