

MINUTES – November 10, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Sharon Dooley. The minutes from the October meeting were approved with 0 corrections or additions. The agenda was accepted with 1 correction.

Update on the Inter-County Connector – Odessa Phillips, Outreach Specialist, State Highway Administration, reported on several upcoming activities related to the construction of Phase A of the Inter-County Connector (ICC):

1. Tree Removal between the ICC and Emory Lane – There is a formula that their arborist uses to assess the “critical root zone” of trees to measure the impact on the trees near their construction area on Georgia Avenue. Some of the trees they removed are in the ICC right-of-way, and the others will be impacted by the bike path they will be putting in. They are within that critical root zone which means that the trees will eventually die.
2. New Signage on Georgia Avenue – They are beginning to place signs saying ICC ahead. The size of the signs is dictated by Federal standards. Some are the same as all advance warning signs on State roads such as Rte 28 E. They are all directional or toll rate signs. There are 2 12' x 16' signs that will be north of Leisure World and south of Old Baltimore
In response to questions about why the signs are so large, Ms. Phillip noted that they are following Federal guidelines and the size is dictated by the MdTA. The signs on other State roads like Rte. 355 at Rte. I-270 are not this big because they are under SHA guideline, while these signs are under the authority of MdTa because this is a toll road.
3. Weather permitting northbound traffic will be shifted over to the new bridge and southbound traffic to the temporary roadbed on November 21st.
4. The comment period for the proposed toll structure closes on November 23rd. The proposed rates are consistent with other MD Transit Authority roads and is a congestion management system which is why they are higher.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

County Councilmember Nancy Navarro, District 4 – Sharon Dooley welcomed Ms. Navarro, the recently elected Council member for District 4. Ms. Navarro introduced Capt. Demme, Commander, Mont. Co. Police Dept, District 4 who she asked to attend to respond to the questions Ms. Navarro was given relating to increased criminal activity in Olney.

Some of the points Ms. Navarro made include noting that:

- The Council is taking a number of actions in response to the economic downturn
- They have completed action on the Growth Policy,
- They just completed work on the Germantown town center plan and are working on the master and sector plans for White Flint, Gaithersburg, Wheaton, and Kensington,
- Their work on code enforcement, which she is supportive of, has been delayed because of their work on the master and sector plans. The economic environment is having a negative impact on neighborhoods. And, she feels the code enforcement effort needs an education piece so all non-English speaking residents can be made aware of the changes and impacts of the changes relating to code enforcement.
- With respect to the Growth Policy, the Council kept the 105% enrollment as the threshold for imposing impact fees for schools. But, this does not address all aspects of school overcrowding that they are not sure how to address, i.e., overcrowding resulting from the turnover of neighborhoods, multiple families residing within one household because of the economy, and an increase in the number of students leaving private schools and returning to public school. Impact fees are tied to new development, so do not address increases in school population as a result of these other causes in existing communities.
- The development of the Olney town center has also been slowed down by the current economic environment;
- The lot at the intersection of Ga. Ave and Rte 28 is not for sale and has a long term lease on it.
- The Agricultural Reserve needs to be preserved
- She helped Councilmember Elrich shepherd through Zoning Text Amendment 09-01 and in Burtonsville promoted by the proposed developments by EZ Storage.
- She serves on the Health and Human Services Committee and the Management & Fiscal Policy Committee.

Captain Demme noted that:

- A woman jogging in Olney Mill Family Park between 11 am and 12 pm stopped a police officer to report a man exposing himself and jogged off without giving her name and address. Officers went into the park and located a man, but they need to contact the woman so she can identify him. Anyone aware of her should ask her to contact the police.

- There had been a number of incidents of thefts for parts and BB gun/golf ball vandalism incidents, and they have a person of interest they are still investigating. She reminded people that they should not leave valuable items visible inside their cars and they should keep a list of their serial numbers.
- The speed cameras on the southbound side of Georgia Avenue were removed for legal reasons.
- Crime statistics are down in the greater Olney area which is still safe compared to other parts of the police district.

Introduction to the Montgomery County CountyStat Initiative, Christopher Cihlar, PhD - Mr. Cihlar provided an overview of the CountyStat program, a tool used by the County to measure the County government's responsiveness and accountability. The main objective of the program is to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of government by using up-to-date data as the ongoing focus for day-to-day management and long-term policy making. CountyStat establishes a data-driven analytical capability within the County Executive's office and incorporates data analysis into the planning and operational procedures of County departments in a cooperative manner. They have concentrated on developing four major focus areas: capacity building, policy translation, data analytics and integration, and internal counseling. Mr. Cihlar provided examples of each of these focus area and noted several examples of improvements in departmental operations. He noted that all of their data is available online, all of their meetings are open to the public, and the County unions have some issues with implementing some of their recommendations and are challenging them. Montgomery County is ahead of other counties in measuring outcomes of its departments and programs. Their office is tracking Recovery and Reinvestment Funding the County has received. They are trying to work better with Montgomery County Public Schools and the Council, since their work relates to Executive Branch departments.

There are mechanisms for community input on their website where you can make suggestions or request topics or areas of interest to be analyzed. The County's new 311 System will be launched soon and will centralize a lot of the data collection which will help ensure its reliability.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasury Report

Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$11,077.37 with \$395 dedicated to the Sherwood High School fund.

Correspondence Report

Sharon Dooley noted a letter from WSSC indicating their willingness to do presentations on why sewers are failing. There was interest in having them present to GOCA.

