



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

**GOCA MEETING - JANUARY 9, 2001**

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Kelley. There was one addition to the agenda and no corrections or additions to the minutes of the December 2000 meeting.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Ed Weisel noted that he has been parking at the Norbeck Park & Ride lot and has been very pleased with his commuting experience there. The lot is not well used, so there is ample parking. The County and Metro are working to make the lot more attractive to commuters.
- Susan Petrocci and Jack Meyer, representatives from Norbeck Meadows Civic Association noted that residents in their development have become aware that a proposal has come up in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan review process to extend Cherry Valley Drive into the Rock Creek planning area in order to direct traffic from Muncaster Mill Rd to Georgia Ave via Cherry Valley through Norbeck Meadows. They asked for GOCA support in opposing this. Mike Kelley deferred discussion of this request till later in the agenda under Transportation Issues.
- Dave Eskenazi noted that Project Change and the 11:30 Club are planning an alcohol-free event at Longwood on Saturday, January 20<sup>th</sup> from 8:00-11:30 pm that is open to students from Sherwood and Magruder High Schools. They are looking for chaperones to work shifts from 7:30 -9:30 and 8:30-11:30, and anyone interested in doing so should contact the advisors, Ann Moriarity at 301 774-3185 or Stephanie Brun at 301 570-5610.

## **OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Correspondence Report** - Ellen Bogage noted that the correspondence folder that was being circulated included the Mid-County Action Group list of road concerns they are following up on for discussion at their meeting the Thursday following the GOCA meeting. These are limited type problems brought to the attention of the Dept of Public Works and Transportation, sponsors of the Action Groups, by residents in the Mid-County area.

**Treasurer's Report** - Roy Peck that there are \$900 in bills, plus a \$1600 outstanding bill from the ad book; and \$2,480 plus interest in the savings account. He had also just received a check for \$110.

**Transportation Committee**- Dave Eskenazi reported that there had not been any real activity on the proposed improvements to the Georgia Ave and Randolph Rd, and Georgia Ave and Rte. 28 intersections.

On the Brookeville By-Pass, Olney Village has expressed general concern with the current proposed alignment on the west side of Georgia Avenue. There is still activity with the environmental impact statement and there will be a hearing once that is completed.

On the proposed Cherry Valley extension, Chuck Keyserling, of Norbeck Meadows, noted that this extension had been on the Greater Olney Master Plan since 1956. But, the Norbeck Meadows residents do not think it is a good idea now to build the road. There are deers crossing the road, a traffic circle on the road already, it goes by an elementary school and through a flood plain, a park, and a residential area.

Rich Kopanda gave an overview of the last Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting. They discussed road issues and the impact of development. Fred Boyd of Park and Planning (P&P) believes the extension is in the Olney Master Plan, but it is not clear. There is a Transportation Policy Report that P&P is working on for the County Council that will address the ICC, (between Avery RD and I-370) that is due to be released in the Fall, 2002. As a result, the ICC is not part of the discussions of the CAC. The CAC will continue to discuss road issues at their February meeting, and staff will report their recommendations to the Planning Board. There are 3 alternatives to Muncaster Mill Rd that they are considering. Alternative A is using the ICC right-of-way from Georgia Ave to Avery and then the Mid-County Highway alignment to Shady Grove. Alternative B uses the Mid-County Highway alignment to Avery and then 4 lanes to Georgia Ave. Alternative C uses Muncaster Mill, making it 4

lanes all the way to Georgia Ave. On 1/22 they will also be discussing connecting Bowie Mill and Needwood Rds to make the road straight and the Cherry Valley Road issue. He suggested that it would be helpful for GOCA to discuss the alternatives at our next meeting.

Dave Eskenazi noted that GOCA has taken a position against the bridge over Georgia Ave at Rte. 28 because of the impact on the development, The Preserve on Georgia just north of Rte. 28. He thought we should do the same, have Georgia Ave depressed and cross at or near grade. He noted, too, that widening Muncaster Mill at Rte. 28 is unlikely because of the opposition of St. Patrick Catholic Church. They have also been pushing putting a light at Magruder HS similar to the light at Sherwood. The High School is very interested in putting a flashing light there and it could be part of the discussion of the Bowie Mill/Needwood extension, especially if they take away of the existing lights on Muncaster Mill.

