



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

## GOCA MEETING -October 10, 2000

The meeting was called to order by Executive Vice President Rich Kopanda. Following introductions, the agenda was approved with no additions or deletions, but a correction of the spelling of Yale Wiesberg's name and the minutes were approved with 1 addition and 1 correction. Helene Rosenheim noted that several names had been left off the list of attendees because she found a second list after completing the minutes; and Rich Kopanda noted that Sycamore Acres are active GOCA members. Before opening the floor was opened to Public Comments, Rich noted the recent deaths of Charles Wood of Sandy Spring, who along with his brother Delmas were recipients of GOCA's Heritage Award last year for all their contributions to the greater Olney area, and of Barney Evans, a civic activist in the Layhill area who had attended and participated in a number of our meetings. He added that we send our condolences to their families and that we will miss them both.

- Mike Kay noted how surprised he was to see the article in the Gazette about the development plans for the Olney Town Shopping Center and suggested that we need to contact the new owners. Ray Ammon and Rick Coburn also both expressed surprise at the activity. We had been given the impression it would be closer to a year before the new owners would have any formalized proposals for development or renovation. Rick indicated he would contact the owner in New Jersey and Ron Berger suggested contacting Andy Plaxan who seemed to know how to contact the owner.

- Ray Ammon noted that there is another Victory Housing project similar to the one being proposed here in the Cloverly area. In that case the Planning Board upheld the master plan and recommended denial of the special exception application. Three days later 3 County Councilmembers wanted to overturn this decision. He thought we should be mindful of the political reality of the Council being willing to overturn the recommendations made within a master plan, even one approved as recently as 1997 as we get further into our upcoming review of the Greater Olney Master Plan. Rich Kopanda noted that the Upper Rock Master Plan review was opened for study now because the Council had decided to put sewer and water to a development in that area, Sheffield, in spite of the counter recommendations of the existing master plan and the Planning Board. Having made that sewer and water category decision, they went on to say that as long as they had made that change, the County should just go ahead and review the whole plan.

- A group of residents from the Preserve development on Georgia Ave. just north of Rte. 28 indicated they do not have a homeowners association yet, but are about to have theirs turned over to them by their developer. However, they wanted to let us know about their concerns about the State Highway Administration's (SHA) plans to build an overpass at the Georgia Ave/Rte. 28 intersection. It did not appear to them that any study had been made of the effect of changing of the light cycles at that intersection or other at-grade solutions. This intersection does not seem any worse to them than other intersections and they think this is an incomplete study. The overpass solution would create more noise, especially for Leisure World. Dave Eskenazi explained some of the issues associated with that intersection and the SHA proposals. He and Mike Kay offered to meet later with them to discuss their concerns further.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS:

Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc. - John Chirtea, the president of this group indicated that their effort started when the Sandy Spring Master Plan was created. It created a new zone, the rural neighborhood cluster zone. This is a zone with 2 acre cluster zoning with 75% open space. The goal of Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc. is to preserve the green space in the greater Sandy Spring area. Now is a good time for this type of effort because of State's Open Space Legacy Program. Their group has a 15-member Board of Directors and 200 members. They work with developers with land in the zone and then they go to the community, hopefully, with a plan they will all find acceptable. Their hope is to influence the developer of the land.

They are currently working on a rural legacy trail from Woodlawn to downtown Sandy Spring. Their next focus is going to be to go to developers with any size property in the Sandy Spring area to explain the tax benefits of putting land into conservation easements, that is, keeping land in open space in perpetuity in exchange for a tax benefit. The County paid \$31,000,000 into an Open Legacy Trust. It is a 6 year program to save open space. It involves park land, the acquisition of property and the conservation of that land.

They are a 3 year old organization. They have a part-time Executive Director who works 1 day a week. They have just published a new brochure that explains what they are and this program. Some of the developers they are working with are Winchester Homes (the Dellabrooke development) and Mitchell. They also testify before Park and Planning on matters relevant to this program.

Some of the points made during questions and answers following his presentation:

- They don't buy land, but help developers put the land into conserverships that they can hold easements on. The easements have does and don'ts on them. They develop the language of each easement and those does and don'ts are

followed in perpetuity. Basically, the land is kept structure-free except where designated. But they can designate a number of uses.