Chamber Report

Joe Buffington noted that the Chamber still is providing the majority of the funding for the Olney Police Satellite Facility. The County does provide some funding, but he encouraged anyone interested in making a donation to the Chamber for the facility to do so.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee

Bob Beard reported on the first meeting Joe Buffington had held for Small Property Owners in the town center area. The purpose is to help them coordinate on what is happening in the town center area by creating an organization for these property owners similar to a civic association. They are looking at doing quarterly meetings. There are about 35-40 small property owners in the town center. Also, he, Jim Smith, Eileen Cahill, Helene Rosenheim, Sharon Dooley, and Matt Zaborsky met with Councilmember Mike Knapp to present 3 top Capital Improvements Program priorities the Committee and GOCA had agreed upon for the town center – funding the study of a Bus Rapid Transit System and recommending the Georgia Avenue Busway for a pilot program; and a municipal center and town commons area. He is working on developing a project description for a feasibility study for the municipal center and town commons. He is also going to explore the BRT program more with Councilmember Elrich and to work with the County's Transit Services staff on possible interim improvements while waiting for State funding for a BRT.

Civic Federation Report – Arnie Gordon reported that Civic Federation has voted to oppose a proposed change to the County's General Plan that would allow accessory apartments by right rather than through the special exception process. There will be a public hearing on this and other changes to the General Plan on December 1st. Following a brief discussion of the anticipated impacts of such a change,

Paul Jarosinski moved that GOCA oppose the adoption of a provision amending the Housing element of the County's General Plan that would "allow accessory apartments in residential zones by right under appropriate design standards and conditions." (Strategy 2.1)

The motion was seconded by Dave Eskenazi and passed overwhelmingly (15 for, 1 opposed, 3 abstentions).

Bob Beard moved to table the motion to allow the officers time to get more background information on this issue. Ron Berger seconded the motion that failed (7 for, 11 opposed, 0 abstentions)

Mr. Gordon also noted that Civic Federation has discussed the proposed ICC toll structure.

Membership Report – No report

Transportation Report

Matt Zaborsky moved that GOCA oppose the toll structure as announced by the Maryland Transit Authority because they strongly feel the proposed rates are too high.

The motion was seconded by Ellen Bogage and passed unanimously.

Anne Stretch moved that GOCA oppose the largest overhead highway signs being proposed for use on Georgia Avenue in connection with the ICC.

This motion was seconded by Paul Jarosinski and passed overwhelming.

President's Report

Sharon Dooley reported on the results of the survey that was completed by attendees at the Olney Chamber's Community Night, and a number of people after that evening. People were asked to rank a list of issues and concerns listed on the survey form. The topics that received the most votes were transportation, pedestrian safety, and business growth. The topics that were ranked as the top 3 priorities – Education, Environment, and Transportation/Business Growth. Other topics that were of interest were the Farmers & Artist Market, extending Metro to Olney, a movie theater, and more specialty stores.

NEW BUSINESS

2010 GOCA Officers Nominations:

Ron Berger noted that it was time to begin putting together the slate of GOCA officers for 2010. He will be talking with the current officers to see what their plans are for 2010. He encourage others to consider taking on a greater role and becoming an officer. Anyone interested in being an officer next year can contact him and he will be contacting people shortly to look for candidates once he knows which positions will be vacant.

2008 GOCA Awards

Ron Berger reported this is also the time of year when GOCA solicits nominations for this year's GOCA awards. As always, we look outside our organization for nominee since our members are not aware of all the valuable work being done throughout the greater Olney community. The categories for the awards are:

Howard J. Garber Memorial Citizen of the Year Award
Contribution to Community Award
GOCA Worker of the Year Award
Olney Heritage Award

The ceremony where the awards will be presented will take place on Sunday, March 1, 2009 at Longwood Recreation Center with a reception that a number of elected officials attend at 2:00 pm and the awards presentations at 3:00 pm. The public is encouraged to submit nominations and to attend the Awards Ceremony.

Following the discussion of New Business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Helene Rosenheim for Lori Wilen
Lori Wilen, Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Barbara Barry (Perspective Woods), Bob Beard (Homeland Village), Danny Benn (Fair Hill Farms) Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Ellen Bogage (Victoria Springs), Brad Branch (Olney Mill), Joe Buffington (Olney Chamber of Commerce), Christopher Cihlar (Off of the County Executive), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Joe Corbett (Williamsburg Village), Capt. Demme (MCPD, District 4) Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Veronica Everett (Victoria Springs/Mont. General Hosp.), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Chuck Graefe (SEROCA), Jim Haddow (Hallowell), Alex Hamilton (citizen), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Dolly Kilbee (Councilmember Navarro), Carolyn Knight (Olney Oaks), Del Ben Kramer (District 19), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village), Sgt. Patrick Lay (MNCPPC – Park Police), Sen. Mike Lennett (District 19), Del Anne Kaiser (District 14), Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), David Moen (Councilmember Navarro), Councilmember Nancy Navarro (District 4), Rick Newman (Mid-

County CAB), Roy Peck (Norbeck Meadows), David Reile (SEROCA), Theresa Kyne Robinson (Olney Oaks), Helene Rosenheim (Mid-County RSC), Ann Stretch (Cherrywood), Michael Waiser (Preserve at Small's Nursery), John Webster (Manor Oaks), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Robert H. Wilson, II (Brooke Manor Estates), Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows),