



Greater Olney Civic Association

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

GOCA MEETING - APRIL 10, 2001

The meeting was called to order by President Mike Kelley. There were no additions or corrections to the agenda and no corrections or additions to the minutes of the February 2001 meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Lyle Rocke spoke about problems at the corner of Georgia Ave and Queen Mary Dr. He noted that his wife takes 11 seconds to cross from the east side of Georgia to the median. In the same time, 5 cars are trying to go through the intersection. In October 2000, she was hit when she was halfway across. She was thrown and landed on her head, and received several broken ribs and a head injury

A big part of the problems at that intersection are a result of the fact that people cannot make lefts into and out of the Georgia Ave entrance to the Giant parking lot. He proposed that the State opening the median in front of the entrance and use a driveway apron similar to the one used on Rte. 108 by the Library and the Post Office to eliminate u-turn movements at Queen Mary. Both the Giant and the doctor across the street from there would like to see the median opened. He would also like to see school signs on the southbound side of Georgia for Olney Elementary. He believes that because the building faces Queen Mary with a Queen Mary address. He suggested turning the walkway from Georgia Ave into an emergency vehicle access, not a full roadway from Georgia, and with that, the State may be willing to put up the signs.

Dave Eskenazi noted that State Highway Administration (SHA) closed access when the Giant entrance was first designed. He didn't think SHA would be amenable to this idea. But, Lyle indicated that he had talked with SHA and Charlie Watkins, SHA's Mont. Co. District Engineer, has assigned an engineer to look at this intersection again. Lyle asked them to consider the apron solution. He sensed that if GOCA asked for them to look at this solution and have an open meeting to discuss it they would. Lyle noted that the police are sympathetic to this solution because it would give them better access as well. He also would like to see a pressure switch at Queen Mary that would affect the light at King William Dr. Lyle also noted that currently in Maryland, a hit and run is just a misdemeanor. Dave thought it would be worthwhile looking into what is involved in increasing this to a felony. Mike Kelley said that the Legislature had tried to do this this past session, but it failed. He noted, though, that it sometimes takes 2-3 tries to get something passed. Lyle also noted his intention to sue the State for negligence in the placement of the crosswalk north of the Queen Mary intersection, which he feels will make them more amenable to change.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

A Partnership for a Unified Olney - Peter Esser of the Northeast Montgomery Political Action Committee (NEMPAC) reported that following each Census there is a local, State, and Federal redistricting. At the State level, Olney is not split between 4 districts. A small portion of the area is also in District 39, but those representatives are not very informed about Olney. The District 19 representatives are pretty responsive to our community's needs. District 14 B is in Howard County so those 2 representatives don't pay any attention to Montgomery Co. There is one delegate in District 14 A that serves the Montgomery Co portion of that District and the District 14 State Senator is split between the 2 Counties, but he focuses most of his efforts on his Howard County constituents. NEMPAC feels the Olney community deserves a district with 1 senator and 3 delegates that are focused on Olney and responsible to the residents in Olney.

In the process of redistricting, the Governor submits a proposal to the Legislature and they have 45 days to propose any changes. Delegates are now discussing this informally, and the Governor has a map in his office. This is a very political process. NEMPAC is hoping to form a non-partisan coalition to go to the Governor and the State Legislature with a request to reunite Olney to give us direct fair accountable representation.

The following points were made through questions and answers:

- So far, the Sandy Spring Civic Association is on board. He spoke with the Chamber of Commerce and got a positive reception to the idea. They are waiting to see an acceptable written mission statement to ensure that this is a non-partisan effort.

- Their website is www.nempac.org and there is a chat forum with information on this issue.
- It takes 112,000 to make a district and the total number of people in the State is divided between 47 districts. They do not create additional districts, they just rearrange the population between the districts by shifting boundaries.
- Each organization that signs on to the coalition will send representatives to go to the Legislature (President Mike Miller) and the Governor to show them the broad interest in the community for a unified district. They are not looking for specific boundaries or a particular political make-up, just a concept of re-uniting the greater Olney area.
- The biggest hurdle is the legislature's instinct for self-preservation. Each delegate and senator will do what they need to to preserve the voting base that elected them. We would need to take a piece of District 19. But, their district has grown so much, they will have to give up some precincts and their representatives are well-ensconced. Senator McCabe, from District 14 has stated in the past that he would have no problem with giving up Montgomery Co. because the interests of their Montgomery Co. constituents are very different than those in Howard Co. and it would make his life easier.
- There are separate processes for the County Council districts and School Board districts.
- The number needed for a district is approximately 100,000, but can draw on + or - 5% of the population. There are now 7 1/3 districts in Montgomery County. Montgomery has grown by 115,000 and you only need 112,000 for a new district. By law, the State will have to create a new district in Montgomery County. District 14 is the only County district that is split between 2 counties, Mont. and Howard Co.
- The Delegation is also trying to strengthen its position by getting a new district and will try to create one that is favorable to the delegation.
- In response to the idea that it might be useful to have representation in 4 districts, Peter noted that Olney represents such a small portion of District 39 that they do not pay much attention to us. The delegates from District 14B don't even campaign in Montgomery Co. Senator McCabe is somewhat attentive, but he actually lost in Montgomery Co in the last election, but is so strong in Howard Co. that he still won the election.
- A question was asked about the feasibility of redoing the boundaries so that we get one district that is not split with Howard Co., but still have representation in District 19, so we have the benefit of having representatives from 2 districts; particularly since the District 19 delegates have represented us well. Peter felt that a plan with 1 or maybe 2 districts that are directly responsible and accountable to the Olney community would be acceptable to NEMPAC.

