



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

## MINUTES – September 9, 2003

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, the August minutes were approved with 1 addition and 2 corrections (Added Ann Kaiser, Herman Taylor, and Chuck Young to list of attendee; correct spellings: pg 2 ¶ 10, Appommattox to Appomattox and pg 2 ¶ 7, Erhlich to Ehrlich. The agenda was approved with 3 changes – reversing items 1 and 2 under Old Business, and adding 2 items under New Business..

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Karen Montgomery noted that she had introduced legislation to the State House of Delegates and a similar bill had been introduced in the State Senate stating that in incidents of power outages, individuals with proven medical necessities either be transported to hospitals or receive priority status in having their electricity restored. Roy Peck noted that these lists are generally only valid for a year, so people need to get on the list each year, but Karen noted there is no list for this right now. She also noted that the electric company's current position is that given a choice between restoring the power of 1 person with a disability versus 300 people, they will go with restoring the power to the 300 people.
- Terri Hogan noted that there will be a candlelighting ceremony on Sept 11<sup>th</sup> at the Rte. 97/108 intersection from 7:30 – 8:00 pm and people should bring their own candles. There were about 1,000 people there last year.

### OLD BUSINESS

**Skateboard Park at Olney Manor Park** – Stephen Smet noted that Park & Planning held a public meeting on Sept 2 at Longwood Recreation Center to present the various locations within Olney Manor Park that they were considering for placement of a skateboard park. GOCA has supported finding a location within the Park. Currently skateboarders do not have a place to go without negatively impacting residents and businesses. They presented 4 possible sites within the Park, some of which involved using and/or relocating tennis courts. Several tennis groups stated that they could not afford to give up any courts because they have a shortage of courts now. At the meeting, Art Brodsky noted that the parking lot next to Ball Field No. 1 should be considered because it is rarely used and placing the skateboard park there would not add any impervious surface to the Park and would not impact the tennis courts; and that Option 3, the land near the pond was the last tranquil area in the Park and shouldn't be used. The staff agreed to consider the recommendation. There does seem to be growing interest in this location, however Ellen Masciocchi is concerned about the safety of this location because of the balls from Ball Field No. 1. The Swim Center staff would be used to oversee the skateboard park. There would be a small fee charged to use the facility to cover operating costs. While there is not much County money to build this facility, there is significant private funding that will be available once the site has been selected.

A question was raised about the difficulty of youths who do not drive getting there. It was noted that it is on a bus route and that there are sidewalks now all the way along Georgia Avenue from Norbeck Rd north of Rte. 108. The kids at the meeting indicated that if the facility was along a bus route, that would be good.

John Lyon moved that

**GOCA SUPPORT PARK & PLANNING 'S (P&P) CONSTRUCTION OF A SKATEBOARD PARK IN OLNEY MANOR PARK ON SOME PORTION OF THE L-SHAPED PARKING LOT BEHIND BALL FIELD 1 AND ADJACENT TO GEORGIA AVE ,  
HEREAFTER KNOWN AS SITE 5.**

The motion was seconded by Chuck Keyserling. The motion passed overwhelmingly.

**Draft Public Hearing Olney Master Plan** – Stephen Smet asked Khalid Afzal about the possibility of delaying the Sept 18<sup>th</sup> hearing, but Khalid noted that it could not be postponed, but it would be possible to ask for the record to be held open longer than usual. If the list of speakers that sign up to speak goes beyond 2.5 -3 hours, they could schedule an additional day for the hearing. People can also send written comments as they go through the work sessions. While they may not officially be part of the hearing record, the staff will certainly consider the comments and they would also be willing to meet with people directly all through the process. In order to testify, people need to call Park & Planning's Community Relations Office ahead of time or can sign up to testify at the hearing prior to 7:30 pm. Individuals get 3 minutes and homeowners and civic associations get 5 minutes. In addition, individuals can sign up and cede their time to other individuals or groups, but they must be present at the hearing.

The following are comments and points of discussion relating to the Public Hearing Draft Olney Master Plan along with the motions passed in connection to the Draft:

Nancy Wendt, a Daley Manor Place resident, read the letter from the Olney Square CA asking that the 9/18 hearing be rescheduled or a second date be added because the issue relating to the recommendation to place affordable housing on the Bowie Mill high school site came up late in the master plan draft process, the coalition of neighboring associations need more time to complete their technical analysis of the environmental impact of the proposal, and that is also the night of the PTA's Back to School night. Mike Knapp noted that there are several steps in the Park & Planning process, and the Council does not take any position until they are done. And, the process does not end with the Sept 18<sup>th</sup> hearing. That is just the beginning of the public hearing process. Heidi Leinwebber presented several language changes these neighboring associations had drafted. They are requesting that the zoning be changed and the site be kept as open space in its natural setting. There are aquifers on the site that are sensitive and already overstressed by the Norbeck Grover development. There is already MPDU development in that quadrant and recommendation to place MPDU's on this site in the 1980 master plan was deleted before that plan was finalized. She noted as well the unanimous opposition to this recommendation by all of the residents on Darnell Dr. which backs up to the property in question. The coalition that Heidi and Wendy are speaking for includes residents and associations from Daly Manor Rd., Olney Square the Oatlands, Norbeck Grove, Olney Oaks, Brookeville Knolls, and Briar's Acres..

