



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212      Olney , Maryland 20830  
[www.goca.org](http://www.goca.org)

## GOCA MEETING – February 12, 2002

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. The agenda was approved with one deletion (special presentation from Good Counsel) and one additional item under New Business. The January 2002 minutes were approved with 1 corrections noting that there had been 2 corrections to the December meetings, not one; the second being a change under Public Comments from “a representative of Olney Mill...” to “ a resident of Olney Mill...”

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ed Weisel noted that there had been some side comments at the first meeting of GOCA's Subcommittee on Traffic Fatalites on Olney roads about moderately-priced housing and in connection with that he read an email that seemed to suggest that the Olney Master Plan was being earmarked to receive moderately-priced housing units not included in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. He also referenced a Washington Post Metro article dated Feb. 6, 2002 discussing the fact that the proposed master plan for Potomac continues to not have little to no low-income, high density housing. He expressed his concern that it appeared that Olney was going to be a dumping ground for the all the low-income housing not provided for in these other areas.
- Mike Kay wanted to be sure GOCA was aware that the Freeman Associates was requesting a waiver of 15% of the parking being required for the current mix of businesses and restaurants in the Olney Village Mart. The issue is being addressed by the County's Permitting Services office as opposed to the Park and Planning Commission (P&P). Art indicated that we had received a copy of the letter from Permitting Services regarding this request and the hearing they would be holding and that we would be looking into what this actually meant.
- Don Schmelter noted that some of the American flags along Georgia Avenue were getting rather tattered. Helene Rosenheim indicated that she would mention that to Bobby Fletcher, who along with Bruce Graeves purchased the flags. She also noted that she had gotten permission from PEPCO and the State Highway Administration (SHA) for place along Rtes 97 & 108 for two blocks in all directions from that intersection. She will be approaching businesses along those blocks to see if they will be interested in purchasing flags to fly in front of their properties.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

**Good Counsel High School** – Art reported that the representatives from Good Counsel would not be coming to this meeting, as announced, because they were not ready to respond to a number of questions we had forwarded to them. They had come to the last GOCA Officers' meeting to give a rudimentary presentation. The biggest issue that came out of that presentation was the impact of school traffic from this project. They are anticipating a student body of 1,200 students and have over 400 parking spaces, 100 of which are for staff. Following their presentation, the officers compiled a series of questions relating to such things as trip generation from the school, school busing capacity, event traffic, and a number of environmental issues. Art noted that Good Counsel had filled its plan with P&P on Friday, but they hadn't seen his email relaying the questions in time to prepare them for this meeting. They currently plan to come to the March meeting. Khalid noted that the plan had not been circulated to the staff yet, so he had not seen the plan yet. In response to a question from John Lyons, Khalid noted that the local homeowners associations and surrounding neighbors will be notified either now or once a hearing date has been set.

**Verizon Building Expansion** – Art introduced Tim Dugan, an attorney for Verizon, who introduced Jay Welch, a realty construction supervisor for Verizon, Gregg Brenner and Eric Marks, architects with William Doggett Architects. Mr. Dugan stated that the site in question is the Verizon property on Georgia Avenue across from the firehouse near Victoria Springs. The facility is currently filling up with telecommunication equipment as telephone, and data transfer needs continue to grow. The expansion of the building will be horizontal to 87,000 sq. ft. The building is now bounded on 3 sides by woods that will remain. The new portion of the building will be built over the existing parking lot and they will add a new parking area behind the building on land already cleared of trees. The existing fuel tanks and mechanical equipment outside of the building will be put behind a stone wall that will also provide for more buffering. The existing building was built in 1960 as a special exception use and so they will need a

modification to their special exception because this is a non-residential use in a residential zone, R-200. As with many of the other Verizon expansions around the County, this should not be considered controversial. This expansion is being done to add capacity to the area so that they can offer more DSL connections. The current capacity will cover their needs for the anticipated growth for the next 5-10 years and they will add equipment as demand increases. The increased need is not just a result of increased population, but also because of the increase in the number of lines per household or user. The existing building had been sufficient for nearly thirty years because the size of the equipment had gotten smaller in recent years so they have been able to get more equipment in the facility than they originally had. They are currently at about 70% of their capacity and at the current rate of increased demand, they anticipate exhausting their capacity within the next 2-3 years. This expansion should meet their needs for the next 5-10 years. At that point, if they need additional space, they will decide then whether to continue to expand horizontally or to expand vertically. They have enough space on this property to do either.

