Sandy Spring Civic Association

Ross Body Community Center, Sandy Spring, MD 20860

(Meeting Virtually by Zoom during Covid-19 Pandemic)

September 11, 2023

**Attendance**:

Board Members – Dr. Daryl Thorne, President; Basile “Whit” Whitaker, Vice President; Christine Hill Wilson, Treasurer; Douglas Farquhar, Recording and Correspondence Secretary

Other SSCA members – approximately 10

Guests: District 4 Commander David Smith, Deputy Commander Robert Sheehan; numerous residents of Sandy Spring Orchards; Judy Hruz, Greater Olney News

Attendance Total (approximate): 23

**Meeting called to order**: 6:302 p.m. by Daryl.

The meeting began with a presentation by Commander Smith. He talked about his top priorities and the difficulties in recruiting and retaining officers. He said that car theft and theft of property from automobiles is a growing problem in our area, and that his district alone is authorized to have 175 officers on staff, but only currently has 135. In terms of developments, he noted that the County police department is launching a drone program so that drones can be the first responders on a scene, when appropriate. He said that there are also a growing number of pole CCTV cameras. In our area, he said that the number of crimes of larceny and theft reported is up this year compared to last year., as is vandalism. When asked what citizens can do to prevent or detect crime, he said that doorbell cameras and security footage can be very helpful, and he encouraged attendees to purchase and use them. He also asked people to be alert to what is going on around them, and to report suspicious activity to the police.

Asked about speeding traffic, he said that speeding and reckless driving are a more significant problem than before COVID struck. He said that traffic enforcement is a core responsibility of his officers, but, with a 30% reduction in force, there are other more important priorities. He said that citizens can report reckless driving to the police at the nonemergency phone number, 301 279 8000.

He also fielded questions about thefts from porches (get a doorbell or front porch camera, record and maintain serial numbers for high-value items), about vandalism (very difficult to address at residences, but security camera footage might help), and about what to do upon seeing a burglary or theft in progress (don’t confront the perpetrator, call the police, and be the best witness you can be).

The minutes of the June meeting were approved. The Transportation Committee reported that the design work is complete on the Brooke Road/Route 108 intersection improvements. Although there are right-of-way issues, construction is expected next spring.

The Treasurer’s Report was accepted, and the Ashton Implementation Advisory Committee announced its meeting the following week.

The meeting adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

 Respectfully submitted,

 Douglas Farquhar,

 Recording and Correspondence Secretary

Approved: