

February 10, 2015
Buffington RE/MAX Olney Community Room
3300 Olney-Sandy Spring Road

7:30 CALL TO ORDER

1. Introductions (Name, Association, Representative/Alternate/Guest)
2. Approval of January Minutes
3. Approval of February Agenda

7:35 PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

7:45 MCPS CHANGE IN BELL TIMES PROPOSAL

- Brian Edwards, MCPS
Todd Watkins, Director of Transportation, MCPS

8:05 PESTICIDE BILL (COUNTY BILL 52-14)

- Chris Gillis, Aide to Council President Leventhal
John Poulos, Director of Grounds, Our Lady of Good Counsel HS
Brian Blake, Montgomery County Branch Manager, McFall & Berry Landscape Mgmt
Phil Catron, President, Natural Lawn
Tom Ritter, Agronomist
Lee Lofthus, Oatland Farm

8:55 OFFICERS/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

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| 1. Transportation Committee | Barbara Falcigno |
| 2. Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board | Greg Intoccia |
| 3. Public Policy & Community Affairs Committee | Matt Quinn |
| 4. Olney Town Center Advisory Committee | Kathy Curtis |
| 5. Library Advisory Committee | Della Dorsey |
| 6. Legislative Update | Bob Reel |
| 7. Bylaws Committee | Kathy Curtis |
| 8. 2015 Membership Renewals | Greg Intoccia |
| 9. Correspondence Report | Jackie Benn |
| 10. Chamber of Commerce Report (www.olneymd.org) | Joe Buffington |
| 11. GOCA Awards winners | Barbara Falcigno |

9:20 NEW BUSINESS

- Election of 2015 Officers

9:30 ADJOURNMENT

GOCA Resolution Regarding Proposed County Bill 52-14
Restricting Pesticides and Fertilizers

***Background:** the Montgomery County Council is considering a bill (Bill 52-14, introduced by Council Member George Leventhal) that would effectively ban all but a few County-approved “essential” pesticides and fertilizers in Montgomery County. The stated purpose of the Bill is “to minimize potential exposure to toxic pesticides in the places where children are most likely to encounter pesticides, namely lawns and athletic fields.” [G. Leventhal email 1/22/2015 to GOCA].*

The bill enacts a general prohibition on homeowner use on their own property of all but a few county-approved pesticides, including application of pesticides to control lawn pests and infestations, and requires homeowners to post signs in yards when pesticides/fertilizers have been applied. The bill requires the County to develop new standards regulating the size, color, content, materials, visibility, and other characteristics of the homeowner signs to be posted. The bill also restricts the County’s own application of pesticides on county property. Agricultural areas, gardens, and golf courses are exempted.

The Bill will require extensive additional county regulation, and require additional oversight and enforcement by the County’s Department of Environmental Protection. The bill will require businesses to post disclosure notices to purchasers, and requires an annual County inspection of all persons who sell at retail any pesticides. The Bill defines weeds as “pests,” and therefore the Bill appears to regulate/ban certain fertilizers and weed control applications as well as insect control applications.

The bill cites restrictions placed on pesticides by Ontario and other Canadian provinces in 2009 and a 2013 General Accounting Office (GAO) report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as evidence supporting the need for the ban. Pesticide classification standards issued by the European Commission, among others, will be used by the County as a basis for determining the permissibility of certain pesticides.

Resolution

Whereas the Bill’s author cites a 2013 GAO report as a basis for proposing the ban, **GAO did not make any recommendations that restricted or banned pesticides**; instead, the report recommended that EPA automate the tracking of “conditional registrations” of products, install improved manual tracking until an automated system is developed, and review and ensure EPA’s website is “clear, concise, and accurate.” [GAO Report “EPA Should Take Steps to Improve Its Oversight of Conditional Registrations,” GAO-13-145 August 2013];

Whereas Montgomery County is facing budget shortfalls and the County Executive has warned residents he will seek to raise property taxes as a result [Washington Post, January 30, 2015, B1], it is irresponsible for the Council to impose a vast and unfunded pesticide regulatory structure on County residents that will require tax increases to be fully funded;

