



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney , Maryland 20830

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

## MINUTES – May 13, 2003

The meeting was called to order by Vice President John Lyons. John explained that the normal agenda had been modified so that the staff from the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission could present an outline of the draft Greater Olney Master Plan one last time prior to it being submitted to the Planning Board.

### OLD BUSINESS

**Funding Proposal for PROJECT CHANGE** – Ellen Lent, Adult President and Amanda Partington, Youth President, for PROJECT CHANGE, noted that PROJECT CHANGE is still interested in establishing a permanent facility for Olney's youth. The business plan they have developed indicates that their costs to run such a facility would be approximately \$8,000 per month. They proposed that working through GOCA, they contact each local civic and homeowners association to request that they contribute \$1 per household per month. This amount could be added to their GOCA dues. Or, alternatively, the adults in a household could volunteer a total of 9 hours per household per month. They are also having discussions with the County's Department of Health and Human Services concerning possible joint uses of a space for seniors programs that could bring in additional funding. In addition, the County's Hospitality Resource Panel within the Department of Liquor Control is looking for spaces for socialability for young adults in the Olney area. Their focus is young adults 18-25, but their efforts may benefit the middle and high school aged youth PROJECT CHANGE focuses on.

Amanda added that she was certain many at the meeting could identify with the idea that our youth are bored and that there has been a rise in the amount of drug and alcohol use in the area and in the County; and that there is a need to find more positive things for kids to do in this area. Also, there is now a growing teen population that needs a voice in the community. The 20832 zip code is among the top five trouble spots in the County in connection with alcohol and drug related citations. She noted that while PROJECT CHANGE won't eliminate this situation completely, it is doing and will continue doing things to help reduce this problem. In response to a few questions, Amanda indicated that some of the uses for the space might include such uses as a cyber café, an arts and ceramic studio, an ice cream parlor, a video lounge, a sound stage for bands, etc. They have held some activities at Longwood Recreation Center, but it is not always available as often as they would like to use it, and it is not very accessible on foot, by bicycle, or even using public transportation which is why they are looking for something closer to the center of town.

**Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department Budget** – Mike Weiner, President of the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department (SSVFD), noted that this had been a tough budget year. The County Executive's proposed budget included establishing fees for ambulance services, but the County Council eliminated this proposal from the budget they finally agreed to. Mike noted that passage of this fee would have meant that the volunteer components of the volunteer fire departments and rescue squads would not be able to function. Each year 18-20 million volunteer hours are donated to the County by the fire department. Mike suggested that the County is trying to take control of the local volunteer fire departments. The volunteer firefighters did not get a couple of seats on the Fire & Safety Commission. The Commission would be discussing this on the following Thursday. They still need to keep the pressure up with the Council to keep these proposals out of the final budget and asked that people email the Council by May 22<sup>nd</sup> asking them to: (1) eliminate the ambulance fees, (2) continue to let each volunteer fire department have its own administrative assistant as opposed to pulling them out of the individual stations to a centralized office to save \$600,000 but which is much less efficient. Mike also noted that they will be dedicating the new tanker truck they purchased recently at the Strawberry Festival on June 7<sup>th</sup>. He also indicated that more information is available on the following websites: [www.ssvfd.com](http://www.ssvfd.com) and [www.cvfra.com](http://www.cvfra.com).

**Olney Days Festival** – Helene Rosenheim noted that the Olney Days Festival was taking place the following weekend. Friday, May 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunday, May 18<sup>th</sup>. After reviewing the schedule of events, she noted that there are still a few slots open for men in the Mr. and Mrs. Olney Contest on Friday evening. She also noted that volunteers were needed for several of the events and circulated a sign-up sheet. Then Bobby Fletcher spoke about the first annual Joe's Ride Remembering Olney's Kids scheduled for Saturday morning of the Olney Days. The Fletchers organized the event along with Joe Sanford's family and many of their friends in memory of Joe Sanford and other youth from the Olney area that had passed away. It is a bike ride with a 40K course for serious riders, a 10K course for less experienced riders and families, and a bike rodeo being run by the Park Police to teach the youngest riders some bicycle safety. The admissions fees will go towards funding the event and Olney Days in general, and the donations raised by the riders will go to the Joseph Patrick Sanford Foundation. The Foundation has decided to donate this year's money to the Children's Inn at NIH.

**Draft Greater Olney Master Plan Update** – During the remainder of the meeting, the staff from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (P&P) presented an overview of the draft of the Olney Master Plan that they expect to present to the Planning Board within a month. Khalid Afzal, the leader of the Georgia Avenue Team drafting the plan, noted that most of the information will be available on their website at <http://www.mcparkandplanning.org/>, clicking on Community Plans and then Georgia Avenue Team.

