



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830
Our Website Address: <http://www.goca.org>

GOCA MEETING - MARCH 8, 2000

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

- Students from Sherwood and Magruder active with Project Change reported on what they have been doing lately and outlined the results of some of the surveys they have been conducting. This included a Buckle-Up Survey and a variety of survey completed by parents, students, and businesses. One notable outcome is that safety for teenagers is a concern. There is a sense, also, that there is not enough for teenagers to do in Olney. About 30 % of the businesses surveyed felt that kids hanging around was a problem. A goal of Project Change is to establish a safe place for teens to hang out. They are not necessarily interested in operating a coffee shop or snack bar for teens, but are hoping to find an investor or business venturer who would be interested in operating such a business in Olney, a place like the Silver Diner, etc. that would be welcoming to teenagers to come and spend several hours. They are still talking with Freeman Associates, but the company has not been very responsive yet. They have a tentative meeting set up.

In response to questions, they noted that the 11:30 Club is similar to what they are hoping to create, but it is limited to Sherwood students and there are rules and regulations that are a part of membership in this club because it is part of the Recreation Department. As a result, it does not convey the sense of trust they are trying to promote. They are looking at church-related youth groups to strengthen their numbers. They are going to visit a coffee shop in Vienna, Va that they believe has an operation similar to what they are interested in establishing. They would be interested in getting some help with grant writing to assist them in getting funds so that they can continue their efforts as their initial grant is about exhausted. Some of the activities they have already sponsored is a pool party at the Tanterra and they have had a number of dances. They will continue to plan activities until they can achieve their more long-range goal of establishing a place for the teens to go to. They are also interested in working with the Mall of Services Task Force that GOCA is establishing.

- Sue DeCicco noted that she has been a volunteer at the Olney Police Substation for some time and she wanted to make us aware of what a poor facility the trailer is that the substation is now housed in. There is no running water and sewage from the toilet flushes into the parking lot. The contract on the facility is about to expire. She knows people have been working on finding a more permanent space for nearly 3 years, and so far nothing has been finalized. The Substation has gone from 14 volunteers to 8 and the officers are very discouraged. She felt that GOCA needs to take some action towards getting a space because she is concerned that if we lose the substation, she does not know what it will take to get it back again.

Dave Eskenazi noted that the Chamber is now working on getting a double-sized trailer with running water. They are looking at this approach because the Village Mart is not offering a space that is acceptable to the police. The police and the Chamber are checking with Giant Food to be sure the larger trailer is not a problem, because it will mean taking more parking spaces from their lot. Rick Coburn noted, too, that part of the problem with using a space temporarily in either shopping center is that it would cost between \$30,000-40,000 to install the necessary radio/security equipment. The Town Center is not willing to do that for a short term arrangement.

- Joe Hess noted that they have observed that traffic coming out of the Olney Golf Center is not stopping when it gets to Emory Church. SEROCA is writing to their management asking them to put in a stop sign at the intersection with the street.

- Ellen Bogage noted that she is working with the District 19 delegates who received a letter from Paula Kahla, Olney Chamber of Commerce President, presenting the idea of using the Post Office as a "town center". They would like to forward a letter of support to County Executive Doug Duncan. Ellen had told them some of our idea for the community center and they would like to hear more about that and how that works with the Chamber's idea before they send their letter.

- Ron Berger noted that Community Concerts of Olney is having a program the following weekend of music of the Civil War.

Mike Kelley noted that there were a number of typos in the February minutes and that he would email a corrected copy to Helene for posting on the GOCA website. There were 3 additions to the agenda.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Development Plans for the Faith Presbyterian Church - Pastor Alvin Avera of the Faith Presbyterian Church noted that the Church had been in Olney since 1988 as an affiliate of the Church of Alternative in Wheaton. In their 40th year, they were looking for a site to begin a new church in Olney or Germantown. His wife had worked in Olney and liked the area, so they got the church to focus on Olney. They have been in 4 locations in Olney - Olney Elementary, Sandy Spring Friends School, Belmont Elementary, and . They purchased a parcel of land on Old Baltimore Rd several years ago and this summer bought the next parcel, so they now have 4 acres. He introduced Clark Kendall, their money raising manager, and Dennis Knoll, their building chair.

The cost of the project will be \$950,000 and they have the money. They spent \$300,000 to purchase the property. They have a \$300,000 load from the Association of Reform Presbyterian Churches, and have \$250,000 in pledges.

