



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

**GOCA MEETING - SEPTEMBER 12, 2000**

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Kelley. Mike welcomed Boys Scout Troop 941 affiliated with the Church of the Latter Day Saints on Rte. 108. Following introductions, the floor was opened for Public Comments.

Mike noted that Peggy Vaughn has been reassigned to the Gaithersburg Gazette and Terry Hogan, who has been with the Olney Gazette for some time will be taking over for Peggy. Mike welcomed her to the meeting.

Rich Kopanda noted that at a recent Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting for the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Study, they discussed a number of nature trails. One of interest to GOCA was a trail along the Upper Rock Creek from Muncaster Mill Rd to Rte. 108. If GOCA has any comments on the trails or any other issues relating to park development, he will forward them to the CAC.

There was one correction to the agenda deferring the special presentation until October because of a scheduling conflict for John Chirtea and one addition; and no corrections or additions to the minutes of the July meeting.

## **OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Treasurer's Report:** Roy Peck reported that our current balance is \$2,032.15. We have about \$2500 worth of bills coming due and some additional deposits, but he is not certain of what that amount is. Mike noted that in the based we have operated on a calender year budget, but since we will be getting funds from Montgomery County towards the Olney Days Festival, and they operate on a fiscal year beginning in July, we are going to switch to that fiscal year cycle as well. He and Roy will be preparing a revised budget going from July 1, 2000 to June 30, 2001 that will be presented at the October meeting.

**Chamber of Commerce Report:** Ray Ammon noted that the Chamber's annual Community Night and Taste of Olney will be on Wednesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> at Longwood Recreation Center from 5-8 pm. This is the Chamber's major fundraiser. He also noted that he has been trying unsuccessfully to reach Freeman Associates to discuss the ramp to get that idea revised. He is hoping to sit down with them over the next few weeks to talk about it. Mike Kelley noted that they are being required to put the ramp connection on their property as a part of the approval of their site plan, but that can only go to their property line. We need to talk with the new owners of the lower shopping center about it. We have not seen any plans for their property yet. Mike Kay added that Park and Planning (P&P) required that the two centers have to share the cost of the center, even though the Village Mart owns a smaller portion of the land involved. Mike Kay noted that they had not seen any plans for the lower center yet and they had been told by the new owners early on that it would likely be a year before they would be proposing any changes because they wanted to get a handle on their tenants, flow of traffic, etc.

**Membership Committee:** Rich Kopanda reported that we still are at 27 paid members. It does not appear that Sycamore Acres will be rejoining. Mike Kelley noted that we had received a request from a property management company that services 2 developments in Olney to become members of GOCA. Our bylaws do not provide for businesses to be members, only civic and homeowners associations and up to 2 individuals at a time who live in areas not represented by such an association. The Membership committee did not recommend making the change to the bylaws that would be needed to permit this. They suggested, instead that it might be more appropriate for them to join the Chamber of Commerce. Based on that recommendation Mike asked Rich to reply to the request telling her that.

**Land Use Committee and Legislative Committee:** No reports.

**Transportation Committee:** Cary Lamari noted that the concerns of Norbeck Rd area residents identified in our earlier minutes did not accurately reflect their concerns. Their major concern are the dangerous s curve on Norbeck, the merge area, the left into the golf driving range (formerly Golden Bear), the preservation of trees along Norbeck and Manor Country Club, minimizing the intrusion into Leisure World, and minimizing any disruption to the parking lot of St. Patrick Church's. They are not concerned about the elevated crossing over Georgia Ave, because that is a part of any of the plans being considered and the Park and Ride lot is 12 ft above the grade of Georgia Ave. now.

Mike noted that he and Dave Eskenazi have copies of the State Highway Administration (SHA) report on the 3 alternative designs being considered by SHA. Individual can submit comments to SHA. Dave noted that one of the alternatives they are not

currently considering involves depressing Georgia Ave so that Norbeck crossing could be at grade. They had eliminated it because the water table and major pipeline, particularly those just put in to WSSC connecting to the pumping station on Norbeck that services Montgomery and Prince Georges Co. make it nearly impossible to depress the road sufficiently to use this plan. Dave suggested that we ask them to reconsider the decision to eliminate it as one of the alternatives.

