



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

**GOCA MEETING - JANUARY 8, 2002**

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. The agenda was approved with no additions or corrections. The December 2001 minutes were approved with 2 corrections: The reference to "a representative from Olney Mill" under Public Comments should read "A resident from Olney Mill", and the url on Page 1 should be [www.movemontgomery.org](http://www.movemontgomery.org). Following introductions, the floor was opened for Public Comments.

- Stanley Elswick asked about the status of his request for a sidewalk on the west side of Georgia Avenue between Olandwood and Prince Philip Dr. Art B. noted that he had written to Rick Allen because he was interested in having the County build a sidewalk all the way to Longwood. The issue is the amount of money available for sidewalks and the competition among communities for those dollars. GOCA is in favor in principal of trying to get sidewalks installed in this area and wants to be part of the effort. He wants to identify any relevant civic association, homeowners association, or homeowners. This type of effort is usually non-controversial, but he wants to be assured that all along that route are in support of this effort. Stan noted that he had drafted a letter to State Highway Administration (SHA) stating his request. Art added that if we are not able to identify an appropriate association to pursue this, GOCA will write a letter to SHA in support of Stan's letter.

- Chuck Keyserling noted that the master plan review process is getting started and he encourage civic and homeowners associations to get involved. He feels that the County is pro-development and we need citizens to be actively involved in this process to balance the analysis of the community's needs. Helen Dodson noted the display on the master plan review that Park and Planning (P&P) has placed in the Library.

## OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

- The second meeting of the Charter Review Commission will take place on January 9th at the Eastern Regional Service Center. The Charter Review Commission is charged with trying to see if they want to recommend a change in the structure of the County Council.

- There will be a Pancake and Sausage dinner at St. John's Church on February 16<sup>th</sup>.

- The GOCA Safety Subcommittee has not met yet. Mike Kelley is going to see if he can get some of the Project Change members involved since a key issue the subcommittee will be addressing is teenage drunk driving. Art suggested that we be sure to reach out to students at Magruder.

**Correspondence Report** - No report.

**Treasurer's Report** - Roy Peck reported that we currently have a balance of \$2,211.61. We currently have a \$2,000 credit with the Zambelli Fireworks Co. for fireworks for the 2002 Olney Days Festival. There are no outstanding bills.

**Chamber of Commerce Report** - No Chamber report.

**Membership Report** - Rich Kopanda reported that he will be mailing 2002 dues letters to 37 associations. The mailing will also include a separate letter requesting contributions for the Olney Days Festival and Fireworks.

**Transportation Report** - Art reported for Dave Eskenazi that:

- The Transportation Policy Report will be delivered to the County Council on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. There will be public hearings before the Council on February 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>. At the last officers meeting, the officers discussed ways of formulating a community response to the report. As a part of doing that, Dave Eskenazi has developed a questionnaire for collecting information. A second question was how to get response and comments to GOCA. The plan is to distribute the questionnaire to our delegates to familiarize them with it and to post it to the GOCA website and to try to make people aware that it is there. The Council's Report will be on the Council's

website and on [www.movemontgomery.org](http://www.movemontgomery.org). The deadline for comments to GOCA will be February 8<sup>th</sup> and should go to [abrodsky@aol.com](mailto:abrodsky@aol.com) or can be submitted to Art in writing. Rich Kopanda suggested that we might want to weight the responses from associations in some way. Art also noted that the Report will be available from P&P the same day it goes to the Council.

- Work is continuing by the working group on the Rte 97/28 intersection. They are looking at a range of alternatives, as many as 6-7 variations.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Election Redistricting** - Art B. noted that the Governor will be making his recommendations for redistricting of the State Legislature within a day or so. The Redistricting Committee recommend that District 14 solely represent Montgomery County and include the bulk of Brookeville, Ashton, Olney, and Sandy Spring. Other parts of Olney would continue in District 19 and District 39. Art felt that we had come out better in the process than we had anticipated. There is still some political maneuvering going on, but it appears that our portion of the proposal may not be affected by these.

