



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

GOCA MEETING - JANUARY 11, 2000

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Kelley.

Mike noted that we are beginning to put together a list of email addresses so that we can send the minutes and agendas by email and reminded everyone who has email to let us know by putting it on the sign-in sheet or by sending it to Helene Rosenheim at helener@pressroom.com.

There were no corrections or additions to the minutes and 1 change to the agenda. Following introductions, the floor was opened for Public Comments.

- Mary Gardner, immediate past president of Community Concerts and co-chair of the first Music Fest 2000. She asked for GOCA assistance wherever possible. She noted that live music has been a basic part of all cultures. Community Concerts Organization (CCO) is committed to bringing the finest musical entertainment the organization can afford. CCO has wanted to do a public music festival. So they have planned a festival to celebrate the millennium and their 5th anniversary. It is scheduled for July 14-15. The idea is to get people to stop mowing lawns and going shopping to come to listen to music. There will be performances all over town. The Festival is being co-sponsored by the Mont. Co. Dept. of Recreation, but CCO will coordinate the event. Mary felt that the Rec Dept was a perfect partner because of the experience they have had with this type of event. Friday night and Saturday morning, there will be an event called Music Where You Are. Saturday from 11am -5 pm there will be youth concerts all day building up to a concert for teens at Sherwood High School. On Millennium Stage II, there will be on-going concerts of blue grass, Celtic, children music, etc. Saturday night there will be a concert by one of the military bands.

Mary requested the assistance of 3-4 people from GOCA to help locate sites to produce short performances all over town. People or businesses sponsoring a performance can have them somewhere else or at their businesses, for example, a restaurant having someone perform in their restaurant or outside of it. If there is any cost for the performers, the business sponsoring them would cover that cost. But, some of the performers are free. CCO and the Rec Dept have lists of performers and CCO is coordinating matching sponsors with performing groups.

- Eliot Rosenheim noted that he and Helene remember when GOCA looked into reducing costs for trash collection for the Olney Master Planning area. GOCA has a history of looking into cost cutting alternatives for our neighbors. He noted that deregulation has come to telephones and utility services. Recent Washington Post articles all discuss his first taste of energy deregulation.

He is involved in this deregulation and it's very exciting because he's working with some of the top people in the industry. Just the previous Saturday, Jan. 8th, he had met with the CEO of ACN Energy. ACN Energy is the 4th largest alternate gas and electric supplier in America. In just one year they have attracted more than 150,000 customers who have chosen ACN Energy over institutional utilities for gas and electric power. ACN Energy became #1 in California in just 5 months.

ACN Energy provides value for the long term. And to ensure the highest level of integrity they have enlisted three former state attorneys general. A former under Secretary of Energy in the Reagan / Bush administration and a former congressman who wrote the deregulation legislation and who went on to become the chief economist for the U.S. Senate joined the team.

ACN Energy provides exactly the same services for less due to deregulation. Gas savings are available now; electricity will be available this summer on July 1st; long distance phone now; local phone this summer when ACN becomes a phone company. He asked who would not want to reduce their monthly gas bill by 2 to 4 ½ percent? No contract, just switch. If it's not lower, than switch back. There is no charge for switching. (Joel Goldberg, a former neighbor who now lives in Howard County, but still maintains a house in Olney, has been saving long distance customers an average of 20 to 30 percent through ACN and

Qwest.) He is spreading the word by means of GOCA, one on one. That's how ACN attracts new customers and independent representatives. No advertising. No overhead. No million dollar spokes persons. He noted how simple the process is and suggest that our delegates could be the contact people to their neighbors and make money while doing it.

He just wanted to begin to spread the word about this opportunity. He invited anyone interested in more information, phone him on 301 774-6774 or e-mail him at eliotr@pressroom.com.

- Ed Weisel noted that on school days, the Glenmont parking lot fills up by 8:30 am. We need the Georgia Ave. Busway developed as soon as possible.