Dave noted that the three alternatives they are considering all involve above grade crossings. One alternative involves an above grade crossing of Georgia in the current location of Norbeck. This alternative would cause more visual and noise disruption for Leisure World, takes more green space from Leisure World, Georgia would go straight through and all north/south traffic wanting to go onto Norbeck would have to go onto side ramps with all the turning movements at grade under Georgia Ave. The other two have above grade crossings just north of the current alignment of Norbeck. One involves a roadway elevated 20' above grade across Georgia Ave about where current entrance to is and the other is a little further south about where the junk yard is now. Cary noted that these alignments go back to the original alignment of Norbeck before the construction of the current intersection. The No-build alternative not being considered. The construction of this any of these intersection improvements would not interfere with the proposal to put a busway down the center of Georgia. The need for an upgrade solution is driven by the fact that the traffic volumes will be so far above the definition of a failing intersection, the historic designation of White's Hardware, and the lack of addition land to expand the intersection into. Ed Weisel suggested that we should get some conceptualization of what they plan to do with Norbeck just beyond these improvements. Mike indicated that the State will not really look at that until the County makes that road improvement a high priority.

There are some similar issues involved in the proposal for an above grade intersection improvement at Randolph Rd. But, that is not as far along as the Norbeck study.

The improvements at Georgia Ave and Emory Rd are nearly completed. They will be paving through the end of that week, from Emory towards Norbeck. They may need to close some lanes while they finish it up, but it will not take long.

Mike noted that he had indicated several months that the contractor for the 98/198 connector thought that he might be able to do the crossing with Norwood Rd without closing the road. However, he, Dave, Helene, representatives from Blake High School, including the principal, Carol Goodwin; the State delegation, and NEMPAC met with Al Genetti, some of his staff and the contractor to discuss the proposed closure. It became clear as a result of that discussion that it would not be possible to do the improvement without closing the road. It is possible from an engineering standpoint, but making any changes to the current plan would be having to go through the environmental impact statement reviewed process again and could delay construction of this improvement for another 3-4 years and ran the risk of the whole project being canceled. It had taken over three years to get the approval they have and that approval might be rescinded if a change were introduced at this point. They have to build the road exactly as it was approved without even the slightest deviations, primarily because of the impacts on the wetlands. The best we can do now is to put pressure on them to stay on schedule with the project so that the closing only impacts one school year. Before they close the road, the State has agreed to complete improvements to Layhill and Rte.28, New Hampshire and Ednor, and Ednor/Layhill and Norwood. We asked that some incentives be added into the contract for early completion of the project. Currently there are only disincentives for not completing the project on time; and they were actually already looking at that possibility. They are also looking at some suggestions we made that Mr. Genetti expressed some interest in that might help shorten the project by a month or so.

Rich Kopanda reported that we had finally received the accident data for Muncaster Mill Rd. It covered a five year period from 1995. The accident rates were higher than average. There were 359 accidents during that period that were significant enough to require towing. Of those, 302 involved personal injuries. He felt it would be in our best interest to stay on top of this; to see how the improvements are coming or if there might be other changes or improvements we might suggest. He has already seen places where vehicular tracks have gone off the road.

