



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

**GOCA MEETING - DECEMBER 11, 2001**

The meeting was called to order by Executive Vice President Rich Kopanda. Following introductions, the floor was opened for Public Comments.

-A resident from Olney Mill CA asked about the possibility about getting a sidewalk on the west side of Georgia Avenue between Olandwood and Prince Philip Dr. Dave Eskenazi indicated that he would provide them with the name of a contact in the Department of Public Works and Transportation. Rich K. noted that there is a county-wide Bikeways/Trailways Program that provides for communities to include bike paths in the master plan process. Helene noted that there is a Sidewalk Program in the County and she would follow-up through the Mid-County Regional Service Center to get more information about the status of the program.

- Mike Kelley noted that the Welcome to Olney sign installed by the Boy Scouts just north of Rte. 28 has been moved further north on Georgia Avenue just short of Emory Lane, in an area missing a tree along the deceleration lane for Olney Manor Park. It was moved by the crew working for the County installing a sidewalk along Georgia Avenue from Rte. 28 north past the Park.

- Fran Ware, the new Head Librarian at the Olney Library introduced herself. She noted that she had been a Librarian in Baltimore for 20 years and had spent the last 3 years working for a private library company. She lives in Howard County and had been commuting up to Jersey City on Monday and returning on Friday and had wanted to find something closer to home. She is very excited about being at our library and is very interested in getting herself and the Library involved in the community. She has had the Library join the Chamber of Commerce and is hoping to continue to meet with other organizations in the Olney area. She just wanted to introduce herself tonight, but will certainly come back both to listen and when she has issues or project that she wants community support for or assistance with.

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**Transportation Policy Task Force Report** -Rich introduced Mark Friis, a Brookeville resident, and Pam Linstrom, a Civic Federation member, both of whom served on the Transportation Policy Task Force. Mark noted that Park and Planning (P&P) solicited for and appointed 36 members for the Task Force and they ended up with 34 members for an 18-month study. One-third of the representatives were from civic associations, one-third from business. Some of the groups represented included Civic Federation, the Audobon Society, the Sierra Club, the Chamber of Commerce, WMATA, State Highway Administration (SHA), and DPWT. The study involved looking at transportation with a 2025 and 2050 time frame.

The study involved a 3-step process: (1) developing land use and transportation scenarios; (2) testing some of the scenarios at certain transportation facilities; and (3) selecting 2 divergent scenerios - one transit-oriented vs one roads-oriented. The process included looking at the County's master plans. They got runs of traffic counts of master plan development against the two scenarios and a mixture of the two. The group eventually agreed on what consensus would be, in terms of counting votes, but they never actually got there. They defined consensus as 27-28 votes out of 34. 22 represented a substantial majority and 17 was an absolute majority. The Task Force has completed its analysis and results, but no final report has been completed yet. But, depending on who you talk to, the results show different things. Each side sees results that supports their positions.

After they went through the runs with the different scenarios, they had an all-day summit where they voted on the different sets of road projects. Some of the more controversial projects, e.g., the Inter-County Connector (ICC), the Montrose Parkway, M-183, were voted on separately. The final votes are available on the website [www.movemontgomery.org](http://www.movemontgomery.org). They came up with a laundry list of facilities with votes and pros or cons. Some of the votes were:

- The Inner-Purple Metro Line received a substantial majority vote of 24.
- Metro from Bethesda to New Carrollton got a substantial majority vote of 24.
- Metro from Bethesda to Tysons Corner did not get a majority vote.
- The ICC got 20 votes.
- None of the alternatives to the ICC got more than 22 votes, including widening Rte. 198 in Burtonsville to Rte. 28; widening Rte. 28 to Georgia Avenue, widening Muncaster Mill Rd to the southern extension of M-183.

- The Georgia Avenue Busway got 26-27 votes.

They felt that some consensus needed to be developed in the middle. They need some transit improvements such as either the inner or outer purple line. There seems to be more support for the inner route.

