



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

GOCA MEETING - October 12, 1999

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Kelley. The floor was opened for Public Comments.

- Ron Berger noted that he had attended several meetings of a group called the Olney Non-Profit Consortium. The primary purpose of the Consortium is to publish a community calender of events He distributed copies of the 2nd edition of the calender, explaining that their goal is to identify events planned by organizations in the community so that groups will be aware of other events going on as they plan their own events. He asked people who are in groups that are interested in being included in the calender to submit them marked "For NPC Calender" to the Consortium by email to R@OLNEY-MD.COM (preferred method), by fax to 222 777-2645 ext 1017, or by mail to the Olney Chamber of Commerce, PO BOX 550, Olney, MD 20830, or by phone to the Olney Chamber at 301 924-3555. The latest calender updates can be seen on the Olney Kiwanis Community Calender at <HTTP://WWW.OLNEY-MD.COM>. The calender is printed by courtesy of IKO Realtors and is placed in stores, libraries, and government centers. Multiple copies are available at the Olney Library. if large numbers of copies are needed, contact the Olney Chamber of Commerce.

Fire & Safety Report

Mike noted that as a result of a problem that had occurred at a party at his house, they were visit by the police. While talking with the police afterwards, he suggested that they put together a checklist for parents whose teenage children are planning parties. They indicated that they already had one. Mike handed out a few copies of the list and some refrigerator magnets. He hopes to have copies available on our website soon as well. In addition, he suggested to them that parties that get too large generally result in the police being called, and it might be useful for parents to be able to call the police ahead of time and register that they are having a party. Then, when there is a concern, the police can call to see if the family needs assistance. The police indicated they would look into that idea and there may be a hotline established for that purpose.

The minutes were approved with 2 corrections (on Pg 3, 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 a notice that the County's Housing & Community Development Office will be considering the Maryland Historical Trust review, and a letter from the Board of Elections indicating that they are recruiting election judges and forwarding several copies of a brochure describing the job, and one bill he had for the Treasurer.

Paul Jarosinski reported that he had received a notice of a hearing on the value-pricing concept for State interstates. Mike Kelley added a copy of a letter he had received signed jointly by Allied Civic and the Civic Federation to the County Council regarding the interview process they used recently for filling the Board of Appeals vacancy.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Lori reported that there were some deficits in the budget because donations pledged for the Olney Days Festival had not been received. Some of the deficit was offset by the profits from the ad book. Our actual receipts to date for 1999 is \$10,121 and our expenses have been \$11,130. She recommended that we have some type of additional fundraiser. Mike noted that we will be talking with Natalie Cantor about getting some of the funding for the fireworks from the MidCounty Service Center's budget.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Mike reported that:

- He and Rich met with the Magruder cluster presidents regarding our efforts to get some safety improvements to Muncaster Mill Rd near the high school.
- He attended a meeting relating to the closure of Norwood Rd between the Red door store and New Hampshire Ave.

Both items were discussed later in the meeting.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Ray Ammon reported that the Chamber's Olney Community Night will take place on Oct. 13th from 5-8 pm at Longwood.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Olney Manor Park Maintenance - Mike indicated that we had concerns because we saw that the maintenance at the Park has been slipping and the condition of the fields has deteriorated. He introduced Gordon Rosenthal of the Dept of Parks, and John Boyd, manager of Olney Manor Park. Gordon apologized for Mr. Cochran, the Director of Parks, who had planned to attend, but could not because of a family commitment. They first got involved in response to the article in the Gazette about the maintenance. Gordon had been asked to list completed projects and proposed funded and unfunded projects. The funded project include: major road repair, water fountain repair, handball court renovation, restroom repair completed, tennis court repair underway, baseball fields - drainage work, asphalt under bleachers, fields #3,4, & 5 - being put out to bid - hope to complete them before the games begin or they will defer the work until after the season, more water fountain repair, tennis court lighting, and more road resurfacing. Some unfunded projects they are hoping to be adapted include: redoing the lighting on all the ballfields to take advantage of more modern technology, expanding the play area, and racquetball repairs including fixing the roof , painting, making them handicap accessible but only doing a few now.