- Roy Peck noted that Sprint is looking for a site in the Olney/Norbeck Road area for a tower similar to the one near Norman's Farm Market. The contact is Chris Deangelo. Barney Evans, a resident in the Norbeck area, commented that this lower end of Georgia Ave north of Rte. 28 seems to be a dumping ground for that sort of facility, and it doesn't seem right for the entryway.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mike Kelley noted that the County has determined that it will be necessary to close Norwood Rd west of Layhill Rd and east of New Hampshire for approximately a year as a part of the Rte 98/198 Connector road project. He introduced Edgar Gonzalez, with the Dept of Public Works and Transportation. Mr. Gonzalez reported that the original plan for the road was for a 2-lane road. But, because of the closeness of Layhill and Norwood, acceleration/deceleration lanes would be too close together.. So, they decided to make that portion of the road 4-lanes. The remainder of the road will continue to be 2-lanes.

This project began in 1980. The alignment included 7 acres of wetlands so they had to do something similar to an environmental impact statement to get the necessary permit from the Corps of Engineers even though there is no Federal money involved. The Master Plan alignment was found to be approvable, so they proceeded with planning using the Master Plan alignment. For a time, the planning got entangled in the Inter-County Connector (ICC) issues and now this project had the eyes of the Federal Government on it. They had to show that this project (1) has the independent ability to improve transportation, (2) will not pre-determine an alignment for the ICC, and (3) will not preclude an alignment of the ICC on the alignment for this road. In 1999, they got the approval from the Corps of Engineers and got their permit from the Maryland Dept. of Environment. They have notified the school system that they would have to close Norwood in front of the school at one of the monthly meetings they have with the school system staff. Bids for the project are going out this month and will be opened in February and March. They should begin construction in May 2000 and it will be a 3 year project. He noted that the area of Layhill floods and they have had a fatality there recently during a storm. This project will raise Layhill 10 ft. At the point the new road intersects with Norwood, Norwood will be raised 18 ft. That is one of the reasons that the road will have to be closed. One of the reasons the road has to be elevated that much is that they have to build in a major structure at Nursery Rd for passage for deer. There are now deer that move along the Northwest Branch and cross Norwood Rd. There are 2 culverts under Norwood, but they are too narrow and there have been a number of accidents there.

They considered building a detour to the northeast of the intersection with Norwood. But found that they would have to take 2 homes and disturb wetlands. They also considered a southeast detour, but that would impact 3 acres of wetlands. They are already fighting with the Corps of Engineers about the amount of wetlands impacted by this project. They told Gonzalez's staff that if they submitted that plan, they would reject it because they can build the road by closing the road without an unreasonable inconvenience to traffic. They are already struggling to convince the Corps that this project is viable with or without the ICC. They considered building one lane at a time, but because the road will be 18 ft. higher, there is too much of a grade difference to do one side and keep traffic going. It will take 400 heavy construction vehicles a day to move the dirt from one side of the area to the other and they were concerned with traffic mixing with them, especially new drivers going to or from the high school.

Mr. Gonzalez stated that they are working with the State Highway Administration to make improvements to some of the surrounding intersections that will facilitate the detour. The Layhill/Ednor/Norwood intersection is going to be improved beginning in May of this year. They are increasing to a 3-lane approach for Layhill to create a left, straight-through, and right turn lane. There will be two lanes on Norwood- a left & straight through lane and a right lane. The Red Door Store side will not be touched. Norwood eastward will be improved by longer green light and as a result of the other improvements there. There was concern expressed because they were not taking any land from the Woodlawn property on the north side of Norwood. Mr. Gonzalez indicated that he did not know why they hadn't because it is a State project. He noted, too, that the intersection of Norwood and the new road will be at grade and signalized.

Their staff initially estimated a 16-18 month road closure. They analyzed the plans and were able to get the time frame down to 11 months. The contract will include a \$5500 delay penalty per day for each day beyond 11 months. That won't help the commuters, but is an incentive for the contractor to finish on or ahead of schedule.

