



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

[www.goca.org](http://www.goca.org)

## MINUTES – MAY 14, 2002

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. Following introductions, the minutes were approved with two corrections and no additions. (Changing Commander Moose to Chief Moose and clarifying when Art's meeting with him occurred; and adding Helen Dodson's name to the list of attendees.) The agenda was approved with one addition.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Chuck Keyserling commented that he felt that having an at-grade intersection at the intersection of the proposed Inter-County Connector and Georgia Avenue could kill Olney. He is concerned because of this being an assumption in the review of the Olney Master Plan without any kind of hearing on the proposal to have an at-grade intersection.
- A resident expressed his feeling that there are a lot of elderly housing developments in this area, including 7 nursing homes in the immediate Olney area. He felt that the community needed to consider other uses for the property on Georgia Avenue where Jeff Kirby is proposing to put another elderly housing project, to provide more balance. He suggested using the site for a recreation center or some use for Olney's youth.
- Don Schmelter noted the new tri-sided signs at the entrances to the Safeway parking lots. He felt they were skirting on billboards and suggested that we need to check with the sign ordinance staff to confirm that these signs are in compliance with the ordinances.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

**Report from Capt. Dee Walker, Mont. Co. District 4 Police Station (formerly Wheaton-Glenmont):** County Council Member Nancy Dacek asked to speak first so that she could tell the community about a conversation she had with Chief Moose while at lunch with him recently. Chief Moose indicated that the Police Department would budget \$10,000 to go towards the cost of rehabilitating the Olney Satellite trailer. They want to share the burden for this effort. Ms. Dacek also noted that Greenwood Elementary will be getting its gymnasium and that she has been working with the Hallowell development concerning some safety improvements on Prince Philip Dr needed because of the increasing number of cars driving off the roadway into the trees.

Capt Walker that she wanted to explain the current staffing situation for the Satellite station. She did not think it was so much a question of public versus private funding and noted that if it is important enough to have a satellite station it is important enough to get enough public support for it. Chief Moose sees the need for the satellite station. But, the Police Department's staffing situation is very difficult. There are 140 officers eligible for retirement. This presents a tremendous challenge with regard to recruiting because of the high attrition and less people applying for their jobs. They are redeploying their resources and trying to use their staffing levels efficiently throughout the week.

As a part of that, the staff from the Satellite Station is being brought back to the Wheaton station. However, they will continue to use the facility much as it is used now except not for roll-call. After they are deployed, they will use the Satellite facility to write reports, etc. They now have 2 sectors, with one beat team each; and are changing that to 3 sectors with 2 sergeants per sector. They are now negotiating to make the shifts permanent. This is a shift to a geographic focus. For example, if the Magruder High School principal calls the police, he will only deal with one sergeant. While the Olney staff is smaller than it was a year ago, staffing is lower throughout the District. When there are problems in Olney, Aspen Hill, Layhill, Longwood, and others; with their shrinking resources, she has to make decision that are best for all. She wants to avoid shifting crimes from one area to another. There has been an increase in the number of calls they are receiving, but that is in sink with the rest of the County, the State, and the country. There has been an increase in robbery. and in reported rapes, but not in murders. She is not sure about assaults because the number varies too much. She is committed to maintaining the Satellite facility and sharing costs. Capt Walker also noted that the Assistant Chief has retired and her new boss is Bill O'Toole.

The following points were made during a question and answer period f

- John Ferguson thanked Nancy Dacek and Chief Moose for their commitment; and to Capt Walker for establishing predictable hours of walk-in service. Capt. Walker did not want to foster a false sense of coverage. They need to recruit more volunteers, but there is no schedule right now. Evenings and weekends are the popular hours for the public.

- Ron Berger asked if there was any thinking about using “para-officers” to do some of the more administrative tasks; do they “think outside the box”? Capt Walker noted that she “lives outside the box”, but they had not given this idea any formal consideration to that idea because there are a lot of civil liberties issues involved. Teenagers interested in doing police work as volunteers should apply to the Department.