In discussing the proposal to participate in the coalition, the consensus was that GOCA should play an active, leadership role in the redistricting effort. The general feeling, as well, was that the representatives from District 19 have served this community well and, while there is a lot of merit to having a district that is exclusively in Montgomery County; there is also some merit to continuing to be a part of District 19 and having the greater community covered by 2 sets of representatives that are responsive to our needs. So, our goal would be to shape the redistricting so that if a new all-Montgomery County district is created in the Olney area, the boundaries would be established so that inclusion in District 19 is retained. There was consensus that a part of participating in this coalition would involve trying to influence the group to modify their goal from simply creating one district for Olney to include retention of our inclusion in District 19, as opposed to be included in Districts in which the representatives have not been responsive to our needs because we represent such a small portion of their electorate. There was a feeling that retaining cover in District 19 might work to our best advantage in the long run. There is not enough population in Olney to form a complete district, so the question will become, what area(s) would need to be incorporate to form this new district. Art Brodsky and Ron Berger indicated that they would be interested in representing GOCA on the Coalition.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report - Art reported that:

- Nancy Dacek's office called to let us know that someone is interested in putting a public storage facility on the site of the old junk yard (now a used car lot).
- He had lunch with Glen Orlin, a County Council staff member focusing on transportation issue to see where he stood on Muncaster Mill Rd. Art told him there was wide community opposition to the A, B, and C options. Orlin said the letters seemed to be mixed. Art also had a transmittal from Blair Ewing on the transportation study.
- In response to his question to Khalid Afzal, the Park & Planning Commission Team Leader for the Georgia Ave team, Khalid

indicated that the Olney Master Plan review would begin in July with a 6 month data collection and community outreach period. Roy Peck suggested that it might be useful to involve Civic Federation and to get them on board with this review. Art indicated it would be okay for him to do that.

Correspondence Report - Lori was unable to attend , so there was no report.

Treasurer's Report - Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$4,183.02, however, we have more outstanding bills that that. We have received fireworks contributions from Olney Village, Victoria Springs, Tanterra, Perspective Woods, Hollowell, Cherrywood, and Olney Mill, for a total of \$975.

Membership Committee - Rich Kopanda reported that there had not been any new mail since last month and we currently have 16 paid associations.

Transportation Committee- Dave Eskenazi noted that now that they have cleared the trees on Norwood at the intersection with the 28/198 extension, it raises the question in his mind about why they cannot put in a temporary bridge. He asked if we wanted to pursue this idea again. Art Brodsky thought we should pursue it again with Blair Ewing.

There have not been any more focus group meetings on the Rte. 97/28 intersection, and the Norbeck intersection plans are in play with the Muncaster Mill Rd. Study. There does not seem to be anything to suggest that the Georgia Ave/Norbeck intersection project is being slowed down because of the delays in the Muncaster Mill Road Study. Khalid Afzal indicated that there is no funding for the construction of the interchange project. So, by the time they do, the Muncaster Mill Rd Study will at least know what is proposed. There will not likely be any construction money of 5-7 years.

Chuck Keyserling suggested that we need to discuss east-west traffic so we don't end up turning Georgia Ave into a parking lot. For east-west traffic, crossing Georgia Ave is the problem. He is concerned that we will end up with 2 major crossing of Georgia Ave within eyeshot of each other and that we should work to a single solution in this area. Dave agreed that if they are improving the 28 intersection and we end up with a major intersection with the relocated Rte.115 so close together, it could be a problem getting the two to work together.

A question was asked about whether SHA had ever looked at such solutions as the New Jersey jughandles, in which they use a series of right turns to make a left. Dave responded that some of these solutions will not work because they don't have enough room at the affected intersection to build in the ramps.

