



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – APRIL 9, 2002

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. Following introductions, the minutes were approved with one addition, adding Ron Berger's name to the list of attendees, and no other corrections. The agenda was approved with no changes or additions.

Public Comments:

-Peter Esser noted that he had brought copies of the new redistricted maps for people to take

- Chuck Keyserling felt that GOCA used to wrap itself around the Master Plan and if someone came in asking for extra density, a red flag went up. At the recent meeting an elderly housing project on Georgia Ave was presented, and simply because there was no impact on traffic, there did not seem to be any opposition to it. When you consider the accumulative impacts on traffic of the expansion of the Olney Theatre, the Good Counsel proposal, Victory Housing on roads that are not prepared for the additional traffic, it is unrealistic to think that Batchellors Forest Road will not be impacted.

-A new representative from the Hallowell development asked how he could get the GOCA minutes. He was told to be sure his email address is on the sign-in sheet and his name would be added to the mailing list and that previous months minutes are available on the GOCA website at www.goca.org.

- Stanley Elswick noted that some time ago he had mentioned requesting a sidewalk on Georgia Ave and asked if GOCA was going to write in support of that request. Art Brodsky noted that Rick Alan, one of the Brookeville Commissioners had written in support of this request and had referenced GOCA's support in that letter. Stanley also requested that GOCA organize a discussion on public transportation. He noted that Transit Services have changed the route a number of time, but, these changes seem to be being made without any involvement with the community. People do not feel plugged into the process. There does not seem to be much of a process at the County level. And, if you look at the service in Olney, it is clear that many parts of the core of Olney is being serviced by Ride-On. They would like GOCA to have a discussion on public transportation and transmit that information to the County. It was suggested that someone from Ride-On be invited to a future GOCA meeting. Ron Berger noted that he talked with the Department of Public Works and Transportation about the process of making route changes and then meeting with the public basically to tell them what the new routes would be and got agreement that the process is not done right. Dave Eskenazi suggested that the real solution is the Georgia Avenue Busway and all the rest till then is patchwork. Helen Dodson noted that the Ride-On bus seemed to disappear from Olney Mill about the same time the County put speed bumps on Olney Mill Rd. Dave indicated that this was just a coincidence. It was also suggested that the County needs to find ways to improve ridership and to do a better job of marketing of the bus route. Karen Montgomery added that the Theatre had been approached about using their parking lot for day time parking, but the County had not gone through with it because there was not enough ridership.

- Paul Schroeder asked that the minutes be placed on the GOCA website in plain text. Helene Rosenheim indicated that she would work that out with their webmaster as soon as possible.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Development Plans for the Olney Village Mart Shopping Center: Mike Reilly, Carl Freeman Associates' project manager for the Olney Village Mart renovations indicated that they have their plans lined up and are acquiring their building permits. They expect to break ground in June. He noted that the Freeman family home is in Olney and the Josh Freeman still lives there and drives past the Center everyday. He indicated that they need GOCA's support of their request for a waiver of a portion of their parking requirements. They have owned the Center for 3 years with a goal to renovate and redevelop the Center. When CVS moved out of the Center that left 40,000 sq. ft. of space. Their redevelopment plan enlarges the Center from 169,000 sq. ft. to 204, 000 sq.ft. They will be putting in a new façade, and new awnings, and signage. The lighting will be refurbished.

Phase 1 will begin June 1st. They have applied for permits for the two-story building in the rear of the property. This has to be built first so that Fitness World can move into the first floor and then the other space can be redone. They may have a tenant for all of the office space on the second floor and hopes to have them in November. They will also put in 4-5 storm water devices. The improvement to the Rte. 108 entrance are part of the Phase I improvements. They will straighten out the entrance so that you come into the Center further away front of the stores. There will also be an entrance directly from Georgia Ave, north of Rte. 108.

In Phase 2, they will demolish several buildings at the rear of the Center to permit driving in from Georgia. They will rebuilding in that area. Two buildings will be constructed on either side of the new driveway from Georgia Av, a 245,000 sq. ft building to house TJ Max Home Goods Store, and a 26,000 sq. ft TJ Max Clothing store. This is a 12-14 month construction project and should be done by April or May 2003.