Rich also reported that the bike path on Emory was suppose to have been started by now, but has been delayed until October. Depending on the weather, they may not complete it until next Spring. The delay is because of the additional engineering designs that were needed to put a couple of bridges along the path.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Development Plans for the Olney Theatre** - Jim Folk reported that the first design plan was submitted by Bill Miller, This plan was submitted any the Theatre. Since the Planning Board had made it clear that they wanted a joint application that clearly showed cooperation between the two applicants, Jim was not sure what P&P's reaction would be. In the Theatre's plan, there is a new theatre building west and south of the existing theatre. In the previous plan it was north of the existing building. Jim met with P&P to get their reaction. Before the Miller plan was proposing changes to the Theatre's property and now the Theatre is proposing changes to Miller's property. P&P is not sure how they could get the other party to comply with either of these plans. They are looking for a plan with 2 buildings that are integrated and they do not see that so far. They still will not accept separate applications and are still looking for a joint application that shows how they are integrated. They are concerned about the proximity of the building to Rte. 108 because of the height of the building; about the traffic flow; and about the amount of parking

they are requesting. Before they would not have been able to operate both theatres at the same time. The second residence will not happen. The area where it is being shown is an area that has already been designated as wetlands and P&P has already told both parties to stop putting stuff in that area. There is no indication that the changes the Theatre is proposing for Miller's property has been okayed by Miller.

**Special Exception Application for St. Andrew Kim Victory Housing** - Jim Folk reported that also attended the hearing for this special exception application. We had been told that project was not going to be an assisted living facility. However, at the hearing, they indicated that a communal dining room would be added later. The project is for 76 units. The narrow end will face Rte. 108. The building was given an s shape to mitigate the visual impact. There was a question about putting this project in a rural cluster zone. P&P stated that a goal of the County is to provide more elderly housing. While this use is inconsistent with zone, P&P that the general plan overrides master plans and the Board of Appeals did not reject this argument; and, by implication, it was the reason for approving it within this zone it is not inconsistent with. However, master plans say they are the overriding policy documents. The intersection of Rte. 108 and Old Vic will be addressed in the preliminary plan. Victory Housing only wants to do a driveway, but P&P staff wants them to do being the road construction of the portion on the realignment of Batchellors Forest. There will not be action on this until the preliminary plan is submitted. We will see if there is any reference to the general plan vs. the master plan.

**Development Plans for the Olney House Property** - Mike Kelley reported that the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff recommended approval of the last plan submitted. The plan calls for adding a porch shown in an old photograph of the House back to the front of the building that runs the length of the building in place of the small porch currently on the building. The building will be near the spring house which will be restored in its current location. Because of the slope of the land, the view from the Olney House will only be of the top 2 stories. HPC wanted all the parking in front of Ricciuti's removed. Most of it has been moved to the back of the property, but there is still some. It seems as if the HPC is trying to make this look the way it did when the building was a residence. They do not seem to be recognizing that this is thriving business in the center of the Olney town center area and is a site our Master Plan says should be a center of activity. The HPC hearing will be Sept 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Possible Development Plans for the Silo Inn Property** - Steve Smet reported that in order for the Silo Inn property to be developed as an Alzheimers residential facility, they need a zoning text amendment that provides for a domiciliary facility in a C-1 zone. Until that is accomplished, there is no need for any other planning. Nancy Dacek's office is working on the language with Ralph Wilson, the legal counsel for the Council. Chesapeake Healthcare is the company that wants to build the facility. The Victoria Springs development feels this is a good use of the property. They are waiting to hear from Nancy Dacek's office that the amendment is being introduced. It is his understanding that Victoria Springs is writing a second letter to Dacek indicating that they are not opposed to the zoning text amendment.

**Olney Community Center Task Force** - Helene Rosenheim reported that a joint letter from GOCA and the Olney Chamber of Commerce had been sent to Doug Duncan asking for a meeting with him and/or his staff to present the idea of the community center. This would involve reallocating \$4 million proposed for a renovation of the Olney Library on the current site, to building a larger site on Rte. 108 east of Prince Phillip Dr and building a larger facility that would house other organizations such as the Olney Police substation, an office for the Mid-County Regional Services Center Olney Satellite Office, and an office for the Chamber plus a visitors bureau they want to create. When the Post Office was proposing to relocate to the Maddox property on Georgia Ave, we thought we could use the existing Post Office building as a youth center and Guide office and then we could offer the existing library site to the Adventist Healthcare property. However, since the Post Office will likely continue to use their building, the land swap idea will not work. However, we may have some private funds to help offset some of the costs of this project.

