



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

GOCA MEETING - SEPTEMBER 25, 2001

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Roy Peck reported that he received a letter indicating that State Highway Administration (SHA) will be putting a sidewalk on Georgia Ave. between Rte. 28 and Emory Lane as a part of their sidewalks programs. It will either be 5 ft wide or in a 5 ft right-of-way. He drove that length of Georgia and determined that we would lose a few trees from the buffer for the golf driving range on Norbeck and the Welcome to Olney sign is within that right-of-way and will have to be moved. Outside of that he did not see any problem with it.

- Steve Smet noted that he had heard there had been some sort of incident at the intersection of Bready Rd and Olney Ln., and wanted to confirm that it had occurred there. Terri Hogan was able to confirm that.

- Khalid Afzal, Georgia Avenue Team Leader, Park & Planning Commission (P&P) noted that he would begin meeting with representatives of the business community during October.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report - Art reported that:

- He had testified before the Councilmatic Redistricting Commission on redistricting for the County Council and submitted written testimony to the State Redistricting Committee regarding State Legislature redistricting. The key point in both was our desire to keep Olney, Brookeville, Sandy Spring, and Ashton should be kept together as much as possible. The deadline for submitting comments to the State Committee was extended till the end of the week and then each committee will begin deliberations over the various proposals

Correspondence Report - Art also reported that the correspondence included:

- A note from Tod Sher thanking us for the expression of sympathy we had sent on behalf of the GOCA members when his mother passed away this summer. She had also been in the Legislature for many years.

Treasurer's Report - Roy Peck reported that we currently have a balance of \$8,244.09. There is still one outstanding for \$225 from the Olney Days Festival that needs to be paid.

Chamber of Commerce Report - Art welcomed Joe Buffington as the new liaison to GOCA from the Olney Chamber of Commerce. Joe reminded everyone about the Chamber's annual Community Night/Taste of Olney on Wednesday, Oct. 3rd from 5:00- 8:30 pm at Longwood Recreation Center. There will also working on the groundbreaking for the Olney Police Substation. He noted that the Chamber has moved its office to a storefront in the Olney Village Mart.

Membership Report - Rich Kopanda that there is one additional member association since the last meeting, Olney Oaks SF that brings the membership up to 25. Four associations from last year that have not paid their dues so far this year are: Christie Estates, Gold Mine Crossing, Highlands of Olney, and Olney Town. Because it is so late in the year, they will probably just try to reach them again in January.

Land Use Report - Art reported that he had received development plans for 2 developments on Muncaster Mill Road. Rich suggested they were in the Upper Rock Master Plan area and would be talked about later in the meeting.

Transportation Report - Dave Eskenazi reported that there is going to be a forum on the Brookeville Bypass alternatives on

October 3rd at Rosa Parks Middle School at 5:30 pm. Nothing new is being presented, but the public will have an opportunity to comment on their preference between the various options. There are 2 options on the east side of Georgia Avenue and 3 on the west side; plus a no-build alternative. The options on the east side are not likely to be selected.

Alternate 5C, one of the eastern alignments, leaves Georgia Ave north of Gold Mine and continues northeasterly; then turns north crossing over Brighton Dam Rd, the Reddy Branch, Lubar Dr, and the proposed Bordley Dr, rejoining Georgia Ave, north of Bordley. It includes 2 roundabouts, one each at the northern and southern ends.

Alternate 7, on the west side, begins at a roundabout near the northern edge of Longwood. Access to Brookeville would be via the northeast leg of the roundabout. It continues from the roundabout, northwesterly, through P&P property and the Reddy Branch. The alignment meets Brookeville Rd at a roundabout west of Georgia Ave and continues northeasterly. The portion of Georgia between the northern connection and the Reddy Branch would be closed. Southbound traffic to Brookeville would pass through the roundabout at Brookeville Rd.

Alternate 8A, on the west side, begins at a roundabout also near the northern edge of Longwood, heads northwesterly through the P&P property and the Reddy Branch Park. Access to Brookeville would be through the northeast leg of the roundabout. It intersects with Brookeville Rd west of Georgia. Two legs of the roundabout connect to the proposed alignment and one to Brookeville Rd. Brookeville Rd would be closed between the roundabout and Georgia Ave would be closed. It then goes northeasterly, connecting with Georgia north of Brookeville Rd.