There will be 18,000 sq. ft. of restaurant space. Shoppers Food Warehouse will expand into the space where the Hunan Delight is currently locate that will bring it to 55,000 sq. ft. The Hunan Delight will be moved down near Mama Lucia's. It will actually be a smaller space, but will allow more seating. They would like to add an ice cream parlor to that area. Other stores they are talking to include Ann Taylor, Children's Place, My Gym, Dress Barn and Rack Room. They are looking for soft goods, restaurants, and service users. They want to fill 5 retail spaces at 1,000 sq. ft., 3 office spaces at 1000 sq. ft. and 2 restaurant spaces seating for 1000. They want to leave the Boston Market building in place and bring in another restaurant. Casa Rico is considering moving into this larger space. If they do not move there, they will leave the Center. Two other restaurants they are looking at for the Boston Market space are Texas Roadhouse that doesn't open until 4 pm, and Austin Grill

They will be adding parking spaces in the front and the rear of the Center. Tenant' staff will be parking in the rear of their stores. They did a marketing study 3 years ago and found that the need is for general merchandise and apparel and restaurants. They are asking for a waiver for 15% of the parking they are not being required to provide, but they really only need 10-12%. They are confident that they will not have a shortage of parking even with the waiver. Fitness World takes up a lot of the parking in the back of the Center near their current space. There will be dedicated parking by their new building in the rear section. The Pizza Hut building will be torn down and turned into parking. The gym is an early morning/late afternoon use, the offices are typically 9-5 uses, and the TJ Max Home Goods and Clothing stores will frequently be shopped together. They are rearranging some of the stores so that there is some sort of synergy in the arrangement of the stores with a cluster of restaurants around the area with the wider sidewalks, and moving much of the retail across from there in the area where Holly's is.

Some of the points made during the questions and answers following Mr. Reilly's presentation are:

- They will lose some of their existing tenants, but not the Karate school. They are looking at using the second story of the new building for Fitness World. The jewelry store has been there a long time and they are considering moving across the way. They are working with a business consultant to determine if that makes sense for them. The dentist and McMahon's both may need to relocate.
- The gym is now 14,000 sq. ft., but it is not laid out well. The new space will end up being the nicest of the places he owns.
- The leases of some of the stores that will need to relocate are not all coming up. Some of them have relocation clauses, but the Duron store and the pet store do not. So they had to get agreements from them to relocate and that was very costly.
- They are supportive of having a connection between the two centers and they are required to provide an easement which they have done towards the rear of the lot. They have talked to Hekimian, the owners of the Olney Town Shopping Center, and they are waiting out the leases on several of their tenants because they have not been able to get the movie theatre to agree to swap spaces with the Safeway. Till then Hekimian does not want to make any commitment on a connection. They do not know what their redesign will be and so, do not know how a ramp might impact on whatever redevelopment plans they come up with. And, it is too expensive for them to do now. Also, the County has no leverage at the moment to make them put in the ramp. Even though Freeman is currently showing the connection further to the rear than the community wants, they realize the site closer to Rte. 108 that the community prefers is a better location because of the grade of the land at that point. If they ever get agreement from the other Center to put in the ramp, they will do whatever is necessary to move the ramp. It will essentially just be a swapping of some parking spaces and the easement. When the ramp is finally built, they have to pay 50% of the cost even though most of the ramp will be on the Hekimian property.
- On the waiver they are asking for, they are asking for a waiver of 150 spaces because of the restaurants. If they did all retail, they would not need any additional spaces. But, when they put more restaurants in the mix the equations for parking spaces requires that they provide more spaces. If they do not get the waiver, they would have to bring in another retail business rather than a restaurant. Eckard has expressed some interest in locating here. Several people had observed that the lot was pretty full in the evenings with many of the stores being vacant. So they questioned how there would be enough parking if the Center is filled. Mr. Reilly indicated that he had observed the parking during the two years their office was in the Center and, because of the staggered hours of use of the parking of different businesses and the fact that the Fitness World parking will be moved to the rear lot, he is confident that there will be sufficient parking without the parking they are requesting be waived. They anticipate that they would only need 1100 sq. ft. for a new restaurant that would require 5% additional spaces (54 spaces) By requesting a 10-15% waiver, they could put in an extra 2,000 sq. ft restaurant and could attract something like a Clydes or Houstons. For restaurants like Austin Grill, they could manage with a 10% waiver.
- They will be participating in a road club making improvements to the Rte 97/108 intersection. The improvements will be to the northbound lane of Georgia Ave. With some milling, overlaying of stripping, and a light change, the lanes will be changed to 2 left turn lanes, 1 straight through, and 1 right turn lane.
- Pedestrian access to the Center from Hillcrest will be along a sidewalk next to the new building. From Appomattox, there will be steps from the corner, and a walkway along the backs of the stores on the side of the Center where Casa Rico is now located.
- The Center will have a more colonial appearance when the renovations are done.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report