Pam focused her discussion on land-use changes - also know as the BLU/Balanced land use scenario. She noted that even though the majority of the Task Force voted against this scenario, there is a lot of support in other circles. Surveys done at public meetings by P&P where they presented information on both the transit and land use alternatives showed a lot of support for the land use alternatives. The concept is that (1) they build an alternative expanded transit system and use it as a backbone for development. With this, 33% of all housing would be near a transit system.; (2)the outer boundary of the fringe areas be brought in; and (3) they balance job and housing growth. The I-270 corridor is the real job corridor in Montgomery County. There is a large excess of job to housing that could be there. Georgia Avenue is a corridor in the eastern county and is a rural fringe. Olney is part of the rural fringe. The Georgia Ave corridor, especially if you include Olney is very job deficient. So, this area would be impacted by this land-use scenario. The only given was that the total number of households and jobs could not be changed through this process. They can only be moved around.

There are 7 traffic zones in Olney. The current job to housing ratio is 3,200 houses to 7,200 jobs. The ratio by 2050 under the current development scheme in our Master Plan would be 1,400 houses to 7,700 jobs. Under the BLU plan it would go to 1,200 houses to 8,700 jobs. The implication is that if you look at the job/housing ratio is useful because the number tells you something about the balance of development. Along the I-270 there are 2 jobs per household. In Downtown Silver Spring there is a higher number per household. There is 0.71 jobs per household goes to 0.55 with master plan extension. Excess labor from that area has to be accommodated. The job number is 8,000 now and goes to 13,000 under master plan extension, but would only go to 9,000 under the BLU extension.

In the discussion:

- Dave E. asked where she expects housing to increase. Pam indicated that Gaithersburg, Rockville, and N. Bethesda have high excess employment and employment growth is 80% of the total for the county. The representatives from Gaithersburg and Rockville are not unhappy with more housing.

- Rich K. asked if that meant changing our policy to zone for more commercial/industrial development. Pam indicated that she was not familiar with our plan, but thought that much of it could accommodate more commercial development. Mark F. noted that they did not look at master plans to say where housing and jobs should be within an area, but that they did a broad approach for an overall area. They did not consider the impacts of increased telecommuting because they did not really have a way to measure and reflect it.

- Don S. noted that it should not just be a job count, but it matters what kind of jobs are being considered. It needs to be jobs that provide a bread winner with enough to live on.,

- Chuck K. had a problem with the approach of spreading out the distribution of business because it made it difficult to organize transit and took people out of public transit and into their cars. Pam noted that this approach assumes that the Georgia Avenue busway goes to major intersections. The BLU plan with higher employment and reduced residential development in Olney does reduce commuting, e.g., 1,000 fewer to Gaithersburg. Chuck K. thought that the projections will be erroneous if they do not consider telecommuting that takes a lot of cars off the road. Mark F. thinks they also need to consider the aging of the Montgomery County population and the increasing numbers that retire and stay in area. It was noted that two-income families is also a part of the reason for the increase in traffic. Rich suggested that the report is pretty much completed and they wouldn't have time to incorporate telecommuting and the BLU plan was on a separate track.

- The next step is that P&P will hold worksession, including one that night and 2 more after that. By January or February they will put comments and recommendations together to go to the Council. The report will not be by specific area, but will be a broad plan. Pam noted that there is a significant majority support of the concept of the BLU plan, but some are bothered by the details of the plan with respect to which traffic nodes are proposed. They had to vote on specific numbers, but many were uncomfortable with that. Growth does not equal development (growth=demand and development=supply). Growth in the greater area is inevitable, so they used the Council of Government models for growth in the area. Many of the Task Force members questioned the idea of accepting the premise that growth population is a given and will continue to say so. This is likely to be an issue with the Council. Mark noted again that there is so much data that supporters of any position can find support for their positions.

