



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

## GOCA MEETING - JUNE 12, 2001

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. There were no additions or changes to the agenda and 2 corrections to the minutes of the May 2001 meeting. Following introductions, Art opened the floor for Public Comments.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Helene Rosenheim noted that the Olney Library is re-energizing the Olney Library Advisory Committee and is looking for a new Chair for the Committee. Anyone interested in joining the Committee should contact the Library's Manager, Elaine Barkley at 301 570-1234.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

**A Variety of Transportation Issues in Olney** - Art introduced Charles Watkins, the State Highway Administration (SHA) District Engineer for Montgomery County to talk about a number of transportation issues in the Olney area. He was accompanied by one of his engineers, Maj Shakid. Charles first discussed the Neighborhood Conservation Program that is about 4 years old. It provides grants for revitalizing main street segments, traffic calming devices, and amenities. Current projects in the County are on Piney Branch Road (almost done), in Poolesville (not done yet, the residents can't decide what to do yet, so the State is waiting for them to make up their minds. They have presented some suggestions and will leave them alone now to make their decision. He then described the Retrofit Sidewalk Program. This is a program that did not exist when he became District Engineer. It is about a 3-4 year old program and they have already spent about \$5 million. Mont. Co. is the leader in taking advantage of this program. Aruna Miller is the project manager. Brookeville has asked for a project on Georgia Avenue from Longwood north into Brookeville.

**Pavement Drainage/Safety Issues** - The Queen Mary/Georgia Ave. intersection is one that we have been looking at for a long time. The current study was prompted by Lyle Roche's suggestions for improving the safety at that intersection. That study should be done with the next 7-10 days and they will send us the results. They don't know yet what can be done. The analysis is being done by a consultant. Then they comment on their report and send it to interested parties for comment and further suggestions. They are bound by certain standards and requirements. But they know local residents are more aware of the situations, particularly since all accidents do not get reported and are, therefore, not available for the engineers to find out about. They explain what they can do, what they can't do, and who we can go to if we don't like their conclusions. They took Mr. Roche's suggestion, added some data and clarification available to them and gave that to the consultant. Dave mentioned the changes that were made earlier that restricted lefts at the Giant and moved that traffic to the Bank. Mr. Watkins noted that we may be aware of County Executive Duncan's Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian Safety. He serves on that Panel and engineering changes are a part of the solution, but not the whole answer. There is nothing they can build that will guarantee safety. Their job is to move traffic, but they have gained an awareness that many of the State roads ARE NOT PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY. He also noted that the School intersection needed a light, but he still believes that King William Drive is a better access point even with Princess Anne being a little slippery for the school buses when it snows. Pedestrian access is different, and there may be some engineering devices they can use as traffic calming devices, e.g. chicanes, that might be used.

**Red Light Camera at Rte 97/108 Intersection** - When the law was passed authorizing the cameras, it was really a police program. SHA works with the police and municipalities. They usually come to SHA with requests for installation. They review the request and make recommendations, but the police are not bound to listen. This intersection is scheduled for installation in 2002. The cameras have a significant impact on angular accidents, but cause an increase in rear-end accidents.

The following points were made during questions and answers:

- The County's responsible for sidewalks on County roads and would be responsible for Queen Mary Dr.
- Mr. Watkins wasn't sure how the Rte. 97/108 intersection had gotten on the list, but suggested contacting Skip Lanin, the director for the red light program at 301 840-2881.
- They have done several traffic studies of the Emory Rd/Muncaster Mill Rd intersection and have found that it does not warrant a traffic signal. But, a work order has been issued for completion in the next 30-45 days to improve movements at that intersection to eliminate the conflicting movements. That will likely include a left turn access lane on Muncaster Mill.