- John Ferguson noted that instead of adding a second trailer, they are adding an addition to the existing trailer, basically a restroom facility and fixing the inside to hook up the utilities.

- John Ferguson noted that there had been a delay in cashing the checks because the Police Foundation decided it did not want to deal with checks, so had been holding them and are now returning them to the Chamber. Also, they had not collected enough money to cover the cost of the 2<sup>nd</sup> trailer and the money collected so far will be used to finance the proposed renovations to the existing trailer. What has changed is that the Chamber had been planning to take out a loan to cover the additional costs for a second trailer, but they are not going to do that now. Before the Chamber was raising \$1,200 a month to cover the expenses for the trailer.

## **OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**President’s Report** – Art reported that he had received a letter from John Ferguson notifying him that this year the Olney Chamber of Commerce will be presenting its annual Service Award to GOCA for its assistance in their efforts in connection with the Olney Police Satellite Facility and he thanked John for that.

Art also had Steve Smet report on a letter we received from Abarris Realty, Inc that services several developments including Environ asking for GOCA’s support for their proposal that the median on Spartan Road north of Rte. 108 be extended back to the intersection with Prince Philip Dr. to increase pedestrian safety. Steve added that while GOCA is supportive of trying to make improvements that enhance pedestrian safety. However, there are a number of issues that we need to pursue further before taking any position on this request.

### **Treasurer’s Report**

Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$6,168.75. Of that \$1,875 came in as dues, and \$2,709 came in as donations for the fireworks and the Olney Days Festival.

### **Membership Report**

Rich Kopanda reported that there are currently 23 paid up member associations as compared to last year when there were 26. Three of 26 are new associations. He noted, as well, that we do not have all the contact information because some of the payments were sent in by association’s management companies who do not provide the contact information. He will continue to try to collect the missing contact information. Chuck K. thanked Rich for researching the by-laws on individual memberships.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**A Skateboard Park for Olney** – Jimena Ryan reported that there had been a lot of coverage in recent weeks about the growing interest in area for a skateboard park. The youth that are involved in trying to get the park are getting excited. They are looking for an interim solution. She is also looking for constructive ways to channel their energies in looking for a long-term solution. They are looking for either a public or a public/private solution. The teenagers interested in having a park are collecting signatures on petitions. They are hoping to collect 2,000 signatures. Several merchants are offering prizes to the students that collect certain numbers of signatures. They are hoping to be able to use a school site or 2 tennis courts for the summer. They need an area approximately 12,000 sq. ft. On the long term, they would like a permanent site, possibly in Olney Manor Park. She has talked with Wayne Johson and Patrick Boyle about using the tennis courts in Tanterra. Their goal now is to show that the whole community supports the idea of a skateboard park.

Ms. Ryan also asked for advice from any other groups who have pursued similar efforts. She has spoken with the Parks and Planning Commission (P&P) who have said that they are reluctant to have a skateboard facility because of their perception that it is unsafe. However, if the sport is done safely, with the proper equipment, there are few injuries. Insurance rates are coming down because of the low number of claims for injuries related to skateboarding. So there is no real reason to not have them. They just need to change P&P’s perception so that they realize there is no reason to not have them in Park facilities. Mike Kay has been talking with other jurisdictions to see what they are doing with similar facilities.

Nancy Dacek added that we have to find land for this kind of park. Damascus has a similar problem. The real issue is finding land. Ms. Ryan noted that Longwood and Greenwood Park are possibilities. Steve Smet added that parking and traffic will also be issues. These will be issues at the unused school site on Cashell Rd that was mentioned as a possibility, along with concerns about the noise from this activity impacting the nearby homes. Ms. Ryan also noted that there are a lot of parents who are willing to monitor the facilities. They are looking for a 3-5 year lease on a private property while the County finds a site. Since this will be used primarily by local youth, so the park can be fairly small. Many existing parks have shown that the noise is no louder than

that at a ballfield. This kind of park would have specific sessions, and initially they would only have daytime hours. Basically, they need a slab with adequate parking. There would be in and out traffic for about 60 skateboarders. The facility would initially be for skateboard and inline skates only because the pad would be too small. Long-term they would also like a facility that was big enough to accommodate BMX bikes. They are also looking for sites in the Upper Rock Creek area, but that is not their first choice because they want to service youth who cannot drive yet. Ms. Ryan ended by noting that their group meets every Thursday at 6:45 pm and she encouraged anyone interested in helping join them.

