

## **ECA 2020 END OF YEAR REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP**

2020 will be remembered as the year of the Covid-19 pandemic. While the impact of the pandemic on peoples' lives varied greatly, we all have been impacted in some way, and we all know someone who has been impacted. In Eastport, we witnessed an outpouring of caring, kindness and generosity as neighbors reached out to help neighbors who were experiencing illness, job loss, reduction in work hours, food insecurity, educational challenges created by virtual learning, isolation and exhaustion.

The Eastport Civic Association responded to the needs of the community by:

Providing hot spots to families of children who attended Eastport Elementary but did not have access to the internet in their homes;

Supporting our healthcare workers who cared for Covid-19 patients through a donation of personal protection equipment to the Anne Arundel Medical Center staff working in that unit;

Organizing a campaign to thank our "Frontline Heroes." Eastport residents showed support for all frontline workers including medical, emergency, and essential service personnel by posting yard signs that recognized the sacrifices these individuals made;

Providing a donation to Feed Anne Arundel to provide meals to those members of the community who experienced food insecurity due to the pandemic;

Providing a donation to PlayEastport to help fund the redesign and replacement of the playground and the equipment in an effort to provide space for families to be outdoors.

The Eastport Civic Association is a success because members of the community come together, volunteer, and work to make Eastport a more vibrant place to live. ECA welcomes new residents to the community and invites members to become engaged and involved. ECA members can participate in events and have the opportunity to serve on a variety of committees. ECA Board and Committee members monitor proposed regulatory and legislative changes, share information with the

membership and take action where necessary. We write and submit comments and testimony, work closely with our Alderpersons, other elected officials and government staff to affect change.

The ECA membership met in-person in January, with guest speakers Mayor Buckley and (then) Acting Director of Planning and Zoning Sally Nash, Ph.D. The March meeting was cancelled due to the Governor's stay-at-home order resulting from the coronavirus. The May meeting was rescheduled for June and held virtually. Members heard from Dick Franyo, Chair of the City's small business recovery task force and Mike Tomasini, Ward 8 task force liaison. At the November Annual meeting (also held virtually) members heard from Steven Rice, Economic Development Manager for the City of Annapolis.

ECA has active and involved committees. Members interested in participating on a committee should reach out to the committee chairperson. Contact information can be found on the ECA website.

### **Architecture & Zoning Committee(A&Z)**

#### **Jackie Wells, Chair**

The A&Z Committee works with the City's Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Department and other City agencies on the architectural aspects and zoning considerations of proposed new and renovation projects in the Eastport Conservation District (the R2NC). The Committee's purview includes architectural aspects of development that affect the character and quality of the Eastport community, including the R2NC and Eastport Gateway Ordinance. The Committee is not a regulatory decision-making entity, and instead provides comments to the City of Annapolis when P&Z sends plans to the Committee for review. Also, sometimes property owners seeking advice in planning new construction, or alterations to existing structures, ask to meet with the A&Z Committee for guidance. From December 2019 through November 2020, the A&Z Committee met for most months, and over the course of the year reviewed 22 applications sent by P&Z for A&Z's review. Sometimes applicants and/or their architects, as well as residents, attended the Committee meetings.

### **Beautification/Neat Streets**

#### **Bumper Moyer, Chair**

Although Neat Streets volunteers missed the spring season due to social distancing requirements resulting from the Covid-19 virus and the heatwave in July and August was pretty brutal, Neat Streets still managed to meet and make Eastport and Annapolis a little nicer. We cleaned up the planter and had a summer long display at PNC bank. Neat Streets

