



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney , Maryland 20830

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

## MINUTES – January 13, 2004

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, the December minutes were approved with one correction (Pg. 4, ¶ 3, Malcolm Spicer changed to Max Spicer). The agenda was approved with one addition,.

### OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

**President's Report** - Steve Smet reported that:

- He attended the Draft Olney Master Plan worksession of the Maryland-National Capitol Park & Planning Commission's (P&P) Planning Board. He commended Khalid Afzal, the head of P&P's Georgia Avenue Team, for the good job he did in presenting the Draft Plan to the Planning Board.

-We have received a response from the Department of Permitting Services (DPS) concerning the Silo Inn. He asked Don Schmelter to read from the response as part of his Correspondence Report.

**Correspondence Report** – Don Schmelter reported that the letter from DPS stated that the property owner of the Silo Inn property cannot build his current proposal on that site. The letter went on to say that the property the Silo Inn was on is a mix of residential and commercial property, but the grandfathered use on the property expired when the Silo Inn was torn down. Therefore, the current property owner cannot use the residential portion of the property for parking for the development on the commercial portion of the property. Of the 3 acres on the site, the 2 northern acres are zoned commercial and the southern acre is residential.

**Treasurer's Report** - Don Schmelter reported for Roy Peck that the current balance is \$3,393.87.

**Olney Chamber of Commerce Report** – Joe Buffington reported that

- The Chamber has received approval from the Montgomery County Foundation for the creation of a not-for-profit fund so they can accept tax-deductible donations for the Olney Police Satellite Facility. They have received all the necessary approvals for water and sewer connections to the trailer. They anticipate that the renovations will be done by April 1, 2004. The next step is being held till the facility can be staffed. They will invite the new Police Chief to the groundbreaking.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ron Berger noted that there will be a Roast of John Chirtea in April to benefit Hospice Caring, Inc, and the Sandy Spring Museum. He distributed Save the Date post cards that people can return to Hospice Caring to indicate their interest in attending.

- Arnold Gordon invited those interested to attend the next Norbeck Meadows CA meeting on Feb 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm at Cashell Elementary where they will be getting a presentation on the Inter-County Connector.

- Chuck Young noted that the County Council will be taking up a resolution opposing legislation permitting slot machines in the State; and that Council members Marilyn Praisner and Mike Knapp are still uncommitted. He recommended that people whether they are pro or con, should contact their council members to let them know what their position is.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATION

**Olney Mill Neighborhood Trail** - Steve Smet introduced Lyn Coleman, P&P's Trail Planning Supervisor to talk about the Olney Mill Neighborhood Trail. Ms. Coleman noted that they been talking with the Olney Mill Community Association in connection with this trail and that she was at this meeting to orient GOCA with the Countywide Trail Plan. The Trail Plan plans trails throughout the County. It was passed in 1998 and provides for interconnectivity of natural surface and hard surface trails. It has two natural trails, one on the C & O Canal along the Potomac, and another along the Patuxent River, with connections between the Seneca Greenway, mid-county, and down-county along the Northwest Branch Greenway. They are considering repairing that greenway. Each year the staff looks at a section of the plan to refine the trails. They are now working on the Rachel Carson greenway. Next year they will be looking at the Rock Creek System which will give opportunities to get to the Patuxent River area.

During the Olney Master Plan review process they were asked to look at a section of the potential trail system in the Olney Mill area. Using a natural trail along the Reddy Branch and a hard surface trail that already exists, they saw a possibility of providing some desired connectivity with a natural trail through Olney Mill. Lyn explained that the trail being proposed would have been proposed eventually when their staff got to that part of the trail plan. So the issue here is should this part of the plan be dealt with out of order. This is already in the plan for study in Fiscal Year 2007. But if there is clear community support they would move the study ahead and continue working on it now. As they have been doing their review, they had gotten some opposition from some Olney Mill residents. What they are proposing is a natural surface trail that would be built by volunteers over a couple of Saturdays. They would not be adding anything, but would just be doing some clearing of leaves, stones, overhanging branches, and trash to create a narrow path just wide enough for one or two people to walk side-by-side. There are no wetlands involved.