Alternate 8B, also on the west side, is similar to 8A between Longwood and Brookeville Rd. It crosses Brookeville Rd with a bridge with no direct access between the bypass and Brookeville Rd. As with 8A, it continues northeasterly and connects to Georgia Ave with a roundabout.

Dave noted the response from the State Highway Administration to the suggestions submitted to them by Lyle Rocke for some changes to Georgia Avenue at Queen Mary Dr and at the entrance to the Giant Food. While they appreciated his concerns they felt that there were a number of safety issues related to many of his suggestions and would not be implementing them.

In response to a question about GOCA's participation in the Transportation Policy Committee, Dave noted that Ed Weisel has been our representative to that group and he would talk with Ed to see what he has been doing with it. The ICC is likely to be one of the topics they will be discussing and it would be useful to have someone there presenting the point of view of our community. There was also some discussion of the fact that some of the other road improvements being studied and planned, such as improvements to the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Rte. 28, the M-13 (Rte 115) improvements that will impact on the need for the ICC and will have an impact on the appearance of Olney and the entrance way into Olney.

Rich Kopanda reported that the North Creek Homeowners Association still believes "the jury is still out" on the proposed safety improvements for the Muncaster Mill/Emory Rd intersection. The cones and lane narrowing devices are slowing traffic, but there are still problems with left-turn movements from Emory onto Muncaster Mill. People are so focused on making the left out of Emory that they do not seem to notice traffic making lefts from Muncaster Mill. The turn is tight, reflectors are getting knocked over, drivers turning left tend to look to the left more than to the right.

OLD BUSINESS

Greater Olney Master Plan Review Process – Khalid Afzal reported that they have begun to place information on the Park and Planning website relating to the Olney Master Plan Review, and distributed some information about their timetable. In response to a question about the citizens advisory committee, Khalid indicated that they are still determining the proposed size and makeup of the committee for the Greater Olney study. They have actually started receiving nominations from the committee. However, the deadline for submitting names is not until December. Once the committee is formed, they typically meet bi-weekly or on an as-needed basis.

Rich Kopanda suggested that, based on his experience with the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan, taking the purpose and outreach strategy report which outlines how you begin a study and sets the parameters and covers every point of concern. They identified which of the full range of concerns they would address. Recently, they reconsidered what their main concerns are now. There was a lot in that initial report they did not address at all. Instead, it might be more useful when preparing this report for the Olney study, rather than having every thing in there and only looking at some of the key concerns; to take some time to reach some consensus on what issues they will consider, for example to look at issues a, b, and c. For example, "environmental concerns about streams, can be more narrowly tailored to the real concern within the planning area.

Stephen Joseph, a member of the Upper Rock Creek CAC noted that they have been meeting for some time and most of that time they have been getting an education about demographic, development, transportation, environmental, etc. issues impacting their

area. They meet the previous evening and felt that they had turned the corner and now have a great deal of the information they need to make some of the decisions they must make with the guidance of the P&P staff. There are 5 key properties in their planning area that they will be looking at. They are the Freeman, Duncan, Casey, Henry, and Wayland properties. There is a development plan currently before P&P for the Casey property, behind Magruder High School. The property is currently zoned for 1- and 2-acre development and the developer is requesting a sewer and water category change from septic to sewer. This has raised a lot of discussion. In their discussions the previous evening, they used the Casey property as a prototype for all 5 properties. This is one of the development plans Art had received.

In looking at the at the Casey property, they identified 4 key issues they wanted to consider in connection with the development of all of these properties. They are transportation; quality of water; open space – not just larger lots, but areas left undeveloped and probably turned over to P&P; and retaining some of the rural quality of the area. As they proceed they will look at each of the properties and weigh these aspect of with respect to each property. They will look at how they maximize their return. For example, what is the best way to retain the good water quality – sewer or septic, cluster development, not developing in certain areas of the wetlands, etc. They have also been asked by P&P to consider the Legacy Open Space Program to see if there is any place in the planning area that this program would appropriate for. They are concerned about the environmental impact of this development if they were to get sewer and water because they would have to significantly cross the Rock Creek to get to the treatment center. They are concerned as well about what happens to the undeveloped area if development is clustered in 20% of a property. What will prevent a developer from coming back 10 years or so down the road with proposals to develop this 80% of conserved land to meet what is considered at that point, a pressing need for additional housing.