- The County has indicated to SHA that the light at Rte. 108 and Dr. Bird Drive is working properly, but they will look at fine-tuning the cycling of the light.
- We noted a visibility problem for traffic from Old Vic turning left onto Rte. 108 because of the berm on the east side of the intersection. Mr. Shakid noted that if cars pull fully up to the intersection, they do seem to have adequate visibility. But, they suggested that when Batchellors Forest is cut through on the south side of Rte. 108 opposite Old Vic, that would provide a good opportunity to look at that issue and see what remedy might be appropriate. It was also noted that we had asked the Olney Theatre to look at lowering the berm then they begin their construction, and they agreed to look at the problem.
- The study of Rte. 108/Spartan Road intersection should be done early in July and there should be some answers to the problems there.
- With respect to the Norwood Road closure, the County has delayed the closure till late summer or early fall and the three intersections the State was improving will clearly be done by then.
- It was noted that at Emory Rd and Georgia Ave, the 2<sup>nd</sup> southbound lane from the curb ends up as the curb lane south of Emory, and many don't realize that. The State may need to add some stripping to emphasize that.
- In response to a question about whether there had been any studies of the overall improvements from the intersection improvements, Maj noted that there are studies that show that there are some initial improvements, but that the improvements falls off after a while.
- Lyle Rocke noted that he has seen people driving around the side stop sign on school buses, and asked if the bus driver could report that. Several people noted that it was against the law to do that and the bus driver could report such action. Lyle also noted that he has noticed more courteous behavior at the Bank entrance since the article about his efforts appeared.
- The Brookeville Bypass Project is too far away from construction for Mr. Watkins to be aware of it. He added that some people need to think outside the box, but his job is the box. He has 85 ongoing active construction projects he is responsible for and he will be responsible for this project once it goes to a construction phase.
- A reference was made to an article in the Post in which Mr. Watkins spoke about risky sidewalks and it was felt that the ones in Olney Mill were riskier than those discussed in the article. The question was asked if any consideration to it was noted as well that many in Olney Mill dislike the sidewalks because they were built so poorly and the question was asked about whether the State spends money in their retrofitting program to fix sidewalks that were not done as well as they should have been.
- It was hoped that SHA is looking at intersections such as Muncaster Mill Road at Rte. 28 that experienced significant flooding during the storm the previous Thursday.
- It was suggested that one improvement that would not have the typical effect of just moving the bottleneck from one intersection to another would be improvements to the Norbeck Park and Ride lot. They include better lighting, removal of debris and poles sticking up out of the ground, adding lighting and improvements to the bridge between the lot and the bus stop on Georgia Avenue, installing an emergency phone, and, improved maintenance of the lot. It was noted that in speaking with Ed Daniels he had indicated to us that it was SHA's responsibility to make these improvements, but Mr. Watkins was surprised that Mr. Daniel's had never called him about these changes. Mr. Watkins also noted that an emergency phone would not last long without being vandalized or possibly be misused for drug activity; and that if a trash can were put in the lot, it would get filled quickly with items like mattresses and old TV's.

**Olney Theatre Development Plans** - Art noted that while this was on the agenda, there seemed to be a mix-up on the date and that the Theatre had gotten approval for the first part of their project, but not the whole thing.

**Olney Police Substation Expansion Plans** - Paula Kahla, the President of the Olney Chamber of Commerce and Lt. Mitchell Cummings introduced Phil Wilk, AES, Inc. to describe the proposed changes to the Olney Police Substation. He noted that about 5 years ago, the Chamber met with the Giant Food Corporation who agreed to putting the trailer in their lot at no charge. The rent for the trailer is paid out of a fund maintained by the Chamber of Commerce donations from local merchants, organizations, individuals and a variety of fundraisers sponsored by the Chamber. There is currently \$16,500 in that fund. They also get some help from the County with the bicycle patrol and with computers for the trailer. Having the trailer here has provided better response times to incidents in the area and has provided a better presence in the area. As the lease was coming up for renewal, the Chamber began looking around the community for a permanent site that would also address the fact that the Substation needed additional space. That effort failed and they went back to Giant to ask (1) if the trailer could stay and (2) if there was a layout for an expanded trailer that would be acceptable to them. Phil has prepared a number of plans with various placements of both a double trailer and two single trailers. The rent for the single trailer is \$450 and it will go to \$900 with the expansion. They will be adding a trailer to the existing trailer and running water. After rejecting the first 5 plans, the Giant has finally agreed to his 6<sup>th</sup> plan that calls for the existing trailer being moved into the hill behind the trailer, after regrading it. and then placing the new trailer in front of that, basically where the current trailer is placed. It will cost \$2,800 to bring the new trailer to the site. Of that the Mid-County Regional Service Center will provide \$5,000 through a Neighborhood Initiative Grant. They plan to try to raise the rest of the funding by requesting a \$1.00 donation from each household in Olney in addition to requesting corporate donations from local businesses. It is important to have a commitment from the community for this project to go forward.