Dennis Twombly, Olney Mill CA President noted that they have been having casual conversations about this over the last year and a half. They already have an asphalt path near the Olney Mill Family Park. P&P had already put in a trail from Oakley Cabin to Brookeville. There is also a 2-3' trail from Rosa Parks to Grey Haven Rd. Approximately 80% of the trail is already established informally and is being used. They wanted to look at what it would take to complete the loop for use by local residents. They had asked Lyn to come to talk with Olney Mill residents. She noted that Planning Board is okay with the liability issues and is in support of a natural surface trail. Since some sections are outside of Olney Mill, Lyn has asked that others bordering the trail be notified of the discussions, which was done with a flyer they posted. They have been collecting input for about 2 months and have forwarded responses to P&P. To date, they have received 110 responses.

The following are some of the points made in the discussion of this issue:

- A resident whose home backs up to the Reddy Branch was told 16 years ago that nothing would happen there, so doesn't trust that it will stay a natural trail and he is concerned with security. Lyn responded that just as with master plans, they do review trail plans after time has passed, but any changes would be made through a public process.
- Dennis noted that approximately 150 residents back up to the park and the response has been approximately 50-50.
- Lyn noted that she did not have specific crime statistics for this trail, but Park Police have found that the more sanctioned a trail is and the more used it is, the less complaints they have about criminal activity related to the trail. She noted, too, that with or without a trail, the park is open to the public and they feel a park with a recognized trail system is better.
- Another resident that backs up to the Reddy Branch trail area noted that there is not much public access to the trail from Rosa Parks to Grey Haven, so people would have to go through private property in between to get access to the trail. They already have vandalism problems and is concerned it will get worse. She added that the homeowners, not P&P would be responsible for maintenance of the trail once it is constructed. Lyn responded by noting that the trail would be under the auspices of P&P, and that they do rely to a large extent on volunteers to take care of this type of maintenance and they generally do not have a problem getting enough volunteers to adequately maintain their trails. She noted as well that trails are probably the most useful and used part of the County's Parks System. As people take ownership of a trail, they get more volunteers to help maintain it.
- In Fiscal Year 2007, the Trails Planning Staff will be looking at connectivity all along the Reddy Branch. The Rural Legacy Trail in Sandy Spring is an example of one such trail. The Seneca Creek Greenway between Rte. 355 and Damascus also goes through neighborhoods. They do have trails near schools, such as the one near Blake High School which the students help maintain.
- A resident that backs up to the Olney Mill Family Park spoke in favor of the trail proposal. She recently walked the area two times and enjoyed it. They have not experienced any crime or vandalism problems.
- All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are illegal in the County, so they are not doing anything special to discourage riding them on the trails. If people are seen on Park trails after dark or with ATV's, you should call Park Police.
- P&P staff walked the trail to ensure that there would not be any need for any capital improvements along the trail and none are needed.
- In order for the staff to continue working on this project, out of the normal time sequence, it must be clear that there is overwhelming support for the project.

**Development of a Wincester School in Olney** – Steve Smet introduced Jody Kline, the attorney for the owner and director of the Wincester School, Mary Rhim. Mrs. Rhim has purchased the 2-acre property west of Georgia Ave on Rock Hill Rd. Rock Hill is between Cherry Valley Dr and Hines Rd. Mrs. Rhim started the school in 1970 which is currently on Bel Pre Rd between the Aspenwood and the Layhill Center nursing homes. They have been in 4 locations including in 2 churches. The currently have a nursery school classes and kindergarten classes. They are accredited for first grade, but do not have any classes. They have been looking for a suitable site for two years and felt this site answered many of her requirements. The land is heavily treed, so she wants the building to have large glass surfaces to bring in the environment. She will continue using the Bel Pre site and this site would be a K-6 program with about 180 students, with 30 students at each grade and 2 sections at each grade. She recognizes that traffic is certainly an issue and, so proposes to have an extensive busing program. They expect that 1/3 of their students would come from Olney and the remaining 2/3's will be bused. There are 75-80 students at the school on Bel Pre and they arrive by private car. They expect to build a one-story glass and stone addition to complement the existing stone building on the site. They believe Olney is a community that has a high regard for education and they feel this school would be an asset to the community.

