



Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

Our New Website Address: <http://www.goca.org>

## GOCA MEETING - July 13, 1999

The meeting was called to order by Executive Vice President Rich Kopanda. The floor was opened for Public Comments.

- Sandy Shulman commented on an article she had seen in the Washington Post about the impact of the commercial development in McLean. The residents have become very concerned about the unsightly way the development has come in. She urged that before Olney loses its character that GOCA members be aware of this and take a strong position, not in opposition to growth, but the appearance of what is developed. Olney is not an urban area and the commercial development should be done in a more refined way such as is done in Columbia. For example, some of the businesses that have come in recently have lots of unsightly signs - Norm's Market has too many signs and looks messy all the time; and the golf driving range next to Olney Manor Park has a lot of unnecessary signage and banners - signs that are not professional signs. The signs should be done in more of a professional way in keeping with a less urban area. She is also concerned about the appearance of the commercial property adjacent to her development, Victoria Springs. It is in a disgraceful condition now. She had heard that a possible purchaser for the property was a nursing home and felt that this would be a use that the residents in her community would readily support as opposed to something that would have bright lights, late night drinking, high traffic volumes. We need to ensure that as Olney is further developed, we do not lose the greenness of Olney. Rich Kopanda noted that as we review development plans, we do ask questions about signage and lighting, but some of the follow-through may not be there. As plans worked themselves through things we thought we were supportive of or not opposed to may change and not end up looking like what we were expecting. There is also a problem of the cumulative affect of developments. We tend to look at these projects individually and make decisions and recommendations based on what seems reasonable for a given project, perhaps overlooking the cumulative affect of all of the developments; and perhaps we need to be more mindful of that. He noted, too, that Hilton Head, NC could be a model for how new development can be done tastefully. Sandy noted that if we do not work to retain the greenway entrance in to Olney and ensure that new development is done more tastefully, than we will end up looking like Rockville Pike.

Joe Hess strongly seconded her comments. He thought GOCA should think hard about the placement of the new Post Office. SEROCA thought hard about it and felt that the best site for it should be the Silo Inn site because it was the best use for this property which is zoned commercial. While he understood the arguments for placing it in the center of town, they felt that the overriding issue of the potential types of usage that might take place on the Silo property made it the most desirable location in spite of some of the traffic issues related to that site. They are very concerned about how this commercial property along Georgia Ave might be developed, based on some of the things they have heard from the developer of that property and felt that this would be a good use of the site. Rick noted that the concerns about the traffic impacts had been the reason that people were opposed to that site.

- Edward Partington expressed concern that the bike path on Emory Ln did not go all the way to Muncaster Mill Rd, and even, along part of Muncaster Mill. Rich noted that the existing bike path was put in by the Brooke Manor development and their portion will not go beyond Calvary Dr. However, the County is planning to extend it to Holly Ridge which would extend it a good portion of the distance to Muncaster Mill Rd. The County has said that eventually they would like to extend it to Muncaster Mill and then up Muncaster Mill to the Smith Center. But, there are no immediate plans to do that. Ed asked about extending it towards Norbeck Rd, and it was noted that there were rideable shoulders along a good portion of that part of Muncaster Mill. Ed felt that it was too dangerous a road to ride bikes on the shoulder. Rich noted that his development, North Creek that is on the north side of Emory is supporting what is now being proposed and will see how much pressure there is to continue it. He noted, too, that they had originally proposed moving a portion of what is currently being planned onto the north side of Emory so that it could be continued at road level to Muncaster Mill, as opposed to at the elevation of the land on the south side of Emory west of Holly Ridge, but the County pressed to keep it on the south side. Rich noted we will see what the next step is once the portion to Holly Ridge is completed.

- Joe Hess expressed his concern about the proposal we had discussed at the previous meeting about putting up commercial signs at Olney Manor Park to finance the maintenance of the Park. He did not object to the existence of the

Park, but felt that permitting commercial signage was going to far. Rich noted that we would be discussing the Park during Old Business.