In the discussion that followed:

- They noted that the county now operates on a 2 year CIP cycle and if there are things we want, particularly big ticket items, we would need to get the into a CIP item. If they are smaller, some funds may be available from funding that Cochran controls.
- If a project is approved with funding during the first year or two of the 6-year CIP, there is no real problem. But, if they funding is shown being spend in the later, out-years, there is the possibility that funding will be reprogrammed to other projects and the completion date might slide.

- Mike asked about the scoreboards. The problem is not so much the cost of the scoreboards, as who will operate them. It hadn't been an issue for some time because the scoreboards were not working. In the past scorekeepers had stayed in the pressbox. But, from there they either could not see the scoreboard or the game. John wanted to take the roofs off of them and use the space for storage. The consensus of those at the meeting was that if the scoreboards cannot be repaired, they should be torn down. John had considered putting ads on the boards, but learned that any money they may have raised that way would go into the general funds, not directly into funds for the park. So, they did not pursue the idea. Gordon was open to the idea of community-supported scoreboards. Joe Hess stated that he did not care for the idea of advertisements on the scoreboards because he thought they would be an eyesore.

- Rich Kopanda asked about the problem of soft toss - the activity some team coaches have their teams go through while warming up of tossing the ball up in front of their bats and hitting them into the fence around the ballfield. While one individual doing this may not seem to do any harm, when hundreds of balls are hit into the fencing, the fencing becomes misshapened and curls up at the bottom and damages the coatings. So, the fences rust and the bottom edges stick out and become a hazard to those playing on the fields. John has put up some signs stating that soft toss is prohibited but they do not seem to be having much effect because the new fencing is already beginning to curl. There is only one staff person on duty in the evenings, so it is very difficult for them to patrol the area to tell people not to do that. It was suggested that they may want to designate an area for soft toss away from the playing fields. Paul asked about the possibility of a batting cage, but Gordon indicated that he had heard there was type of liability issue with them, but he had not paid full attention to them so he did not know exactly what the issue was. Paul asked them to look into this idea, because it might be helpful if teams had an alternative place to warm up.

- Paul asked about Ballfield #2 and Gordon get enough funds this year. Each year there is a certain amount of money for fencing, lighting, etc. and each manager will put in a list of their druthers. They will likely put in next year for Field #2. Paul asked how GOCA could help get the money needed for our repairs. The Parks Dept had just given the County Council their list of preferences for the next 2 years. The Recreation Administrative Board prioritize the items. GOCA could play a more active role in the CIP process. Letters could be written to Mr. Cochran expressing what projects we are interested in and our priority. There is some money in the CIP specifically for repairs at Olney Manor Park, other is in more general items such as road maintenance. So, it becomes more difficult to get a complete picture of what repairs are being funded. It is helpful to get their list of priorities to Cochran before he does his prioritizing.

- When asked about resodding, John indicated that they had hoped to take one field out of play to do the work, but with the drought they had to delay. There is only a small window of opportunity when the fields are not being used and this year the weather was a problem during the time they should have been doing the work.

- Paul asked if there was a mechanism for reporting people who were misusing the fields. John indicated that there is a system, but it had kind of fallen between the cracks. Paul suggested that the teams get a notice that if they are seen doing soft toss, they will forfeit the game or lose their permit to use the field. John noted that the Recreation Department is really responsible for relaying the information and reiterated that they only have 1 person at night, which makes it difficult to patrol.

- Paul noted, too, that they needed some sort of maintenance for the holes in the fields during the first games. John reiterated that this was difficult to do as well with only one staff person. It was suggested that they have dirt available, and possibly a shovel that the coaches could use before their games. The maintenance staff does seem to fill the holes during the day, but they fill it with dust that flies out of the holes the first time someone steps in it.

- Paul asked what it would take to make the concession stands operational, at least on the weekends to generate some income, perhaps using a volunteer system. Gordon noted that it had been a money loser for the County. If we are proposing to have an association sell food as fundraiser, we can make a proposal to Mr. Cochran with an explanation of how we would use the funds.

- Paul suggested that there was a need for a rededication of the Robert Hill sign on the ballfield named for him. John indicated that it was being repaired.