Art Brodsky reported that:

- An oncologist in the area had contacted him to say that he was interested in putting a small medical building near Montgomery General Hospital and is looking at the 5 acre site on Rte. 108 between Prince Phillip Dr and Old Baltimore Rd. He will contact GOCA when the plans are more fully developed.
- On Thursday, he and John Ferguson will meet with Chief Moose about the status of the satellite station in Olney. They will ask about the future staffing of the station and the impact on the need for expansion because they wanted to know whether they should stop the community's fund raising effort. It was not clear from their conversation with Capt. Walker what they should do. Polly Knight noted that following several incidents in their development, she had been speaking with the police who had indicated to her that things were not moving forward because the Chamber had dropped the ball and officers were transferring out of the Satellite because it was so uncomfortable in the trailer. Their staff had gone from 14 to 8. She also asked where the funds that had been collected already were. Art assured her that the money was being held by a foundation established for this purpose. In their discussions with Capt. Walker they considered 3 options – renovating the existing trailer, replacing it with a larger one, or moving ahead with obtaining the additional trailer. Peter Esser noted that Council members Silverman and Ewing are still committed to have the station here in Olney, but it is a staffing issue. So, for now the Chamber will retain the funds in the foundation until we have a clearer picture of the staffing situation, and they will use the time to continue raising funds.

Treasurer's Report

Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$3,748.61. There have been \$891 received in fireworks donations.

Membership Report

Rich Kopanda reported that there were no new groups. We are still missing about half of the associations that were members last year. They will be contacting those who have not submitted their dues yet.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report

Joe Buffington supplemented Art's comments about the police satellite station by noting that the Chamber had done a lot of work on this and they want to see it work.

Transportation

Dave Eskenazi report that:

- The issue at the meeting on the Brookeville Bypass was that the State Highway Administration (SHA) is looking at is the potential archeological value of a mill they have identified. There is a mill house and foundation of a house behind the Longwood ball field that might cause a redesign in the alignment of the Bypass that would bring it closer to Olney Village, and elevating it at Brookeville Rd. That would make it more visible from the houses. SHA clearly heard the community's concerns. On the Parks & Planning (P&P) walk, the archeological specialist felt that this issue should be resolved and road redesigned. SHA expressed no position on this.
- He missed the last meeting on the Rte 28/97 intersection focus group. But he would check on any changes made in response to concerns raised by The Preserve and Leisure World to various alignments.
- The Hazardous Road Subcommittee has gotten accident data on the State roads in Olney and has requested similar information from the County for a number of County roads. That data should be available within the next month. Once the data is received the Subcommittee will look for patterns in the data. If they find any patterns, they will forward the information to SHA and the County.

OLD BUSINESS

Good Counsel High School Proposed Relocation To Olney –John Lyons reported that he had attended the P&P staff meeting on the plan submitted by Good Counsel High School for the proposed Olney site. Malcolm Shaneman chaired the committee meeting, There were representatives from Environmental Protection, Permitting Services, Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and Parks, public utilities, and planning staff. Each agency discussed their concerns. Steve Kaufman and his technical specialists were present to respond to the concerns. The staff identified the issues they will focus on. Planning staff indicated that they had not fleshed out all of the issues yet. HPC wanted to preserve the gateway into Sandy Spring. They did not like the school building being up on the hill with the parking in front. They wanted the building on the road and the parking in the back. Mr. Kaufman noted that the community preferred the parking in the front. Sarah Navid, with Transportation, expressed a need to understand the impact of this project on the rural rustic road designation of Batchellors Forest Rd. It may not be a problem, but they need to see a plan. In response to Mr. Shaneman's question about what is happening with the Centex proposal for the

