



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

GOCA MEETING - May 9, 2000

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Kelley. There was one addition to the agenda and 1 correction to the minutes of the April meeting to add the feeling of the Towns of Environ community as expressed by Michael Kay that the new building being proposed for the rear parking lot of Olney Village Mart should be moved towards the other part of the center, further from the rear of that area and further from their townhomes.

The following Public Comments were made:

- Ellen Bogage thanked GOCA for its support of the proposed condemnation of the structures on the old Silo Inn property that have fallen into significant disrepair and for supporting the position of the Victoria Springs Homeowners Association. The County cited 32 items that were in need of repair, replacement, or removal and gave the owners 2 weeks to get bids on the repairs or to demolish the building. The owner has decided to demolish the Silo Inn and Mr. T's, but not the Higgins Tavern that is currently designated as an historic building. Rich Kopanda noted that we had discussed looking into what would be involved in having its historic design and that we might want to move forward with that idea. Joe Hess thought, however, that the historic designation might be a deterrent to undesirable development on that site.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Development Plans for the Olney House Site - Gus Bauman, the Buffington's attorney, noted that this is a 2 acre parcel that is actually 2 1-acre lots divided north-south. Riccuiti's restaurant want to stay on in the Olney House and plans to expand their operation within the building - replacing some of the existing tenants. The new building will house Bette Buffington's ReMax Realty Center and her husband, Dr. Joe Buffington's medical offices. Because of the historic designation of the Olney House all of the property comes under the auspices of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The HPC will make determines on every design aspect on this site both with respect to the proposed building and the relocation of the spring house. They go back before the HPC on June 14th. At their last hearing before the HPC, a number of people spoke, but one in particular, Eliot Rosenheim - speaking as a resident only gave the Commission members a good sense of the condition of the property and the spring house and its impact on the community. The public will also be able to speak at the next hearing.

Ward Bucher, the Buffington's architect indicated that in their earlier design, the building was a fat structure (as viewed from Rte 108) placed nearer to the Olney House. He was concerned with the proximity of this building to the Olney House, particularly since it was wider than the Olney House. So they were proposing to relocate the building and change the configuration. In the current design, the building will include a basement that would contain a community meeting space, 1 or 2 floors of offices, with no retail space. The 2 parking areas for this and the Olney House would be connected and the restaurant could use their parking for overflow parking in the evenings. The side of the building facing Rte. 108 would be 54' 4" across which is 20' shorter than the Olney House. The main entrance will be on the side of the building. All facades of the building will have real windows and porches. The roofs of the 2nd and 3rd stories would be shingled and there would be a Chippendale railings along the top roofline. The Olney House is also 3 stories, but this would be taller because of the current building standards. The Olney House is 36' and this will be 48', but the ground slopes so the difference in the height will be less apparent. The top floor would be more narrow so that the building will appear to be less massive.

Gus pointed out that the issues they are concerned with are that: (1) the HPC may not want the type of classic design they are proposing, but a more modern design. The chair of the HPC had suggested at the earlier hearing that a black glass building might be appropriate there. If the community wants the more classic design, they may need to be at the upcoming hearing to support this type of design. (2) the HPC may not want to move the spring house, but have it redone in its current location. Raced's would like to have it on their lot so there is more of a connection with the Olney House itself. If the HPC does want to move it, they may want it moved to the rear of the property because the utility buildings are in the board or on the side of a property, not in the front. Putting it in the rear of the property would impact Riccuiti's parking lot. (3) The HPC has also suggested building an extension to the existing Olney House structure to house the ReMax operation, but Riccuiti's want to expand into the remaining space there. (4) They have been told they will have to participate in a road improvement at the Rte. 97/108 intersection It was suggested that the Buffington's should be able to move ahead and should be participating in whatever road improvements they get involved with in proportion to the scope of their projects versus those of the other participants; and that they would only be shaving a right turn on the northbound lane on Rte 97 onto Rte. 108, but deferred to the State Highway

Administration (SHA).

