

## **Parkwood Residents Association**

### **Winter Meeting**

**March 7, 2022**

#### **Meeting Summary**

*Slides of the presentation and a video recording of this meeting are available on the PRA website- [www.parkwoodresidents.org](http://www.parkwoodresidents.org)*

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 PM by Vice-President Jeff Griffith. Jeff presented a slide which reviewed the agenda for the meeting. President Kira Lueders announced that she has volunteered to Chair the Beautification Committee, as Gail Dalferes had recently resigned as Chair, and no others had stepped forward to assume that role. Kira announced that Bailey Condrey would no longer be available to manage care and maintenance of the Parkwood gardens. Kira thanked Bailey and Gail for their wonderful stewardship of the Parkwood gardens. She said that the Beautification Committee would conduct a competitive process to hire a new contractor to maintain the gardens. Kira would then ask PRA members to review and approve the 2022 budget, which would include the updated cost of maintaining the gardens.

As there was a quorum present, the election of new Executive Committee members was held. Jeff requested approval of a new Secretary, Mary Ellen Savarese, and approval for Kira Lueders to become Chair of the Beautification Committee, in addition to continuing as President. A motion to that effect was made, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Kira then introduced the speaker, Montgomery County Police Detective Cynthia Miranda of the Investigative Service Bureau. This special law enforcement unit covers a very important and timely area of law enforcement: financial fraud and other related crimes.

Kira shared a brief bio of Det. Miranda.

Det. Miranda gave a brief overview of the types of cases her unit of five detectives handle for the entire County: credit card fraud, fake I.D., substantial money loss, identity theft, phone scams, and exploitation of the elderly.

They are assigned approximately 500 cases each month (4000-5000 / year).

Typical cases are phishing, social engineering, phone fraud, skimming credit cards, pick pockets, computer fraud and credit card data breach.

Of special concern are cases of exploitation of vulnerable adults. Police can investigate reports that a family member, health care worker, home improvement contractor, or phone scammer is taking financial advantage of a senior. Maryland law requires financial institutions with

suspicious of such situations to contact County Adult Protective Services or the police. This applies to adults age 65 or older.

Officer Miranda presented many examples of the variety of ways that thieves work and suggestions to avoid these events.

The fraud unit also works closely with US Postal Inspectors on issues related to mail fraud. There has been an increasing number of mail thefts from “Blue Boxes” in neighborhoods, and it is believed that criminals have access to keys. Thieves have methods to alter and cash checks they take from mail boxes.

Det. Miranda recommended mailing checks from the Post Office Branch or giving directly to your neighborhood postal carrier or bill pay on line. She repeated her request that community members report suspicious behavior and take steps to protect their own financial interests (regularly review credit reports, safeguard personal information, review internet safety protocols and register for donotcall.gov)

There were additional questions from participants regarding postal theft and credit card fraud, data on closed cases, Zoom safety, and opportunities to volunteer with the fraud unit.

Det. Miranda and the members of her unit are available to provide community education on these topics and others. There is also a Citizens Academy offered by Mont. Co. Police Dept. Information is on the their website.

She believes that community awareness and caution are the best ways to beat the criminals.

**Her office can be reached at 301-279-8000**

Kira thanked Det. Miranda for her presentation and her service to the community.

There was no new business to discuss. However, a vote of the membership may be required when the Beautification Committee makes a recommendation regarding the new contract for garden maintenance.

The meeting was adjourned.

Mary Ellen Savarese, Sect.

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