- Two main products of the Task Force is the modeling scenarios for which there has been a lot of outreach, and the extensive data that will be a great resource for many years. Pam suggested that our saying a middle ground approach is desirable, if that is what we support, and if there are specific projects that we oppose or support, we should note that as well. Mark suggested that, to the extent that we can, we should be as specific as possible. He also suggested that we speak to Stuart Rochester about the East County master plan.

## OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

**President's Report** - Rich Kopanda reported for Art Brodsky that Khalid Afzal, P&P Georgia Ave Team Leader, is wrapping up the data collection phase of the Olney Master Plan Review and is putting together the Purpose and Outreach Report. The draft should be completed by the end of the month. The report will identify the issues that the master plan review will develop. In January and February they will (1) be finalizing the report, (2) contacting those people nominated to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), and (3) will send those selected copies of the report for comment. December 31<sup>st</sup> is the closing date for nomination letters for membership on the CAC. Those interested in applying should contact Marian Joyce. Her number is 301 495-4724.

- Good Counsel High School will be filing their subdivision plan by the end of the month. The plan is essentially the same as the plan they presented to us several months ago. John Lyons noted that Art Raimo met with SEROCA a second time the previous evening. Their general reaction was that they had not heard any of the concerns expressed by the residents at their earlier meeting. They did indicate that they would prohibit students from driving on Batchellors Forest, but there was no real response to the issue of evening events at the same time as performances or events at Olney Theatre. Their traffic plan does not include the Centex development plan for an empty-nest type development around the school that will be more like a "little Leisure World", not a low-income development. They also intend to light some of the practice fields in addition to the main field. This is a real concern to the residents since this would be like another Olney Manor Park. Ron Berger noted that Centex has been talking with the County government for some time, particularly in conjunction with developing the Good Counsel site in Wheaton. Centex is acquiring land - the Hyde property and the Northwest property and then is providing land to Good Counsel in exchange for their land in Wheaton. Good Counsel is also making arrangements to purchase the Hyde property directly in the event that the Centex deal falls through. It was noted that we need to have representatives from Centex at a future meeting to discuss that they are planning.

**Correspondence Report** - No report.

**Treasurer's Report** - Roy Peck reported that we currently have a balance of \$5,010.15. Helene R. noted that if we make a \$2,000 payment to Zambelli by the end of December, we can get a 10% discount on our fireworks contract for the Olney Days Festival. Roy Peck moved that:

GOCA SEND A \$2,000 DEPOSIT TO ZAMBELLI TO GET AT 10% DISCOUNT.

The motion was seconded by Don Schmelter and passed unanimously.

Roy also noted that we needed to find someone to audit our books. Jack Meyer offered to do that.

**Chamber of Commerce Report** - Joe Buffington reported that they are continuing to work on financing the Police Substation. They have completed the household requests for \$1 per household and they will be coming to the civic associations for help. They are also beginning a corporate campaign that was started by the Sandy Spring Bank. They need not only to come up with the money to open the door, but also to meet the ongoing cost of operating the station.

**Membership Report** - Rich Kopanda reported that we still have 25 member associations. They are getting ready to send out the membership letter for 2002. He noted that the GOCA Officers had talked about raising the dues to make them more proportional to the size of the developments. Mike Kelley noted that the dues had been low in the past because our expenses were low. But, now we are doing more, such as the Olney Days Festival and he thinks that for most higher dues is doable. Mike moved that:

GOCA SET MEMBERSHIP AT \$1 PER HOUSEHOLD.

The motion was seconded by Steve Smet. Some of the points made in the discussion of the motion:

- Chuck K. thought that associations with no mandatory dues might object and might be less interested in making a donation to the Festival to help finance the fireworks.
- Jackie B. suggested that we might want to tell associations about the change this year and start collecting the new amount next year since most would not have budgeted for such an increase.
- Ron B. thought that we needed more input from our member associations, to the extent that they will reply and he suggested putting together a committee to put together a proposal for a new fee structure.

The motion was tabled until a report can be made by this ad hoc committee.