remaining acreage, Mr. Kaufman indicated that the two plans are moving ahead separately and he did not know what the Centex developers were proposing. Khalid raised questions about the storm water management impacts and the amount of forest that is shown being cleared; and felt these issues had not been fully addressed so far and the plan does not spell out the status of the abandonment of the end of Batchellors Forest Rd. The issue of the abandonment of this road needs to be resolved before the rest of the plan can be addressed. The staff also identified an error in the traffic study that was submitted. They looked at the intersection of Georgia Ave and Prince Phillip Dr north of Rte. 108 instead of south of Rte. 108. So they will have to recalculate the impact and submit the amended data. Because of this error, all of the traffic has not been addressed by their mitigation plan. Ms. Navid would like to see all of their proposals for traffic mitigation in a legal document. Art noted that at the previous Officers' meeting, the officers discussed that we had heard from Good Counsel twice now and it seemed appropriate to go on record with the community's concerns.

Ron Berger moved that:

GOCA PRESIDENT AND OFFICERS ARE HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO EXPRESS GOCA'S VERY DEEP AND SERIOUS CONCERNS WITH THE PROPOSED RELOCATION OF GOOD COUNSEL HIGH SCHOOL TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD AND STAFF AND TO VIGOROUSLY WORK WITH THE PLANNING BOARD STAFF AND OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES, THE DEVELOPER, AND OTHERS TO ENSURE THAT THESE CONCERNS ARE SUFFICIENTLY MITIGATED SUCH THAT ANY FINAL APPROVED SUBDIVISION PLAN WILL REFLECT A PROJECT THAT IS SUITABLE FOR THE PROPOSED SITE. OUR CONCERNS EXTEND PRIMARILY TO: THE UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION AND OVERALL IMPACT ON THE RUSTIC NATURE OF BATCHELLORS FOREST RD, ALONG WITH THE SITE IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED BUILDING, LIGHT AND NOISE POLLUTION, STORM WATER MANAGEMENT, AND THE OVERALL IMPACT ON A LOW-DENSITY RESIDENTIAL AREA

The motion was seconded by Chuck Keyserling.. Following a brief discussion in which Polly Knight suggested that we needed to take a more positive approach to our comments, Ron's suggestion that we have a number of concerns and we need to be sure . early in the process that staff is addressing those concerns as they evaluate this application and this motion is not a statement of opposition but our interest in being a part of the discussions of mitigation of the problems we have identified and some of which we may have suggested solutions for, and Mike Kay suggested that we put strong emphasis on the traffic concerns, and Chuck noted that we want to see a plan that makes this project work and not become a burden on the community; the motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Special Presentations

Update on Olney Village Mart Development Plans - The comments on this presentation focused primarily on parking issues and the percentage of waiver being requested:

- The design of the Center does look better.
- Movement of the parking for the fitness center to the back and removing the Pizza Hut building does improve the parking situation.
- The 15% that was requested goes hand-in-hand with the preference for having the 10,000 sq ft of restaurant space. But it is clear they would be satisfied with 10% which would allow them to develop 8,000 sq. ft of restaurant space.
- The letter we sent already and the testimony given to Permitting Services did not say that we are opposed to the idea of a waiver. It just suggested that Permitting Services needed to carefully assess whether they, in fact, needed a 15% waiver or would some lesser amount be adequate.
- The consensus was that we did not need to write a second letter since the first letter still reflects our position. We are not opposed to a waiver, but still feel, and Mr. Reilly agreed, that they could manage with less than 15%. It did not seem appropriate or necessary for us to say what percentage of waiver should be granted.

-Relocation of GOCA Meetings - Helene Rosenheim reported that one of the features of the new Buffington RE/MAX Building is a community room designed to seat 100 that the Buffington's want to make available to community groups at no charge. Now that the building is open, it is our intent to take advantage of their generosity by relocating the monthly GOCA meetings to that space. So, beginning with the May GOCA meeting we will meet at the Buffington Building Community Room.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Helene Rosenheim'
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Ron Berger, Paul Schroeder, Peter Esser, Dave Eskenazi, Mike Kelley, Stanley Elswick, Jackie Benn, Chuck Keyserling, Stephen Smet, Don Schmelter, John Lyons, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Art Brodsky, Helene Rosenheim, Lee Kidd, John Clifford, Robert "Bo" Newsome, John and Seth Iacangelo, Joe Buffington, Mike Knapp, Khalid Afzal, Helen Dodson and Michael Kay.