- John Mahoney, VP and GOCA representative of Homeland Village noted that their homeowners association was organizing a community blood drive for the Red Cross. The drive is initiated by the secretary for their association, Chris Patton, an employee of the Red Cross. Chris noted that in the two hours it will take to complete this meeting, 1,028 units of blood will be needed in the Greater Chesapeake and Potomac area. That's a lot of blood - every 7 seconds someone in our area needs a unit of blood and, even though you may never meet that person, you could be that person's savior by donating blood. What he was seeking tonight was GOCA's support. What he needs from every business or organization in the community to help recruit donors. To date Homeland Village, Christ Fellowship Church that meets at Olney Elementary and, possibly, St. Peter's Church are helping with the drive. He had one binder to give to someone to solicit donors and can get more from their office in Baltimore that services this area. The drive is tentatively scheduled for August 28<sup>th</sup> in preparation for the Labor Day weekend which is one of the holiday weekends with the lowest amount of donorship and generally high shortages of blood. Their goal is to collect 70-75 units, but they need people making one-on-one contacts with people to get the kind of turnout they need. He is trying to get Olney Elementary as the site. What he is asking people to do is contact people and get a commitment from them for a time slot for donating. Domino's Pizza has agreed to put flyers on every pizza they sell and Chris will be contacting other local businesses to put up flyers and get actively involved. He felt that the 70-75 unit goal was a very modest goal and that the Olney community could do a lot better, but it would take the active support of many people. He noted that what you are charged for with a unit of blood is the testing, shipment, transport, storage. 8 state of the art of blood and for every unit of blood they collect 4 test tubes of blood. The unit goes to the region and the test tubes go to one of their eight test labs to screen them for every possible virus imaginable including looking for HIV at least 3 ways.

Homeland Village has a web site set up <http://www.hova.net> and they will be posting blood drive information there. People can also contact him at 703 312-5711 or by email to [pattonc@usa.redcross.org](mailto:pattonc@usa.redcross.org) or [pattonc@erols.com](mailto:pattonc@erols.com).

The minutes were approved with no corrections or additions and the agenda was approved with 2 additions.

## **CORRESPONDENCE REPORT**

Art Brodsky noted that the correspondence included the routine correspondence from County agencies and one bill he had for the Treasurer.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Lori Wilen was unable to attend the meeting, so there was no Treasurer's Report. However, Steve Smet presented a check from Norbeck Meadows Civic Association for the Olney Days fireworks.

## **FIRE AND SAFETY REPORT**

Rich Kopanda noted that the groundbreaking for the new Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department building in Sandy Spring is scheduled for September.

## **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

Rich reported for Mike that

- We are looking for some continuing County or other public support for funding for some of the activities GOCA sponsors on an annual basis, such as the Olney Days Festival. We get a lot of support from the community and local business. But we seem to end up having to "tin-cupping and going door-to-door to businesses and local civic and homeowners associations asking for donations. There should be County funds available to support some of these types of activities, so we are continuing to seek those kinds of funds in the amount \$10,000-\$15,000.

- There have been a number of serious accidents on Muncaster Mill Rd, especially near Magruder High School. We are hoping to bring together a number of organizations to work with the State to see if there is anything that can be done to make that area safer. They are going to look at accident data through there to see if the accident rate is higher in that area than other portions of Muncaster Mill Rd. While we are not engineers and may not be able to propose solutions, but we can certainly document whether there is a real problem there that the State needs to address. Ed Partington suggested that part of the problem is that the lack of traffic lights along there encourages speeding and the curves and topography make the road through there make it more dangerous. There was some discussion of whether Muncaster Mill Rd is slated for improvement in conjunction with the ICC project. The consensus was that, if that is still part of the plan,

there is nothing planned for Muncaster Mill in the near future. Khalid Afzal of Park & Planning indicated that there is some work being planned at several intersections on Muncaster Mill as a part of the road improvement program that the Emory Ln project is a part of, but that no other road improvements are underway for that road. He noted too, that the improvements at Bowie Mill are merely to add an access lane on Muncaster Mill for an improvement to the right turning lane on Bowie Mill. Khalid also thought that this might be something that can be looked at in the upcoming Rock Creek Master Plan review. Ed Weisel also noted that we want to be sure to cast this as a safety improvement so that it does not get caught up in the capital budget process.

- July 28<sup>th</sup>, 7-9 pm, the County government is sponsoring a town meeting at Longwood Rec Center to discuss what businesses should be doing to prepare for Y2K. Ed Weisel said that he had heard that it was going to be delayed until after January, 1900.

## **CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

There was no Chamber Report.