Lt. Cunningham, from the Wheaton/Glenmont (District 4) Station commended the Chamber for their efforts. This substation is kind

of the northern outpost for District 4. Lots of officers will come to the trailer to write reports, etc., including many who are not specifically assigned to the substation. This gives a greater police presence in Olney. He has approached the new District 4 commander, Capt. Dee Walker, on behalf of Sgt. Johnson to add patrols to the substation. She has assigned 1 additional position so far which he sees as a noteworthy commitment on her part. There is a good squad assigned there, a select crew, officers have to ask to be assigned here. The facility needs space for records, desks, and computers to accommodate approximately the 11 people assigned there, plus other officers who stop by, walk-ins and volunteers. They do need running water and toilet facilities. That may not seem like much, but it very helpful when they come in from a call where they have been rolling around with arrestees and need to clean up to continue their assignment and it will be nice to have water to do that with in the office.

Phil noted that the earlier plans used the existing lot in front of the current trailer, but the Giant Food management felt it would restrict the view of their store to much. So, the hill behind the trailer will need to be regraded to nearly level it with the parking lot. The planters will need to be moved and the ramp will have to be extended. They will replace the existing trailer with a double-width trailer placed onto the graded hill and will place the new trailer in front of that in the lot. There will be 5 additional parking space, plus 2 handicap spaces. They have permission from both Giant and the Dept. of Environmental Protection to connect to the water and sewer line under the parking lot, with a separate meter. The cost for this will increase their monthly costs because this is something they didn't have to pay before.

Twenty-five % of the cost of this project is fees, but they are hoping to get some of the fees waived.

They will need 18" diameter poles in the ground 30" for footings for the trailers. The company that is doing the Sandy Spring Vol. Fire Dept and the Buffington building estimated that the site work would cost \$44,000. That does not include the cost of transporting and setting up the trailer or the landscaping. The money for this project is handled by the Chamber as a trustee of a fund for the substation. It is not part of the Chamber's money. The donations go to the Montgomery Co. Police Fund who then send checks back to the Chamber for use on costs related to the trailer.

The following points were made during the discussion of the project:

- A concern was raised about wisdom of collecting cash versus checks, but Paula was not concerned and would not want to discourage someone from donating if they wanted to give cash.
- A question was asked about why there was no County money for this, and Paula explained that, while the County supports the concept of satellite stations, there is a County police to not expend any extra money for their operation. The communities interested in having them, must support them financially.
- They hope to build and complete this project as soon as possible, but it depends largely on the pace of the fundraising.
- Mike Reichgut of Manor Oaks presented a \$1,000 check to Paula as a donation from the 400 homeowners in their Association and challenged the other homeowner associations to do the same.
- There may be additional expenses after the construction begins, so any money collected beyond the \$44,000 will be put to good use.
- Chief Moose has given his assurance that satellite is pretty permanent in Olney (in terms of willingness to dedicate staff to the facility).

As side notes:

- Phil reminded everyone about National Night Out on the first Tuesday in August, 8/7 and Community Night is October 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Paula reported that the building their office is in has been sold to J. Clogg who plans to use the entire building for his business and they have to move. As an interim solution, Freeman Associates will be giving them space to use probably until December, while they look for a more permanent solution.

## **OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**President's Report** - Art reported that:

- Good Counsel High School is working on a deal that would give them 40 acres of property off of Dr. Bird Drive near Rte. 108. They were hoping to have a meeting with some of the local representatives of the community, but cancelled the meeting. They have sent letters to parents of the current students and to alumni telling them about their plans to move to Olney. Art continues to encourage them to meet with the community.
- We had received a letter describing Norman's Market on Georgia Avenue just north of Rte. 28 being an eyesore. But he felt that things were looking better there now, so no real action is needed right now.
- The Board of Appeals is looking into the issue of the lighting at Norbeck Golf Center in response to our letter. Mike Kelley noted that he had spoken to Nancy Dacek's staff about the lighting issue. They had requested that Permitting Services check on whether

they were in compliance with what they had applied for. Nancy wanted to know if the issue had been resolved yet; and, even though the lighting has been toned down and directed less into the roadway; Mike told them he still thought it was an issue. The question is what are they in compliance with - what they indicated they would do in the permit application or what they indicated what they would do in their special exception application. There is some thought that the two are not the same. There is still a safety issue, particularly for southbound cars on Georgia Ave, and an issue with the impact of the light on the homes in The Preserve, particularly compared to other driving ranges where the light essentially stays on site. Roy suggested that any inspections be done at night. Steve Smet noted also that the 100 ft. buffer they promised also seems to have disappeared and is part of the problem.

**Treasurer's Report** - Roy Peck reported that we currently have a balance of \$2,892.40, but we have \$4,760 in unpaid bills. We still need to get the \$6,000 from the County grant for the Olney Days Festival.