The study of the master plan began in July 2001, and there were 13 meetings of the Greater Olney Master Plan Advisory Committee between then and November 2002. They had anticipated having the draft complete by December 2002, but because of staff shortages and schedule conflicts, the issuance of the draft has been delayed. Khalid noted that the concept was a fine tuning of the 1980 plan. There are no major changes from that plan. Much of the development in Olney was consistent with that plan, but they wanted to update the plan for the next 20 years. The plan is to conserve as much of the agricultural land in the northern portion of the planning area as possible. South of Brookeville, the area is more suburban and residential. They identified 3 areas to concentrate on: the residential area, the town center area, the southeast quadrant where most of the undeveloped land is located. Compared to the 1980 study, there is a relatively small amount of undeveloped land. Most in the northern portion could be developed at the ratio of 1 unit per 25 acres. They have proposed some agricultural easements and some conservation efforts. Most of the redevelopment in the southeast quadrant is intended to provide open space rural clustering. There are 810 acres in that quadrant that is redevelopable and vacant. The Casey property is 76 acres, the NW Investment property (near the Good Counsel High School site) is 104 acres, and the Pollinger property is 176 acres. The remaining properties are smaller. Some of that land is zoned RE-2, some is Rural Cluster. The RE-2 land does not get sewer and water and has an anticipated yield of 1 unit per 3 acres. The potential in this area under the current zoning is 150-241 lots. Some other sites they are looking at for redevelopment are the Mess property north of Rte. 108, and Norbeck Country Club. There are no current plans to redevelop the country club, but they want to include a recommendation for how it should be developed, if it were ever sold for redevelopment. In the southeast quadrant, they are recommending the Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC) zone for land in the sewer envelope.

Since the last Advisory Group meeting in November, 2002, the County Council has launched an initiative to find potential sites for affordable housing (moderately priced dwelling units – MPDU's) throughout the County. By definition, MPDU is housing units priced for families earning less than 65% of the County's median income. Referring to a chart showing potential development in the planning area, it shows 431 units in the southeast quadrant if it was developed under the current scheme. Khalid continued to review the chart, noting that the chart may not be in the plan as presented at this meeting, but would be reflected in the detail in the draft plan. He noted that the main issue in the design of the town center area was the use of Olney Elementary School. When the master plan study began and throughout the study, the community has expressed a desire to have a civic center to house a larger library, and other government offices. They are proposing to explore relocating Olney Elementary to another unused school site within the existing boundaries of the school on Bowie Mill Rd. He stressed that this is not something that will happen right away, but this proposal provides the most likely opportunity to have a civic center in the town center with space for recreation and a town commons area. Another option is to buy some private property, but in light of the cost associated with that approach, the reuse of the school seems like a much more feasible plan.

Mary Dolan, the environmental specialist on the Georgia Avenue Team, indicated that there had not been any changes in their recommendations since the November 2002 meeting. Their goal is to protect and restore a network of forests and wetlands throughout the area and expanding the biodiversity of the area. The plan intends to maintain and restore the water quality of the streams. The plan calls for low density housing outside of the town center with forest buffering and forest restoration on public land. The plan anticipates voluntary use of forest banking to continue the protection of the area. It includes 700 acres of new parkland at the head of Hawlings Run with the expansion of several forestation areas. In the southeast quadrant, there are 400 acres of open space preservation with up to 100 acres for forest banking. The plan adds new forest on the Pollinger and Casey properties. The development proposed in that area would only increase imperviousness by 1% which is still a very good percentage.

Dan Hardy, the transportation specialist on the Team, indicated that the goals of the plan included enhancing transportation accessibility and improving the bicycle path network. They are trying to accomplish this through higher arterial roads. They hope to keep the main capacity on the main roads and reduce neighborhood traffic. Regionally, the InterCounty Connector (ICC) is still in the plan, and there are plans for a new busway along Georgia Avenue in the median between Olney and the Glenmont Metro Station. It includes recommendations for widening Rtes 28 and 198 west of New Hampshire Avenue. It also discusses the conversion of the intersection of Rte. 28 and Georgia Avenue to an interchange. The State Highway Administration have been studying this because it is an improvement that needs to be made with or without the ICC. The current master plan of highways calls for the extension of Cherry Valley Dr, but the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan recommended eliminating that proposal and this plan will do the same. They are also recommending that Batchellors Forest Rd. retain the rustic rural road status, with a slight realignment so that it ends at the Farquhar Middle School site. They are proposing a ring road system in the town center area to enhance mobility between the four quadrants. They are deleting the proposal to build the missing piece of Buehler Rd. They are proposing extending Appomattox to Georgia Avenue to create a business connection into the shopping centers. Hillcrest is a possible alternative and if they can find another way to get to Georgia Avenue without Appomattox, they will take it out of the plan.