### **Proposed Development of an Elderly Housing Project on Georgia Ave, just north of Rte. 108**

Jeff Kirby, the developer of the Finneyrock property on Georgia Avenue just north of Rte. 108 returned to present some of the changes he has made to his proposal in response to the comments made at the March GOCA meeting. He is proposing to build an affordable elderly housing project on this site on Georgia Avenue that Postal Service had planned to use at one time. He is going to try to rezone the property from a commercial C-1 zone and residential R-200 to a planned development PD-9 zone.

There is a stream bed along the rear of the property so the building needs to be along the front of the property. The changes he made were in response to the comments made in March that the building was too long and maybe too many units. The un-built portion of Appomattox Rd (behind the Village Mart and Olney Town Shopping Centers) comes through this property. The project engineer addressed the portion of the road that had been abandoned by the County, but the Park and Planning staff has indicated to him that they would like to hold on to the right-of-way until further into the master plan review process to see if they have any need for it. They would prefer if the right-of-way were not used by the County. But in the meantime, they have planned a phased approach by building south of the road right away, and then building the rest after a decision has been made on the roadway. To be responsive to the comments that the building was too long, they are now proposing to go from a 3-story building with a terrace in the rear to a 4-story building with a terrace in the rear. They have lowered the building down into the land and they are proposing a berm along Georgia Avenue so that all that would be visible from Georgia would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> floors. They have moved the wing of the building nearest Appomattox back some to break up the line of the building and put landscaping in front of it. The roofline is gabled and has chimneys so that the building has a more residential appearance. The parking lot will be 6-10 ft below the level of Georgia Avenue.

There is commercial development south of them and residential north of them, so they see this as a good transition. They believe that the PD zone would stop the commercial development from creeping north. They have done a study of the other similar developments they have built and in the area of their parking use patterns in a variety of times of day, days of the week and time of year and found an average of .45-.65, so they determined that they need .66 spaces per unit.

Some of the points made during the questions and answers:

- Karen Montgomery is concerned that cars leaving this property will be entering Georgia Avenue at the point it is narrowing. Mr. Kirby noted that their traffic would be off-peak hour traffic and what they are proposing is what the State Highway Administration (SHA) asked for from a safety point of view. They will continue to work with SHA to make access to and from the site as safe as possible. Nearly all of their traffic is off-peak hour and this type of use would generate less traffic than a commercial use. They do not think their development would warrant a traffic signal, but they are willing to pursue that with SHA.
- Mike Kay suggested (1) making the structure look more like townhouses by using different treatments along the facade and (2) lowering the roofline so that it is part of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor rather than on top of the fourth floor. Mr. Kirby indicated that he was willing to consider those ideas.
- If Appomattox is not built and they can use the land, there will be 100 units. If it is built, there will be 80 units.
- They are willing to work on a pedestrian crossing across the Appomattox right-of-way if the road is not built.
- Several people expressed concern about the height of this building, all of which will be visible from the rear looking at the property from the back of the Village Mart or from the Tammaron Apartments. In response to that, Mr. Kirby displayed some photographs of several of the newer buildings in the area that are 3 or more stories, e.g., the new Buffington building.
- The building will consist of 1- and 2-bedroom units with some common areas and a variety of facilities to draw people out of their apartments. There is a covered entranceway and there is enough room in the parking lot for 6-7 cars waiting to get to the entrance for pick-up and drop-off of residents.