Paula Kahla had heard from Mr. Duncan's secretary who had indicated that Duncan's schedule was very busy right now and that she would be sitting down with him in September to work out his schedule for October. She will get back to us once that has been worked out. In the meantime, she suggested that we continue to work with Harriet Henderson, the head of the Library system on the proposal. So, Paula and Helene will be meeting with Elaine Barkley, the manager of the Olney Library and Mrs. Henderson. In addition, she and Roy Mead had walked the property to get a sense of what the property was like. There is a stream running along the eastern edge of the property that they will have to build around and that will make a lovely setting for the building. But, they believe there is enough buildable land remaining on the site. The land has a slight rise to the west and the building could be set into the hill so that only the top portion of the building would be visible from the adjoining properties. There are no meetings planned for the moment for the Task Force, but they might meet prior to the meeting with Duncan. In the meantime, we will continue to try to collect the specifications of the space needs for the sub station, Project Change, etc.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Zoning Text Amendment 011, Parking Trucks in a RMH Zone** - Helene Rosenheim reported that Nancy Dacek and 3 other County Councilmembers had introduced Zoning Text Amendment 011 in response to a problem in the Sandy Spring community along Brooke Rd and Chandlee Mill Rd. The Underground Railroad had come through Sandy Spring with the assistance of the Quaker community that settled in Sandy Spring during the 1700s. Many of the families living there now are ancestors of freed slaves that settled there after coming north along the Underground Railroad. Most of the families were living in trailers when the

land was zoned, so it was assigned the rural mobile home zone. When the area moved away from some of its agricultural uses, many of the residents began operating businesses that involved using large commercial vehicles. They were not operating businesses out of their homes but were driving the trucks they use in connection with their businesses to and from their homes where they park them. Some of these families have been doing this since the 40's, but most from the 50's and 60's. There was legislation passed in the 50's that made it illegal to park these types of commercial vehicles on residential properties, with some exceptions noted in the zoning ordinances. But, these people were not aware of this and no one has complained about this practice all of these years. Recently, however, a new housing development was built on the end of Brooke Rd closest to New Hampshire Ave. Some time after that, Permitting Services received a complaint about the trucks. But, the long term residents not only do not have a problem with them parking on these residential properties, they actually perform services to the community such as removing snow as they leave to go to work. They are also very considerate of their neighbors as they leave and return to the neighborhood. The zoning ordinances already permit the parking of commercial vehicles on RE-1 zoned properties. There are only 3 RMH zones in the County and this is the only one with lots of one or more acres, and all of the trailers have been replaced with permanent homes. Because of that, the zoning text amendment can be worded in such a way that it clearly only applies to this one community. Since a major concern with zoning text amendments is the possible applicability to other areas outside of the one the remedy is intended to help, this is not a concern with this amendment. It can clearly only apply to this one community since the amendment only applies to properties in the RMH zone with lots of at least 1 acre. It will also only allow people currently parking these trucks on their properties to continue to do so. People who do not own trucks now, will not be able to start parking trucks on their properties in the future. Since the bill was introduced, 2 other council members have added their names as sponsors. But, the community is still seeking support from neighboring communities and would like GOCA to write a letter of support for the amendment. So, Helene Rosenheim moved that

GOCA WRITE A LETTER OF SUPPORT OF ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT 0011.

The motion was seconded by Ellen Bogage and passed unanimously.

**Community Service Day** - Rick Coburn reported that he was planning a clean-up of the Rte. 97/108 intersection. It will be part of the County's Community Service Day on Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>. It will probably be about a 3-4 hour project beginning early Saturday morning, probably around 7:30. People do not necessarily need to come at 7:30 pm and don't have to work the whole four hours. He will be calling organizations that put signs up at the intersection. If so, they will be offered a reduction or rebate of fees they have paid to put up banners. He will also notify different organizations and scout troops to assist as well. The consensus of those present was that rebates should not be given, but discounts on future uses. Mike Kelly noted that Olney is scheduled to receive some County funds for some intersection maintenance and a most of the groups displaying banners are non-profit groups, so we don't necessarily need to collect as much this way any longer.