With respect to the County Council redistricting, Art felt that the Olney area was being divided up more than he would like. Nancy Dacek was interested in retaining the central part of Olney. Marilyn Praisner was interested in having the Ashton and Brookeville areas in her district. Art noted that at one time the Council redistricting committee was going to use Batchellors Forest Road as a boundary between precincts that would have split the Southeast Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA) area in half. He and John Lyons testified against the use of this road as a boundary and the plan does seem to respond favorably to that request.

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Review Update** - Rich Kopanda reported that the Upper Rock Creek Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) recently held the first meeting with P&P at where land use recommendations were discussed. There was a large attendance at the meeting and most did not want an increase in the density of their residential developments nor did they want clustering. A lot of the people there had also attended many of the sessions over the past 2 years. Fred Boyd, the lead P&P staff member working on this study responded to a number of critical comments that it was not true that the committee was stacked with developers, that large property-owners should serve on the committee, and people who don't live in the area not serve on the committee.

One thing that is still not clear with the number of units that could be built because we do not know how the land might perk. This will make it hard to evaluate the percentage of change resulting from the proposed changes in density in the Casey and Freeman properties in this area. On the Dungan property, they are proposing a change to some portions from RE-1 to RE-2. Most of the RE-2 areas are in the Legacy area and that yields 5-10 fewer units than under the current zoning. That may be more because there is no sewer there. The rural neighborhood cluster zone is one that is being considered for this area. By definition, this zone has a standard method of development and an optional method with higher density, but more stringent review and more restrictive requirements. The final ratio of units per acre is not part of the definition of the zone, but is fixed in each master plan, e.g., in Sandy Spring the ratio is 1.5 units per acre. The zone was first used in Sandy Spring. With the Casey property, they are proposing clustering some of the housing between Magruder HS and Sequoyah ES and making the rest less dense; and possibly dedicating land behind homes along the streams that feed the Rock Creek. They want to take sewer lines for a section of Muncaster Mill Rd and for Magruder HS and extend it to this property. The amount of units being permitted under this zone represents a decrease. But, the actual yield is not yet known based on the percolation information that is available now. The question is that they could build 85 units under the current zone. With the proposed change, the yield would possibly be a 50 unit increase. Since 1985 because of environmental concerns about the stream bed and the improvements in newer technology, the recommendation is that sewers would be better for this area. The recommendation for the Casey property is a midway compromise between the existing yield permitted and what the developer is currently asking for. The property is now partially zoned RE-1 and partially RE-2. The recommendation is for RE-2 zoning.

Chuck K. noted that several developers came in requesting density increases greater than what the Olney Master Plan called for and GOCA successfully opposed them. It sounds as if this is similar to what the people in the Upper Rock Creek area are asking for which is that the residents there just want to keep what is there. Ron B. noted that when there is a recommendation for an increase in density, a reason for opposing the increase is the impact on infrastructure and the inability to keep up with it. The impact is relatively minute with this number of units over this total acreage. The number of increased housing units recommended versus the 2000 houses we got with the last Olney Master Plan is not a significant increase for the trade-off you get in the Upper Rock Creek area in preservation of undeveloped land. The staff really did not get to present information on the changes expected because of the hostile reaction of people at the meeting. The committee needs to spend more time reviewing and analyzing to what see exactly what impacts the recommended changes will have. Unfortunately, the recommendations from P&P were given to the committee at the same time it was given to the public.

Rich noted that Olney's position has been that we are actively neutral in this process, but that we are concerned about the impacts on roads, schools and other infrastructure in the Olney planning area. GOCA will have to decide what, if any, comments it would

like to make about the density recommendations because of those impacts, keeping in mind how we would feel about residents in the Upper Rock Creek area about proposals for changes to our master plan.