Rich K. added that there are a number of issues around the school relating to the proposed extension, including a rear entrance to Magruder, a wider lane on Muncaster Mill, and more bus lanes.

Chuck K. noted that even though this discussion is part of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan review, an alternative that would impact a road going to Georgia Ave would impact the Greater Olney Master Plan and is something we should be commenting on and that Norbeck Meadows has always been concerned about the proposed Cherry Valley Rd extension.

Susan noted that making this change to Cherry Valley Drive would bring 10-20 thousand vehicles a day through their development. It would be an alternative similar to Muncaster Mill. Joe indicated that many residents looked at the Olney Master Plan prior to purchasing their homes and saw no indication that the road might be extended. Rich K. noted that one issue with Cherry Valley is the environmental impact of another crossing on the wetlands between Muncaster Mill and Georgia Ave. He added that Fred Boyd indicated that it was part of the Upper Rock Creek discussion because it has to be dealt with. There would also be a discussion of the impact of development on schools - Magruder and Sherwood. Enrollment numbers for Magruder seemed wrong. Future enrollment seemed low based on the density of development in that area. Redland, Magruder and Olney EI, would be over capacity by 2006. Sherwood would be okay because of the 12 room addition proposed for that school. But, if they are not built, there would be a problem there too.

Rich noted that the discussion of Cherry Valley on 1/22 would be important and would continue into February. The leading option is to delete it. He suggested that GOCA might want to take its position after the 1/22 meeting to see where the discussion goes. Jack M. added that the Bowie Mill residents were surprised at the level of reaction from Norbeck Meadows and he felt GOCA should take a position on it. Chuck K. noted that there are no residents currently at the end of Cherry Valley in the Upper Rock Creek area, so it was up to Norbeck Meadows residents to voice concerns. Dave E. thought Cherry Valley was not built for this type of traffic, but that Hines was. However that meant going through Norbeck Country Club. Mike Kay suggested that he did not see any reason to not voice opposition, unless staff can show some real justification for keeping the road extension in the plans. Ed Weisel suggested that the fact that this road may have been on the books for a long time, is no reason to oppose now because of the changes in environmental conditions, and because Cherry Valley was not designed like Muncaster Mill. Chuck K. suggested that GOCA should forward its concerns to P&P so it can be removed from both the Upper Rock Creek and the Olney master plans.

It was agreed that Rich and Art Brodsky would work with a group of people to formulate a statement that could be presented at the 1/22 meeting. Rich suggested Norbeck Meadows do a similar letter and he encouraged other associations to do so as well.

Jim Folk reported that he had asked the State Highway Administration to look at the intersections of Rte. 108 and Old Baltimore Rd, and Rte. 108 and Dr. Bird Dr. after the 4<sup>th</sup> recent accident occurred there. He should have the results of that study by the next meeting.

**Membership Committee** - Rich Kopanda reported that the 2001 dues letters were going to be sent out shortly and the dues structure would stay the same. It is a three-tiered structure based on the number of homes in the developments.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Development Plans for the Olney Theatre** - Jim Folk reported that the staff report had been released on their most recent site plan. The staff indicated that they felt the developers should build what was called for earlier and that it was up to the applicant to give good reasons to do otherwise. They were satisfied with the alignment of the ring road around the theatre as revised in the most recent plan. Also, the GOCA Officers reviewed that plan and were generally satisfied with most of the improvements to the plan. There were still some concerns relating to the restaurant/inn.

**Olney Community Center Task Force** - Helene Rosenheim reported that several members of the Task Force met with Council member Steve Silverman, at his invitation, to give him a presentation about our proposal. We were not certain how he learned of the proposal, but he seemed interested in the idea. After explaining what we had in mind, he seemed generally positive about the idea

of a several County services co-existing in a government center, citing similar arrangements in several other facilities such as the upcounty center and newly proposed civic center in Silver Spring. His real concern was not whether it might be built, but more when it might be completed. Under the current more limited budget projections for the upcoming years and with the number of deferred projects already waiting for funding, he estimated that it could be 7-8 years before the center might be build. Since he knew that we were hoping to have something built within the next 4 years or so, he suggested that we looked at some alternative solutions for the uses we hoped to move into the center. He offered to assist with that effort by speaking to the Freeman Foundation on our behalf, if we are interested.