- They are working with Park and Planning on acquiring or getting easements for the property the Red Door Store is on. That property goes all the way to Rte 28. He is not entirely sure what happens with the Red Door Store.

- Two properties have already been brought into the program. The Serpentine property in Potomac, and the Buck Lodge Golf Course. There are also 2 others being considered; one in Kensington, and one in Takoma Park. They are hoping to get an additional \$9 million for the Fund. They are hoping that the Legacy Trail will be ready by the end of 2001.

- Rich Kopanda asked that he contact the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Citizen Advisory Committee. John indicated that they had sent some people to speak with them.

State Legislature Redistricting - Impact on Olney - Ron Berger introduced Yale Wiesberg, noting that while Yale was no longer an Olney resident, he had a long history with Olney; that Yale had been a key player in getting the Olney Library built, that he had been a president of GOCA, and that he had received a number of GOCA Awards.

Yale indicated that he was there as an individual to suggest some things we should be doing as a result of changes that will come about in our State legislative districts as a result of the 2000 census. He noted that he was there as an individual. The amount of growth in the County, expected to be 90-100,000, and that is a threshold for adding a new State senator to the County. The question is where will that senator be. There are now three districts in the Olney area and of those, the 14<sup>th</sup> district is divided between Montgomery and Howard County. GOCA may want to take a leadership role in getting a new district in this area, splitting District 14 into 2 districts. The senator that now serves both counties and the 2 delegates that serve Howard County could be one district with one additional delegate added. Then a new district could be established in Montgomery County with a new senator and the one delegate expanded to 3.

Yale noted that, over the years, when he has gotten involved with issues, he has had 2 rules - (1) be ahead of the curve, and (2) have a back-up plan. He suggested that GOCA and the Olney Chamber get together with the Greater Colesville Civic Association and their Chamber to put pressure on the Governor to give another senator and 2 delegates to this area. Redistricting will be a big issue after the election. The County will be looking into new councilmatic districts as well. This is not a political question, but a civic question about having citizens properly represented in the Legislature. The 14<sup>th</sup> District is the only district in the County that is split between ours and another county. He believes a good case could be made for putting a new district here because there has been a lot of new growth in this area and because we are the only area sharing a senator with another county.

A question was asked that since the state can't have more senators who would lose a senator if we get one. Yale indicated that when the 39<sup>th</sup> district in Gaithersburg, Baltimore County lost a senator. And, it is likely that it could be Baltimore County that would lose another one. But, it is a function of where the population shifts are as reflected by the new census results. There may be other pockets of growth that might be candidates for a new senator as well. We need to decide whether we want to react and try to influence the decisions about where the new district lines will be drawn before they are drawn or afterwards. Obviously it is easier to have an impact before the decision is made. If we want to create an issue here in District 14A we need to let people know that we want another senator for District 14A. We need to let officials from the County Council to the County Executive to the State delegation to the Governor know how we feel. If the decision is that District 14A should get its own senator, then the State decides how the representation will shift by redrawing the boundary lines for the State Legislature districts.

There was a consensus of the meeting, that this is definitely an issue worth pursuing and volunteers were solicited to form a committee to follow-up on this suggestion.

NOTE: Due to an unusual circumstance, no one at the meeting was going to be able to secure the building at the end of our meeting, which is usually later than the normal closing time for Longwood; we were not able to remain in the building beyond 9:00 pm when the Center was closing. Therefore, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 pm without addressing any of the remainder of the evening's agenda.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

#### **People in Attendance:**

Ron Berger, Roy Peck, Dave Eskenazi, Michael Kay, Terry Hogan (Gazette), Bill Thewes, Christie Berman, Joanne Karambellas, Ellen Bogage, Rich Kopanda, Mindy Harris, Irene Lee, Isabelle Mouysset, Michael and Ricki Weiser, Jim Folk, Ray Ammon, Rick Coburn, Dawn Richardson, Jake Merchant, Kevin Glasser, Sharlene Monroe, Yale Wiesberg, Ed Partington, John Chirtea, Ed Weisel, and Helene Rosenheim.