Steve Smet noted that is designated as an arterial designation which calls for a 80' right of way and is designed to carry a lot of traffic with few driveways, except at the end near Rte. 108. The Plan recommends a bike path on Bowie Mill to Rock Creek which would take additional land. Steve suggested requesting that Bowie Mill be downgraded from arterial to primary from Cashell and Wicker Rd. to Rte. 108. That might mean lower priority for snow removal, but it would permit the use of traffic calming devices. It was also suggested that we should know if the Bowie Mill site qualified for inclusion in the open space legacy program before stating that in the language change we recommend. The language was changed to suggest that it be evaluated for inclusion in that program.

Mark Feinroth noted the concerns of Williamsburg Village and others with the initial proposal to relocate Olney Elementary and use the building for a civic center, but that they were much happier with the draft language. However, they requested that a four option relative to this site be added to cover the possibility that the civic center ends up located on a different site and the MCPS' decide to dispose of the site. Currently the language does not address this possibility. There are not many areas of green space in the town center area, so it is important to preserve this green space.

There are 800 open acres in the southeast quadrant which is the last area of large amounts of undeveloped land. That area also contains the headwaters of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. There is a lot of pressure to develop the land by the large lot owners. It was acknowledged that the staff did try to protect the area, but the area still has a potential for 1,000 homes if the zoning is not changed. While there is a lot in the plan to support, SEROCA will limit its testimony to issues relating to the southeast quadrant. It was noted that staff was under pressure from developers to maximize density and from residents to limit density and they tried to find a balance. However, SEROCA sees some basic fairness issues in the proposed language relating to the southeast quadrant. The proposed use of the RNC zone enriches the large land owners; but by downzoning with the RNC zone does, it eliminates the opportunity for small lot owners to be developed. If the Polliger golf course goes away, SEROCA wants to see development that will not overwhelm the quadrant. One property alone could double the density in that area. The owners of the Kimble and Graefe properties next to Olney Manor Park are opposed to their properties being designated as future park acquisitions, particularly since there are no current plans to expand the park. This recommendation places a cloud over these properties if the owners want to sell them. Deleting the language would not preclude the Parks from purchasing them in the future. They also noted their agreement with the proposal to treat the acreage in the triangle east of Georgia Ave and west of Norbeck Road, but only as long as Inter-County Connector (ICC) actually goes in. They would, therefore, like this recommendation include language that indicates it is conditioned on real progress with the ICC. However, if the ICC is not developed then the land should be treated in the same way as the rest of the southeast quadrant.

There was discussion of the need to downgrade the designation for Bowie Mill Rd between Rte. 108 and the Olney Master Plan boundary at the North Branch of the Rock Creek from Arterial to Primary because of the many driveways along that portion of the road. It was also suggested that ii the designation of Bowie Mill is changed to Primary, and the lower end of Cashell as Primary, then there does not seem to be a need for the upper portion of Cashell to be designated as Primary. Khalid indicated that their staff would look at the issue of the designation of Bowie Mill. SEROCA's position on the Good Counsel High School site is unchanged.

The consensus was that the proposals for the town center are generally okay. There was a suggestion that for the 4-story building height limit being proposed for land immediately adjacent to Rte. 108 and Georgia Ave, there be a 300 ft. setback required from the road.

In the area of the Silo Inn, there was agreement on the desirability of changing the zoning there to a residential zone similar to the adjacent development, Victoria Springs. It was noted that the Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS) had received a request for a waiver to permit the part of the residentially zoned property where the Silo Inn to be used for parking for the commercially zoned portion of the property. GOCA had written questioning DPS' interpretation that the grandfathered use by the Silo Inn of this residential area was still valid since the Silo Inn had been torn down over four years ago. The current regulations relating to

"grandfathered" uses of a property states that the grandfathered use becomes invalid if the use is abandoned for more than 6 months. In response to GOCA's letter, DPS asked GOCA to provide evidence that the use had been abandoned so they could investigate our concern. We will check the archives of the Gazette and possibly get a letter from Tommy Tavenner stating when the Inn had been closed and torn down. It was also noted that the Shaare Tefilah Synagogue recently purchased land south of the Silo Inn property and north of Emory Rd and it was suggested that staff needs to look at the issue of access from the service road in front of this property to Georgia Ave to see if it would be appropriate to have a new access to Georgia Ave added near the property in question.