During the Question and Answer Period the following points were made:

- Ken Cusick presented the concerns of the Williamsburg Village community about the proposal to relocate Olney Elementary. (They were reacting to information they received from a very early draft of the master plan some of which is no longer relevant because of later changes to the draft.) Their civic association opposes the relocation of the school because they feel it would be costly, the school ideally serves its students in its current location, their community would lose its only green space, MCPS objected at that time, and it would likely increase traffic in their community. They also questioned why the school site was the only location in the plan being proposed for the civic center. They noted that the school had been modernized in 1990 at a cost of over \$5.6 million dollars, and that it served as a buffer between their community and the town center area. They felt that the cost of building a new school would be better spent on building gymnasiums for schools that don't have them, and added that there was another school site MCPS owns within a half mile of the Bowie Mill site intended originally to handle growth in that immediate area, and there are PEPCO high-tension power lines adjacent to the Bowie Mill site that could present a health concern. They felt there was no reason to limit the site selection to the school site during the feasibility study and suggested some other possible sites: land across from Montgomery General Hospital, land east of Old Baltimore and south of Rte. 108, and redevelopment of commercial sites such as the Safeway and North High Street area. Residents from the Williamsburg Village community asked a number of other questions related to this proposal. Khalid Afzal's general response was that this is a plan that will guide development for the next 10-20 years and this part of the plan is not likely to happen anytime in the near future. Part of their plan is to propose uses of land when an existing use is no longer there or needed, and the plan will not spell out the specific of the design of the site, but might include language that would serve as a guide in the design process.

- The overall increase in this plan would be 53-171 units based on the proposed zoning. This would be increase the 950 remaining units under the current plan to a total of 1100 units. The forecast for the full build out of the southeast quadrant will be about the same as the full build out proposed in the plan 20 years ago. There are only 97 MPDU's outside of the town center area. They are also proposing some mixed-use residential development in the town center area. One focus in the town center area is improving pedestrian access and they are recommending that all roads in that area should have sidewalks.

- The rural neighborhood cluster (RNC) zone is a new zone created during the development of the Sandy Spring Master Plan. It provides the staff with more flexibilities in designing a site. There is a high percentage of aggregated open space. Without sewers, the yield is 1 unit per 5 acres with a minimum of 65% open space. With sewers, the recommendation in the plan is for 1 unit per 3.7 acres, but no more than 1 unit per 2.5 acres. The Sandy Spring Master Plan includes lots of guidance related to preserving the rural historic quality of the area and the uses for the land are more limited than other large lot zones. RE-2 is an old zone with a lot of uncertainty. It does allow saving open space, but it does not allow for the direct placement of that open space or for clustering. There are more design controls with the RNC zone and you can direct where the development should be.

- The only area with Transfer of Development rights development is the Golden Bear site in the wedge on the east side of Georgia Avenue and north of Rte. 28.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

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Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Khalid Afzal, Dave Ager, Greg Banner, Lee Barbelman, Jackie & Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Susan Berger, Steve Berry, Patrick Boyle, Bette Buffington, Joe Buffington, Carolyn & David Clalhaun, Lynn & Andrew Cambell, Kristi Cameron, John Cofrancesro, Steve Coniglio, Allison & Dan Corbett, Rick Coburn, Kristine & Adam Currie, Gail & Ken Cusik, Nancy Delalio, J. Delauder, Mary Dolan, Karen Donovan-Espina, Don Drew, Suzanne Duclos, Stanley Elswick, Dave Eskenazi, Mark Feinroth, Greg Fury, Sandy & Bobby Fletcher, Joe Fritsch, Mark Glaudemans, Lori Goodwin, Chuck Graefe, David Hamod, Joe & Marilyn Hess, Valerie Higgins, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Claire Iseli (Marilyn Praisner's Office), Mary Kay Isaacs, Mike Kelley, Jack Kerekes, Rona Kramer, Cary Lamari, Ellen Lent, Amy Lindsey, Doug Lohmeyer, John Lyons, Kim & Art Maxhaum, Harvey Maizel, Peggy MCGerr, Annette McKelvey, Pam & Rich Miller, Gary Mizrahi, Sharlene Monroe, Karen & Harry Montgomery, Carol & John Murphy, Marlene Murphy, Alyce Ortuzar, Miara & Brian Page, Astrid & Raymond Pages, Betsy & Don Palmer, Norman Palmer, Amanda Partington, Roy Peck, Susan Penders, Susan Petrocci, Ellen & Dave Quirk, Mark Rosendorf, Helene Rosenheim, Susan St. Pierre, Don Schmelter, Paul Schroeder, Debra Schupler, Alan Soukup, Michael Stewart, Deborah Stevens Panzer, Edward Taubman, Capt, Patty Walker, Kim & Kelly Welch, Phil Wilk, Howard Wilpon, Mary Pat Wilson, Trish & Pat Wollard, and Chuck Young.