OLD BUSINESS

Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Review -Rich Kopanda reported that they had reached consensus to go with a modified option A for the Muncaster Mill Rd Study. The focus of the group shifted from development to this road issue. They added a number of safety solutions. They are recommending no 4 lane divided road, but prefer a 2 lane road with a light at the schools, and possibly with a signal light at Emory Lane or possibly a traffic circle. They are not supporting a "capacity" solution as much as a "safety" solution. Art noted that after the Magruder meeting, the recommendations of the master plan advisory group and other contacts, the County Council sent a letter to the SHA indicating that the Council will defer recommendations until the State completes its studies. Rich noted that \$10 million has already been designated for safety improvements, but that money won't go very far. He is concerned that the list is too specific. Khalid noted that a lot of what they are recommending do not require a master plan amendment, but the group wanted to document their concerns. Rich thought there were other ways to pursue some of these concerns. Rich anticipated that at the next meeting of the advisory group, they would get back to considering environmental issues.

2001 Town Meeting - Helene Rosenheim reported that in preparation for the Master Plan review process we are planning a town meeting similar to ones we held in 1970 and 1986. This all-day event will be at Rosa Parks Middle School on Saturday, April 28th. The meeting will include an opening plenary session in which Khalid will give an overview of the process. Then there will be a series of concurrent breakout sessions in which a variety of topics will be discussed by the community. As a result of a discussion at the last Olney Neighborhood Network, Sophie Randolph, the director of Longwood, and Wilbert Givens, the director of the Ross Boddy Center, are organizing a teen speakout that will occur at Rosa Parks at the same time as the town meeting. It will be patterned after a series of speakouts the County Youth Administration is holding in a variety of sites around the County. To distinguish our meeting from theirs we will call this part of the town meeting, Teen Voices. They will be meeting from 10:00 to 1:30 while the adults are in the cafeteria. David Kottler, an Olney resident has offered to donate food for the box lunches.

Olney Days Festival 2001 - Helene also reported that plans are progressing for this year's Olney Days Festival. She briefly went over the schedule of events that begins this year on Thursday, May 17th with a juried flower show at the Olney Library organized by the Cherrywood Garden Club to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Montgomery County Libraries. The Olney Community Band will perform Friday evening, May 18th at the Olney Theatre. Bobby and Sandy Fletcher are hosting, and

organizing, the annual Car and Truck Show, along with the help of Ed Weisel at Fletcher's Amoco on Saturday morning, from 10 am to 1 or 2 pm. He has sent out 60 or more invitations to participate and he included Parade application forms with his own entry form. Hopefully some of those people will be interested in participating in both events. Then beginning around 4:00 pm, we will have control of all of the Olney Manor Park for the Fun Fair and Fireworks. The Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department and Auxiliary will be providing fire engine rides, a number of carnival games, a drawing for a child's push/pedal riding fire engine, and food and glow stick/necklace sales. The Rec Dept will provide face painting and we are contacting WH Rental about providing a moonbounce. The East Montgomery Babe Ruth/Cal Ripken Baseball League will be running the Homerun Derby with a little assistance from the Fire Department. Roni Septoff is working with the fireworks company and all the necessary agencies we need to coordinate with. One outstanding issue is the insurance certificates being required by the County in order to get the grant money budgeted for the Festival in terms of getting the certificate of insurance worded in a way that is acceptable to the County.

On Sunday, we now have a new event called Fish for the Cure. Last year a student at B'nai Shalom of Olney held a Fish for the Cure event at Lake Hallowell as a project in conjunction with his Bar Mitzvah. He was able to raise quite a bit of money that was donated to the Inn at NIH. He would like to do it again this year and I have invited him to hold the event as a part of the Festival weekend. He will donate a small percentage to GOCA, but at least 80% of the money will go to the Inn again. The event takes place at Lake Hallowell beginning around 7:00 am. Then the Parade will begin around 2:00 pm. Delmas Wood has indicated that he will be traveling with his Franklin Delano Roosevelt show and will not be able to announce the Parade. Instead, Bill Thomas has agreed to be the announcer again. Forms are coming in from participants and we have begun hearing from the government and elected officials we invited. So far, the responses are low. There are a number of competing events that day, including the Taste of Olney. We are working with the Olney Village Mart again to do the Bull Roast at the front of the center again. The Chamber will not be doing their craft show and flea market this year, so we will be doing that event ourselves along with Freeman Associates, owners of the Center. Anita Brady and Roni Septoff are planning the major part of the entertainment. We are inviting all the scout troops and packs in the area to perform songs, poems, or skits they make up celebrating the Olney Community. All of the children that participate will receive a ribbon and this will be a non-competitive event. BJ Pumpnickels will be providing the food again this year and we will be providing the manpower.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance: Mike Kelley, Rich Kopanda, Ron Berger, Roy Peck, Art Brodsky, Dave Eskenazi, Helene Rosenheim, Steve Smet, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Khalid Afzal, Chuck Keyserling, Polly Knight, Peter Esser, Lyle Rocke, Angelo Caputo, and Paulette Cooley.