

Barbara Falcigno
President
OLNEY OAKS

June 17, 2013

John Webster
Executive Vice President
MANOR OAKS

Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD

Howard Greif
First Vice President
NORBECK GROVE

Kathy Curtis
Second Vice President
LAKE HALLOWELL

Dear Chairwoman Carrier and Planning Board Commissioners:

Mark Hill
Recording Secretary
CAMELBACK VILLAGE

After many meetings and long discussions, the Greater Olney Civic Association approved the following motion:

Greg Intoccia
Corresponding Secretary
ASHLEY HOLLOW

Ruth Laughner
Treasurer
WILLIAMSBURG VILLAGE

Whereas the addition of 69 homes in Trotters Glen will almost double the number of current homes living off Batchellors Forest Road, GOCA believes that another method of egress is needed from that community to access southbound Georgia Avenue other than having the traffic use Batchellor's Forest Road and cut through Olney Manor Recreation Park to access 97S at Emory Lane. The park has already complained about safety with cut-through traffic and GOCA feels that additional cut-through traffic from the new community will make matters worse. GOCA feels a second method of egress should be constructed. The simplest method would appear to be the connection of Emory Church Road to the Trotters Glen property since Emory Church Road already abuts the Trotters Glen property and traffic could access Georgia Avenue via an existing traffic signal without cutting through the park and the already failing signal at Emory Lane/97. An alternate, and perhaps more desirable option, would be to connect Mt. Everest Lane to the Trotters Glen property allowing traffic to exit on Route 28 to get to 97. This option minimizes F-level congestion that has already occurred between the ICC and Emory Lane. These two suggested options do not preclude other possible options of egress from the new development to 97S OTHER than cutting through the park.

There are currently approximately 50 homes along Batchellors Forest and adding the already approved Stanmore (13 more homes) and Batchellors Forest (37 homes) as well as the proposed Trotters Glen (69 homes), the number of homes will total ~ 170 homes. Throughout the Olney Master Plan discussions (2002-2005), staff predicted as long as the number of total housing units stayed under 200 units, Batchellors Forest Road would still meet the the Rustic Road requirements of less than 3,000 trips per day¹. However, no analysis was done on how these vehicles would access southbound Georgia Avenue. Currently it appears over 300 cars use Olney Manor Park (data supplied by Dr. Anne Wylie's analysis of Toll Brothers' traffic study data) as a means to access Georgia Ave south. The members of GOCA find it unacceptable that traffic funnels through the park and the additional development along Batchellors Forest Road may double or even triple that number. Mike Little, manager of Olney Manor Recreational Park, has shared that

speeding through the park has been a growing problem and he has had park police in the park to catch speeders. The parking lot also has several speed bumps and the asphalt is breaking up.

To not use the park to access southbound Georgia Ave from Batchellors Forest Road, a vehicle must first travel north, cross three lanes of traffic in 0.1 miles (~500 feet on a 50 mile an hour road), and make a u-turn at Emory Lane. At peak hours, traffic at Emory Lane backs up south of Batchellors Forest Road which forces these vehicles to travel to the next signalized intersection approximately 0.5 miles north at Emory Church Road to make a u-turn. The State Highway Administration has been very clear that they would not approve a light at Batchellors Forest Road and Georgia Avenue due to its proximity to the light at Emory Lane. A traffic light at that intersection would also have other unintended consequences.

None of these scenarios are safe for drivers or users of the park. Thus the members of GOCA feel there needs to be safe access to southbound Georgia Ave from this relatively large development. We suggest two options (connect Batchellors Forest Road to Emory Church Road or to Mount Everest Lane), but we do not feel these preclude other possibilities. Any connection should be circuitous and long in order to discourage any non-local traffic and to maintain the rural nature of the area.

The Olney Master Plan states on page 31 in the discussion of the Polinger Property that “Access to new houses should be provided from both Batchellors Forest Road and Emory Church Road.” The next sentence is specific for “A pedestrian and bikeway connection between Emory Church Road and Batchellors Forest Road should be provided through the property.” In the bulleted recommendations on pages 31 and 32, nothing is mentioned about a vehicular access between these two roads. In 2006, there was a pre-preliminary plan from a different developer that connected these two roads through that proposed development. No issue was made by the local community at that time about the connection.

GOCA's concern is to protect park users from additional through traffic as well as ensuring vehicles can safely reach southbound Georgia Avenue from these developments.

Sincerely,

Barbara Falcigno

Barbara Falcigno
President
Greater Olney Civic Association

1. In 2002, there were 630 average daily trips on Batchellors Forest Road south of Farquhar Middle School (Olney Master Plan, page 101). In 2012, Toll Brother's Traffic Study shows 1,500 average daily trips in the southern area of Batchellors Forest Road and the only new housing development that has been built since 2002 is Batchellors Forest which has only a handful of homes occupied at this time (Exhibit 1 of Memorandum dated 9/20/2012). Washington Christian Academy and Good Counsel High School were constructed post 2002.