- Gordon was asked about the replacement of mulch in our local parks. He indicated that in the Northern region has 2 people dedicated to park inspection. They get around about one time a month to each park. The mulch is suppose to be 12" deep, and they are suppose to be checking that. If they find places where it is less than that, they let John knows that and he replaces it. They do not have enough staff to do the inspections every day. He noted that if people see mulch that needs maintenance, they can call John Boyd at 301 774-6255.

OLD BUSINESS

Olney Golf Center Signage - Rick Coburn noted that there would be a hearing on 10/14 on a request from the current owner of the Olney Golf Center for new signage on both Georgia Avenue and Emory Church Rd. They are requesting an 11' sign in the shape of a golf ball on a tee on Georgia Ave. We are planning to testify in opposition to the signage request. He did not feel there was a middle of the road position on this because the a sign of this design, even in a smaller size would not be acceptable as a part of the rural entryway into Olney. The special exception approved for the center did include a description of a sign of a certain size, and the lights and facility itself that is very visible from Georgia Ave and eliminates the need for the kind of signage being asked for. Rick plans to stress that this is a special exception in a residential zone which places certain restrictions on the signage. He sees this use as almost an extension of Olney Manor Park and the kind of signage used in the park setting should be a model for the signage from this facility, that it should not be a large, commercial sign. Joe Hess indicated that the Southeast Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA) would testify in opposition to the large sign and are proposing that the signage on Georgia Ave be more like the sign they are proposing for Emory Church Rd. He also noted some additional concerns they have about the Center's hours of operation. The special exception states that they will close at 10:00 pm, but the sign at their entrance says they close at 10:30 pm. Also, the special exception calls for a pork chop shaped entrance to discourage left turns onto Emory Church Rd. and notes it is not required until the work on the center is done, but he did not know when that would be.

Khalid Afzal, Park & Planning Staff, noted that if the proposed change is a modification to a special exception, it goes to the Board of Appeals. The hearing results are a recommendation to the Permitting staff. If it needs to be modified, there needs to be a hearing, but if a waiver is granted, there is no waiver

Safety Issues on Muncaster Mill Rd - Rich Kopanda reported that he and Mike Kelley had attended a meeting of the Magruder PTA Cluster to ask for their support of our efforts to get the State Highway Administration to take some action to address safety issues we have identified on Muncaster Mill Rd near Magruder High School. They were generally interested in our effort, but wanted to discuss it at a separate meeting. Rich had indicated that we are interested in having them as co-signors to a letter we propose to send to the SHA outlining our concerns once we get the data we are collecting on accidents along this portion of Muncaster Mill. They were interested in our views on the Inter-County Connector, and they had indicated we were opposed to it. There was an issue of what portion of Muncaster Mill to include in this discussion. They expressed some interest in including the portion of the road beyond the area of the park, maybe even to Avery Rd. We decided at the officers meeting to limit the scope of our efforts to the portion of the road up to Bowie Mill. If other groups were interested in going further, we would support their efforts, but we did not want the scope of this project to be too big

Rich also noted that as a result of attending the cluster meeting ,he had been contacted by Tom Welsh in conjunction with the formation of an Upper Rock Creek Alliance, a group forming to deal with water and environmental quality in the Rock Creek Watershed area. It is being formed as a result of the initiation of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan review. They are inviting organizations in the watershed area to participate in the alliance. North Creek is planning to participate.