In response to a request from Natalie Cantor, Director of the Mid-County Regional Center, the County's Facilities Staff has agreed to look at both the site on Rte. 108 between Prince Philip Dr and Old Baltimore Rd. we were originally interested in as well as the Maddox property on Georgia Avenue just north of Rte. 108 the Postal Service had been looking at in detail and had abandoned. We provided them with some maps of the two areas. Helene had been contacted by one of their staff members to get some additional information about the uses we were proposing for the site. She indicated that she would go out and look at the two sites and then get back to us with a report of the feasibility of using these sites as we are proposing. In the meantime, Helene has drafted a letter to go to Samuel Riggs asking if he would be interested in meeting with us to hear more about our proposal. It will be a letter co-signed by Mike Kelley and Paula Kahla, as respective presidents of GOCA and the Chamber of Commerce.

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Review** - In addition to the remarks Rich Kopanda made earlier in the meeting during the report of the Transportation Committee, he reported that there should be a draft report this Spring, with a final plan completed by the following Spring. He noted, also, that there will be a Park & Planning meeting on Jan 16<sup>th</sup> on the Master Planning Process in general. The Upper Rock Creek Citizen Advisory Committee has been invited to attend and comment on their experience.

**2000 GOCA Awards** - Ron Berger reported that it is time again to put together the list of nominees for this years 2000 GOCA Awards. The categories are: the Howard J. Garber Memorial Citizen of the Year Award, Contribution to Community Award, GOCA Worker of the Year Award, and the Olney Heritage Award. All those eligible to vote, i.e., delegates from associations in good standing in 2000 plus the officers and committee chairs, will receive a ballot that needs to be returned by the next meeting in February. He also encouraged everyone to come to the ceremonies on Sunday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at Longwood, and to encourage their friends and neighbors to attend as well, so that we can properly recognize those receiving the awards. He noted, too, that a large number of elected officials, from all levels of government attend and are available to talk with people in an informal setting during the hour-long reception prior to the awards presentations. It provides a good opportunity to discuss issues and concerns with them. Ron then presented the list of nominees for the ballot, and, as required in the by-laws, that list was approved by the members present.

**2001 GOCA OFFICERS** - As chair of the nomination committee, Ron Berger also presented the slate of GOCA officers for 2001. That slate will be voted on at the end of the meeting in February. Nominations will stay open until that election. The slate, as presented that evening consisted of:

President:	Art Brodsky
Executive Vice President:	Rich Kopanda
First Vice President:	Jim Folk
Second Vice President:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Roy Peck
Corresponding Secretary:	Ellen Bogage
Recording Secretary:	Helene Rosenheim
Past President:	Mike Kelley

Ron asked for nominees for Second Vice President, but heard none. He indicated that he would continue to work on filling that position and was certain it would be filled by the February meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Skate Board Park** - Mike introduced Ellen Masciocchi, an Olney resident and P&P staff member who explained that P&P had received a petition from 200 students from Olney who are looking for a skate board park. P&P is aware of the large number of youth looking for safe places to do use their skate boards and are trying to identify opportunities in existing and proposed parks to include skate board parks. Because she is responsible for roller hockey study P&P is doing, she got the petition. They are looking for a site where they can ride their skate boards where help would be available if someone gets hurt. She had been very impressed with their presentation and had suggested to them that they bring their request to the community by coming to groups like GOCA. But, the young man who had written to them to send the petitions had done such a good job of presenting their position, she wanted him to explain their request. She introduced Josh, a student at Sherwood High School.