The other plan Art had received was the Duncan property that further south of the Casey property on Muncaster. This one has just been submitted, so they do not know a lot about it yet, but it is for 25 units. It crosses Needwood Rd. This was considered by P&P staff by one of the most pristine areas for natural habitat, for wild life, for a preserve, etc., in their planning area. They almost took it off the table for discussion because they were certain P&P would acquire it and retain it as park space. So, they are now stepping up their consideration of this proposal. Another property Art hasn't received a plan for yet is a 5-acre site near the crab restaurant on Muncaster Mill that was recently acquired by a developer. The current zoning would permit 62 townhouses on the property. But the developer would really like to put closer to 100 units there.

He recommended that we be involved with the master plan process because the process brings all kinds of people out of the woodworks. Some individuals come to the process with their own agenda and try to take over a meeting. The committee must balance who they are their to represent. Rich suggested that each of the delegates from our member associations make sure the people in their developments are aware of this process so they have a real opportunity to have input and to be aware of what is going on. Steve noted the success we had with the Cherry Valley Rd. issue and how that proposal was stopped when the community had an opportunity to discuss it rationally. This can be used as a response when people question why they should get involved.

State Legislative Redistricting – Art noted that there have been several key events in the process of redistricting for State Legislature districts. There was a hearing several weeks ago that Peter Esser testified about the desire to pull the Olney community together in their coverage. Representatives from a number of other communities made similar requests that their communities be kept together in this process. There was also a Councilmatic redistricting hearing last week. Peter added that he presented testimony on Sept. 6 before the Governor's Redistricting Committee. Basically his testimony was given on behalf of the Partnership for a Unified Olney, a non-partisan alliance consisting of GOCA, the Olney Chamber of Commerce, NEMPAC, the town of Brookeville, and the Sandy Spring Civic Association. They concentrating on defining the greater Olney area as a separate community from other portions of the County, focusing on its identity and that it should be unified within a single legislative district, preferably entirely within Montgomery County. They talked about the civic associations that make up the area, and some of the physical boundaries that separate the area from other areas.

All of the plans presented so far are Democratic plans. The Republicans do not have a large enough voting base in the Legislature within Montgomery Co. to be likely to get a plan accepted. Of the 5 Democratic plans presented on Sept 6th, 3 would have significantly unified Olney within one district. Two of the plans were very expansive east to west. In one of these Olney is largely in one precinct with another south of Rte. 108 along Muncaster Mill. The plan that seems to work the best is variation 2 of Plan 1B. It is more geographically compact. Olney has more in common with areas in the eastern portion of the County and the other plans stretch further to the west. But, this does not include some of the area south of Rte. 108 This was presented by Dana Dembrow. After testifying, he spoke with the chair of the committee, John Willis, the Md. Sec. of State and other delegates who indicated that the Partnership had presented quite strongly and had established the facts about the Olney community very well.

Peter added that one other plan he presented came out of the District 19 delegation that split the Olney community down Georgia Ave. Although Delegate Heller indicated there might changes to this plan, both Peter and Art indicated that they were disappointed that Delegate Heller had done this because, even if the final outcome might be Heller's proposal, they would have preferred that he go into the negotiations supporting the desire of the community to be in a one district. Peter noted, too, that the District 19 delegates seemed reticent to let them see it prior to the testimony. In speaking to Del. Heller, Heller suggested that the plans that

put all or most of Olney into one district were not likely to succeed because of pressure from Dana Dembrow, a delegate from District 20 who wants to be redistricted into the Olney area.

The Committee is collating the testimony and during the next month will be drafting a statewide plan that will be presented to the Governor in November. There will be a series of hearing around the State in which people can give their reactions to that plan. Then after some possible tweaking by the committee, it will be submitted to the Governor who may do some additional tweaking. Constitutionally he has to submit a plan to the Legislature on the first day of their session in January. They have 45 days to creates its own plan that must be agreed upon by both the House and the Senate or the Governor's plan becomes law. Historically, the Governor's plan as become the final plan.

A week later, they also testified at a hearing for the councilmatic redistricting, making the same essential statement. There was testimony to keep the agricultural preserve areas in the northwest quadrant of the area. Within the next month and a half, that committee will submit a plan to the Council and they are required by the County charter to hold a public hearing on the proposal and then the Council can do what it wants.