GOCA supported the widening of Muncaster Mill Rd in the earlier discussion of Muncaster Mill Rd alternatives, and it was suggested that GOCA should reaffirm that position relative to this Draft plan recommendation relative to this road.

The following 6 motions were passed in connection with the draft master plan and will form a basis for the testimony GOCA will present at the Park and Planning Public Hearing on the Draft Olney Master Plan.

**Motion 1** by Nancy Wendt, Olney Oaks SF CA  
Seconded by: Mark Feinroth, Williamsburg Village CA

**NANCY MOVED THAT:**

**GOCA SUPPORT THE OLNEY COALITION'S REQUEST TO RESCHEDULE THE SEPTEMBER 18 HEARING OR TO SCHEDULE AN ADDITIONAL HEARING AFTER OCTOBER 31, 2003 TO PROVIDE ALL RESIDENTS THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROVIDE INFORMED INPUT TO THE HEARING AND TO ALLOW TIME FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE TESTIMONY, AND THAT THE RECORD BE KEPT OPEN BEYOND OCTOBER 31<sup>ST</sup>.**

**Motion 2** by Heidi Leinneweber, Olney Square CA  
Seconded by Jay Feinberg, Olney Oaks SF CA

**HEIDI MOVED THAT:**

**GOCA ADOPT THE PROPOSED LANGUAGE CHANGE FOR THE 32-ACRE SITE ON BOWIE MILL RD PRESENTED 9/9/03, AND AS AMENDED IN THE LAND USE PLAN, P.36, #17 TO CHANGE "THIS LAND SHOULD BE PRESERVED AS LEGACY OPEN SPACE" TO "THIS LAND SHOULD BE PRESERVED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE FOR OPEN GREEN SPACE AND EVALUATED ENVIRONMENTALLY FOR INCLUSION IN THE LEGACY OPEN SPACE PROGRAM..." THE SAME CHANGE SHOULD ALSO BE ADOPTED FOR THE PROPOSED RECOMMENDATION FOR #17. A THIRD AMENDMENT TO STRIKE THE PROPOSED ADDITION OF THE SITE AS LEGACY OPEN SPACE SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED. THE FIRST COMMENT OF THE LAST PROPOSAL SHOULD ALSO BE STRICKEN.**

(This motion went with a spreadsheet of proposed language changes that essentially asked that references to the use of the disposed of high school site on Bowie Mill Road being used for affordable housing be deleted throughout the draft master plan and that language be added recommending that the site be evaluated for inclusion in the Open Legacy Program.)

**Motion 3** by Mark Feinroth, Williamsburg Village CA  
Seconded by Chuck Keyserling, Norbeck Meadows CA

**MARK MOVED THAT:**

**IN THE EVENT THAT THE CIVIC CENTER/TOWN COMMONS FACILITY IS BUILT ON A SITE OTHER THAN THE OLNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PARCEL ON QUEEN MARY DRIVE AND AT A LATER DATE THE SCHOOL IS NO LONGER NEEDED FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES BY MCPS, GOCA SUPPORTS DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPERTY AS PUBLIC GREEN SPACE SUCH AS A PARK OR COMMONS. GOCA WOULD THEREFORE, ONLY SUPPORT STRUCTURES ON THE SITE THAT WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH RECREATIONAL USES.**

**Motion 4** by John Lyons, SEROCA  
Seconded by Art Brodsky, Cherrywood HOA

**JOHN MOVED THAT:**

**GOCA RESOLVES THAT (1) ITS TESTIMONY OR WRITTEN COMMENTS ON THE PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT OF THE OLNEY MASTER PLAN (THE "PLAN") WILL EXPRESSLY SUPPORT OR ENDORSE THE POSITIONS OF SEROCA ON THE PLAN, AS OUTLINED IN JOHN LYON'S SEPT. 9, 2003 MEMORANDUM TO THE MEMBERS OF GOCA (ATTACHED**

**HERETO), AND (2) THAT IT AUTHORIZES SEROCA'S REPRESENTATIVE TO TESTIFY AT THE PLANNING BOARD'S PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PLAN THAT GOCA SUPPORTS OR ENDORSES SEROCA'S POSITIONS CONCERNING ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN THAT ADDRESS THE SOUTHEAST QUADRANT OF OLNEY.**

(In John's memorandum, SEROCA states their belief that the general recommendations and the Specific Property Recommendations explaining how the RNC will apply to properties in the SEQ (pg 26-36) are "fundamentally unfair and inequitable insofar as they apply would [give] different densities to different parcels depending on access to existing sewer lines. These recommendations effectively increase the value of certain large properties that have access to public sewer, and effectively devalue all other redevelopable properties (i.e., <5 acres).