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

Development Plans for the Remainder of the Brooke Johns Property - Steve Smet indicated that he was wearing 3 hats at this meeting - as a GOCA rep for Norbeck Meadows, a resident living in close proximity to this property, and, in this case, as a commercial realty agent for the purchaser of the 20 acre property in the northeast corner of the Brooke Johns property near the corner of Georgia Ave and Emory Ln. This property was purchased by the Oxbridge Group last June 1998. Their preliminary plan is for a cluster development with 24 homes, including the existing Johns manor house largely hidden from view from Georgia Ave by a group of trees. He read a portion of a letter written by the president of the Oxbridge Group, who was formerly with the developers of Prince Georges Plaza. The letter is to the Montgomery Co. Historic Preservation Society in which he submitted the names of the adjacent homeowners to the subject property. They intend to subdivide the four parcels that make up this 24 acres site into 24 cluster lots leaving the manor house on 2 acres which reduces its environment setting. However, they are proposing to leave a clear vista between Georgia Ave and the manor house that they also plan to renovate. They indicated that they agreed to relocate a driveway for one of the lots to provide a better view of the manor house. They are asking for the Historic Preservation Society to approve their proposed changes. They have redrawn the plan to accommodate the request of the Society. The smallest lot is 21,000 sq ft. and largest is 38,000 sq. ft. in a 1 acre, clustered development and are larger than the lots in the Toll Brothers portion of the development. The access to this development is off of the existing entrance to the Toll Brothers portion. They have moved one house and moved the driveway as requested so that the manor house will be seen from Georgia Ave., although the only portion of the house that will be visible because of other houses, trees and shrubs is the two pillars in the front of the house. The developer is concerned that the Society will require more land around the manor house even though it would not be visible from Georgia Ave that would mean making the other lots smaller. Steve noted that there is a Society hearing the next evening on this plan and the developer asked that GOCA indicate that they supported the developers proposal. As a member of the community, he did not think anyone except one homeowner immediately behind the manor house would benefit from creating a larger setting for the house and he would prefer to see the house on larger lots. He recognized that it is the role of the Society to ask for all that they can legally expect, but in this case, the benefit of the larger lots is a greater benefit than a larger environmental setting for the manor house. What the Society is asking would cause the lots to be reduced to about 18,000 sq. ft. The lots in the rest of Brooke Manor are 18-22,000 sq ft. and are about the 18,000 sq. ft. in Victoria Springs. Steve Smet and Joe Hess both indicated that they would prefer to see the larger lots. Khalid pointed out that my clustering they are able to maximize their development to get 24 units and so, are required to give something back and the area being used for the storm water management pond does not count towards their green space, and providing the larger setting for the manor house may be the trade. If it was not cluster, they would likely only be able to develop 17-18 units. It was suggested that the benefit to community may not be as obvious to the community as a ball field or recreation facility. But, as Khalid suggested, an historic home is a valid benefit to the community in exchange for the increased density the developer is given and though it is not a ballfield, it is a cultural benefit to the community.

Steve also mentioned that he was approached as a commercial broker by Chesapeake Health Care Corp., which develops Alzheimer facilities, and he spoke with David Burka, the owner of the Silo Inn commercial property. Chesapeake is interested in purchasing the property for a 54 bed facility with 24 staff members. They are looking for a 3.5 acre site, the size of this site, a little bit north of Leisureworld, but not all the way into Olney. So this seems like a perfect site. But, the problem is that the property is zoned commercial and this is not a permitted use in this zone. It has an historic house on one corner, but that is not a problem for the developer who can use the building as a reception center. However, for this use to go on this site, the property must be rezoned or legislation has to be passed that would make this a permitted use in this zone. If the legislation is passed, then they would have to get a special exception. Both

are actions that need to go before the County Council. Steve felt that this would be a relatively low impact use with a building footprint about 30,000 sq. ft. Since this is a complex process, but with the Olney Master Plan almost being revisited, this might be a good time for making this kind of change.

## OLD BUSINESS

Transportation Issues - Rick Coburn reported that Dave Eskenazi indicated that State Highway Administration are still awaiting an exception to the Smart Growth Policy. This is a State policy intended to discourage development where it leads to sprawl as in the case of the area north of Brookeville in Montgomery and Howard Counties. Montgomery County has already agreed to do everything necessary to satisfy that the Brookeville Bypass will not do that, to ensure that the road is not widened, that density is not increased in the area. But, Howard County has not made the same commitments. That is being worked on, but he did not know if failing to get that agreement would be fatal to the process. There is a meeting to discuss some interim measures such as a round-about that would cause traffic to slow down somewhere in that stretch. While we do not believe this improvement will do anything to increase sprawl, the State is being cautious to not give the impression that they are doing anything to contribute to additional sprawl. He did not know for sure if this issue was causing any delay in the completion of the draft impact statement nor did he know if Carol Petzold had written the letter to SHA that she had indicated at our last meeting that she would write asking them to speak to the people in Olney.

Several people indicated that the stripping that SHA has added to Georgia Ave at Emory Ln has only seemed to confuse drivers turning left. The State has agreed to come back and look at the traffic patterns once the intersection is completed to see what adjustments are needed on the east side.

With respect to the improvements at Georgia Ave and Emory Ln, the State is aware that our recommendation to extend the accel lane south of Emory straight through to Rte. 28 is not meant to be a precedent that would lead to any additional widening on either side of Georgia Ave. That lane will be built as we recommended, and construction will begin in the Spring. The stripping put in recently is just an experiment to try to improve the situation at that corner until the improvements to that intersection are made. There was a consensus that we need to continue looking at that intersection to see if the improvements do fix any problems with the left turn lane from the east side of Emory.