GOCA's Fundraising Efforts – Art noted that while we are relative healthy now, when fireworks time rolls around things get dicey. He has asked Steve Smet to look at fundraising efforts, and anyone with an idea for fundraising should contact him at 301 924-1734. Art added that he had talked with Ellen Bogage, a former GOCA corresponding secretary who works for COMCAST, about the possibility of them sponsoring the fireworks. But, they were not interested right now in doing that. But, the fireworks are about a year away, so we will continue to work on that option. Steve also mentioned the idea of selling yellow page type ads on our web site. We can also look at having levels of sponsorship. Roy suggested a plaque or other gift-based on their level of sponsorship. Art indicated that this is something we will be working on over the year. This year we got a grant from the County of \$6,200, but that is not available next year. The possibility of raising dues was mentioned. Art noted that these are all ideas that we will be considering over the next few months.

NEW BUSINESS

Special Election for Corresponding Secretary – Ron Berger noted that Lori Wilen, our recording secretary had to resign her position because of the demands of several other commitments she had made. He nominated John Lyons, a delegate from the Southeast Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA). He has been attending GOCA meetings for a while now and is familiar with the issues we are facing. Art added that there a number of upcoming issues, such as the Good Counsel High School relocation plans and the Master Plan review that impact his area and he will be a valuable addition to the officers. There were no other nominations. There was a question about whether the nomination could be voted on at this meeting, but the conclusion was that it was acceptable since this was an emergency election filling a vacant office for the remainder of the term only. John was elected to fill the vacancy of Corresponding Secretary unanimously.

Ride-On Bus Route Change – Ron Berger reported that on August 16th the County had a meeting at the Olney Library to announce the changes they were proposing to make on the Ride-On bus routes 52 and 53. This is not how this has been done in the past where they would solicited comments from the community about how to improve ridership. But this time, they simply announced that ridership was not what it should be and how they were changing the route. The changes only affect the 53 Route. The two routes runs between the Glenmont and Shady Grove Metro Stations through Olney. The route from Shady Grove will go through Norbeck Grove off Bowie Mill. It still goes to Montgomery General Hospital and they have added service up towards the Marian Fathers Assisted Living development. Service along Bowie Mill north of Norbeck Grove and along Headwaters has been eliminated. At the meeting there was discussion about problems with the service, such as drivers that were not always courteous, buses that are not on schedule, service that is not as frequent as it should be. Ron added that the staff person working on this was fairly new and was just handling this the way she had been told it had always been done; and that she agreed that it would be better to get community input before change routes rather than just dropping changes to routes on them.

Fall Festival/Community Night – Art announced GOCA would be having a table at the Chamber of Commerce's Community Night on Oct 3rd and we are providing volunteers to help Barry Schwartz of BJ Pumpnickel's serve food at his food tent at his Fall Festival on Saturday, Oct 6th and Sunday Oct 7th. We help him with volunteers, at his request, in appreciation for him providing all the food and setup at cost, and staff to supervise for the Olney Days Bull Roast. There was some discussion about pursuing the idea of getting a share of the proceed from the Fall Festival next year in exchange for our volunteering. Any one interested in volunteering was asked to call Helene Rosenheim at 301 774-6774. It was also noted that there will be a blood drive that weekend as well organized by the Lions Club.

Emergency Preparedness - Steve Smet noted that he would like to see a discussion between the local police, fire and rescue, and the hospital about potential wider-area emergencies that may or may not happen. For the Y2K experience, the County put out information about things people should do to prepare for that. It is a different time now and people are exposed to certain dangers. It might be useful now for these groups to get together to take a look at what people should do in the face of such an

emergency as the Sept. 11th attack. People need to know what to do. When the incident happened last month, people ran and got their kids from schools, there was no continuity to what people did, which just leads to more confusion and panic. He felt that GOCA should take a leadership role in putting together a plan for the community for dealing with emergencies, some guidance to residents where to go for services, things they can do to prepare their homes- things to have in their homes. Other issues that could be considered is the kinds of reactions people have in cases such as the biological incident in Japan a number of years ago, when thousands of people went to the hospital that had not been infected; how the community might deal with distribution of medications to combat biological or chemical terrorist' attacks. Art noted that we would contact some local officials and the hospital to see how we can get those kinds of discussion underway.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Following a reminder that the next meeting will be on Oct 9th, and that there will be at Officers' meeting on Oct 4th at Art's, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance:

Stephen Smet, Roy Peck, Peter Esser. Terri Hogan (Gazette), Art Brodsky, Rich Kopanda, Chuck Keyserling, Ron Berger, Sharlene Monroe, Stephen Joseph, Edward Partington, Joe Buffington, and Khalid Afzal.