**Olney Days Festival 2002** - Helene Rosenheim reported that plans continue to process well for the Festival which is set for Friday, May 17- Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup>. The biggest need at the moment is for volunteers. Some of the events are in good shape. The greatest need is for marshals for the Parade and people to work at the Bull Roast. Since the last meeting, she has been working with PROJECT CHANGE. They were planning a Spring volleyball/basketball event, so she invited them to hold their event at Olney Manor Park on the Saturday evening of the Festival. That way the people coming to their event can enjoy the fireworks and then stay in the Park after the rest of the people leave. They will be able to stay until 10:45, but everyone has to be out of the park by 11:00 pm. PROJECT CHANGE is also lining up a DJ and several bands to provide the entertainment at the Bull Roast. She has also arranged for a PA system that will be set up throughout the Park, so that announcements can be heard throughout the Park on the Home Run Derby or the Fire Dept. activities, etc and so that we can play music to accompany the fireworks.

Helen Dodson noted that Olney Mill was not included in the list in the Festival Ad Book of the civic and homeowner associations that had donated money for the fireworks and the Festival and they had sent their money in March. Helene apologized for not including them, but she had only included the names of associations she had gotten from the Treasurer prior to going to press. In comparing her list to the Treasurer's records they determined that Lake Hollowell, Norbeck Meadows, Olney Mill. and Victoria Springs had been left off the list in the Ad Book. Helene indicated that she would prepare an insert that could be passed out with the Ad Book at the events and that they would certainly be included in any signs on display at the events and on the GOCA website.

**Greater Olney Master Plan Review** – Art Brodsky reported that at the last meeting of the Olney Master Plan Advisory Group the topic had been schools. Bruce Crispell, the demographer from Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), presented student population statistics for the Blake, Magruder, and Sherwood clusters and discussed how MCPS and Parks and Planning (P&P) staff work together to assess anticipated needs in the master plan process. It would appear that, based on the additional housing units Khalid Afzal projected based on early analysis there does not appear to be any need to reserve any additional school sites. But, at the same time, the current MCPS policy is to not release any of the undeveloped sites they own. The next Advisory Group meeting is June 12<sup>th</sup> at the Yardall Hall at Sandy Spring Friends School where P&P staff will present their draft concept plan for the revised Master Plan. Then on Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, there will be another all-day session at Sandy Spring Friends School again where the Group will be discussing the draft concept in detail and about the Town Center area. In response to several questions, Art noted that the public is not only welcome, but are encouraged to attend; that he had not planned, at this point in the process, to put together any kind of list of specific proposals that GOCA will be taking a position on; and that on June 12<sup>th</sup> the staff will basically be presenting the draft concept and a discussion of the concept will take place at the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan** – Rich Kopanda reported that in April a compromise was reached by 10-11 of the members of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Advisory Group on an issue of clustering on 5 properties. This included some developers, some individuals and 4 associations. The compromise deals with what is recommended on each of the 5 sites with clustering for some in the center of the sites and green space around the edges of the property. Rich felt it was a good compromise because it puts a lot of land into use as parkland in perpetuity. Some people are still pushing for no change, but most are going along with the compromise position. The total number of units among the 5 sites is between 500-600 housing units.

Chuck Keyserling noted that 2 associations had come to GOCA requesting support of their position for no change because of current overcrowding at Magruder High School and increased traffic on Muncaster Mill Rd. He felt that GOCA should support their position. Rich reiterated that most of the Advisory Group members think the compromise is the best solution even though it may result in more units than might be built on land that percolates under the current zoning. Helen Dodson expressed concern that when people focus on the process and not the issues, the final product doesn't necessarily reflect what the people really want. She added that she would like Rich to convey to the Advisory Group the concerns of the Olney Mill Community Association that each house will add 2 cars and 1,000 trips to Muncaster Mill Rd which is an increase that the existing infrastructure cannot accommodate. The consensus of the meeting was that GOCA should hear more about this compromise and, sometime later will determine if we should take a position on it.