Mr. Gonzalez noted, too, that with the hydraulics of the area, they get floods on Norwood, but not as bad as some other intersections. The flooding alone would not necessitate the 18 ft elevation of the road, possibly only 12-14. The extra height is needed to create the deer crossing. When asked if this road could become a State road, Mr. Gonzalez indicated that the County Council passed a resolution stating that the road could not be transferred to the State without their vote.

A second improvement will be at Ednor Rd and New Hampshire Ave. Eastbound on Ednor will be expanded to a right and a left/through lane, and westbound will also have a right and a left/through lane. On New Hampshire, the stacking lane for the left onto Ednor will be improved. At Norbeck and Layhill, the intersection will be raised 11 ft, but that road will never be closed.

The Norwood project will not begin until these projects are done, and won't start until June, after school closes. They have data on workable days over a period of years, and can estimate the average number of days that will be available to contractors. Contracts used to specify number of work days, but now they just give a calendar date for completion, so there are no arguments about the workability of a day. Mr. Gonzalez had suggested including incentives in the contract as well as disincentives for delaying. But, his staff felt that they really did not want to push the contractor because of construction restrictions involved in

raising a road 18 ft. It will be an opened section road with no curbs and a drainage gully. There will also be a bike trail all along the length of the road.

When asked about the impact of this on Norbeck west of this intersection, Mr. Gonzalez noted that because of the ICC situation, many Master Plans are in transportation disorder. If the ICC is not built, Park & Planning (P&P) will need to rethink transportation lane. Both the County Council and the County Executive have indicated to the State, that the length of Norbeck needs to be looked at. He noted, also, that if this project had not gotten caught in the ICC controversy, it would have been completed at the same time the widening project on New Hampshire was completed. The County did not want to wait for the State on the New Hampshire project, so they fronted the money for the design of that project. When that was done, they asked the State if they wanted the County to acquire any land that needed to be purchased, but the State chose to do that themselves.

He noted, too, that the 11 month schedule is not driven by money, but by the environment, and engineering and construction requirements. This construction is very sensitive to weather because of the movement of massive amounts of dirt and the compression of the dirt after it is in place. Although Mr. Gonzalez was not sure how much the plans could be changed at this point, he agreed that it would be useful to talk with SHA about the Layhill/Ednor/Norwood improvement concerning the use of land on the north side of Norwood, if not for the short term improvements, but possibly for a long term improvement some time later. A concern was also raised that the State might come back later and try to use the environmental impact statement from this project to build the ICC in this area, even though it is not totally applicable to the ICC. Mr. Gonzalez indicated that the State would not be able to do that. There will be a public forum at Blake High School on February 29th.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Art Brodsky reported that the correspondence included a note to Helene with a name of a delegate, a letter from Council member Phil Silverman, the lead member for the Department of Parks in response to the copy of the letter to Don Cochran regarding Olney Manor Park that we cc'd to him asking us to keep him apprised of our progress. Mike noted that he had received a copy of a letter Nancy Dacek sent to Cochran asking him to keep her apprised of the progress in response to our letter. We had also cc'd her a copy of our letter to Cochran.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mike noted that Lori Wilen was not able to attend the meeting, but Roy Peck had just finished auditing our books so would be able to report. Roy indicated that as of 12/31/99, our checking account balance is \$747.90 and the savings account balance is \$3377.80 plus 3 months interest that he did not have a record of, for a total balance of \$4115.70. The only real discrepancy he found in auditing the books was a \$30 late fee that we had to pay for the fireworks because of a miscommunication about the payment of the bill.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Mike reported that:

- We have added 3 new items to the agenda for committee reports. The GOCA by-laws assigns each of the areas to a vice president and they will be reporting on any activities in their committees during the previous months. For this meeting, he would be giving the reports.

Membership: Letters for 2000 memberships will be going out to our member associations very soon.