Dennis noted that the zoning ordinances permit construction of churches in any zone, but there are a number of regulations they must adhere to. They are taking care to follow the regulations because they want to be a good neighbor. A natural resources analysis has been done and there are some issues affecting the road and the edges of their property. They are proposing an 85,000 sq. foot facility with seating for 250 movable seats. They are not proposing any day care operations and no school. They were offered an opportunity to go into a joint venture with a school, but declined that offer because they did not feel this site was appropriate. This part of the facility will be towards the back of the site, so that if they want to build a sanctuary later, it would be built out towards Old Baltimore. They believe they have met all the County requirements. They have been sensitive to the night sky since several of their members are amateur astronomers. So, their lighting system will have cut-offs for the luminaires and they will use directed light fixtures. They met with Park and Planning (P&P) staff the day before and there were no big red flags identified.

Aside from their Sunday services, there will be an occasional meeting during the week. They hope to break ground this summer and to build the frame next fall with the interior being complete by winter. They hope to be worshiping in the facility by early Spring, 2001.

The following points were made during the questions and answers following the presentation:

- The zoning ordinances require 1 parking space for every 4 seats. So, for 250 seats, they will need 67 parking spaces. If their congregation grows, they can do some pull-off parking on the grass, so they should not have problems with overflow parking impacting the neighbors.
- They will be looking for the purchase of other adjacent properties later on if they want to expand later. They do not have room on the existing site to expand the building and the parking. The two properties they purchased and the adjoining properties are all owned by members of the same family.
- There is only one property on the south side of Old Baltimore that will be immediately affected by this development.
- Joe Hess asked if they had 100% plans yet and cautioned it might take a year to get building permits. They indicated that the Church had begun the process last Fall.
- They will be improving Hampeg Lane which is now a gravel road. It has a better site-distance from Covered Wagon Way. They have asked for guidance from P&P on accel/decel lanes.
- They asked for a reduction in setbacks from Old Baltimore and Hampeg. They need a resolution on the category of the stream on the property because that will have an impact on the placement of the storm water management pond. It is partially in the setback area and it needs to remain there so they do not have to use more of the buildable land on the sit. They feel it is an environmental use of the area of an environmental setbacks.
- They are being asked to put in a sidewalk, but they may be able to sign a covenant to put the sidewalk in later. They have a 5 ft elevation near the road so it would be hard to put it on the north side of Old Baltimore.
- Their signage will essentially be the sign currently on the site, with some additional plantings and external lighting.
- The site has a 10" sewer line, but no water. The closest main is at St. Theresa Ct. in Hallowell. In talking with the family in Hallowell regarding the extension of the water line to their property, they have gotten a positive reaction so far. They would build a hydrant on the corner of the property and would tap into that. The line from Covered Wagon Way is too far and would cross an environmental area, so not very doable. They are pleased that the Hallowell residents seem responsive.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT

Art reported that the correspondence included a Civic Federation newsletter, notice of a town meeting for the Gaithersburg/Rockville area

TREASURER'S REPORT

Roy Peck reported that there is \$500 in checking and we will be transferring funds from savings to cover a \$2,000 deposit for the Olney Days Festival fireworks. They were having difficulties with the transfer because of changing treasurers after the last election. Roy presented the 2000 budget and, following a brief discussion, it was approved as presented.

PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS

Mike reported that:

- He had sent a letter indicating that we did not have any objections to the County liquor store being located in the old Blockbuster store in the Giant Food parking lot, with the proviso that there be no liquor store signage facing Georgia Avenue.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Membership- Rich Kopanda reported that he had sent 35 letters to civic and homeowner associations for membership renewals. Rick Coburn suggested dividing the list of associations between the officers to make follow-up phone calls. A question was asked about our policy regarding sharing membership lists to people outside of GOCA. The consensus was that people could give us information or copies of information and we would mail them.

Land Use - Jim Folk reported that he had spoken with Khalid about the Olney House property. The Historic Preservation Commission had voted in favor of the subdivision as proposed by the property owner by a 4-3 vote. The Commission had not been overly concerned about , but was more concerned with the impact on the Olney House. They were not overly concerned with the subdivision because of the close control they will have in the site plan review process.

Legislation - No report

OLD BUSINESS

Transportation Issues - Rick Coburn reported that: work at Ednor Rd and New Hampshire Ave is scheduled to begin in March 2000 and go to the end of the year. It's a \$23 million project, but he is not sure what they are doing.

Work at Norwood and Layhill is scheduled to begin the summer 2000 and will go to the end of the year. There is a permitting problem they are resolving with Park and Planning. But, they should be finished before the County begins to work on the Norwood intersection with the 28/198 Extension. That project is scheduled to begin late summer 2000 and will go till September 2001. From 9 am - 3 pm, the project will require the closure of one lane at all times, but mostly during the day. Mike had raised the point at the hearing at Blake HS that both lanes need to be open when school is dismissed each day.

Work at Redland and Muncaster and at Shady Grove Rd and Muncaster Mill is scheduled to begin on April 3, 2000 and should last 130 working days. These 2 projects are being done by one contractor - Concrete General. Because of their proximity, these projects need to be carefully coordinated.

