



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – June 11, 2002

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. Following introductions, the minutes were approved with two corrections and no additions. (Changing Olney Mill Civic Association to Olney Mill Community Association and 11 to approximately 1000 trips) The agenda was approved with one addition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Karen Montgomery noted that the bus stop across the street from Sherwood High School was on a slope and on the roadway. She has spoken to the County Council about that need for a concrete pad and possibly a shelter, and a crosswalk there because it is very dangerous as it is.
- A gentleman who spoke at the May meeting reported that he had done another survey and had determined that there were 48 elderly housing projects in the this area.
- Lee Kidd reported that he had been shocked by the Congressional redistricting and asked if anyone had appealed it. Peter Esser responded that to date there had not been any challenges and there have not been any changes.
- Stanley Elswick reported that he had spoken to GOCA in March about his concern with the Ride-On route changes. Since then he and another gentleman met with Phil McLaughlin with DPWT who was very responsive to their concerns. They make route changes two times a year and Stanley hoped to get their proposed changes to the Olney Mill portion of the route in for the next round of changes. In July DPWT will be filling a vacancy for compiling ridership information and to meet with the community in August to present 3 or 4 alternative routes for comment. Stanley told Mr. McLaughlin that they would help publicize the meeting.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report – Art reported that:

- He had received notification of a proposed zoning text amendment (ZTA) to create a Planned Retirement Community Zone. Currently the zone requires a 750 acre site and the only one in the County is Leisure World. The amendment would reduce the acreage requirement to 25 acres and includes dwelling units, meeting rooms, and other amenities and facilities. Park and Planning (P&P) staff indicated that this zone would have more requirements as a floating zone because the developer would have to apply for a zoning change. It eliminates the need to apply for a special exception. Regardless of the underlying zone, this zone permits 10 units per acre. Steve Smet was concerned because even though the definition of the zone may be worded carefully to fit a particular site, once it is in law it applies anywhere in the County that it fits, so the use may be put in unintended areas. He is also concerned that a developer could put a 100 ft. tall structure 50 ft. from the property boundary. The ZTA has already been before the Planning Board and now goes to the County Council. The hearing record was staying open until June 18th. Art may put something together to submit.

- The GOCA website will have some new features soon, including several bulletin boards. Each will have an issues of concern to the community and the public will be able to post comments to it. We will report comments back at subsequent meetings.

Treasurer's Report

Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$3,366.57. We have over \$2,000 in as dues, and we received \$2,809 as donations for the fireworks and the Olney Days Festival.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Joe Buffington reported that National Night Out will take place on Tuesday, August 6th.

Membership Report

Rich Kopanda reported that there are currently 27 paid up member associations. This is one more than last year, but we lost 4 associations from last year. Art commended Rich for his efforts in collecting the dues.

Transportation Report

Dave Eskenazi reported that:

- On June 4th there was a Rte 28/198 Connector Forum. The Connector is well underway. Norwood Rd is scheduled to open in July and he suggested having a ribbon-cutting. The Forum presented information about the proposed plans for widening 198. The only real point of controversy relates to the proposed realignment of 198 in Burtonsville.
- There are a number of things being proposed for improving Muncaster Mill Road. How many of the things they will do depends on how far they can stretch the \$10 million the State has for these projects. The proposed improvements are based on accident data, not fatalities. They are not closing the road to make the improvements. Their safety priorities are (1) adding left turn lanes at Grist Mill Rd, (2) moving the intersection with Avery Lane to the northeast to flatten the curve, (3) making the entrance to Redland Middle School similar to the entrance into Magruder High School with a turning lane in the center of the road that will also help the traffic turning into Winter's Run, (4) putting non-skid pavement in certain areas, and (5) adding left turn lanes at Lisa Dr and Jacob's Ct. There are other problems, but they are less serious.
- There will be a focus group meeting on the Rte. 28/97 intersection during the following week. They will be considering where to put the interchange so that they do not land-lock The Preserve and so that Sycamore Acres does not become a cut-through development.
- The Northeast Montgomery Political Action Group is having a meeting on June 13th at Sherwood Elementary on transportation issues and Civic Federation is holding a meeting on the morning of June 15th at the County Council building to discuss the Transportation Policy Report (TPR). And, there will be a Deer Management meeting on June 18th to discuss Lyme Disease and plans for next year's management efforts.

