

4/14/26

Council of Neighborhood Associations – April Meeting.

**Attendance:**

Michael Dalton, Shawn Woodford, Michael Sanchez, Ellen Berger, Bob Friscia, Martins Gaujenieks, Tom Osbeck, Howard Waldman, Wade Hardy, Joseph Castelli.

**Agenda:**

**1. Meet the new Leaders of Public Safety in White Plains**

Guest Speakers: Public Safety Commissioner Wade Hardy & Deputy Commissioner Joseph Castelli

Commissioner Hardy described his 22 years of service as a police officer and detective in the WPPD. After retiring from WPPD he managed corporate security for Con Edison for 12 years. Most recently he has served as Deputy Chief Criminal Investigator for the Westchester County District Attorney’s office. In the years that he was a police officer in White Plains and in the District Attorney’s office he advanced initiatives to improve conditions in public housing, foster better relationships with at-risk youth, and regularly met with neighborhood associations, community organizations, local clergy. He discussed how important it was for police officers to be part of a community rather than separate from it. Commissioner Hardy explained that in the Downtown area...more police officers will be patrolling “on foot” rather than in police vehicles. Officers will be stopping by stores and businesses...connecting with the community.

Commissioner Hardy explained that there will be a Police Exam in October (Check Website). He asked that the CNA members let their neighborhoods know about the Police Exam...and that the WPPD will be recruiting heavily in WP to get local applicants.

- The WPPD will be hiring 3 new officers in 2026.
- The WPPD now has 218 officers.
- The WPPD has added 15 officers since 2019.
- The WPPD has increased the number of officers on Foot & Bike Patrol in the Downtown to address the increased residential population density.
- The WPPD is focused on greater community engagement and transparency.

Commissioner Hardy announced that there will be Fireman Exam in 2027. He expects to hire the Fire Department’s first female firefighters in the next year.

Deputy Commissioner Joseph Castelli presented several crime statistic summaries illustrating that White Plains is a very safe city.

- Violent crime is very low for a city of our size.

- The overwhelming majority of crimes committed in White Plains are larcenies (property theft) taking place in shops and stores...most often it is shoplifting.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> most frequent type of crime in White Plains are “Scams” where people are “tricked” into allowing criminals to steal money from them.
- The total number of crimes in the last 12 months is down 200 incidents

Regarding the Fire Department...Deputy Chief Castelli explained that the Ferris Ave Firehouse is currently under renovation and all other Firehouses in the City are fully operational.

- No firehouses are closed. Ferris Ave Station is under renovation. The responsibility to serve the neighborhoods normally served by the Ferris Ave Station has been temporarily assigned to other nearby fire stations.
- The WPPD fire response times average between 3:40-5:05 mins...which is near the top of all fire departments in NY State...well below the recommended benchmark of 6 mins.
- Response times projected less than 30 seconds difference due to temporary relocation.

## 2. Q & A

H. Waldman asked whether the WPPD sponsors a Police Athletic League (PAL). Commissioner Hardy said “No, but Public Safety works with the Youth Bureau. They also host National Safety Night Out, the Cadet Program, and other kid/family events”.

H. Waldman asked about the bombmaker who was arrested a few weeks ago? D.C. Castelli reported that explosives being made by the bombmaker were bigger than fireworks. Suspect was charged federally and likely had mental issues. He is not believed to be a terrorist.

E. Berger had concerns about the restaurant delivery bike riders. She asked if they could wear reflective belts or clothing. D.C. Castelli said that Public Safety has given out reflective gear, but the workers are transient...and for the most part are not employed directly by the local restaurants. They are “gig” workers who sign up on sites like Doordash or Uber Eats. Maybe a law could be made by the Common Council to register or regulate these workers. D.C. Castelli said that they have safety education programs that are held occasionally for the delivery drivers. The police officers that attended the CNA meeting handed out safety pamphlets that can be translated into different languages via a QR code.

B. Friscia asked whether the WPPD has seen increased DUI’s in the City related to the cannabis dispensaries? D.C. Castelli explained that the dispensaries have not had an

impact on the quality of life in White Plains. The WPPD has had no legal or public safety issues with the cannabis businesses in White Plains.

H. Waldman had a question about drones and asked if the commissioners had any concerns about private drones. At this time, the Commissioners did not have any concerns or issues with private drone use in White Plains. That said...private drone use could become an issue in the future. The WPPD will be getting more training regarding drone use.