**B J Pumpnickel's Fall Festival** - Helene Rosenheim reported that GOCA will be participating in this Fall Festival sponsored by B J Pumpnickel's. They have agreed to let Bobby Fletcher run the car and truck show that had gotten rained out during the Olney Days Festival. In addition, Barry had been so pleased with the job the GOCA volunteers (mostly the officers) had done helping him serve at the Bull Roast, that he asked us to provide volunteers again to help him serve food at the Fall Festival. The Festival will begin on Friday, Oct 13<sup>th</sup> with a dinner and auction at the Sandy Spring Museum. The remainder of the Festival will be on Saturday, Oct 14<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 5 pm each day. She was not certain of the exact hours he needs our help. She asked that people interested in volunteering contact her and she would find out, as quickly as possible, the exact hours they would be needed. There are a number of organizations that benefit from the event such as the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department.

**Magruder High School Sign** - Mike Kelley reported that he had received a call from the Magruder Booster Club in which they expressed an interest in putting up a sign similar to the Sherwood High School sign in the Rte. 97/108 intersection on the southwest corner. The officers had felt it was not a good idea and suggested that they consider the Muncaster Mill/Redland intersection. They discussed some of the problems with the existing Sherwood sign. It was suggested that we need to approach the Scaggs family that built their sign to request that the words High School be added to the sign. As it is now, it sometimes confuses people new to area or visiting the area who think they are in a town called Sherwood. This may lead to some later discussion of the Sherwood sign. The majority of students in the Olney area do still go to Sherwood, but some do go to Magruder, Blake, and now Rockville. So, we need to be sensitive to that.

**Election of Corresponding Secretary** - Mike noted that Lori Wilen had to resign her position as Corresponding Secretary. He added that Ellen Bogage had recently agreed to accept the position. Before holding the election, he opened the floor to nominations. Jim Folk nominated Ellen. No other nominations were offered. So, Jim moved that

GOCA ELECT ELLEN BOGAGE TO FILL THE CORRESPONDING SECRETARY POSITION VACATED BY LORI WILEN.

The motion was seconded by Ed Weisel and passed unanimously.

**Hiker/Biker Path on Cashell Rd.** - Steve Smet noted that there is a gap in the hiker/biker path on Cashell - 850 ft from Cashell Elem to Hines Rd. and 1,870 ft from to MacDuff Rd to Emory Lane. There is no safe way to get to the Olney Swim Center. All of Norbeck Meadows is cut off. He spoke to Al Genetti who suggested writing a letter to the County asking for these two pieces to be constructed. The consensus was that we should write such a letter.

**Olney Post Office's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary** - Helene Rosenheim noted that in the course of reviewing materials for the Olney House development plans, she discovered that the Olney Post Office was renamed from the Mechanicsville Post Office in 1851 which would mean that the Olney Post Office would be 150 years old next year. She did not know whether the post office was planning to do anything to recognize that, but thought that the community should. At a minimum it could be the theme for next year's Olney Days Festival. She will contact the postmaster to see if they have any plans.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Christie Berman announced that there would be a new representative from James Creek following their elections at the end of the month.

Cary Lamari announced that on October 28th Montgomery County Civic Federation will be sponsoring an all day forum on mental health issues in Montgomery County. It will be at the County Council office building in Rockville, and he encouraged people interested in this topic to attend.

Following announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance: Mike Kelley, Roy Peck, Jim Childress, Brandon Botelho, Jeff Bailey, Chip Bailey, Steve Smet, Alan Cole, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Fran Breidenstein, Matt Peterson, Dave Peterson, Eric Rigby, Chris Rigby, Jim Folk. Ellen Bogage, Christie Berman, Ray Ammon, Cary Lamari, Ed Weisel, Michael Kay, and Helene Rosenheim.