OLD BUSINESS

PROJECT CHANGE Funding – Ellen Lent noted that she is the liaison from the Olney Chamber of Commerce to PROJECT CHANGE. PROJECT CHANGE's goals are to provide safe and productive activities for teens and to provide a place for these activities. Olney is good if you are little or big, but there is not much for teens and they are trying to address that need. PROJECT CHANGE has just gotten its 501 (c) status through the assistance of Carl Freeman Associates who have provided staff to assist them with this. They need a stream of funds in order to maintain a space that is available, open, insured, and safe. St. John's Episcopal Church has offered the use of their gym and meeting hall for PROJECT CHANGE this summer. But for a permanent space they would need approximately \$5,500 a month with free space and more if they need to lease a space. Ellen suggested a possible funding source might be a dollar amount from each home in each homeowners association. Art noted that he suggested that Ellen attend our meeting to present the idea and then meet with the individual civic/community/homeowner associations to present the idea. Ellen encouraged any interested associations to contact her.

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 additional changes he has made to his proposal in response to the comments made at the May GOCA meeting. They have already shown the latest changes to the Towns of Environ. The building is still one structure, but there are 2 small courtyard indentations that give the appearance of 3 separate buildings when viewed from Georgia Ave. The southernmost section is back 15 ft further from the roadway and the northernmost section is angled further from the roadway. The southern entrance will be a right turn in northbound and a left turn in southbound with a stacking lane for 4 cars. Traffic within the parking lot will be one-way. The northern entrance will be right in-right out only. There will not be any parking in front of the center of the building where there will be a covered entrance way. The closest building in Environ to the rear of their building is 276 ft. away but the view is obstructed by trees. They are building a pedestrian bridge/bikeway to Appomattox Way to make it a more pedestrian-friendly community. In the other elderly projects they have built they have a parking space ratio of .62 per unit and that has been sufficient spaces. For this project they are providing .66 spaces which should be ample parking. There is room on the north corner of the property for a Welcome to Olney sign. They will do a nice streetscape with a sidewalk along Georgia Ave and will landscape along the front of the building with large plants and mature trees. They will have a storm water management system that feeds into James Creek and may have to do some stream restoration depending on the flow of water. They will do some reforestation in the meadow between the existing trees and the building.

Some of the points made during the questions and answers:

- One resident noted that there is not much commercial land left in Olney and he did not feel that a residential use on this site was not what the community needed particularly since there are already so many elderly housing projects in the area. Mr. Kirby responded that they are serving a market that is not being met in Olney.
- Steve Smet expressed some concern about the height of the building. Even though the first of the four levels visible from Georgia Ave. is 9 ft. below street level, it will still be a very imposing building. It will be the second largest building town, on the edge of the town center area. Mr. Kirby noted that he sees this as 3 - 30,000 sq. ft. buildings that will have less impact than a commercial use and is in scale with the buildings across the street. They cannot completely separate the buildings because of the use. There are common areas and facilities that need to be available to all the residents with them having to go outside.
- The units will be rented to people 62 and older and there are 80 units.
- They are submitting two plans because P&P is reconsidering building the portion of Appomattox Way between Georgia Ave. and the existing roadway that had previously been abandoned in the current Olney Master Plan review. So they have a plan with the road and one without the road. If the road is built, the southernmost section would be eliminated, even though the project is only marginally economically viable without the 3rd section. They will also work with the Ride-On staff as they get occupancy. Also, in the sections with the recessed areas, the roofline will be dropped so that it is less noticeable and they will not use all deciduous trees in those areas.
- This is a use that will not impact infrastructures such as schools and roads.
- The rear of the building will look similar to the front with a brick façade and they will try to make it attractive, especially because of the concerns expressed by the Environ residents who will see the full height of the building.

At the end of the discussion, Steve Smet moved that:

GOCA supports the Kirby Development Project (Olney Manor) with the following requirements:

- (1) The highest point of the structure shall not exceed 50 ft. above paved Georgia Ave.
- (2) Zoning and use must be consistent with the Olney Master Plan staff draft recommendations for permitted use within the downtown portion of Olney.
- (3) The height of the roofline behind the two courtyards should be reasonably lower than the roofline of the three large residential units closer to Georgia Avenue.
- (4) The trees planted at the time the facility is built shall cover the majority of the building behind the courtyard.

