

# **LPCA General Meeting Minutes - April 10th, 2024**

## **Held at Francis Scott Key Elementary-Middle School**

### **Preliminaries:**

- Pledge of Allegiance
- New Neighbor Introductions
- Treasurer Update:
  - There were no balance updates reported at this meeting but expenses this period were negligible.
  - Paypal payments for \$5 annual memberships now accepted (and checks to PO Box); cash will be accepted at meeting, and checks can be mailed to Locust Point Civic Association, PO Box 27097, Baltimore, MD 21230-0097
- There was no update on memberships. Please renew your membership for 2024.
- March Minutes Review/Vote:
  - A motion was made and seconded to approve the March minutes. The motion was carried with no objections or abstentions.

### **Committee Reports/General Updates**

#### **Safety:**

- There was no BPD Southern District representative in attendance.
  - Officer Rivera can be reached at [Raul.Rivera@baltimorepolice.org](mailto:Raul.Rivera@baltimorepolice.org).
- There was no DoT representative in attendance.
- As a reminder, if you open a 311 ticket please email the board with the ticket number.
- Safety concerns can be sent to [contacts@mylocustpoint.org](mailto:contacts@mylocustpoint.org).

#### **Parks & Beautification:**

- The Earth Day Park clean up will be held on 4/21 from 2-4 PM. There are details on the website,
- The Park Spring Maintenance Day will be held on 5/19 from 2-4 PM. More details will come at the next meeting.
- All 4 playground sun shades are up.
- The park committee is seeking volunteers to take responsibility for specific sections of the park. Please reach out via email to the committee if you would like to help take on a portion of the park.
- If you are interested in joining the parks and recs committee in one of the targeted task forces, questions can be directed to [parksandbeautification@mylocustpoint.org](mailto:parksandbeautification@mylocustpoint.org).

#### **Education & Schools:**

- The 7th annual Scramble for the Art is scheduled for June 17th. Golfers can sign up on Eventbrite.
- BCPSS has announced that Interim Principal Pitts is being made the official Principal of Francis Scott Key Elementary-Middle School.
- School 1514 is what to link to if you go into Harris Teeter to sign up - must renew annually (Aug - May). If you register through LPCA, we will create a database of VIC numbers and automatically renew you in future years - either check the box on your membership form, or email VIC number to [jjrs10132007@gmail.com](mailto:jjrs10132007@gmail.com).

**Social:**

- The 2024 Festival will be held on September 14th.
- The LPCA Board issued a letter of support for the festival.

**UA Community Garden Updates**

- The garden committee is waiting to hear what the next steps regarding soil testing will be from the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- Questions can be directed to [locustpointcg@gmail.com](mailto:locustpointcg@gmail.com).

**Communications/Newsletter/Website:**

- Please check out [mylocustpoint.org](http://mylocustpoint.org) for information and opportunities.
- If you would like to receive our emails, send a note to [contacts@mylocustpoint.org](mailto:contacts@mylocustpoint.org) and like our page on Facebook for updates. Send any editorial ideas or interest in volunteering on the newsletter - [communication@mylocustpoint.org](mailto:communication@mylocustpoint.org).

**Community Improvement Grants:**

- Grant awarded (\$350) to Hap & Cheryl for Latrobe Spring Clean Up Day 5/19.
- Grant awarded (\$400) to Alex Baglione for U-Haul rental. During the 8/24 and 11/2 dumpster days, Alex will have a U-Haul available for people to put useful, donate-worthy items in. They will then be delivered to a local non-profit for use.
- These grants are available to the entire neighborhood. Projects may beautify, benefit, or otherwise enhance the community with a preference given to those ideas with lasting impact or creating broad new connections. Please consider submitting a grant to [contacts@mylocustpoint.org](mailto:contacts@mylocustpoint.org). The grant form is available on the website <https://mylocustpoint.wordpress.com/about-the-lpca/community-improvement-grant/> and on Facebook.

**Design Review:**

- No updates.

**LPCA Website:**

- Please check out the website at <https://www.mylocustpoint.org>.

**Dog Park:**

- No updates.

**New/Old Business****Digital Bay and Immigrant House**

- No updates.

**Utility Work at Fort & Andre**

- The ongoing work is related to a conduit project, needed for the reconstruction of a manhole.
- It was originally scheduled to last 50 working days; with no rain/snow delays it will be done around April 17th. The project is behind schedule and will take 15-20 more working days. The LPCA will provide updates as it gets more information.

**Election Judges**

- Election judges are needed for the Primaries: Tuesday, May 14, 2024. See <https://mylocustpoint.org/> for more information.

### **LPCA Board Election**

- If you are interested in becoming a LPCA board member or officer, please contact us! Elections are next month.