Work at Emory Lane and Georgia Ave is scheduled to begin March 6, 2000 and it will be a 115 day project.

He and Mike Kelley met with staff from State Highway Administration and several others to determine the value of the condemned land on the corner of the Johns property on the southwest corner of Emory Lane and Georgia Ave. This land is being used for a storm water management pond for the water from the road and graded area just north of Emory. It now feeds into a pipeline that goes into Batchellors Forest, so this should improve the quality of that water. This is also suppose to be a dry pond on the site. The developers would like to combine it with the other pond, and had an agreement with the State for them to donate land to the State and for the State to use the money from buying the land to build it. However, the County objected to the idea of mixing the uses into one pond. The developer is still trying to reverse the County's decision. For our purposes, it might be better if there were only one pond. There was a hearing immediately following the site inspection. Mike was permitted to testify first. He noted that we had not taken an official position, but in our discussions, members generally preferred one pond.

In response to a question from Rich Kopanda, Rick noted that he did not know how the work at Layhill, that also involved changing the elevation of the land was being done without a road closure.

With respect to the Town Center/Village Mart ramp, Rick noted that he knew we are frustrated because the ramp that we thought was going to happen a year and a half ago, looks as though it will not happen now. The problem is primarily because of the centers being owned by 2 different companies. The contract with Shoppers Food Warehouse give them a great deal of control and they will likely nix the idea. Aoki has a contract on the Town Center shopping center. They can still build an additional 20,000 sq. ft. and that is what the new owner is looking to build - in the bottom of the hill in the area where the ramp would have gone - maybe using the original design, and, if not they would need to redesign the whole center and they are not interested in that now. Freeman Associates is planning to submit preliminary plans for changes to the Village Mart the next week. It would call for an increase of sq. footage from 160,000 to 200,000. They will need to make some intersection improvements. It will involve adding a lane to Georgia Ave, northbound to make a right turn onto Rte. 108.

In addition, we asked them to look at what could be done to improve ingress and egress to the shopping center. They are looking at it to see if it can be realigned to straighten it out some., edging it away from Shoppers some and moving it closer to the old Boston Market building, and adding a third exit lane to separate the straight through from right turn traffic. They are also looking to bring Hillcrest straight into the parking lot instead of where it comes in now. This would impact the end building the Grand Marquis used to be in. We asked them to look at the idea of an entrance from Appomattox. This would bring Appomattox about 100 ft closer to Georgia Avenue. This approach would require a closer look by the community to be sure that it really works better. Freeman Associates will present their plans at our next meeting. From what he and Mike have seen, they have given a lot of thought to invigorating the center. They are keeping Shoppers as their main anchor and are adding 2 other smaller anchors - 25,000 sq. ft. each, near the back near the old CVS and Grand Marquis buildings. Mike Kay indicated that the residents of the Towns of Envirion have looked at ways to put an opening onto Appomattox and they still have big concerns about cut-through traffic to avoid the light at Spartan and using Markham.

On Muncaster Mill Rd efforts, Rich Kopanda reported that he sent a letter to Governor Glendenning asking for some improvements we would like to see done on Muncaster Mill Rd between Redland Middle School and Bowie Mill Rd. The PTA's at Redland and Magruder are very concerned that something be done to improve the safety of the road within that area. He also noted that he has continued to be contacted by the associations involved in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan study. They are looking for associations in the watershed area of the Upper Rock Creek to sign onto letters expressing concerns about the environmental impacts of any changes that might be proposed in the update to the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan.

Olney Days Festival 2000 - Helene Rosenheim reminded everyone that the dates for this year's Festival is Friday, May 19th-Sunday, May 21st and that we will begin looking for volunteers to work the various events. Anyone interested in volunteering should let her know. She noted that she will be working with an art teacher at Sherwood High School who has a number of students interested in working on the design for this years t-shirt. We are looking for a car dealership to sponsor insurance that will provide a car as a prize for a hole in one at the Festival Family Golf Tournament at Trotter's Glen on Friday, May 19th. The next planning meeting will be on March 16th at Roni Septoff's. Anyone interested in helping with the planning or with any of the events should contact Helene at 301 774-6774.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Helene Rosenheim, Ellen Bogage, Roy Peck, Christie Berman, Sharon Elswick, Michael Kay, Rick Coburn, Gary Lieber, Rich Kopanda, Joe Hess, Ron Berger, Dave Eskenazi, Jim Folk, Peggy Vaughn (Gazette), Ed Weisel, Mike Kelley, Alan Avera, Clark Kendall, Dennis Knoll, Sue DeCicco, Ann Moriarity, Anthony DeCicco, Mandy Woodfield, Jeff Davis, Brian and Intellicato, and Mai Ragan.