Olney Village Mart/Olney Town Shopping Center Connection/Development Plans Update - Rick reported that the proposal for the sale of Olney Town Shopping Center to Freeman & Associates appears to be off because the counter offer proposed by Freeman & Associates was not accepted. So, Olney Town Shopping Center is moving ahead with its expansion plan. They are going ahead with their development plan. But it has been scaled back and there is no garage. Rick still thinks the connection ramp is too far forward. The tenant for the new store is Harris Teeter, a food store similar to Fresh Fields. Rich Kopanda, Paula Kahla, Ray and Rick will meet with Freeman Associates to try to assess the situation with them. They want to see that both groups move forward in a way that enables the best potential for the connection road. They have not presented any plans to Park and Planning yet.

Olney Post Office Expansion Update - Helene Rosenheim reported that the Post Office has selected the Finneyfrock property on the northeast corner of Georgia Ave and Appomattox Way. The Finneyfrock's have signed an agreement to sell, but they are still working out the specific details of the price.

Fletcher's Amoco Expansion Plans - Bob Fletcher indicated that the Amoco company has merged with a company that produces solar panels, and they now more environmentally sensitive. His station has been selected as the first station in the US to use the company's solar panels (Solarex) to generate some of their electricity. They will be placing a bank of solar panels on the top of the canopy over the gas pumps. All that will be visible from the front is about 2 feet of the top of the edges of the panel. The sides of the canopy will hide most of the panels from view. The banks of panels will really only be visible as you drive north on Georgia Ave. The plan at the moment is that Amoco will pay the costs of installing the panels and they will maintain them. This is a newer less expensive technology to maintain.

Maintenance Issues at Olney Manor Park - Paul Jarosinski reported that, as requested at the last GOCA meeting, he had drafted a letter to Park and Planning asking them to look into the matter of the County maintaining the ballfields and equipment at Olney Manor Park. They have added the problems with the tennis courts as well. The letter outlines what the problems are and expressing our concerns about the slippage in maintenance schedules. He is not sure where the funding will come from. The County has already replaced the curled fencing we had identified earlier. But, he received a call from the maintenance staff at the Park who indicated that the teams playing ball there have already

started to damage the new fencing playing soft toss into fence while they are waiting to play. They may need to put up signs saying No Soft Toss Permitted. Rick noted that it may take some private money to complete the repairs, but we do not know yet. What Paul is doing is starting a process and as we get into it, we will have a better sense of what is needed and who we will need to talk with. It was suggested that we invite the head of the Parks Department come to one of our meetings to discuss this issue. It is possible that once the County has the park back up to a good condition, then we might consider getting involved in financing that maintenance. Paul suggested that people go look at the Cabin John Park fields to see how they are using advertising signage to raise revenue for maintenance.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Discussion of Special Presentation - Development of John's Property - In the discussion of the request for GOCA support of the developers request to the Historic Preservation Society, several people expressed concerns about taking a position at this time since we at just heard about the issue for the first time that evening and there were a lot of issues that we have questions about. It was pointed out, as well, that the impact of the request from the Society to increase the acreage around the historic home did not necessarily have to be making 24 lots smaller, but could be to build one less unit. While clustering does permit the developer to maximize the number of units being built, there have been many situations when we have asked that developers build less than the maximum permitted in order to create a more attractive development and/or to provide amenities for the community that are a part of the trade off expected, for example, as a result of being able to cluster development allowing the developer to achieve a higher yield of units than if they developed without clustering. There was some feeling that plan may be reasonable, but that this is not an issue that GOCA has a strong feeling about the issues involved - positive or negative, to the point that we should take a position. There was a concern about the impact on rural entryway of large homes on small lots. IArt Brodsky moved that:

### GOCA TAKE NO POSITION ON THE JOHNS PROPERTY AT THIS TIME.

The motion was seconded by Ellen Bogague. Following a brief discussion about how the County officials will read GOCA taking no position, the consensus was that we might want to point out what our concerns are without necessarily taking a position at this time and the fact that this motion would not preclude us taking a position at a later time, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Rick Coburn, Helene Rosenheim, Mike Kelley, Rich Kopanda, Dudley Finnefrock, Art Brodsky, Peggy Vaughn (Gazette), Steve Smet, Sharon Elswick, Colleen Prorok, Paul Jarosinski, Ray Ammon, John Mahoney, Claudette Hamerski, Joe Hess, Sandy & Bobby Fletcher, Sandy Shulman, Ellen Bogage, Nora Blau, Richard Melnick, Patricia Sullivan, Christopher Patton, and Khalid Afzal