S. Woodford expressed concerns about the safety of the City Center, especially the garage. What is the city doing to make the City Center safer? D.C. Castelli talked about how perception is reality. Police officers and ticketing agents regularly patrol the public areas of City Center and the garage. There have been very few crimes against persons in the City Center. The City is working to upgrade lighting and cameras at the City Center. People should call the police if they see anything or anyone acting suspicious.

M. Dalton asked how the city interacts with federal authorities, specifically ICE? D.C. Castelli explained that the WPPD cooperates with federal authorities when those federal authorities are acting with a Judicial Warrant. A Judicial Warrant is a warrant issued by a Judge...based on probable cause for criminal action. An Administrative Warrant is issued by a government agency for civil or regulatory purposes and is not issued by a Judge. The WPPD does not cooperate with federal authorities acting with an Administrative Warrant.

E. Berger told a story about how her car ran out of gas and the police officer went and got her gas from a nearby gas station. There is a place on the WPPD website where you can leave nice stories or complements of police officers. The officer just happened to be in attendance at the CNA meeting.

S. Woodford asked a question about speed cameras in school zones. D.C. Castelli explained that the Speed Cameras that will be installed in school zones are under the domain of the Department of Traffic. D.C. Castelli was not certain of the when the cameras would operational...but he expected them to be operational soon.

Pres. Dalton thanked Commissioner Hardy and Deputy Commission Castelli for attending the meeting and for their presentation.

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### 3. CNA Scholarship award

- CNA “Scholarship Review” Committee reviewed the profiles of 3 scholarship candidates that were supplied by the WPHS.
- **Daystelin Garcia** has been selected to receive CNA \$300 scholarship award.
- Treasurer Osbeck has mailed the scholarship check to Kristell Moreno at WPHS.

#### **4. CNA Website**

M. Dalton has been working with Michael Kushman on improvements to the WPCNA website. All the re-design work is taking place on a copied version of the existing website. The goal of the “refresh” is to improve the utility of the website. No changes to the existing website have been made...yet.

- Minor updates to Home page
- Reorder the rotation of menu items to improve site utility
- Update Neighborhood Map to be “active”. Link neighborhoods on map to thumbnail photos of the active neighborhood members & neighborhood websites.
- Update the Local Events page to feature 8 current events “curated” by AI from the City’s & Library’s events webpages. Events page will dynamically delete past events and update for new events taking place in the City.
- Move Agenda & Meeting Minutes archive to follow Local Events posting page
- Update Contact page. Revise contact to “info@wp-cna.org” mailbox (not personal mailbox). Include message dialogue box on contact page to replace map of City.
- WP-CNA Workshop Materials to follow Contact page
- MD has been contacted by 2 students who expressed interest in helping to manage, maintain and update the CNA website once the refresh of website is completed.

#### **5. The CNA voted in February to increase the member dues to \$50 for 2026.**

If you have not had a chance to mail your \$50 dues payment to Treasurer Osbeck...please take a moment and do so. Thank you.

Mail your payment to:

Tom Osbeck  
48 Rockledge Ave  
White Plains, NY 10601

#### **6. Downtown Revitalization Project – Train Station Clocktower**

- The City has decided to have Westchester Arts ask local artists for proposals to redesign the Train Station Clocktower.
- At the same time.... the City has begun the process of determining the current cost of repairing the central clock mechanism that operates all 4 clock faces.
- In the DRI proposal submission by the City to the State...there was an illustration of the clocktower which added “color panels” to concrete columns holding up the

clock section of the tower. This illustration was just to provide an “idea” to the NYS officials of what might be possible.

## **7. May Meeting**

### Galleria Project Update

- Capelli Organization – President Bruce Berg and Mark Weingarten (Land use Council) will be updating CNA on the developer’s progress.

### New Cultural Institution in White Plains

- LMHA – the Living Museum of History & Art Museum will cost roughly \$65 Million
- The Board of the LMHA has completed a new prospectus describing the museum and will be initiating a round of “Seed” funding for the next phase of the project

## **8. June Meeting**

### Mayor’s Office Report on Parking Garages

- Private Parking facilities update – Building Dept
- Public Parking facilities update – Parking & DPW Dept’s

### Neighborhood Association Workshop

Pres. Dalton thanked all the attendees...and closed the meeting at 9:05pm.