**Membership Report** - Rich Kopanda reported that we have 20 paid members. The Towns of Environ has indicated that they plan to pay which would take us to 21 and there are at least 2 others that plan to pay. Khalid has asked him to get an ADC map and map out the borders of all the community associations. Mike indicated that he has done that already and that Alex Rosenheim currently has it to try to use it in conjunction with our website. Helene indicated she would get it from him and get it to Rich.

**Transportation Report** - Rich also reported that work on the Emory Lane bikepath is underway again and should be done in 2-3 weeks.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan** - Rich reported that, with respect to the Muncaster Mill Road Alternatives, the County Council wrote to the State to go ahead and do the studies of all the alternatives and then the Council will select an alternative. However, the State wrote back and indicated they would not study all the alternatives, and the County would have to let them know which alternatives they want studied. Now the County is relying on the Transportation Policy Report. That report is being prepared by a 38-member committee with a very diverse representation. Five scenarios are being considered in the report. They range from: (1) the Fiscally Constraint Scenario that includes a four-lane Muncaster Mill RD, M-83 and assumes minimal, but some road construction, (2) the Base Scenario that would include the M83 option with some transportation improvements, (3) the Road Scenario that would include building roads all over the County including the ICC and crossing the Potomac at Point of Rocks, (4) the Land Use /Transit Policy Scenario that mostly focuses on transit lanes and includes a widened Muncaster Mill RD and a purple line for the Metro, to (5) the Everything scenario that includes everything - roads, public transportation, the sky the limit scenario, which is not likely to be selected. The Committee will develop a preferred scenario for all roads in the County to be done in November and then there will be a public hearing. The County Council has no plans to address the Muncaster Mill Rd issue until after the election and it will eventually be addressed through the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. Chuck Keyserling noted that this Policy committee is supposed to have an outreach committee, but they do not seem to be doing much outreach, especially in this area.

The Advisory Committee looked at the possible benefits having the area identified as a Special Protection Area. It uses an environmental analysis of impervious surfaces. There are 3 such areas in the County now. They can be set up any way a community wants, but they are not well monitored. The three are very narrowly tailored. In a presentation to the Advisory Committee they were shown how measuring the impact of impervious surfaces in their master plan area from the no additional build to full build-out showed there was no significant difference in impact on the stream quality no matter what you did. So it did not provide much of an argument against cluster development. The only real impact was on the Brooke Manor, but that was because the stream is so small in this area that a small change has a greater impact. What is proposed, even with the changes in the impact is still in a good range. There may be other reasons to limit development, but impervious surface impact is not a good one.

Rich noted also that Sammy Tota has gone ahead and submitted his development plan for the Casey property behind Sequoyah Elementary and Magruder High School. The residents in the surrounding area do not want any extra housing. There will be a hearing on the plan this summer. This is a property that the Advisory Committee would have commented on through the master plan process, but now the process has slowed down substantially and Tota doesn't want to wait any longer and is moving ahead.

**Olney Days Festival Wrap-Up Report** - Helene Rosenheim reported that, in spite of the intermittent rain, the weekend was overall a success. The weekend began with the Cherrywood Garden Club Garden Show at the Olney Library celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Montgomery County Libraries. The Garden Club was pleased with the participation both of exhibitors and people coming by to view the entries. But, it is not an event they anticipate doing every year. Because of the threat of rain, the Olney Community Band Concert at the Olney Theatre was moved into the Practice Lab area, although it turned out it didn't rain. But, we still had an audience of about 75 people and the Band was terrific, ending with a hope that they would be invited back again next year. The staff of the theatre were extremely helpful with setting up and taking down for the concert. A location for the concert may be an issue next year, though because the Theatre expects to have the grassy area where we were supposed to have the concert to be under construction by next Spring.

The Car and Truck Show was moved to Sunday because of the threat of rain on Saturday and, as it would happen, it never rained on Saturday during the hours we would have had the show, but it did rain about halfway through the show on Sunday. Bobby Fletcher, the sponsor for the Car and Truck show was pleased with the turn-out in spite of the weather and a number of the participants also joined in on the Parade. The Fun Fair at Olney Manor Park went well. Helene did not have a report from the Fire Department about their fundraising, but they seemed pleased that evening. The participation in the Home Run Derby was good, even though they got a bit of a late start. One of the park employees estimated that there were about 5,000 people there to watch the fireworks that were as good, if not better than ever.