also returned to that area this Fall and had a seasonal display. After Halloween we returned and planted hundreds of bulbs both at PNC bank and at the Eastport Methodist Church. A major undertaking, also at the Eastport Methodist Church, was the removal of about 40 feet of old shrubs, weeds, and vines along the small alley. All in all that small section of Eastport was visited about approximately eight times and should look very nice next Spring. Neat Streets also did a Summer flower/plant planting at Turner Playground in May or early June on Third Street and all eight flower boxes were maintained throughout the summer months. Bulbs have been planted in the boxes there and tulips and daffodils should start to show in abundance in late March. We also had an event that was well attending at Roosevelt Court in late June. Neat Streets was also asked by City Hall to help out and take the lead with the clearing, cleaning, and painting of a section of Bike Path behind the Westin Hotel. Many people showed up from across Annapolis for this event and the before and after pics are striking. Neat Streets had the best group turnout and is the model for the City's volunteer clean-up efforts. Finally, *Annapolis Green* asked Neat Streets volunteers to help out with a City Wide Clean Up on Saturday, November 21, to target cigarette butts, in step with the [Great American Smokeout](#).®.

### **Communications**

#### **Rita Ormasa, Chair**

ECA communicates with its members bi-weekly emails, membership meetings, posts on the ECA website and social media. This year, ECA worked to increase its social media presence with more frequent posts to help keep the community informed.

### **Eco-Action**

#### **Diane Butler and Barbara Beelar, Co-Chairs**

#### **Co-chairs Barbara Beelar & Diane Butler**

The Eco-Action Committee meets the first Wednesday of the month at 4:30 PM via Zoom. Please email [ecoaction@eastportcivic.org](mailto:ecoaction@eastportcivic.org) so we can add you to the invitation list.

The Eco-Action Committee has had a busy year writing support letters for a number of environmental grants and submitting testimony and meeting with City officials on numerous environmental issues which will impact Eastport. Generally speaking, we have been disappointed with the City's response to issues which impact the water quality of Back and Spa Creeks as well as access to them for residents of Eastport.

1. Water Quality: The water quality in Back and Spa Creeks has had mixed results in 2020. We refer you to the Severn River Association's report card located on their website under

news. However, lax enforcement of our stormwater runoff regulations continues to hamper major improvement in the water quality in both creeks.

2. Hawkins Cove: The City has proposed a plan to make changes at Hawkins Cove. We know that the Spa Creek Conservancy is not a partner on this plan which concerns us. We will learn more about the plan and will formulate a position as soon as we know more.

3. Wells Cove water access: The owner of a Short Term Rental house at 924 Creek Drive put a floating kayak dock that blocks water access for the community and filed an application for approval AFTER the fact. The Eco-Action Committee (one of the Chairs recused herself due to a potential conflict of interest) met with surrounding neighbors and were dismayed to learn that P&Z Staff recommended approval of the application for the floating dock after residents met with the Mayor and had worked for months with other city staff to preserve protection of this location. A compromise is in the works according to Eco-Action members who are working on the issue.

4. South Annapolis Yachting Center "SAYC" water access: a/k/a old Sarles and Petrini boatyards. The City is still NOT enforcing the zoning code at this WME zoned location. The City continues to allow an unpermitted fence. The developer removed the chain link construction fence when they installed the more permanent black, eight foot high, iron fencing with keypad electronics ready to be deployed. This is in direct conflict with the condition of approval of the project which expressly allows residents reasonable pedestrian access to the water, including but not limited to water taxi access. In addition, SAYC continues to market Building "F" which is a maritime use only building, as garages, and is now being used as office space, the City has not, as far as we know, taken further action to enforce the zoning law which prohibits residential use of this building. While this is not necessarily an environmental issue, we are tracking it along with the water access issue.

5. Jones Cove Trees - The Anne Arundel Watershed Steward project to remove the English Ivy (and other invasive species from the six acre area of forested land managed by the Annapolis Conservancy Board will not begin until we can work with the USNA volunteers. The new projected date for the project is winter 2022.

6. Jones Cove Stream Restoration – This project is related to the Eastport Shopping Center project. The City, for reasons we do not understand, approved a plan to allow the developer to rescind its original plans to restore the Jones Cove outfall with a Step-Pool Conveyance System. The City's Board of Appeals agreed with the residents of Eastport and rejected the approval of the developers' plan. The plan was remanded back to P&Z to do a better job and meet our adequate public facilities law.

Jones Cove Follow up – Eco-Action requests that the Mayor require P&Z to meet with the Eco-Action Committee and Back Creek section of the Severn Association, to give our input to any proposed restoration plan.