Rich Kopanda raised the issue of putting wires underground as will be done in 3 communities in the State and asked if this is a course that they might be amenable to, but Gus did not know. Michael Kay asked about the possibility of using more modern materials and if that might satisfy the HPC. Ward noted, in response, that they are looking for a particular texture and a banding effect. The durability of some of the newer building materials is a concern as well. He noted, too, that we won't really know what the HPC's position will be until they get to the hearing on the 14th. Ward added that there will be a second hearing, probably in July, but they won't do a 2nd preliminary plan, if things don't go well on the 14th.

St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church Assisted Living Housing (Victory Housing - Mike introduced Bonnie Thomson of Victory Housing. Ms. Thomson explained that Victory Housing is a non-profit organization that is part of the Archdiocese of Washington that builds affordable elderly housing. Most of the projects are on church land that helps make the units affordable. They are proposing to put one of their elderly housing projects on the St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church property. She noted that the Church approached them about putting a building on the northeast portion of the property that will be formed by the extension of Bachelors Forest Rd to Rte 108. Residents have to be at least 62. However, until the adjacent property is developed, the Church will only be required to build the road towards Rte. 108, not back towards the existing Bachelors Forest road. They are proposing a 4-story, brick building.

The property is zoned for a rural cluster and this is a special exception use in this zone. They do have to show a demand for this type of housing as part of the special exception process. The income level of residents cannot exceed \$20,000. It is hard to find housing at this level. They have 2 of these facilities in Hyattsville. They have a lot of common space - a TV lounge, craft area, etc. There are plans for communal dining area, but not for 10-12 years. Their building would be beyond the slope of Rte. 108 so all four stories would not be visible from Rte. 108. The 76 apartment units with kitchens. There will be 2-3 staff members plus a resident manager that would live on-site.

When asked if they could lower the number of units, Ms. Thomson indicated that they have already gotten approval and funds from HUD for 76 units, and it would be difficult to reduce the number now. Michael Kay suggested that they reduce the height of the tower connecting the two wings of the building to make it look less massive.

PRESIDENT/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President Mike Kelley reported that:

- He will be meeting next week with a representative of the State Highway Administration to see about moving the Welcome to Olney sign on the south end of Georgia Ave. to a more suitable location. The concerns about the current location include: the obstruction of the view of the sign by the fencing around the stormwater management pond just south of the sign, the proximity of this sign to the a SHA sign indicating that Olney is in 3 miles, and concerns expressed about confusion the sign will cause by the developer of The Preserve because their development has a Rockville zip code and is assigned to the Rockville High School cluster.
- We had written a letter to the County asking them that they not place any signage indicating their new liquor store in the old Blockbuster building not face Georgia Avenue, and especially not Olney Elementary and they had indicated that they would comply with our request. However, there is signage that says Liquor and Wine facing Georgia Ave. He is writing a follow-up letter asking them to reconsider the placement of that sign.
- Longwood Recreation Center has begun enforcing a County-wide policy that states that non-profit groups can hold one meeting a month at the Recreation Department centers for free. There will be an \$18 fee for each additional meeting during that month. Since we only meet there once a month there will not be any charge to us.
- Council member Steve Silverman has put \$6,200 in T & E Committee's recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2001 County budget to Olney Days Festival fireworks. Mike indicated that we would need to lobby other Council members asking their support of this budget item. Helene added that the T & E Committee has also included "wish list" money for infrastructure for several local communities, including Olney that also needs to be lobbied for.

Membership - Rich Kopanda reported that we still have 26 paid member associations and that there have been no new dues paid.

Transportation - Rick K. also reported that the State is still looking into the accident rate on Muncaster Mill Rd. They expect it will take 3-4 months to complete the analysis. He also learned that the principals at both Magruder High School and Redland Middle School have written letters to SHA. John Nori, the Principal at Magruder, has asked that he be included in any meetings GOCA has with the SHA. The consensus of the meeting was that even if the accident rate data suggests that the accident rate on

Muncaster Mill turn out to be average for that type of road, we will ask the State for some safety improvements.