Phil Perrine, a land use specialist, noted that they will keep the existing house and trees in front of the addition. The addition would be lower than the existing roofline. The parking would be in the rear with spaces for 30 cars. They would be keeping 1,200

sq. ft. of trees and they would have a cleared, mulched play area under the tree canopy. They will have a 6 ft. fence around the property within the trees to soften the appearance of the fence. The storm water management will be underground. They would widen the driveway and put a couple of stone walls on either side of the driveway, with signage for the school. Barbara Seliger, their architect, described some of the detail of the building. There is 23 ft. to the midpoint of the roof of the existing building, but you do not see the building from the street now. They will extend the stone finish all around the building on surfaces not windowed and the windows will be trimmed in brass. They expect to renovate the house initially for 30 students and then, over time, they will phase in the construction until they reach the full enrollment. There is a residence to the north of the property, residences on the south with their access on Cherry Valley Dr, 3 undeveloped properties behind the school, and Pogo's to the north with a special exception use. There would not be more than 2 classes outside at anytime with a total of 30 children for safety reasons and for noise abatement between 8 am and 3 pm. After 3 pm, there would be a larger group, approximately 50 children outside from their after-school day care program, but they would be scattered over several play areas.

The school is not religiously affiliated. The current tuition is \$750 a month, including before and after school care provided beginning at 7 am through 6 pm in the evening. Classes begin at 8:45 am. There are 12 teachers at the Bel Pre school from 8 am – 3 pm, 3 administrators, and 23 cars plus 4 parking spaces in front of the school for visitors. The only evening activities they have now are a back to school night and an international dinner. For this school, they would likely hold the programs off-site or they would do it by grades 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6 and would have people carpool. With respect to northbound traffic coming to the school, they expect that 1/3 of the children will come from north of the property and will already be coming south on Georgia. The remaining 2/3 will be bused on 3 buses that will make a u-turn at Hines Rd. The children would be required to come by bus. They have requests now for busing, but they do not provide it.

The following are points made in the discussion of the proposal:

- A Rock Hill Rd resident noted that traffic coming from the site that needs to go north again after dropping off children at 7:30 am will experience extreme difficulty getting across the southbound traffic to make the u-turn at Cherry Valley with cars going at least 45 miles per hour.
- Dave Eskenazi echoed the concerns about the traffic. In response to his questions, the architect indicated that the footprint of the building will be 1,200 sq. ft. with an imperviousness of 9%., noting that there will be a storm water management program on site to address run-off issues.
- Another Rock Hill resident reiterated how bad the traffic is there noting that there had been 3 accidents in that area in the last 8 years.
- There was concern that with visitors to the school during the day, 30 spaces would not be sufficient. But it was noted that they only have 12 spaces now with 75-80 students. But, they do not have a lot of conferences with parents during the day. Between 7 am and 3 pm there would normally only be 15 cars parked on sight.
- The will outdoor play in the parking area and they would not have any team sports.
- The 6 ft fence would be one of the first things constructed with the trees along the edges of the property. The construction would take about 6-8 months. Traffic from the sight wouldn't go into the neighborhood, but would all be on site.
- Outside of major vacations, the school doesn't close as much as Mont. Co. Public School s do. They do plan to have a summer program, but with a smaller enrollment. Students come for remedial work or to excel. Their program is educational, not recreational. Recreation would be provided off-site.

## OLD BUSINESS

**Development Plans for the Marian Fathers Property** – Steve Smet noted that there are plans to put 50 townhouses on the Marian Father site. There has been some community objection to the plans to having the road cutting through into the adjoining development.

**Olney Days 2004** – Helene Rosenheim reported that plans for the weekend are progressing well. The next planning meeting will be during the the last week in January.