7. Back Creek water access success story – P&Z actually got a small water access easement for Back Creek at the foot of Bill Jones Alley across from the Democratic Club. Thank you, P&Z. This shows it can be done!

8. Tree Canopy Loss - Eastport continues to lose tree canopy at an alarming pace with no replacement plan in place. This loss includes both public street trees as well as trees that are not in a tree conservation area.

## **Grants**

### **Nancy Briggs, Chair**

The Eastport Civic Association (ECA) Grant Program was set up to support organizations that improve the quality of life for Eastport residents. The funds supporting these grants typically come from the spring Home and Garden Tour and the generosity of ECA members. Because there was no Home and Garden

Tour in 2019, the budget for 2020 grants was limited to \$7,500, with additional community enhancement funds allocated to support the Winter Relief Program and Creating Communities Thanksgiving event. Due to the decreased grant budget this year, it was decided to allocate the entire \$7,500 in the spring, rather than having spring and fall distributions as has been done in previous years when more funds were available. The six-member 2020 ECA Grant Committee conducted all business via e-mail to recommend recipients for this year's grants due to Coronavirus restrictions. Although the process was not ideal, it worked exceedingly well, thanks to the dedication of everyone involved.

The committee received applications from six worthy organizations requesting a total of \$13,755.98. The Committee recommended, and the ECA Board awarded, five grants. The organizations that received the grants are:

1. Annapolis Maritime Museum: \$750 for restoring four Chesapeake workboat models for the new permanent exhibition "Our Changing Waterfront."
2. Charting Careers: \$1,000 for the costs associated with providing tutors and mentors for middle school studies to determine their needs and provide applicable goods and services.
3. Eastport Elementary PlayEastport playground renovation: \$2,250 for two basketball hoops for the new basketball court for use by students and the Eastport Community.
4. Seeds 4 Success: \$2,000 for backpacks and school supplies for the fall season.

5. Start the Adventure in Reading (STAIR): \$1,500 for materials, books, and supplies for tutoring/reading buddies program.

### **Events**

#### **(Chairperson needed)**

ECA has traditionally held a home and garden tour in June and a picnic in August. Due to the Covid-19 virus ECA held neither event in 2020.

### **Planning and Major Development Committee(PMD)**

#### **Bill Reichhardt, Chair**

For the past year, the PMD Committee has met monthly. Consistent with the PMD charter, our focus has been to track and assess the impact of major development in the Eastport community. Specifically, we assisted the ECA Board in writing a letter and advocating opposition to adoption of the Draft Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study. The Annapolis City Council voted to reject the adoption and formed the Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study Task Force to review the draft and to suggest revisions, additions and related recommendations. The ECA has two representatives on the Task Force, one of whom serves as the chairman. The report of the Task Force is due for submission to the City Council in January 2021.

Members of the PMD Committee meet jointly with members of the Greater Annapolis Coalition. This group is a coalition of civic association representatives dedicated to joint advocacy for reasonable and controlled development.

Most recently the PMD committee has been instrumental in the development of a model for the future use of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) as part of the development application process. This mechanism represents a significant tool to ensure citizen participation in the analysis and acceptance of new development projects in the City. We are now working with our Alderman and other members of City Council to codify the CBA model into the City Code and zoning regulations for the City of Annapolis.

We recently added new members to the PMD Committee who bring experience in project management and development. Our Committee represents a dedicated group of collaborative problem solvers working to improve citizen input to future development and preserving the best of our communities.

### **Safety Committee**

#### **Charles Hernick, Chairperson**

Over the course of 2020, the safety committee finalized actionable recommendations for the mayor, the police chief, and ECA /ourselves. The recommendations were finalized and

approved by the ECA Board in February and submitted to the Mayor and Police Chief. Follow-on conversations with both the Mayor's office and Police were productive and the recommendations to increase police visibility and establish a police substation were well received. The substation was funded in the City Budget and is scheduled to open and provide a site for police and community engagement at Harbor House HACA property on President Street. Babe Feldman and Andre Atkins will take the reins of the committee for 2021.