Land Use: (1) We received plans for 5 lots near Tridelphia Lake on the site the Humane Society was hoping to develop as a shelter several months ago. (2) We also received plans for an additional building on the Olney House property and we plan to invite the developer to an upcoming meeting to discuss the proposal. (3) we have been told that a developer is interested in putting a 64-bed Alzheimer's facility on the Silo Inn site, but it is too early to bring any plans to us.

Legislation: Nothing to report this month.

- The officers met with Elaine Barkley, the Head Librarian at the Olney Library. She is conducting outreach to the community to get input on how the Library can better address the needs of the Community. She speak to us as one part of that process. She also gave us some post cards to distribute for our members to fill out and mail back to the Library as a survey of the types of services the community is interested in.

- He has received correspondence from the new Director of the County Historic Society forwarding information about a group of about 24 sites in the Olney area that are being considered for designation as historic sites.

- The Olney Town Shopping Center is up for sale. They are looking for new buyers and plans for the ramp are on hold again.

- He and Dave Eskenazi attended a meeting of Project Change. They reported on the results of the survey they had done. He invited them to the February meeting to discuss the survey and their continuing interest in setting up a facility for teens in the town center area.

OLD BUSINESS

Olney Theatre Development Plans - Jim Folk reported that a letter based on our motion at the last meeting generally supporting the concept, but outlining some concerns we have is on its way to Park & Planning. He indicated that he spoke with Khalid Afzal at P&P who indicated that he had not seen the changes Bill Miller had shown us; and that he does not plan to schedule a hearing until they get the revised plan. The Lake Hallowell HOA sent a letter to P&P saying an amendment to the preliminary plan required a reconsideration of the development plan. He noted, also, that the MidCounty Citizen Advisory Board will be reviewing the proposed amendment to determine if they want to comment on the proposal.

Mall of Services - Helene noted that several meetings ago, Roy Mead had suggested that the community might want to take advantage of a proposal to renovate the Olney Library by proposing to the County that it might make more sense to include the new library facility as a larger facility that could house a variety of County services, particularly since the County police are looking for a permanent substation site in lieu of the trailer and the MidCounty Regional Service Center is looking for a space other than the small meeting room they use on Fridays. We had agreed, by consensus, at the previous meeting to pursue this idea. In order to do that, we would like to form a task force that would include several GOCA members plus people outside of GOCA that are interested in the idea such as PTA cluster representatives. We believe that this is an idea that will need a broad-based community support. Mike suggested that this might also be a good location for the teen center the Project Change students are hoping to establish. Before we can begin putting any real proposal together, we need to wait to see in the Olney Library renovations are included in the upcoming budget proposal from the County Executive and, if so, what timetable is projected for those renovations. She will be scheduling a meeting with Ron Berger, Roy Mead, and any others interested in attending shortly after the budget is released.

Transportation Issues - Rick Coburn noted that Emory Road improvements should begin in April and will take 4 months. They should not be doing any work during rush hours.

Olney Days Festival 2000 - Helene Rosenheim reported that her husband, Eliot has been talking with the staff at Trotter's Glen Golf Course on Batchellors Forest Rd to make arrangements for an Olney Days Millennium Golf Tournament on Friday, May 19th. It will be a family-oriented event with reduced entry fees for children or young players

accompanying adult players. There will be a \$75 entry fee for adults and \$50 for the children accompanying them. The Tournament will be set up so that golfers will be assigned to one of the holes and at a certain time, all the golfers will have 10 minutes to get to their hole and at the sound of a gunshot, all will begin playing and will advance on through the holes until they have played all 18 holes. At the end of the golfing, there will be a banquet lunch at which prizes will be awarded. In addition to the money raised in entry fees, we are also going to look for corporate sponsors for each hole. We will post a sign at each sponsored hole identifying the sponsor.