### **Mayoral Candidate Forum:**

- In attendance:
  - Wendy Bozel
  - Thiru Vignarajah
  - Donald Scoggins
  - Kevin Harris
  - Wendel Freeman
- Each candidate made a 2 minute speech introducing themselves and their platform.
- Questions from the moderator (candidates were asked these questions in a shuffled order during the meeting, their responses have been combined into groups):
  - How would you support Locust Point as a community?
    - Bozel: In response to the bridge disaster, a proposal should be put forward to initiate a ferry service or expedite other transportation options during the rebuild. Additionally, efforts should be made to secure a grant from the FDA for Besco to facilitate its closure and redevelopment.
    - Thiru: Concerns about city services should be listened to attentively and addressed accordingly. The inability of the government to address these concerns adequately should be acknowledged, and the authority of the office should be utilized to address them effectively.
    - Freeman: The approach should involve actively listening to the people in the community to understand their specific concerns and develop tailored solutions. A commitment should be made to being a visible mayor who engages directly with communities.
    - Harris: While there is already a Mayor's Office of the Neighborhoods, it has failed to engage effectively with residents. If elected, efforts should be made to ensure visibility at community associations and to overhaul the Mayor's Office of the Neighborhoods by increasing staff and deploying them to report directly from the ground.
    - Scoggins: A proposal should be put forward to establish an Office of Neighborhood Stabilization tasked with maintaining contact with neighborhood organizations to address complaints promptly. Additionally, a commitment should be made to regularly visit neighborhoods to stay connected with residents.
  - What role does the Mayor's Office play in preventing corruption?
    - Harris: The Mayor's Office should lead by example by not being corrupt. There should be consequences for corruption, such as dismissals.
    - Scoggins: The primary role should be to set the example. The optics of accepting large sums of money for reelection are problematic. Expectations should be set directly with staff.
  - What would you do about juvenile crime in our city?
    - Freeman: There are two-part problems, including a lack of investment in the school systems, with a \$200 million backlog of repairs. Accountability should be enforced for all crimes, including quality of life and violent crimes.

- Harris: To address juvenile crime, children should not be treated as criminals from an early age. The absence of safe third spaces leads to an increase in criminal activities. Good economic options should be brought in to provide alternatives.
- Scoggins: Early intervention is crucial to getting parents to take responsibility. Crime is a manifestation of poverty, education, poor parenting, and blight. A long-term plan should be put in place to address these issues, starting with parenting.
- What has Mayor Scott done well in office and what would you do better?
  - Scoggins: Mayor Scott has done well with his intentions and is earnest. As a change, mayoral staff should be made aware that the government should do no harm and should consider the optics of their actions.
  - Thiru: Mayor Scott has successfully built recreational centers and maintained transparency regarding expenditures. However, there is a need for a bigger vision for the city, as current progress has been only incremental.
- What is your plan to fix city services?
  - Thiru: Potholes, trash, and graffiti issues often lack responses from 311/911. Trackers will be created for these issues, and a public portal will be established to monitor the status of these requests. Transparency will be a focal point.
  - Freeman: Since the pandemic and even before, fixing city services has been the number one issue. As mayor, efforts will be made to bring people back to in-person work to address this concern.
- What is your stance on the current plan for the redevelopment on the Inner Harbor?
  - Harris: Supports building new structures in the area but opposes the construction of apartments. Believes the space should be utilized for common purposes such as more park space and public activities.
  - Scoggins: Supports the redevelopment of the Inner Harbor but disagrees with the proposed plan. Concerned about the proposed 900 luxury apartments and questions the transparency regarding the city's portion of the financing. Suggests scaling down the project and reallocating funds to other areas. Worries about traffic congestion in the vicinity.
  - Bozel: Has attended all meetings to understand David Bramble's plans for the Inner Harbor. City leadership was not doing anything to proactive plan. Advocates for a mixed-use approach similar to the National Harbor. Believes current zoning regulations are inadequate. Opposes the proposed 30-year lease for developers and suggests they should have an ownership stake.
  - Freeman: Disapproves of the redevelopment plan. Recalls the Inner Harbor as a destination for families and believes luxury apartments would increase the risk of crime. Prefers a community space instead.
  - Thiru: Supports the revitalization of Harborplace but opposes the construction of 900 luxury apartments in the Inner Harbor. Would utilize an Executive Order to block the construction of luxury apartments on city parks.
- What is your plan for education reform?
  - Bozel: Proposes having two teachers in each classroom from kindergarten to 2nd grade to improve educational outcomes. Emphasizes the importance

of ensuring students are on grade level by the end of 2nd grade. Suggests addressing truancy issues and exploring work release programs for certain students to focus on core classes while also providing opportunities to earn money.