There was discussion of the impact on the process if GOCA takes a position for or against the recommendations, e.g., GOCA appearing to support developers, Upper Rock Creek not wanting to support GOCA if we want their support if we do not support them, etc. Mike Kay suggested that we might want to address the density questions strictly in terms of its impact on traffic, regardless of where the traffic is coming from. Helen Dodson suggested that Muncaster Mill is such a dangerous road now that any increase in traffic generated by the proposed changes would be unacceptable and that GOCA recommend that no changes be permitted unless adverse impacts on road capacity is addressed. Khalid noted that this is just a first draft and positions can change. The consensus of the discussion was that GOCA should comment on the proposed master plan for the Upper Rock Creek area and Art indicated that he and Rich would prepare a list of the issues involved. Khalid offered to have P&P staff come to a GOCA meeting to give a presentation on the draft proposals, and that we should look at the whole plan, not just this aspect of the plan. Ron B. suggested that if we are going to comment on this plan, it should be because (1) we see a direct impact on the Olney community, (2) we see an indirect impact on our community, or (3) we see a problem in the planning process that we think could impact us in our planning process. Art agreed that we needed to consider these aspects as we decide whether to comment. Khalid added that the Olney Master Plan issues paper will be done in late January and asked that we spend some time at our February meeting discussing that paper. Also, the deadline for nominations to the Olney CAC was December 31, 2001 and they will appoint the CAC by the end of February when their report goes to the Planning Board. Khalid will try to have a different format with the Olney CAC than they did with the Upper Rock Creek process. He anticipates some Saturday sessions to go through an entire issue in one sitting. When the issue paper comes out there will be about 3 weeks to get comments in before the report goes to the Board, and then there will be an opportunity for additional comments after it goes to the Board.

**Olney Days Festival 2002** - Art B. noted that the fireworks display we have had for the past several years as a part of the Olney Days Festival is a great event that he does not want to see go away. The dues structure for our member associations is relatively cheap. It is at that level to encourage participation. We do not want to raise the dues, but we are sending a separate letter along with the dues letter asking each of the civic associations and homeowners associations to raise some of the money by collecting \$1 per household. We have asked our member associations for donations before, but not in this same way. So, we will have to wait to see how effective this strategy is. Helene Rosenheim reported that the next planning meeting would be on January 17<sup>th</sup> at Roni Septoff's home. Anyone interested in attending can contact Helene for the address and directions.

**2001 GOCA Awards** - Ron Berger noted that the 2001 Annual Awards Ceremony will take place on Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at 2:00 pm at Longwood Recreation Center. He indicated that the list of nominees was nearly complete except for one nomination that was being emailed to him. Ballots will be mailed shortly to GOCA delegates and officers and should be returned by the February meeting. They will be tallied at that meeting and the winners will be announced.

**2002 GOCA Election of Officers** - Ron B. reported that the election of officers will also take place at the February meeting. All of the current officers will stand for election again except for the First Vice President. The ballot should be complete by the February meeting.

**Skate Park Effort** - Mike Kay noted that he had seen a mention in the minutes about a skate park and that he had tried to open one in Olney. He was not able to use any school blacktop areas because of liability. The Parks Department would not allow any private ventures unless they are through the Recreation Department. But, the Recreation Department has been helping him. The new Damascus park was to include a slab, but that may not be happening. The Parks usually do concrete slabs that are unattended that cost \$167,000 on average. They are about 15,000 sq. ft, a little less than 3 tennis courts.

## NEW BUSINESS

There was no new business.

Following this discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance:

Steve Smet, Roy Peck, Jackie and Danny Benn, Ed Weisel, Mike Kelley, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Helene Rosenheim, Rich Kopanda, Don Schmelter, Chuck Keyserling, Ron Berger, Stanley Elswick, Khalid Afzal, Helen Dodson, Polly Knight, Mike Knapp, Michael Kay, and Craig Zucker.