

Walter Jernigan

Candidate Questionnaire Answers

1. What position are you applying for

X Board Seat (1 Year Term)

2. How long have you lived in OHCA?

I am incredibly grateful to have been an Oyster Harbor homeowner for the past eight years. My personal connection to our peninsula actually goes back much further, having first experienced the magic of this community as a child visiting here decades ago.

3. Why are you interested in applying for this position?

I care deeply about the long-term safety, preservation, and unique character of Oyster Harbor. Now that I am retired, I want to step up and give back to the community that has given my family so many wonderful memories. Because our primary home is in Washington, DC, and sits less than 45 minutes away, I maintain a consistent weekly presence on the peninsula for consecutive days at a time, especially throughout the summer and holidays. I am applying for the 1-Year term to offer an extra set of hands behind the scenes, providing the flexible daytime availability needed to check on neighborhood infrastructure, look after administrative tasks, or assist the board during normal business hours when working residents are occupied.

4. Have you ever held office in OHCA or another community before?

I have not previously held an elected civic office in Oyster Harbor. However, throughout my 28-year career with the District of Columbia Fire & EMS Department (FEMS), I served extensively on formal administrative governance bodies, including the department's Disciplinary Investigation Board and as an active Trial Board Member. These roles

required reviewing complex policy parameters, evaluating evidence impartially, and ensuring fair due process.

5. What experience do you have that is related to the position in which you seek to serve?

Please discuss any credentials or qualifications you possess that would speak to your ability to serve in this role.

My professional background directly aligns with the operational, administrative, and safety challenges facing our neighborhood board:

- **Infrastructure & Asset Management:** As a former Operations Company Commander (Captain/Lieutenant) and Battalion Aide, I was directly accountable for the strict operational readiness, safety inspections, and maintenance tracking of high-value municipal apparatus, tools, and facilities.

- **Fair Covenant Enforcement:** My experience serving on municipal Disciplinary and Trial Boards, combined with my time in the Fire Prevention office conducting code compliance investigations, taught me how to enforce regulations fairly, consistently, and without personal bias.
- **Interagency Coordination:** I served as the Fire Department's official Neighborhood Services Liaison, where I collaborated directly across 10 distinct city agencies to coordinate public safety resources and address complex community complaints. This experience prepares me to engage smoothly with Anne Arundel County officials regarding our local needs.

6. What other experience do you have that will be helpful if you're elected?

Following my fire service career, I worked as a COVID-19 Community Outreach Specialist and CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) Coordinator for Prince George's County, specializing in volunteer mobilization and local logistics. Additionally, since 2016, I have thoroughly enjoyed volunteering as a Visitor Information Advocate for

the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Welcoming and assisting a diverse global populace from all walks of life has honed my capacity for diplomacy, active listening, and calm de-escalation—skills that are incredibly helpful when navigating neighborhood disagreements or sensitive community feedback. I also remain a proud member in good standing of the International Association of Firefighters, IAFF Local 36.

7. What do you think OHCA's top priorities should be for next year?

- **Proactive Infrastructure Auditing:** Ensuring our private roads, storm drainage systems, bulkheads, and marinas undergo routine, meticulous safety and operational reviews to prevent costly emergency failures.
- **Streamlined County Communication:** Leveraging interagency coordination to ensure our Special Taxing District parameters and localized public works needs are clearly communicated and seamlessly aligned with Anne Arundel County guidelines.
- **Community Accessibility & Support:** Providing accessible, reliable administrative oversight during the week, helping the board manage active on-site contractors smoothly during peak business hours.

8. What do you see as the top 2-3 challenges OHCA faces now?

- **Coastal and Stormwater Resilience:** Managing localized drainage and coastal erosion pressures across our low-elevation waterfront community.

- **Long-Term Capital Upkeep:** Ensuring our private infrastructure, boat ramps, and piers are heavily protected through diligent fiscal forecasting and asset preservation.
- **Balancing Community Dynamics:** Keeping our neighborhood safe, welcoming, and secure during high-traffic summer seasons and holidays, while maintaining a peaceful environment for both full-time and part-time residents.

9. What is your “vision” for OHCA?

My vision is an Oyster Harbor that remains safe, structurally resilient, and fiscally sound for generations to come. I envision a board that operates with absolute transparency and quiet efficiency—one that listens carefully to residents' concerns, handles covenant enforcement with empathy and fairness, and aggressively protects our shared waterfront infrastructure so that the community retains the exact same charm I fell in love with as a child.

10. Have you reviewed the OHCA Constitution, and are you committed to OHCA being run in accordance with the Constitution?

Yes, I have reviewed the OHCA Constitution. Coming from a career where operating procedures, legal protocols, and organizational bylaws governed everything I did, I am fully committed to ensuring that OHCA strictly adheres to its constitutional guidelines, maintaining absolute fairness and legal accountability for all residents.

