

## **BDC sending warning to those who may trespass at historic Tome School property**

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The former Harrison Hall on the historic Tome School property was burned down in June, about six weeks after The Tome Inn was destroyed by fire, only three buildings on the Bainbridge property untouched by fire.

COURTESY COMMUNITY FIRE COMPANY OF RISING SUN

**PORT DEPOSIT** — The Bainbridge Development Corporation is getting the word out to those who may be considering coming onto the private property without permission.

Toni Sprenkle, project manager of the 1,200-acre former military base, Steve Cassard, executive director, and Carl Roberts, chairman of the board of directors, came before the Port Deposit mayor and town council Tuesday to update the elected body on the efforts to ready Bainbridge for the future development plans and to protect the remaining buildings on the Tome School campus for preservation.

“Three buildings remain ... the headmasters house, Madison House and Monroe House,” Sprenkle said. In May the Tome Inn was destroyed by fire. Six weeks later Harrison Hall went down in flames.

Cassard said Sprenkle is also getting the word out on social media, as that is where people appear to be learning about the property and coming to explore.

The next step is to determine where these trespassers are parking and get assistance from those property owners in discouraging the activity.

“The problem is you don’t want to deter people from coming to Port Deposit,” Roberts said. “But you can’t traipse on other people’s property.”

“We will be talking about additional things we can do, we will be vigilant,” Roberts added.



In between the two incidents the BDC board gathered to discuss increased security for the property. Sprenkle said the board is tackling every aspect including trying to determine how these trespassers — almost always people that do not live in Cecil County — gain access.

“We continue to repair the perimeter fence and we have regular perimeter checks,” Sprenkle said. Port Deposit Police Chief Sue Smith and the Cecil County Sheriff’s Office routinely patrol the property as well. “We’ve closed all the breaches.”

In some cases she said it’s been discovered that the fence is not being but, but unscrewed. That, too has been addressed.

“And we’ve told the (Cecil County) State’s Attorney’s Office we want every trespasser to be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law,” she said.

Cassard has met with Cecil County Sheriff Scott Adams and James Dellmyer, state’s attorney and has their full support.

“If anyone tells you the state’s attorney is not engaged that’s false,” Cassard said.

The Maryland State Fire Marshal is also in their camp, Roberts said. He told the mayor and council he had a meeting with Brian S. Geraci.

“He left with a different impression and in support of our intention to beef up security and stop it,” Roberts reported.

Sprenkle described a new security system in place that will let law enforcement know when trespassers are on the property.

“It’s fully wireless and solar powered,” she said. There are cameras at key points on the property, monitoring 24/7 she warned. The board is also in the process of hanging 100 new “No Trespassing” signs.

“The rules are the rules, the signs are the signs. Common sense should have told you to turn around,” she said.

However if that doesn’t do it, there are now speakers on the property too.

“The speakers will tell you you are trespassing on private property and if they still do not leave the sirens go off,” Sprenkle said.