The following points were made during the question and answer period following Verizon's presentation:

- Jackie Benn asked whether they would begin their construction after the AM rush hour. They indicated that the construction would not begin until late in 2003 or early in 2004 and would take about 8-12 months and they would take care to not have their construction vehicles impact rush hour traffic as much as possible.
- Rich Kopanda asked about the coverage this facility would provide. Jay Welch indicated that it actually services a fairly limited area west towards Gaithersburg.
- Roy Peck asked why they didn't move to the Silo Inn property. Jay responded that it was too costly to reroute the lines and it would be much more disruptive than the planned expansion. With this expansion, there will not be any disruption to underground service.
- Dave Eskenazi asked if they had any plans to put a tower of any type on this site. Jay indicated that the towers are for cellular phone service and this facility is separate from that. They do not generally put towers near this type of facility. Any towers with them would be for pager traffic. However, there are no plans for putting any towers on this site.
- The only regularly assigned staff at this facility now is one full-time person and they do not anticipate any additional full-time staff there. There are additional technicians that come into the facility for short periods of time over the course of the day as they responding to service calls. Generally for each service call they must come into this facility.

## **OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

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

- He would be testifying the next evening before the County Council on the proposed Transportation Policy Report. He is 25<sup>th</sup> on the list of speakers for the second night of testimony and he will have 3 minutes to speak. He anticipates that by then everything that could have been said with have been said, but at least GOCA will be on record. Based on his sense of what the community is saying, particularly in response to questionnaires GOCA distributed to our member associations and those on our email list, the consensus is that we support the improvement to selected intersections, but not for wholesale road construction in our area.
- Freeman Associates have filed a request for a waiver of 15% of their required parking. At the same time, they want to expand the number of restaurants in the center. There will be a hearing before the Dept. of Permitting Services on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am. The concern is that there are only 3 or 4 businesses there now that pretty nearly fill up the lot. Mike Kay added that his development, the Townes of Environ behind the Center had not opposed the Center's request to be released from the requirement for a cut-thru at the rear corner of the Center to provide access from homes near the intersection of Spartan Rd and Appomattox Way. However, they will likely oppose this request to eliminate parking without adequate pedestrian access. They may ask for a reversal on the decision to eliminate the cut-thru. Khalid noted that they are not changing the building footprint, but are changing the mix of uses. The uses have different formulas for calculating parking than the original mix of uses. Now they want more restaurants which means that they need more parking spaces than they are presently providing. He was not certain what the P&P staff's reaction would be to the request.
- He received a letter from a group called Marylanders for Better Transportation. They want to make up the \$79 million deficit in transportation funds, but they don't say how they will raise that money. They are asking us to join in on their effort. Rich Kopanda noted that the State has already spent \$10 million on Muncaster Mill Rd. He will be speaking to SHA staff and will ask where the money was spent and he will ask about this as well. Helen Dodson noted a series in the Post last year about road dollars being used for sidewalk construction. Roy Peck noted that another developer has applied for building permits on a corner of another quadrant of the Georgia Ave/ICC intersection. Typically the SHA will buy the land before the developers get the building permits. He suggested that they could save money if we could get the State to stop buying this land. Art noted that the County Council had introduced legislation to support restarting the environmental impact study of the ICC.

- The Olney Lions and Knights of Columbus will be holding a Pancake Breakfast on Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> from 8 am –2 pm. This will include an Inova blood drive.

**Correspondence Report** - No report.

**Treasurer's Report** - Roy Peck reported that our current balance is \$2211.61, plus we have a \$2,000 credit with the Zambelli Fireworks Co towards the 20002 Olney Days Festival Fireworks. He also submitted a list of last years expenditures

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

**Membership Report** - Rich Kopanda reported that all dues letters and requests for fireworks/Festival donations have been mailed to all of the homeowners and civic associations we are aware of, except Ashley Hollow. Most went to either the association's president or their po box. He can't really tell if they are going to the correct person, especially if they do not come back. It is our hope that people will forward them to the correct person, if the recipient is no longer the right person.

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

- The website for the Transportation Policy Report is [www.movemontgomery.org](http://www.movemontgomery.org), and reiterated that the hearings on the report were going on that night and the next night.