Expansion of the Olney Library - Ron Berger reported that a member of the staff of the Olney Library had come to our last meeting to report on the plans to renovate the Olney Library. The renovation plan included expanding the library building towards Rte. 108 and cutting down most of the trees between Rte. 108 and the existing building.. They noted that the plans were being presented to the Library Advisory Committee at their next meeting. He and Helene Rosenheim had attended the meeting. At that meeting, Library staff from their headquarters office, presented the plans to the Committee, after which we suggested to them that they may be being shortsighted given that Olney has doubled in population since the Library first opened, that maybe they needed a facility larger than what they were proposing. The Department staff people that were there indicated that when they projected out the Olney population until 2025, there was no enough population to warrant a library the size of a regional library. We then also pointed out that what they were doing was shortsighted because what this community needed at this point where we need some kind of free standing government building that not only housed the library, but some other government center such as the police substation, a satellite office of the MidCounty Regional Service Center. In addition, the US Postal Service has just completed a site selection process so we are aware of several sites that would likely be candidates for this type of building. The Library Advisory Committee did not react much to what we were saying and did not appear to be an idea that they were interested in pursuing. However, he and Helene still believe this is an excellent idea, and an idea we need to purse with Natalie Cantor. Mike indicated that he had mentioned the idea to Nancy Dacek at a recent town meeting he attended. He hadn't gotten to ask any questions while they are on the air, but had spoken to her after the telecast. She seemed supportive of the idea, not so much the regional library portion, but the other part. Helene noted that we are not really proposing a larger library, but a large facility that would not only house the library they are proposing along with spaces for these other government services, similar to the UpCounty Government Center. We would be proposing that the money intended for the library expansion be used, in combination with some additional money to fund this larger facility. We believe there is a need for this kind of center and it will be build in the not too distant future. Building a larger facility now, before the library is renovated, would be more cost effective in the long run. So, we need to act quickly to gain support for this idea before the renovation plans for the library get to far along. It might be possible to incorporate the Rock Creek and Sandy Spring in the area that would be serviced by this center. Ed Weisel expressed concern that we may be inconsistent with previous CIP positions in which our main focus has been education. Helene and others noted that while our priority has been education for the past several years, that has not precluded us from supporting other CIP projects such as the Olney Swim Center and the new fire station. While this idea seems to just be a reaction to an idea presented by at our last meeting, the idea that was presented really just crystallized the fact that there are a number of government agencies looking for a more permanent presence in Olney. A part of the long range plans for the MidCounty Regional Service Center is to have an actual presence in Olney. The Police Substation has been looking for a more permanent location than the trailer they are currently located in. Ron Berger moved that:

GOCA ADOPT A POLICY OF SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FREE-STANDING GOVERNMENT-TYPE FACILITY TO HOUSE SERVICES SUCH AS THE LIBRARY, POLICE SUBSTATION, A REGIONAL SERVICE CENTER SATELLITE OFFICE, MEETING ROOM SPACE, ETC. AND FORM A WORKING GROUP TO PURSUE THAT PROPOSAL.

The motion was seconded by Helene Rosenheim and passed unanimously.

Olney Town Shopping Center Expansion - Rick Coburn reported that both shopping center expansion plans are within current permitted areas. Most of the additional space in the Town Center will be used with one primary building. Chris Aleva seems to be committed to the ramp to their property line. The question is if there is no cross easement, do we want them to build a road to nowhere or to incorporate some alternative bonded commitment. Rick indicated that Chris may need to come back to us for support of a waiver of parking requirements, but either way, he does plan to come before us with their latest plans as soon as they are ready. There are not plans for the Olney Village Mart yet. The Freeman Associates, the most recent owners of that center, are still trying to meet with Shoppers Food Warehouse. They have also been talking with Lou Iaquina about the access on Hillcrest. Michael Kay asked about the viability of the extension of Appomattox to create an exit from the rear of the Village Mart. The Environ development is still concerned about the impact such an entrance could have on traffic into their development in general, and, specifically, on Marksman Circle and about the sound buffering from the centers. Rick noted that they want to do something to help the flow of traffic on Rte. 108, but no determination has been made as to what is the best thing to do. Rick had also told the developers to keep the adjacent residents informed and involved in the development process.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Special Presentation

Olney Manor Park Maintenance - The consensus of the discussion was that Paul Jarosinski will write a letter outlining what we would like to add to the list of proposed maintenance projects for the Park, primarily the renovation of Field #2 and to get a timetable for those improvements that are already planned. Rich Kopanda noted that we need to identify our priorities of both the planned projects and those we are proposing and we need to be consistent in our communications with the Dept of Parks, the Dept of Recreation and the County Council. Rick added that we want this to be an ongoing process. There was some discussion of what our priorities might be. Khalid noted that we should send a copy of our letter to the Chair of Park & Planning and to the County Council president and to Nancy Dacek.