Helene also noted that the Fireworks have been ordered and a deposit of \$2,000 needs to be sent by the end of February. Roni Septoff is suppose to get back to our contact at Safeway at the end of January for a decision on whether they will do the coupons at the register. Apparently some of their management did not feel it was a compelling enough need. Roni was going to try to persuade them that supporting this community event was a major event intended to foster a strong sense of community among the 35,000 people living in this area which has a significant impact on the lives of our children and the environment they grow up in. She also noted that she has submitted a grant application to the Dept. of Recreation requesting funds for the 2001 Olney Days Festival. We were too late for this year. We are asking for \$10,000-\$12,000. It appears that there is money available for this type of activities, so we are optimistic that we will get a large portion of that amount. We still plan to use the ad book as a fund raiser, both this year and next year and will use the proceeds of all this fundraising to support GOCA and its projects. There will be a meeting for the Planning Committee on Wednesday, Jan. 26th at Roni Septoff.

1999 GOCA Awards Nominations - Ron Berger reported that we had not received as many nominations as we have in the past, but that those we had received were very worthy nominations. He reminded everyone that we will be presenting awards to the winners at our annual awards ceremony. This year's ceremony is scheduled for Sunday, March 5th, at 2:00 pm at Longwood. He presented the ballot and indicated that our delegates would be receiving ballots that would be tallied at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

County Liquor Store Relocation - Mike reported that he had been contacted by Natalie Cantor and by the Olney Chamber of Commerce to see if GOCA would have any objection to the County Liquor store relocating from the Olney Village Mart to building in the Giant Food parking lot that Blockbusters used to be in. Once assured that it would be outside the setback required for a liquor store near a school building, the officers felt that there was no particular problem with them. Some concerns were expressed about the limited parking in the vicinity of that building, but it was also suggested that there would likely be less traffic for that store than for Blockbusters. There was some concern expressed about the signage and the consensus was that the relocation would be acceptable as long as the signage is only on the front of the building. There was some concern about another store leaving the Olney Village Mart, but it was also suggested that since Freeman and Associates are doing a major revamp of the shopping center, it might actually make it easier for them if that space were empty. It was noted, also, that this would fill a building that is very visible and has been empty for a long time.

Possible Zip Code Change for Olney Residents in Cashell Area - Dave Eskenazi reported that when the US Postal Service representatives were at our meeting discussing their plans to expand the Olney Post Office, we asked about the possibility of the zip codes for residents in the Cashell Elementary area that have a Rockville zip code and are serviced by the Twinbrook Post Office. The residents in this area feel as though they are part of Olney, their children go to school with and socialize with children that live in Olney, and, for most, it is closer to the Olney Post Office than Twinbrook. With the expansion of the Olney Post Office, it should be able to accommodate the additional residences. It appeared that this is something that the Post Office would consider. Dave indicated that he is drafting a letter to the Postal Service to see what would be involved in trying to accomplish that. He is also identifying the areas that should be included and is proposing to conduct some sort of survey to get a sense of the extent of interest in such a change. The consensus was that he should continue with the effort.

2000 GOCA Officers Ballot Approval - Ron Berger reported that the 2000 GOCA Officers will be elected at the February meeting, and in accordance with our by-laws, the slate for those elections must be approved at the January meeting. There were no nominations from the floor, so the slate is currently as Ron presented it:

President - Mike Kelley
Executive Vice President - Rich Kopanda
First Vice President - Art Brodsky
Second Vice President - Jim Folk
Treasurer - Roy Peck
Corresponding Secretary - Lori Wilen
Recording Secretary - Helene Rosenheim

Rick Coburn would continue to be the immediate Past President.

Ron noted that the nominations are still open and invited anyone interested in serving in any of these offices to contact him at or following the meeting. Elections will be held at the end of February meeting.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Rick Coburn, Helene and Eliot Rosenheim, Mike Kelley, Rich Kopanda, Roy Peck, Peggy Vaughn (Gazette), Dave Eskenazi, Jim Folk, Michael Kay, Joe Hess, Stanley Elswick, Art Brodsky, Ellen Bogage, Larry Shulman, Phil Kauffman, Chuck Young, Ed Partington, Edgar Gonzalez, Joel Goldberg, Mary Gardner, Debby McIndoe, Barney Evans, and Ed Weisel, and Khalid Afzal.