- He, Steve Smet, Rich Kopanda, Ed Weisel, and Mike Kelley have been looking at the most dangerous intersections and portions of roads to try to identify some ways to make them safer such as additional signage, etc, short of actual road construction. They are requesting accident data in addition to the fatalities they are already aware of. They anticipate having some recommendations by the March meeting. The roads they are primarily focusing on are Cashell Rd, Muncaster Mill Rd, Rte. 108 west of Olney Mill by the soccer fields; New Hampshire Ave near Brinklow, and Emory Lane. Rich suggested there may be a need for increased publicity and education. Steve noted that they may want to put a survey on the GOCA website to report on other road issues. There is currently no speed control officer in Olney now who can collect special statistics, so they are still developing information.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Review** – Rich Kopanda reported that there was not much to report since the last public meeting he had discussed at the last meeting. At the last Citizen Advisory Committee meeting they went “off-line” to discuss the Park and Planning recommendations. The next public meeting is Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Olney Master Plan Review** – Art noted that comments on the draft Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report for the Olney Master Plan Update are due Feb. 28<sup>th</sup>. GOCA will likely comment and he invited anyone interested to email comments to him. On March 7<sup>th</sup> the Planning Board will approve the Report and appoint the Citizen Advisory Committee members.

Khalid explained that there is a Countywide affordable housing initiative. It is not that the Olney Master Plan has been stuck with affordable housing. About a year ago there were several different elderly housing projects that they had a difficult time with and the Council decided that every master plan had to be explored for possible sites for affordable elderly housing. They directed P&P to look for every possible opportunity. The Potomac study was already underway when this decision was made, but that does not mean that they will not get any such housing. There was no specific number of units prescribed for each plan. They had just been told to look for opportunities. Dave E. noted that there was to have been an elderly housing project where the Fair Hill townhouses are currently located, but the developer argued successfully that there was no market for this type of housing and now we have Victory Housing on RE-2 zoned land instead of on land where it had been planned for in the Master Plan. He asked what the County will do if the use designated for in the next master plan does not happen as envisioned to avoid getting us more dense development than originally intended and not create undue impacts on traffic and other public facilities. For example, while the 43 townhouse units at Fair Hill is less density than the 250 elderly housing apartment units proposed there, the 43 units is substantially higher density than was originally called for in the base zoning. Khalid suggested it was not clear what the County could do to avoid that kind of situation. In a master plan, they can put a zoning limit, or say if a site is appropriate for elderly housing. But there is no tool that can give the kind of guarantee Dave is looking for. Master plans do not normally designate two zones, one if it is developed for elderly housing or if it is developed some other way. What the master plan will say is if elderly housing is compatible with a site. The Council will ask for affordable housing analysis for both the Upper Rock Creek area and for Potomac. But that does not necessarily there will be any there, just that they have to have looked for possible sites.

The Purpose and Outreach Strategy Report is the staff assessment of what to look at in the Olney Master Plan Review. It will become the workplan on 3/7. They can look at issues not included in the Report, but it should identify the major issues they will be addressing. Khalid did not expect any major changes, but more of a fine tuning. In the town center area, they will be looking at accessibility, transportation, cohesiveness. In Southeast Olney they will look at zoning and density, but mostly environmental issues. There are lots of streams and little park land. They will look for opportunities for protection of these resources. Batchellors Forest Rd's designation as a rustic road will also be reviewed to determine if its interim designation should be made

permanent. The Transportation Policy Report is not being addressed in master plans yet, but they will be looking at thru-traffic versus local traffic. He had expected more rezoning requests, but was surprised at how few there were.

They received 30 requests for membership on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) and Khalid expected that all 30 would be named to the CAC. He anticipated that they would hold more Saturday workshops versus months of evening meetings. The first meeting would likely be late in March or early in April. This would consist of a recap of the current situation, the issues they would be looking at, the process for doing the review, and tools available to them for planning. There will be an orientation session at the end of May or early in June where they will develop a conceptual framework for the master plan based on the preliminary discussions. They will deal with land use, community facilities, such as parks, schools, bike trails, et. During July and August the staff will work on the plan. In September, they will release the draft plan. In October it will go to the Planning Board. In September 2003, the plan will go to the County Council for approval and by January 2004 it will be final. Rich Kopanda suggested that a description of this process be publicized well in a variety of ways. He does not see how the master plan can say whether or not there should be an ICC, but it can address Muncaster Mill Rd. He noted that they will ask Montgomery County Public Schools about all the unused school sites in the planning area and their anticipated uses. They will also address the Georgia Ave. busway study.