In addition, SEROCA believes that the density being proposed for the large sewerable properties (0.33 units per acre) is too high and should be substantially reduced because the absolute numbers such density will yield will completely transform and overwhelm the low-density, rural character of the southeast quadrant, along with its sensitive environmental attributes, that the Plan expressly seeks to preserve and protect. These problems will only be magnified if the MPDU law is amended to apply to large lot zones and the maximum density in effect becomes 0.4 units per acre)"

The memorandum goes on to note that MPDU's are not the issue, but the absolute number of units yielded is, and that they would like the proposed changes to Specific Property Recommendation #10 be conditioned on some measurable objective being achieved with respect to the actual use of the ICC right-of-way.

The memorandum supports language in a variety of places in the Plan concerning land use, environmental resources, transportation and Parks and Recreation relating specifically to the southeast quadrant, and suggested that the Plan include a recommendation to explore possible options for providing access to any future development on the Polinger property by some means other than, or in addition to Batchellors Forest Rd and Emory Church Road.)

**Motion 5** by Art Paholski, Olney Square CA  
Seconded by Art Brodsky, Cherrywood HOA

**ART MOVED THAT:**

**GOCA RECOMMEND A DOWNGRADE TO THE DESIGNATION OF BOWIE MILL RD FROM AN ARTERIAL ROAD TO A PRIMARY ROAD FROM RTE. 108 TO THE BOUNDARY OF THE OLNEY MASTER PLAN WITH THE UPPER ROCK CREEK PLANNING AREA.**

**Motion 6** by Susan Petrocci, Norbeck Meadows CA  
Seconded by Chuck Keyserling, Norbeck Meadows CA

**SUSAN MOVED THAT:**

**GOCA SUPPORT THE REMOVAL OF THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF CHERRY VALLEY DRIVE FROM THE OLNEY MASTER PLAN STREET AND HIGHWAY NETWORK.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**"Emerging Community" Funds Being Used in Olney** - Helene Rosenheim reported that the County's FY 2004 operating budget designated a total of \$50,000 for use by the 5 Regional Service Centers in the County for "emerging community" infrastructure and services. Natalie Cantor, the Director of the Mid-County Regional Services Center has designated Olney as the emerging community for her service area. After discussions with Steve Smet and Phil Wilk, the president of the Olney Chamber of Commerce, a decision was made to use the \$11,000 for the Mid-County area will be used to support the goal of the master plan to create a more comprehensive appearance to the town center area. So, they will purchase trash cans that will be placed around the town center area such as at bus stops and high traffic areas, will provide regular trash collection for the trash cans, and will purchase American flags similar to those purchased by Bobby Fletcher and Bruce Graeves. The flags will be added to the blocks of Georgia Ave north of Rte. 108 and on Rte. 108 east and west of Georgia Ave. within the town center area. In future years, there kinds of funds could be used to purchase benches and other features to enhance the town center area.

**Annual Growth Policy Being Revised** – Susan Petrocci noted that there will be hearings at the end of the month on proposed revisions to the County's Annual Growth Policy. The County Council is holding a "AGP Teach-In" on the following Saturday from 9:30 am – 1:00 pm to help people understand the proposed changes. The hearings will be on Sept 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. Khalid noted that the Master Plans control where and what type of development and land uses are appropriate for a given area, and the Annual Growth Policy controls the timing of that development by measuring whether adequate public facilities exist or are budgeted to support proposed development. Helene Rosenheim gave a brief description of some of the proposed changes. The changes are recognize that while schools throughout the County are at or over capacity, and traffic is congested throughout the County, it is

impractical to totally restrict development. So, the goal is to promote concentration of development in the areas of Metro stations. It does this by imposing transportation impact taxes on new development that is higher the further it is from Metro stations. The changes also add an impact tax for schools that is the same throughout the County. Susan added that the development moratoriums these provisions could trigger are overridden for projects with MPDU units. Steve Smet encouraged our member associations to comment to the County Council on the proposed changes.

Following this discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim'  
Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Khalid Afzal, Robert Bell, Scott Berg, Ron Berger, Joe Buffington, Leslie Cronin, Linda Dunn, Dave Eskenazi, Haroldl Hadrich, Kevin Hillman, Zack Hopkins, Chuck Graefe, Bob Irvin, Claire Iseli, Anne Kaiser, Deulii Kecki, Chuck Keyserling, Mike Knapp, Karen & Harry Montgomery, Sean O'Brien, Roy Peck, Scott Reiber, Bruce Rhoderick, Helene Rosenheim, Tim Russell, Don Schmelter, Robin Shea, Mariana Shul, Jerome Simon, Mike Vawie, Ed Weisel, Nqancy Wendt, Elaine & Andrew Van Wie, Tony Wilbur, Sean Wilder, Johnmare Winfield, Chuck Young, and Brookes Yundkall.