The Fish 4 the Cure, a new event this year, went well. It was the second year of an event started by 4 young boys as a bar mitzvah project. They did not have quite as many fishermen as they did last year, but it had been a kind of last minute decision to make it part of the Festival weekend, so some people were not aware they were having it again. But, even with the lower number of participants they were able to raise nearly \$1,000 that they donated to the Children's Inn at NIH. They plan to be part of the Festival again next year and expect even better participation. They will continue to have their website, <http://www.fish4thecure.com>. We came close to calling the Parade, but the members of the Oakdale Emory Church had been working for hours that day to set up their float and we just didn't have the heart to call it off. Most of our drivers for our dignitaries did not show up and Roni Septoff did her usual terrific job of improvising to find rides for them all. Mike Weiner did a great job as a last minute emcee announcing the parade at the reviewing stand filling in for Bill Thomas, the former Sandy Spring Postmaster who called Friday to say he was in the midst of a kidney stone attack and wouldn't be able to be there Sunday. The judges, Rawleigh Sybrant of the Olney Kiwanis Club, Barbara Kreiger, owner of Changing Seasons, and Roy Mead of Friends of the Olney Library were great sports about judging right up to the end, even with the rain the last ten minutes or so of the Parade. The one event that did suffer from the rain was the Bull Roast. Barry Schwartz of BJ Pumpnickel's had already prepared the food, and we had already past the cutoff time for cancelling the DJ at no cost to us when the rains started, so we went ahead and tried to hold it. However, by 3:30 it was raining pretty hard. A number of people did come by to buy food, but no one stayed to eat it. We did do about \$300 in sales and Barry was able to restock a lot of what he had brought, so he only had to bill us for about \$190. The DJ cost \$300, so we did lose money on that event. However, we did make money on the sale of ads for the ad book and through donations. So, once we have all the accounting done, we should net some money overall. We will have a wrap up meeting shortly to assess the weekend and see what we can do better next year.

**A Skate Park in Olney** - Mike Kay noted that while he had not abandoned the idea of opening a skate park somewhere in Olney, the idea of putting one in an empty storefront in one of our shopping center has not worked. Commercial property is not viable for this type of use. It would require a special exception in both a C1 and a C2 zone. He has met with the Recreation Dept's public/private committee which has 4 proposals for skate parks. They are not committed to anything. The Skate Park that was proposed for Damascus has been dropped from the Recreation Center being built there. Most of the schools in the area are being used for summer camps, and are not available for this use. The basketball court areas of Parkland Middle School or Rosa Parks may be usable. July 12th or 15th there will be a hearing before the Parks Department on the demand for skate facilities. There are several projects being considered in other parts of the County, but none in Olney. The Rockville Center has opened, but it is really only good for beginners. So, nothing is happening anytime soon.

As an aside, Steve Smet noted that the Olney Soccer Club want to use the Oakdale middle school site on Cashell near Continental Drive. It was agreed that this would be an acceptable use of the site.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Montgomery General Hospital Women's Board Annual Picnic and Bazaar** - Helene reported that she had received a letter from the Hospital's Womens Board inviting GOCA to participate in this year's Annual Picnic and Bazaar by having a table set up to distribute information about GOCA. She would like to do that in conjunction with distributing information about the Olney Satellite Office of the Mid-County Regional Service Center. She asked for volunteers to man the table with her and asked anyone interested to contact her at 301 774-6774. The Bazaar is scheduled for Tuesday, July 24<sup>th</sup> from 10 am -8 pm.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- There will be a public meeting on deer management at Redland Middle School as a follow-up to last year's meeting.
- On June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1-3 pm, WMATA is hosting a Regional Bus Study meeting.

- MusicFest 2001 will be on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup>. It includes a Rock Concert on Saturday, the 14<sup>th</sup> at Sherwood High School. Music Where You Are includes an event for children at the Olney Library, Ethiopian performers at the Slave Museum in Sandy Spring, the Olney Community Band at the Village Mart Shopping Center, and Indian dinner music on the lawn at the Inn at Brookeville Farms.

-Also, on July 15<sup>th</sup>, Olney Buzz, an adult support group for Project Change, is having an all day retreat at the Smith Center on Muncaster Mill Road to try to help Project Change move forward on their efforts.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance:

Steve Smet, Roy Peck, Lyle Rocke, Jackie Benn, Helen Dodson, Paula Kahla, Phil Wilk, Michael Reichgut, Michael Kay, Ed Weisel, Greg Tatoccia, Lt. Mitchell Cunningham, Peter Esser. Mike Kelley, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Art Brodsky, Helene Rosenheim, Rich Kopanda, Don Schmelter, Chuck Keyserling, Dave Eskenazi, Ron Berger, Charlie Watkins, and Maj Shakid.