**Transportation Report** - Dave Eskenazi reported that there will be a SHA Focus Group Meeting on the Rte. 28/97 intersection on

December 19<sup>th</sup>. Ron Berger asked if it was Dave's intention to get information on road abandonment issues. He noted that there was a recent proposal to abandon a portion of Tridelphia Lake Rd near the Lake that the WSSC will control. They will still let the public access the lake, but it will not be a public road. Dave indicated that these are issues they would be interested in, but they are not always aware of the proposed actions, as in the case of the Tridelphia Lake Rd. It was noted that we need to see if a mechanism can be put into place so that we get notified about such actions on roads in our planning area or in surrounding areas that will directly impact our community.

**Land Use Report** - No additional report beyond the comments made under the President's Report above.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Public Safety Update** - Mike Kelley reported that even though Project Change had been able to raise \$6,000 in corporate and individual donations, they have decided that they are not going to be able to accept the offer made by the Freeman Associates. Josh Freeman had offered the use of an empty storefront until they were ready to renovate the space. The money they had raised was enough to cover their start-up expenses, but they realized they did not have an income source to cover their on-going expenses. Instead, they are planning a number of activities throughout the year. There will be special events at Longwood, pool parties, etc. They are also looking at long-range planning and are working on establishing themselves as a non-profit 501(c) organization. Rich suggested that once they have their 501(c) status, they should look into getting added to the list of United Way recipient organizations.

Mike also noted that it had been a long time since we had a report from the County Police. He will invite Capt Dee Walker to attend our February or March meeting. He noted, also that there had been a case of arson in James Creek and an arrest has been made. He also mentioned the increase in serious accidents recently. High speed seems to be the cause in many cases. The day before, two cars had turned over near the intersection of Georgia Ave. and Emory Ln. The turn on Muncaster Mill Rd is still a problem. There was another accident on Muncaster Mill between Emory Ln and Meadowside. All of the recent accidents seem to occurred on slight declines in the road, near curves and involved high speed. Rich noted that it is scary to think of our children driving with all of these accidents occurring. Mike added that we need more education about safe driving. We may want to try to get driver's education put back into the public school curriculum. He goes to the high schools with the Fire Department, but he focuses on alcohol and driving. He suggested that he might need to expand his discussion to touch on speed as well. He noted that the Olney zip code is number 1 in the County for underage drinking. They are not necessarily in Olney when they do the drinking, but the statistics are maintained by the zip codes where they live. A primary goal of Project Change is to provide activities for teens here in the community so they do not have to drive to other areas. There was a sense that GOCA needed to take a more active role in addressing this problem. Ed Weisel moved that:

### GOCA FORM A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF THE HIGH NUMBER OF DRIVING FATALITIES IN THE OLNEY AREA.

The motion was seconded by Mike Kelley and passed unanimously.

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Review Update** - Rich Kopanda reported that Park and Planning staff is developing the various pieces of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Report. The parts are being made available to the CAC for comment. P&P is proposing to purchase the Dungenone property in order to preserve the environmentally sensitive areas around the headwaters of the North Branch of the Rock Creek. This effects 3 properties - the Freeman, Casey, and Henry properties. If they make it community-held property, there is a greater chance of it being left undeveloped. They are proposing through easements so the land would remain undeveloped. There are also some wetlands areas that border the properties. They are developing a land use recommendation plan to be discussed on 12/17. Dave suggested that paths and walkways be provided in the undeveloped areas. Rich noted his concern that the Upper Rock Creek CAC has been so focused on specific developments that they have ignored other issues like bike paths. Only one bikeway has been talked about so far. But, they have been told that others are included in the County's Trails and Bikeways Master Plan. However, there is no funding for any of them. He noted, also, that P&P said that they did not want to comment on the Casey property preliminary and site plan until after the Master Plan process is completed.

