



**Hillandale Citizens Association Inc. General Public Meeting Minutes
Thursday, February 29, 2024 at 7:00 PM
CHI / WE Achieve Center
10501 New Hampshire Silver Spring, MD 20903**

Community Meet & Greet: 7:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Neighbors, Board members, and community speakers signed in, grabbed snacks, greeted each other, and viewed a variety of information displayed at community events including the new Hillandale Park that was built in 2023. The meeting was attended by 39 people, including the following: 6 speakers; 12 Board members and 1 child; and 20 other members of the community. There was also information on the new projects coming in the next few years.

Call to Order / Welcome by HCA President: 7:31 PM

The Community Forum on Schools

The HCA president welcomed the community and the panelists to the meeting. He asked the panelists for the Community Forum on Schools to introduce themselves. The panelists who participated were:

- Councilmember Kristin Mink, the 5th District (our district) mentioned that she is on two committees: Public Safety, and Education and Culture
- Ms. Sherri Gordon, Principal and Ms. Ramona Johnson, Community School Liaison (CSL) from Cresthaven Elementary School
- Dr. Norman Coleman, Principal and Mr. Dirk Cauley, Assistant Principal from Francis Scott Key Middle School
- Mr. John Weinshel, Assistant Principal from Springbrook High School

After introductions, County Councilmember Kristin Mink was asked to respond to two questions

(1) What is your office doing specially to support the local and schools in District 5?

Kristin Mink, a former classroom teacher, serves on the County Council's Education Committee, where she has worked successfully to ensure full funding, both for public schools, as well as for the newly-opened East County campus of Montgomery College. Locally, she pushed through the pedestrian safety improvements for Cresthaven Elementary School. Her long-term goal is to overcome the perennial neglect of the East County.

(2) How are you helping the schools deal with the impact of the influx of our new migrant neighbors to District 5?

Mink is especially passionate about helping the many new immigrants to the area, and to achieve this, she facilitates cooperation among county, state, and federal authorities.

The full panel was asked to respond to two additional questions

(1) What programs are in place to ensure that the schools are safe, nurturing, and positive environments for all students?

Springbrook, Assistant Principal: *Safety and security are paramount, and these goals were reinforced recently by the installation of a new entryway to the school, which ensures that all people entering the building are checked. Moreover, Springbrook proves that East County schools are better than their reputation suggests. He would send his children there.*

Francis Scott Key, Principal and Assistant Principal: *School staff are outside each morning as the students arrive, and staff are frequently in the hallways so that they can spot problems early and deal with them proactively. In addition, both teachers and administrators try to become acquainted with each child personally, so they can nip any problems in the bud.*

Cresthaven Elementary: *The staff knows all of the students, every one of whom is welcomed into an environment that is caring and supportive. Their success in this endeavor is proved by their unusually high attendance rate of 96%.*

(2) how do you ensure teachers have adequate administrative support?

In all three of these local schools, administrators treat teachers with respect, to help them do their best. Teachers are not in it for the money, but rather for their love of the students and for teaching, but the work can be isolating. Administrators see it as vital to support their teachers, both individually and in creating a safe, nurturing environment, where the students feel connected.

On the whole, the community members in attendance left the meeting impressed with the professionalism and commitment of their local educators.

The HCA president then thanked the panelists and presented to the community HCA membership, HCA financials, and the HCA president's final comments for the evening.

HCA Membership Report

HCA Membership committee thanked those who have already paid a membership fee and spoke about current efforts to revive this community organization after coming out of COVID. She reported that we now have a PO Box for checks. As of the previous Monday there were 55 checks in the P.O. Box. Another method for paying for membership are by PayPal which is accessible on the website of the [Hillandale Citizens Association \(hillandale-md.org\)](http://hillandale-md.org). She mentioned that membership is \$20 per year or \$40 for two years.

HCA Treasurer Report

The HCA president provided the treasurer report as follows:

- Cash balance: \$17,974.41
- Checking account: \$2,955.97
- Money market account: \$6,448.44
- CD: \$8,570.

HCA President Comments

In the final HCA president's comments, he highlights that the community has its first ever "Adopt-A-Road project" and is looking at other Beautification projects to be proactively involved in cleaning up our neighborhoods and not waiting for others to do it for us. He also mentioned we will have an upcoming forum with our elected state representatives coming to tell us what they have done for Hillandale. HCA president emphasizes accountability and encourages involvement from the community to ensure their voices are heard and there is a successful activity for our community.

Adjournment: The HCA president adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.