Rich also reported that he has been appointed to the Rock Creek Master Plan Citizen Advisory Committee as the GOCA representative. The other members include developers such as Pulte, Freeman Associates, major property owners, 2 civic groups and 2 individuals. They will meet one time a month for 18-24 months. There are 5 large properties that want to be clustered to get sewer and water so they can maximize their yield. We need to go back to our associations to see if there is any questions they want him to ask or issues they have concerns about such as (1) Rock Creek being a watershed area, (2) impacts of development on schools and roads, and (3) concern that if develop using cluster zones it would result in overcrowded schools and more traffic congestion.

Dave Eskenazi reported that a focus group met to discuss the Brookeville Bypass. He will meet with the Olney Village Civic Association prior to the public meeting SHA is planning to hold at Rosa Parks Middle School early in June. There will be information in the lobby of the school prior to the public meeting. He noted also, that there are plans to make Rte. 28 and Georgia Avenue an above grade intersection. SHA is forming a focus group that Dave will participate on. It will include associations all along Rte. 28.

Jim Folk expressed concern about the mowing schedule on Rte. 108. Mike gave him the phone number for Charlie Watkins, the SHA District 3 Engineer.

Land Use - Mike noted that the had received one preliminary plan for the Bancroft property in the northeast quadrant of Dr. Bird and Norwood Rd for 44 lots. Even though this property is in the Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan area, it borders our Master Plan area and may impact the greater Olney community. So, we will try to get the developer, Mitchell and Bent to our June meeting.

Ron Berger noted that the Rachel Carson Conservation Master Plan is coming up on May 25 for a hearing at Park and Planning. GOCA has historically supported and pushed for its development asa park. We should had someone look at the plan and comment on it.

Michael Kay noted that Mr. Reilly of Freeman & Associates, owners of the Olney Village Mart had to cancel his meeting with their homeowners association.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Special Presentations:

Development Plans for Olney House Site - Ron Berger spoke for Ed Weisel indicating that Ed thinks that a classic building is appropriate for that site, but that he sees this building looking different then that. Rich Kopanda suggested that we may want to write before the 14th hearing date. He also likes the idea of moving the spring house to the front of the property, with a plaque explaining that it had been moved and that a spring house would not normally be in the front of a house, along with an explanation of what a spring house is and how it was used. Mike is also in favor of relocating it. It is an eyesore where it is now and needs to be moved to restore it. If we want to use it as a museum, it needs to be in front, where it is more visible. Joe Hess cited an example of a property on Muncaster Mill with a spring house that is closer to the road than the house, so they are not always on the side or rear of a property; they pretty much have to be where the spring is. There was a sense that the relocation of the spring house could provide an unique educational opportunity that could be viewed by all the people coming to Raced's restaurant in the Olney House.

The major concern with the design of the building itself centered around the signage, particularly the large red, backlit ReMax sign that was proposed. It was generally felt that a tasteful, ground-level sign would be more appropriate. The Buffingtons seemed willing to look at the signage and to consider eliminating the signage on the face of the building itself. There was also some discussion of the desirability of connected parking lots with one joint entrance because of the proximity of that entrance to the corners of Rte. 108 and 97 and to entrances into the 6-Twelve Convenience Mart and the Bank of America.

A number of people expressed concern that one of the Historic Preservation Commissioners might be interested in seeing a modern building on this site. There was a clear consensus that what might be built on this site should be consistent with the design and scale of the Olney House. There was a concern about the sensitivity of this area of Olney, given all that is there. There was a recognition and appreciation of the struggle the HPC went through in making their decision to permit the construction of a new building on this site, and a hope that their analysis of what should go on that tract of land would be consistent with that decision. There was a consensus that what should go on this site is something that is consistent with what ought to be next to the Olney House, something consistent with what the whole character of what his community is about and, historically, what makes sense. Ellen Bogage pointed out that we might not want to limit our discussion to a "classic" design

because that was a specific type of design and there might be others that would meet our criteria just as well. Generally, there was a feeling that a classic design similar to the one used for this proposed building is a type of design, as opposed to a more modern design, that would make the most sense after considering all the possible kinds of designs that could be used there. Dave Eskenazi moved that:

GOCA (1) SUPPORT THE RELOCATION AND RESTORATION OF THE SPRING HOUSE TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE OLNEY HOUSE PROPERTY AS PROPOSED, AND (2) FAVOR A DESIGN THAT MEETS THE CRITERIA OF BEING CONSISTENT WITH THE DESIGN OF THE OLNEY HOUSE AND WITH THE WHOLE CHARACTER OF WHAT THIS COMMUNITY IS ABOUT. GOCA BELIEVES THE DESIGN PROPOSED BY THE BUFFINGTONS IS CONSISTENT WITH THOSE CRITERIA, HOWEVER, WE DO HAVE SOME CONCERNS ABOUT THE PROPOSED SIGNAGE ON THE FACE OF THE BUILDING.

St. Andrew Kim Korean Catholic Church/Victory Housing Assisted Living Proposal -Jim Folk expressed concerns of the Lake Hallowell HOA about the impact on traffic and the size of the facility. There were also concerns expressed about the fact that the land could be graded away from Rte. 108 to mask the size of the building from that view. However, there was concern about what the adjacent property owner would see. It was noted that Ms. Thomson had indicated that there were restrictions in setbacks and percentage of coverage related to this type of use that limited the footprint of the building that, in turn, required them to build up rather than out. A number felt that the building was too big for this site. A number of suggestions were made for some modifications to the architectural design that would mitigate the massive impression the building seemed to have such as having the bottom floor somewhat submerged and putting some of the communal uses there, separating into two buildings, reducing the size of the tower connecting the two, etc. There were concerns expressed, as well, that the number of units was driven by the fact that they already had an approval from HUD for funding for 76 units and modifying that approval would be difficult - although not impossible, and that what they had come to us with appears to be a done deal - in terms of design. The consensus was that we support the concept of a senior citizen residence on this site, but that we cannot endorse the coverage and design of the building as presented. It was felt, too, that we needed to wait until the Lake Hallowell HOA and SEROCA have had an opportunity

Funding for the Olney Police Substation - Ron noted that the new sergeant for the Substation, Sgt. Johnson, was not really happy with the current trailer, or even the double trailer idea, but would prefer a more permanent storefront or similar location. Ron had been asked, by County Executive staff, if GOCA would approve the concept of GOCA asking each homeowners/civic association to consider donating money, either from their treasuries or by increasing dues by a \$1 to raise money to finance a location for the Substation. Dave E. added that, in speaking to the Lieutenant for the District, the single trailer is not big enough and the double trailer did not seem to be workable because it required 30' footings and took up more of the Giant's parking spaces. Ron added that, regardless of how things work out on this site, the County is interested in knowing if civic and homeowners associations would be willing to make such a donation to provide support for the substation. We are not at a point of asking for a specific amount. It was suggested that the idea of a continuing donation sounds like a tax, and we already pay taxes for police protection. Ron indicated that the position of the Police is that they do not have funding for substations and if communities want them, they have to be willing to support them financially.

Mike suggested that instead of GOCA asking our member associations, we might want to do a joint letter/ad with the Chamber asking for a donation of \$1 a month or \$12 a year per household and have the funds sent into a fund. This could be a mass mailing by zip code and/or by running an ad in the paper. There was some concern about the sequence of events and that we couldn't really do this until the police have some idea of what they are going to do. It seemed that a mass mailing would reach more people and we would not have to rely on our member associations to distribute them. The consensus was that we would be willing to work on this and Ron will let those interested know that we are interested and are massaging the idea to arrive at the best way to go about doing something like this.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Mike Kelley, Dave Eskenazi, Ron Berger, Ellen Bogage, Michael Kay, Morris Berman, Joe Hess, John Lyons, Peggy Vaughn (Gazette), Bill Theives, Sharon Elswick, Bonnie Thomson, Bette and Joe Buffington II, Ward Blucher, Gus Bauman, Jim O'Neil, Helene Rosenheim, and Nancy and Dave Delalio