**Olney Days Festival 2002** – Helene Rosenheim reported that the planning committee for the Festival has begun meeting. The schedule for upcoming meetings is 2/27, 3/21, 4/24, 5/1, and 5/9. The meetings are at Roni Septoff's house at 8:30 pm. Monica Friedman has begun working on the Festival Ad Book that will include a listing of all the corporate sponsors. They have added one new event. Fran Ware, the new manager of the Olney Library spoke to her about wanting to participate in the Festival So they will be sponsoring and arranging for a puppet show on Saturday around 11 am. Fran anticipates that 200-300 children might attend which is more than their large meeting room could accommodate. So we are looking for another location, starting with Longwood Recreation Center. Olney Elementary is another possibility. One other change is that the Car and Truck Show the Fletchers sponsor will be held on Sunday instead of Saturday and then the cars in the show will move down to Prince Philip Drive to be in the Parade.

Helene and Steve Smet reported that Steve had spoken with Bobby Fletcher of Fletcher's Amoco and Tom Johannes of the Good Earth Produce and Garden Center. They had offered to provide the \$6,000 that we had gotten last year from the County for the fireworks and some of the other expenses related to the Festival, but did not get this year. Steve suggested to them that he would like to involve the community more in raising the money since this is a community event. So Sandy Fletcher will be arranging for getting a number of collection jars to place at a number of businesses around town and will take care of collecting the money. It is hoped that the merchants who set out the jars will match or partially match the amount collected in the jars. Bobby and Dave will provide the balance of the \$6,000 that is not collected through the jars

**2001 GOCA Awards** – Ron Berger reported that he had tallied the ballots we received from our delegates for this years GOCA Awards. The balloting was close, but the winners were as follows

Howard J. Garber Memorial Citizen of the Year Award - the group of Local Area 9/11 Fire/Rescue/Medical Response Personnel. Contribution to Community Award – Dr. Winston Anderson, founder of the Sandy Spring Slave Museum; Debby and Bruce McIndoe for all their efforts with Community Concerts of Olney, Musicfest, scouting, and the PTSA at Sherwood High School; and Phil Wilk for all his work with the Chamber of Commerce providing plans for the police substation expansion and as chair of National Night Out. The GOCA Worker of the Year is Dave Eskenazi and the Olney Heritage Award will go do Dean Sarff. The awards will be presented at our annual awards ceremony on Sunday, March 3<sup>rd</sup> at Longwood. Some of the elected officials and dignitaries attending includes County Executive Doug Duncan, and Steve Silverman, President of the County Council. Ron reminded the officers that they needed to be at Longwood around 10 am to set up and he encouraged everyone to come with their friends and neighbors to express their appreciation to our award winners. The reception begins at 2:00 pm and the awards presentations begins at 3:00 pm.

**Sidewalks** – Helen Dodson reported that an architect at the University of Maryland had written an article about sidewalks discussing sidewalks vs. minimal sidewalks vs. ribbons of concrete. Even the risky sidewalks he described had curbs. She is very concerned about the retrofitted sidewalks the County is providing such as those in Olney Mill. She feels there is no safety without some barrier between the cars and the pedestrian and curbs are a necessity. She feels that we should insist on real sidewalks that offer real protection rather than these poorly made strips of concrete that will degrade quickly for the amount of money that is being spent. Rich Kopanda noted that the paths being installed on Emory Rd are without curbs, but are nice because they are farther from the road than the paths in Olney Mill and they are also adding lighting in the more poorly lit areas. There were several that felt some sidewalk even one that isn't the safest sidewalk is better than walking in the street.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

There was no new business.

**ELECTION OF 2002 GOCA OFFICERS**

Ron Berger presented the following slate of GOCA officers for 2002:

President – Art Brodsky  
Executive Vice President – Steve Smet  
First Vice President – John Lyons  
Second Vice President – Rich Kopanda  
Treasurer – Roy Peck  
Corresponding Secretary – Don Schmelter  
Recording Secretary – Helene Rosenheim

Mike Kelley would continue as Immediate Past President

There were no nominations made from the floor.

Ed Weisel moved that:

THE 2002 SLATE OF GOCA OFFICERS BE VOTED IN BY ACCLAMATION.

The motion was seconded by Jackie Benn and passed unanimously.

Following the election and Ed Weisel wishing Abraham Lincoln a Happy Birthday, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

People in Attendance:

Jackie Benn, Eric Marks, Gregory Brenner, Tim Dugan, Jay Welch, Dennis Twombly, Helen Dodson, Steve Smet, Roy Peck, Ed Weisel, Mike Kelley, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Helene Rosenheim, Rich Kopanda, Don Schmelter, Chuck Graefe, Ron Berger, John Lyons, Khalid Afzal, Helen Dodson, Jack Meyer, Lori Wilen, Suzane Duclos, Michael Kay, and Craig Zucker.