As an aside, Mike mentioned that Olney Boys & Girls Club is holding its groundbreaking ceremony on Sunday, October 31st. They had asked Mike for a mailing list for our member associations that he faxed to them. So, we should be expecting notices about the ceremony.

Closure of Norwood Rd During Rte. 28/198 Connector - Mike Kelley noted that within the last month we became of plans to close Norwood Rd for 15 months between Llewellyn Farms and Blake High School during the construction of the Rte. 28/198 connector. We are aware that this is a concern to the principal of the high school and a number of the communities that feed into Blake. He had a call from Jim Folke of Lake Hallowell concerning this who indicated that there have been several meetings with the school community Mike noted that there will be a meeting on Oct 20 at 1:00 pm that he plans to attend and he encouraged others to attend. According to Blake's principal, staff at MCPS do not seem to be concerned about this. Ron spoke to several County officials who said that this project has been in the plans for many years, well before Blake was planned, that MCPS knew about these plans when they selected the site for Blake. They also indicated that because of the wetlands in that area, it is doubtful that the Corps of Engineers would permit them to do that on the south side of the Norwood, even temporarily for a bypass around the construction. The County would have to take several properties in order to put a detour on the north side, but the County is not interested in doing that. So, in their minds, building a bypass is an impossibility. As far as they are concerned, closing the road is the least of all possible evils and they plan to keep it closed for the minimal amount of time possible. They have asked the school system if they would like the closure timed so that the disruption will cover one or two school years. As for Fire and Rescue, their understanding was that it was Company 4's responsibility, and when the question came up, it was more about medical emergencies. Ron did not know if it made a difference whether it was a fire emergency.

Ron noted that It is not so much a question of it being a done deal, as a situation in which there are no other real alternatives. Even though these communities may not have been aware of this plan, it is not a new plan. This area experiences a lot of flooding and a special bridge will need to be build on both the new road and across Norwood. The problem for the schools is that buses to go to Blake will have to go some other, longer way to get to Blake and then back again to pick up middle and elementary schools students. While Lake Hallowell was concerned about the impact on commuters from their development east on Rte. 108, but it was noted that there are commuters from all over the Olney area that use that route to commute to work. So, there will be a significant impact on the Olney community.

Several alternatives were discussed, but it seemed that most would not work because of the differences in the elevation of the existing and the new road. The point was made that no one ever anticipated that Blake would have been build when these plans were first put together, and it is possible that they need to rethink this plan to take the existence of the high school into account. Mike concluded the discussion by noting that he would attend the 10/30 meeting with Natalie Cantor.

Olney Days Festival 2000- Helene Rosenheim noted that she would like to hold an initial planning meeting for anyone interested in serving on the planning committee on October 25th at 8:00 pm. Those interested in attending were asked to contact her for the location of the meeting.

Joe Hess reported that they had become aware of a pre-preliminary plan that was files at Park & Planning for a number of 2 2.5 acres lots for a piece of land-locked property south of SEROCA and north of East Norbeck Park. He did not think that the immediate neighbors were concerned, but he wanted us to be aware that there was some activity going on there. Mike indicated that we had not heard anything about it, and was not even certain that the property was in our planning area. He asked Joe to let us know if he heard anything more about it.

Extension of Brighton Dam Rd - Bruce McIndoe, a resident of Brookeville, reported that he wanted to be sure GOCA was aware that there were plans to extend Brighton Dam Rd that the residents in that area feel would have a negative impact on their community. Mike indicated that we would look into the situation.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Rick Coburn, Helene Rosenheim, Mike Kelley, Rich Kopanda, Art Brodsky, Peggy Vaughn (Gazette), Sharon Elswick, Claudette Hamerski, Joe Hess, Ellen Bogage, Ron Berger, Nora Blau, Paul Jarosinski, Gary Lieber, Roy Peck, Michael Kay, Christie Berman, Anita Brady, Steve Smet, Ed Weisel, John O'Loughlin, David Burnett, Henry Alley, Bruce McIndoe, Lori Wilen, Ray Ammon, and Khalid Afzal