Whereas GOCA has received overwhelmingly negative comments on the bill from Olney residents and businesses, including concerns the proposed bill will result in higher taxes; higher consumer prices; higher lawn care prices; excessive weed growth resulting in Montgomery County properties being placed at a disadvantage compared to Howard, Fairfax, and other nearby counties; result in Olney residents relying on ineffective pest control products and ineffective fertilizers that expose Olney properties to pest infestations

and sub-quality lawn conditions; and impose onerous requirements on homeowners to display County-approved signage, etc;

Whereas both the federal government and the State of Maryland have existing environmental and pesticide regulatory agencies and laws that provide oversight of pesticide applications, and also have well-established testing and compliance resources, there is no justification for Montgomery County creating a costly and redundant regulatory process; further, there is no evidence the County possesses the extensive infrastructure to test and regulate such products; creating such expertise and infrastructure will be expensive, with the costs passed directly to county residents, businesses, and manufacturers;

Whereas the purported health risks to children that are the stated premise for the Bill have not been substantiated by any relevant scientific data; further, the cited health risks to children and others from currently marketed products occurs in acute exposure cases (e.g. ingesting the pesticide directly); and further, exempting the significant agricultural areas and golf courses from the ban creates an arbitrary and confusing policy that offers no actual protections for children, the Chesapeake Bay, etc.;

Whereas GOCA believes the bill is a costly but ineffective “feel good” proposal based on dubious medical presumptions, that it unnecessarily duplicates existing federal and State regulations, and that it creates a burdensome and costly regulatory oversight program that places both Olney residents and businesses at a disadvantage;

Whereas GOCA believes existing federal and State environmental and oversight regulations adequately protect county residents from the potential health hazards that are the objectives of the proposed bill;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) should formally state its strong objections to Bill 52-14, in writing, with the Montgomery County Council.

**Topics for 2015 GOCA Bylaws Revisions
GOCA Executive Board Meeting
2/10/2015**

A proposed amendment to the Bylaws was received by the Bylaws Committee on January 22, 2015 from the Cherrywood Homeowners Association. Per Article XI of the Bylaws, the Bylaws Committee will (1) put the amendment in the proper language, (2) identify associated sections of the Bylaws that need to be amended to accommodate the amendment and (3) favorably or unfavorably report the amendment to the Executive Board within 60 days. The Bylaws Committee will report to the Executive Board at the March 10, 2015 meeting. This is the proposed amendment as submitted:

Committee chairs are appointed and removed by the president with simple majority consent of the delegates at an open meeting of the GOCA members. If a committee chair position is unfilled for more than 30 calendar days, then any delegate may nominate himself/ herself or any other delegate to a committee chair position. The GOCA delegates shall then, by simple majority, approve or disapprove appointment of the nominated delegate to the committee chair position.

The Bylaws Committee is already working on revisions to the Bylaws and has identified the following areas for clarification. The Committee will provide drafts for discussion at an Executive Board meeting in the next few months.

1. Specify that the President needs to have been a Representative or on the Officers Committee for the preceding 12 months to be nominated.
2. Clarify when an LCA membership is actually over. It is ambiguous in Article IV (3).
3. Clarify the process to appoint and remove Committee Chairs.
4. Specify that Committee members can come from Member LCAs as well as others from the Master Plan community at large regardless of GOCA affiliation.
5. Clarify the number and purview of the Standing Committees.
6. Clarify if the LCA of an Officer withdraws from membership or does not renew by March 31st, is that individual still an officer?
7. Review the definitions in Article II (2) to confirm their existence in Roberts Rules of Order.
8. Specify the process for the Officers Committee, the Executive Board and all other Committees to make GOCA's work more transparent. These may include:
 - a. Post Agendas and Minutes on the website
 - b. Announce all meeting dates on the website with location and invitation for public attendance
 - c. Establish quorums for meetings
 - d. Establish number of meetings required per year
 - e. Follow Roberts Rules of Order
9. Are there any requirements for who can propose a Bylaws Amendment? For example, does the proposal need to come from a person who lives in a Member LCA?