**2001 GOCA Awards** - Ron Berger noted that it is time again for people to submit nominations for GOCA's annual awards. The application is available for downloading from the GOCA website. Normally our nominations come from a limited number of people, and he hoped that we could do better. Those working on the awards are not aware of all the deserving individuals and groups and we rely on others in the community to bring them to our attention. The categories of the awards are the Howard J. Garber Citizen of the Year Award, Contribution to Community Awards, the GOCA Worker of the Year Award, and the Olney Heritage Award. The Heritage Award is one that we began giving a few years ago to individuals who did something for the community that had a profound impact on the way Olney developed. The Awards Ceremony will be at Longwood on Sunday, March 3<sup>d</sup>.

**2002 GOCA Election of Officers** - Ron B. reported that the election of officers will take place at the February meeting, so now

is the time to consider the slate. Those interested or those you know of someone who would be a good candidate should contact him. For those who have not been active in the past, this is the time to give careful consideration to becoming more involved.

**Mid-County Regional Center's Olney Office** - Helene Rosenheim reported that the County has been negotiating with the Buffingtons to lease the office in their new building adjacent to the community meeting room they are providing. The County will then sublease a portion of the space to the Olney Chamber of Commerce since they are also looking for office space. With the help of volunteers, we are hoping to have the Mid-County Olney Office open 5 days a week. Joe Buffington indicated that he thought the space would be available by the end of February. Helene noted that we have not given up on the idea of a government center in Olney, but with the current budget situation that is not likely to become a reality for 6 or more years. Natalie Cantor, the director of the Center is excited at the prospect of this interim solution, both for the Regional Service Center as well as for the Chamber. Helene asked that anyone interested in working in the office as a volunteer, contact her at 301 570-2884.

**Olney Days Festival 2002** - Helene Rosenheim reported that planning has begun for the next Olney Days Festival. She has met with Roni Septoff and mapped out the committees we will need and identified some likely candidates to chair those committees. She noted the earlier discussion and motion to make a partial payment to the Zambelli company in order to get a discount from them for their fireworks package. The events will be essentially the same as last year. However, we may need to find a new location depending on where the construction of the new main stage is by then. The events will be essentially the same as last year. But, we may try to add some events to the Fun Fair at Olney Manor Park on Saturday afternoon. One possibility is a volleyball tournament between civic and homeowner associations. They will begin regular planning meetings mid-January.

## NEW BUSINESS

**Discussion of the Special Presentation** - Dave E. noted that he had attended one of the Task Force hearings, but the discussion was all over the board. But, he felt that we should tell them what our position is on some of the projects they looked at. Rich K. thought that we should do an inventory of the projects that will impact the Olney community, take a position on them, and prepare a paper outlining our positions on them.

Ed W. added that there are also some overarching philosophical issues that will impact our master plan process. We will need to decide if we want to remain a bedroom community with roads to other areas or do we want to follow the BLU approach. Steve S. noted that planning does take into account the changing impact of technology and ways of doing things better. People will adapt to telecommuting in the future and that should be considered in taking our position. Chuck K. suggested that GOCA should say that we like the community described in our current master plan and that we want that to be our community of the future.

The consensus was that we should put our position on roads on paper and make sure it gets in front of the right people as we go through this process. It was suggested that we put the position on our website and circulate it to our GOCA representatives. We could send them an email directing them to the website and soliciting their reactions. Dave E. offered to put together a list that he would then send to the officers for an initial review before placing it on the website.

Following this discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

**Helene Rosenheim**

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance:

Steve Smet, Roy Peck, Jackie Benn, Ed Weisel, Mike Kelley, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Helene Rosenheim, Rich Kopanda, Don Schmelter, Chuck Keyserling, Dave Eskenazi, Ron Berger, John Lyons, Joe Buffington, Jack Meyer, Pamela Linstrom, Mark Friis, Alan Dellapenna, William Dellapenna, Matt Martin, Michael Doss, Bill Doss, Stanley Elswick, Dianne Davenport, and Fran Ware.