- Freeman: Advocates for education reform by replacing the school board with individuals who are experts in the field. Emphasizes the need to focus on providing opportunities for students.
- What is your plan to attract businesses & increase commercial real estate usage?
  - Bozel: Proposes introducing more tech incentives in the area to attract businesses. Suggests converting vacant commercial spaces into apartments. Recommends extending train service until 3 AM to facilitate commerce between Baltimore and DC. Advocates for expanding the Preakness into a weeklong event.
- How would you increase the number of police officers?
  - Harris: Recruiting numbers are down nationwide. Suggests that one effective approach would be to appoint individuals to lead the BPD who can manage the budget successfully. Also emphasizes the importance of improving the public image of the police force and addressing corruption within the agency.
- How would you increase composting?
  - Thiru: During his campaign four years ago, both he and Mayor Scott pledged to terminate the Bresco contract. However, Mayor Scott reversed this decision and renewed the contract. Thiru's plan is to address this issue within the first 60 days of assuming office by highlighting violations of the Clean Air Act and the absence of competitive bidding for the contract to give notice to rework or invalidate the contract.
- Many crosswalks in the city are not ADA compliant and unsafe, how would you fix these issues?
  - Bozel: emphasized her background as a special educator and her familiarity with the necessities of ADA compliance. Indicated that making ADA compliance a top priority should be pursued.
- Question from the floor:
  - What is an idea from a colleague that you would like to implement?
    - Thiru: Would work with Wendy on education. Would work with everyone.
    - Freeman: Would work across the aisle to reduce property taxes and address other issues.
    - Harris: Acknowledged Scott's success on squeegee issues and praised Thiru and Wendy for their ideas on education.
    - Scoggins: Proposed hiring someone like Thiru as solicitor general to protect the city from lawsuits.
    - Bozel: Suggested bringing in top individuals for think tanks.
  - Property taxes are high and most candidates want to lower them. What are you going to do to replace that income?
    - Thiru: Pledged to cut property taxes by half over 10 years. Plans include raising taxes on blighted/abandoned buildings, using environmental citations on properties for eminent domain, and relying on increased property values to offset the lower rate.
    - Bozel: Supports the "Renew Baltimore" initiative on the ballot, aiming for lower taxes over 7 years. Believes the reduction can be offset through

- growth and aims to make taxes competitive with neighboring localities. Also looks to boost commerce between DC and Baltimore and expand the port.
- Scoggins: Proposes serializing some properties and using the proceeds to pay down the tax burden. Serializing involves using government-owned buildings as collateral for bonds. Additionally, suggests disposing of city-owned properties.
  - Could you talk on public safety in terms other than juvenile crime? What holistic plans would you evaluate?
    - Bozel: Proposes problem-oriented policing, involving collaboration between businesses, police, and organizations to analyze crime data and address underlying social issues. Emphasizes the need for housing and job opportunities in neighborhoods like Sandtown-Winchester, where a high percentage of prisoners come from. There needs to be a focus on housing and jobs for people leaving prison.
    - Scoggins: There are three generations of dysfunctional families that lack education. Education needs to be totally reformed. Suggests tailoring education to young people's interests and views crime as an economic decision.
    - Thiru: Supports a holistic approach, including education reform such as universal pre-K and free college for City School graduates. Calls for consequences for violent crime while acknowledging the ineffectiveness of mass incarceration.
    - Freeman: Highlights the shortage of police officers and proposes reallocating resources for recruitment. Emphasizes the importance of community policing and officers being visible in neighborhoods.
    - Harris: Addresses issues such as lead contamination in impoverished neighborhoods and the problem of vacant properties. Advocates for improved lighting citywide and stresses the need to address all issues simultaneously, not sequentially.
  - With Under Armour looking to sell the Tide Point property, does the city have a role to play?
    - Bozel: Would strive to preserve any green space lost and collaborate with the corporation to address the impact of their departure, potentially through open forums or think tanks.
    - Thiru: Highlights the challenge of developers not acknowledging the city's contributions to their success, emphasizing the need for leverage in engaging with them.
    - Scoggins: Advocates for community input before making any plans, emphasizing the importance of dialogue. Believes addressing corruption is a prerequisite for action.
    - Harris: Expresses unfamiliarity with the issue but stresses a commitment to research-based approaches to understanding any problem.
    - Freeman: Stresses the importance of resident input in addressing such issues and pledges to prioritize the needs of the people.
  - Candidates each gave a 30 second summary of their platform and were invited to stay and interact with the membership after the meeting.
  - The record shows that Candidate Yolanda Pulley was delayed arriving in time for the candidate forum but did arrive at the LPCA meeting to meet with the attendees.

- Dumpster Days 2024: 5/4, 8/24, 11/2. The dumpster is normally dropped at Fort & Andre around 8 am Saturday and is there until full.
- Join Team FSK for the Baltimore Running Festival: October 19, 2024 – as a runner or a volunteer! See our website for more details.

#### **Community Announcements / Guests**

- There were no additional announcements or guests.

#### **Motion and Second to Adjourn the Meeting**

- Motion was made and seconded.
- Reminder: Our next meeting is May 8, 2024.

**Adjourned 8:54 pm**