GOCA should support the proposed development as presented at the meeting with the lowering of the roofline and approval of the Towns/Fair Hill Farms/Tamarron developments of the appearance of the rear of the building; as long as this kind of development was consistent with the recommendations of the revised master plan.

GOCA By-Laws Amendment – Rich Kopanda reported that the changes being proposed affect two sections of the by-laws. The first involves eliminating term limits for the Treasurer, Recording Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary. The second would allow all past presidents to vote and participate in the Officers Committee, as long as they remain a resident of the Olney community.

Rich Kopanda moved that:

APPROPRIATE SECTIONS OF THE BY-LAWS BE MODIFIED TO ELIMINATE TERM LIMITS FOR THE OFFICES OF RECORDING SECRETARY AND TREASURER.

John Lyons seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Rich also moved that:

APPROPRIATE SECTIONS OF THE GOCA BY-LAWS BE MODIFIED TO PERMIT ALL PAST PRESIDENTS RESIDING IN THE OLNEY COMMUNITY TO BE CONSIDERED OFFICERS.

John Lyons also seconded this motion.

The following points were made during the discussion of the motion:

- Helen Dodson felt that the past presidents should be residents in member association in order for them to vote. She moved that: the motion be amended to say that the Past President be a resident of an LCA in good standing or a member-at-large. The motion was seconded by Ed Weisel, but failed.

- Lee Kidd suggested that it is often difficult to find people willing to be delegates, so the past presidents could just come back as delegates for their associations. Art noted that in some cases that is not true and if there are several people interested in being a delegate, you would lose the involvement of an interested person if the slot had to go to the past president. Also, once someone has served as president, their perspective changes and they tend to have a more global view of the community. They would not necessarily want to limit themselves or serve GOCA best if they were limited to representing the views of their association which they would have to do as a delegate. Art's intent is to provide an incentive to keep people involved so that GOCA can take advantage of their experience and knowledge. In real terms vs. the abstract, if we have someone who wants to contribute the expertise they have gained, we want them to participate fully.

Following the discussion, there were no amendments to the motion and the motion passed.

Greater Olney Master Plan Review – Art Brodsky reported that the Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) would meet on June 12th at which time the P&P staff would present the outline structure of their initial concept of what the draft plan will include. Then, the MPAG will meet again in an all-day session on Saturday, June 15th to provide their initial feedback to the concept plan and to spend some time brainstorming on the design of the town center area.

Olney Days Festival 2002 - Helene Rosenheim reported that overall the Festival had been a success. Some of the events were impacted by the rain, but most went off successfully. The Olney Community Band Concert was reasonably well attended. Her benchmark is that there are more people in the audience than band members and we met that test. The concert started outside in a lovely amphitheatre at the Sandy Spring Friends School, but had to move inside, mid-concert. The band members were very good humored about the move and many of the spectators helped carry equipment inside a nearby gymnasium. Helene thanked Howard Zuses, the School's business manager, for making the facility available and for all the arrangements he helped with. She also thanked Fran Ware for providing the Puppet Show sponsored by the Olney Library and the Friends of the Olney Library. There were about 150 people in attendance. All seemed to enjoy themselves. Fran has already booked another group for next year, but we are considering having the show as a part of the activities at Olney Manor Park in the afternoon. Even though the rain had subsided by late afternoon, the ball fields at Olney Manor Park were too wet to use, so the Home Run Derby was cancelled. The organizers are going to try to reschedule this event later this summer. Because the Derby was cancelled the crowds were thin at first, but began to build around 7:00 pm. The estimate was that there were 4-5,000 people by the time the fireworks went off. PROJECT CHANGE had their DJ set up near the volleyball courts. The attendance was down because it was cold, but those there seemed to have a good time playing basketball and listening to the DJ.