Josh explained that the ramps and rails used for the new aggressive in-line roller blading is destructive to property, so they are not included in many places. Owners and merchants in most commercial areas around town do not want the skaters there because this type of skating is destructive to property. The problem is that there are increasing numbers of skaters, but fewer places for them to use. They had been using a small park on Gelding Lane. They had build some ramps and rails in the park, after cleaning it up, because it had not been used for a long time and was not well-maintained. However, after a short period of time, their equipment was removed. They thought it had been done by the police, but Ellen indicated it had been the park maintenance staff because there was no adult supervision of the skaters, in the event someone got hurt. Josh's mother added that the kids had done a great job of fixing up the park and maintenance staff had just dismantled the equipment and taken it away two times. He noted, to, that some of the kids that are not able to find places to pursue this activity do get involved with drugs.

Rich Kopanda noted that there are several sites in the Upper Rock Creek area that are being discussed as possible locations for this type of use, but they are still far from Olney. Ellen noted that there are plans to build 2 such parks in Gaithersburg and Rockville, but they are a still pretty far from Olney. Josh added that it did not need to be a very large area - 15,000 sq. ft., and an indoor area would be better so it could be used year round. He noted that the skaters are willing to pay for the use of area to skate in. P&P staff felt that this could be a likely reuse of tennis courts, but their study is just beginning.

Rick Coburn noted that if 200 kids had signed a petition to request this type of park, we need to find a way to support their effort. Mike Kay added that his 9 year old son had asked their Board for their okay to use some of their property for an area of ramps and rails. They went to their insurance company which indicated that a key issue is that there needs to be some kind of supervision in the event of injury. It was suggested that they get in touch with the students in Project Change. The consensus was that we would like to help these students locate an acceptable site for such a park. Rick Coburn agreed to act as a liaison with them in looking for a way to help them.

**2001 Town Meeting** - Helene R. noted that in 1970 and 1980, the community had held very successful town meetings where the community came together to identify problems in the community and to outline a vision for the growth of the community. They were full-day sessions with a boxed lunch break. There was an opening session in which people got an overview of the purpose of the town meeting and general information about how the day would operate. People got together in small groups to discuss and brainstorm a number of areas, such as transportation, development, educations, crime, etc. Sessions were timed so that people could participate in multiple discussions. The day ended with a plenary session at which the points of each discussion were briefly summarized. We had decided that this kind of session would be a good prelude to the initiation of the Greater Olney Master Plan review process that is scheduled to begin during this calendar year. We had also applied for a Neighborhood and Community Initiatives Grant being offered by the Mid-County Regional Center. The initial rounds of grants had been approved and GOCA had been selected to receive a grant of \$1,500 towards the cost of the Town Meeting. The meeting will be done in conjunction with Park and Planning staff, the Chamber of Commerce and possibly other service groups in the area. She anticipated holding the first organizational meeting near the end of January and asked anyone interested in serving on a planning committee to contact her at 301 774-6774 or at [helener@pressroom.com](mailto:helener@pressroom.com) The date for this Town Meeting is Saturday, April 28th.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following announcements were made at the close of the meeting:

- The County Council will hold one of its Town Meetings at Rosa Parks Middle School on February 28<sup>th</sup>.
- The first meeting of the Olney Neighborhood Network that Helene Rosenheim is organizing as a part of her job as Olney Community Liaison for the Mid-County Regional Center will take place on Tuesday, January 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Ross Boddy Center in Sandy Spring.
- There was to have been a special presentation that evening by representatives of Good Counsel High School. They are considering moving to Olney to a site adjacent to the St. Andrew Kim Korean Catholic Church, but they were not ready to make a presentation yet.
- Ron Berger noted that the next Community Concert, on February 4<sup>th</sup> at Blake High School at 3 pm. The performers will be the Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats, a world-renown group of acrobatic performers. Tickets are \$20, in advance.

Following the announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

**People in Attendance:** Mike Kelley, Chuck Keyserling, Rich Kopanda, Ron Berger, Ellen Bogage, Roy Peck, Jim Folk, Don Schmelter, Art Brodsky, Michael Kay, Joanne Karambemas, Bill Thewes, Sharlene Monroe, Susan Petrocci, Jack Meyer, Dave Eskenazi, Edward Partington, Ed Weisel, Rick Coburn, Helene Rosenheim, Ellen Masciocchi, Kathy Foster, Josh Foster, and Zach Foster