**Good Counsel High School Development Plans Update** – John Lyons reported that he had been communicating with the P&P staff extensively on Good Counsel High Schools proposal for relocating to Olney. He had been told by P&P's Transportation staff that there would be a public hearing before the Planning Board on this proposal on June 13gh. There was concern about such a quick hearing date because there are so many unresolved issues with this site. Khalid Afzal contacted him shortly after getting the 6/13 information to notify and reassure him that this project is not on the 6/13 agenda. Jim Folk noted that the Lake Hollowell Homeowners Association has 4 concerns about this proposal: (1) stormwater runoff into Lake Hollowell that is already getting expensive to maintain; (2) traffic impacts on Old Baltimore, Rte. 108, and Old Vic Rd.; (3) off-premise parking for sporting events, and (4) the size of the proposed high school facility vs the concepts in the Olney Master Plan for this area, especially in combination with other large buildings being built around it. Khalid Afzal distributed copies of some of Good Counsel's response to some of the P&P staff's questions since the application did not have a comprehensive description of the site, only the site they were proposing to use.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Discussion of Special Presentations**

**Olney Police Satellite Facility** – Mike Kay noted that we won't know what will happen until the staffing issues stabilizes more. Steve Smet suggested that we follow-up on Ron's question about the use of volunteers to perform some of the more administrative work done at the Satellite Facility.

**Kirby Elderly Housing Development Proposal** – Mike Kay noted that Mr. Kirby had met with the Towns HOA. Their Association. They felt that the noise generated by this kind of project vs a commercial uses is better for them. The four-story building is a issue for them. The site line to the nearest building is 200 ft. They are also still having some vagrancy problems in the area of the creek and the developer indicated to them that he is committed to cleaning up that area. Rich K. felt that a bridge and sidewalk across the creek on this property would be an asset to pedestrian access in that area. Ron Berger felt that the building might be ok is the roofline was not taller than the tree-line in that area; and that they would need to do something to make the rear of the building more interesting since the whole façade would be visible from the developments on Appommattox.

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**GOCA By-Laws Amendments**

Rich Kopanda reported that there were 2 By-Laws changes that were being proposed. The first involved changing the Recording Secretary and Treasurer positions so that they are not limited to 2 terms. There was no questions or discussion of this change. The second change relates to participation of past GOCA presidents. Currently the By-Laws include definitions of the Officers Committee and the Executive Board that limits voting rights to the immediate past president. However, several past presidents have continued to stay involved, but they are not necessarily the delegates from their own associations. There was a feeling that these individual bring a lot of experience, historical perspective, and knowledge that are a benefit to community as a whole and that the community would best be served by removing the limitation to voting to the immediate past president. To accomplish this, the proposal is to change Article II, Definitions, Section 3, Article V, Executive Board, Section 2; Article VI, Officers and Their Duties, Section 6 by deleting the word "Immediate". Some concerns were raised that past presidents could serve as delegates from their associations and that it appears that once elected president a person would be a voting member for life. It was pointed out that once a person serves as president, they take on a broader perspective and community view that may or may not be consistent with the view of their individual association and as a delegate for their association, they would have to present that association's view rather than acting on their broader community view. It was also noted that GOCA needs all the volunteers it can get and the By-Laws should be designed to encourage involvement, not inhibit it. A vote on the proposed changes was tabled till the next meeting, so that delegates could discuss them with their associations.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim'  
Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Art Brodsky, Ron Berger, Nancy Dacek, John Ferguson, Helen Dodson, Jimena Ryan, Chuck Keyserline, Don Schmelter, Rich Kopanda, Lee Kidd, Jackie and Danny Benn, Karen Montgomery, Dudley Finneyfrock, Sr, Dudley Finneyfrock, Jr., Gary Schiwin, Jim Folk, Commander Dee Walker, Dave Eskenazi, Michael Kay, Roy Peck, Steve Smet, and Helene Rosenheim.