Adam Barth, John Harris, and Jordan Fabian did a great job with their Fish 4 the Cure Tournament on Sunday morning. They and 2 other friends did all the planning and organizing. There were 40 participants and they raised \$1,900 that will be donated to the Children's Inn at NIH. Fletcher's Car and Truck Show was a great success. There wasn't room for another car on his lot. Bobby Fletcher was very pleased with the way things went. The Parade was probably one of our best, both in terms of the variety in the units, the amount of participation by merchants and local groups, and the organization. Roni Septoff and Monica Freedman did a great job. The Bull Roast was another casualty of the rain. Because Saturday's weather projections for Sunday were cold and windy, the Planning Committee agreed to Barry Schwartz's suggestion that we cancel the food portion of the Roast. What influenced our decision was the fact that this is a fairly new event that does not really have a following yet, and it got completely rained out last year (after we had everything set up), Even though there was not going to be any food, the bands were anxious to play anyway. So we went ahead with that. The crowds were small, but enthusiastic and each of the four groups had their own circle of fans. The bands were very good and apparently could be heard several blocks away. Monica Freedman did a great job with the Ad Book. We don't know yet how much we made, but we are certain we covered the cost of the printing and then some. Now that she has some experience with the process, she is confident it will be even more successful next year. Helene gave a special thanks to Dave Johannes and Bobby Fletcher for the substantial contributions they made to ensure that we could have the fireworks. There will be a wrap-up meeting shortly after the school year ends to get ready for next year.

Proposed Relocation of Good Counsel High School to Olney – John Lyons reported that there was still no hearing date before the Planning Board. He had heard there was going to be one in June, but that turned out to be a mistake. He and Jim Folk had attended the P&P staff meeting with the developer. Most of the department representatives had expressed some concerns about the plan. To date, there had not been any response from Good Counsel to the issues raised at that meeting, so there has not really been any movement on the plan.

Proposed Plans for a Western Parkway – Chuck Keyserling noted that there are 4 options being proposed for a western parkway essentially along the ICC right-of-way between Rte 370 and Rte. 28. Park and Planning has assumed the option with an at-grade intersection with Georgia Ave will be built for purposes of the current Master Plan study. He feels this will make access out of Olney very difficult and seems like a poor choice when we are working so hard to fix the Rte. 28/97 intersection just down the road. He added that once a road gets into a plan, it is difficult to get it taken out and if this road can be inserted into the Master Plan without any kind of public hearings, it seems unfair. Art B. read a motion from the March 2002 meeting and noted our testimony on the Transportation Policy Report in which GOCA opposed the Inter-County Connector (ICC) and opposed an at-grade crossing at Georgia Ave. Khalid indicated that the Transportation Policy Report will take precedence over the County's master plans; and any affected master plans will be modified in response to changes in the Transportation Policy. Rich Kopanda noted that the Upper Rock Creek MPAG is leaning towards supporting the ICC. Steve Joseph had indicated to him that no decision would be made on an east-west road until the ICC decision is made and his association did not want Muncaster Mill will be widened. Chuck noted that the ICC did not have an at-grade intersection at Georgia and he recommended that GOCA needs to oppose the options with at-grade intersection. Art mentioned the letter from the County Council to P&P staff indicating that the Transportation Policy Report was not finalized yet and therefore, the MPAG was not limited to any particular option in their deliberations. Khalid noted that it was acceptable for the MPAG to present alternative suggestions. Ed Weisel noted that the Aspen Hill Master Plan was approved without including the ICC, but Art felt that did not matter because the TPR would be the controlling document, and the Aspen Hill plan would have to be modified to be consistent with the TPR recommendations. The consensus was that GOCA should reiterate its position to P&P and the Civic Federation in opposition to Options 1 and 2. Park and Planning is recommending Option 1 for purposes of the Master Plan study and the County Council will decide on the TPR recommendations this summer.

Jackie Benn moved that:

GOCA REITERATE ITS SUPPORT OF THE PRIMARY USE OF MUNCASTER MILL ROAD FOR EAST/WEST TRANSPORTATION WITH PRIMARY EMPHASIS ON SAFETY. AND, THAT GOCA FURTHER REJECTS OPTIONS 1 AND 2 AS PROPOSED BY THE PLANNING STAFF.

Lee Kidd seconded the motion. Following a little additional discussion, the motion passed.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim'
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Art Brodsky, Herman Taylor, John Lyons, Greg Allar, Joe Buffington, Ron Berger, Helen Dodson, Chuck Keyserling, Don Schmelter, Rich Kopanda, Lee Kidd, Jackie and Danny Benn, Stanley Elswick, Karen Montgomery, Peter Esser, Dudley Finneyfrock Sr, Dudley Finneyfrock, Jr., Dave Eskenazi, Roy Peck, Steve Smet, Ed Komorus, Pat Cummings, Greg Swamocore, Kenny Cohen, Bob Peveromo, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Ellen Lent, Ed Weisel, Jeff Kirby, Arnold Gordon, Chuck Young, and Helene Rosenheim.