

Councilmember Nicole Wagoner called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and reminded everyone to sign-in.

Attending were: Allen Hedrick, Jenn Jeudy, Katie Horabech, Marion Krystal, Cory Whaton, Tormod Svensson, James and Sheila Plummer, Barbara Salas, George Reynolds, Tim Wiseman, Randy Pullman, Stan Ward, Lee Borrer, David Cox, Laurie Marchini, Joshua Greise, Nicole Wagoner, Tom Delawder, Louise Elliott, Terri Hast and Lt. David Biser. Wagoner asked all to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

Wagoner reminded everyone that City Department reports are online on the City's website under Government / Boards Commissions / Neighborhood Advisory Commission / Department Reports. She asked if there were any specifics that needed mentioned. Lee Borrer said that the Neighborhood Matters grant funds are available to assist homeowners with code violation repair within targeted areas of the City of Cumberland. Applications are available by contacting Kathy McKenney in the lower level of City Hall, Department of Community Development, 301-759-6431 or [kathy.mckenney@cumberlandmd.gov](mailto:kathy.mckenney@cumberlandmd.gov).

The minutes from the July meeting were distributed. A motion to approve the minutes was made by Hedrick and seconded by Jeudy. All were in favor.

Wagoner introduced Lt. David Biser by saying she had originally heard a similar presentation while attending Leadership *Allegany!* in 2008. She thought the group would want this information and asked the City Police Department to share it so we could become aware of the signs to watch for regarding gangs.

Lt. Biser presented a power point presentation on local Gangs and Gang Activity. (The presentation was heavy with photos and crossed off faces.) Biser said that about 15 years ago Cumberland didn't see much gang activity but slowly some signs and criminal activity began appearing. The City Police Department (CPD) sent staff to Chicago for hands-on Gang Investigation training which proved worthwhile. Examples were given of actual scenarios involving drugs, weapons, robberies and assaults that have happened in Cumberland. A popular song was played for the lyrics to be heard and noted that this builds up this type of activity among our pre-teens, teens, and young adults. The CPD used to be able to recognize anyone hanging out during the night, but now find people from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, District of Columbia and even Los Angeles who all promote gang activity. Many of the gang members are smart kids who have been misguided and teased with the potential to make money. Many times the 12 to 15 years olds are talked into selling the drugs which keeps the adult or gang leader from receiving a bigger sentence if caught. Young girls looking for attention are becoming girlfriends and taking hits for their boyfriend gang member. Those buying the drugs include doctors, lawyers, teachers and other educated people. It seems that criminal activity is not only becoming a business but is entertainment for these folks. Boys go into jail and come out as a gang member. Young children at the age of 2 – 10 years are exposed to this through their parents or siblings activity. They know about the drugs and can stack the coded alphabet at a very young age. Maryland is behind the curve on gang laws as compared to Virginia. Criminal activity with exposure to a gang is a 2 year sentence. If they associate with another remember when they get out, they can receive a 5 year sentence. Biser asks, "Is there gang activity in Cumberland – you tell me?"

Wagoner and the group thanked Lt. Biser for his presentation and asked for questions. We were reminded to watch for signs such as the number/code marks, wearing of red or blue bandannas, etc. Lt. Biser said it is a growing lifestyle in Cumberland and that CPD do have a handle on it. Svensson asked if the three strikes mentioned, to determine a gang relationship, were enough to warrant a search. Maryland Law requires a criminal activity to warrant a search and the overwhelmed court system sees so many repeat offenders for that they are handing out harsh sentences.

With the hour meeting timeline being depleted by the presentation, Wagoner asked for any important news from the neighborhood groups to be quick.

Dave Cox asked the Rolling Mill Neighborhood Organization permission for the City to take over the care of the small parklet on Maryland Avenue that has become unruly. The City would be removing the cross ties for ease of grass cutting. Tim Wisemen agreed that the City should do whatever they need for ease of care and that they've had a hard time finding volunteers to keep it up. Wagoner mentioned the importance of recruitment for the Neighborhood Advisory Commission and the neighborhood groups, saying that some of these types of projects could also be handled by the Let's Beautify Cumberland Committee.

Josh Greise mentioned that the Decatur Heights will hold a Neighborhood Picnic on September 13th which will be held in the

Adams Family Funeral Home parking lot.

A motion was made to adjourn and Wagoner reminded all to sign in before leaving.

The meeting ended at 6:40 p.m. with the next meeting to be held Monday, September 29, at 5:30 p.m.

Respectively submitted,  
Terri Hast

cc: Margie Woodring, City Clerk

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