**2003 GOCA Awards Nominations** – Ron Berger noted that we are still accepting nominations for this year's awards. Ballots will be sent to all eligible delegates and they will be voting on the Citizen of the Year Award, 3 Contribution to Community Awards, an Olney Heritage Award, and the GOCA Worker of the Year Award. Ron encouraged delegates to return the ballots quickly. In the past we have only gotten about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the ballots back, He is hoping for a better response so the decision is based on a wider response. The Awards will be presented on Sunday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at Longwood Recreation Center. It will not be as elaborate as last year, but will be nice. It still provides an opportunity for residents to express their appreciation to others from the community that add to the quality of life in the area through their services to the community, and to speak to our elected officials in a more relaxed setting.

**2004 GOCA Officer Nominations** – Ron Berger reported that the slate of officers for 2004 must be presented at the January Executive Board meeting with the election being at the February meeting. The new officers take over at the end of that meeting. As happens sometimes, not all of the slots are filled, so anyone interested in serving should talk to him. We try to bring in new officers to complement the existing officers.

To date, this year's slate is as follows:

President – Steve Smet  
 Executive Vice President – John Lyons  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President – Chuck Young  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President – Jackie Benn  
 Treasurer – Roy Peck  
 Recording Secretary – Helene Rosenheim  
 Corresponding Secretary – Vacant

**Pulte- Dell Webb Development Proposal on the Freeman Property on Rte. 108** – Steve Coniglio, of Pulte – Dell Webb wanted to show the changes in the plan since the last meeting he attended. He noted that 40% of the people on a waiting list he is putting together to purchase units are from the Olney area. The proposal had been for 585 units with 9.4% imperviousness with storm water management and 3,000 sq. ft. of commercial development. This is in a special protection area which limits imperviousness to 10% or less. The County Council's PHED Committee decided that this site was not appropriate to the type of senior community they were proposing. The property could support 110-133 regular single-family units with an effective impervious rate of 9.87% under the current zone. There would be 237 acres of parkland, no commercial development and no multi-family units. The financial difference is that before units would begin at about \$350,000. Now there will be 3 tiers of sales – lower \$300,000's, lower \$400,000's, and mid \$500,000's. In a senior development, residents do not generally want different lot sizes, just different unit sizes. The project will not generate any school students and it will have the same traffic impact as the earlier project. The open space called for in the RNC zone would be put into an easement that would be given to John Chirtea's Green Space group or to GOCA or to any entity that would shepherd the land or it could be given to the Parks Dept as the top of the nature trail talked about earlier in the meeting. He is proposing 376 units, plus any MPDU's the County might want him to include. But, currently, there is no mechanism for including MPDU's in the RNC zone.

The property is across from the OBGC's Freeman Field and they hope to break ground in 2005. There is a curved road through the property from Bowie Mill Rd just short of Rte. 108. They would connect it through to Rte. 108 and would do something similar to the Oatlands and Norbeck Grove properties with traffic circles to discourage cut-through traffic. He doesn't know if they will restore the Chichester House. With the RNC zone it will be harder for them to afford the restoration. The property would be maintained by the Dell Webb after the project is built. He asked for a letter of support for the RNC zoning to the County Council.

**Draft Greater Olney Master Plan** – Khalid Afzal reported that the Office of Housing and Community Affairs has declared the 32 acre Bowie Mill site surplus by the County and the property is being considered for affordable housing. Their office has sent out letters dated 12/19/03 soliciting interest by other County agencies in this property with replies requested by 2/2/04. He does not have any idea yet what kind of housing there would be on the site since this is outside of the master plan process. This is one of four sites being offered and it will be discussed at the Feb 5<sup>th</sup> master plan work session. The Draft Master Plan has recommended putting MPDU's on this site with 15% MPDU's if developed privately. If developed by the County that percentage could be higher. The 2/2 response date is not an issue if the community wants to try to stop the disposal of the site. That can still happen.

## NEW BUSINESS

### Discussion of Special Presentations

**Winchester School Proposal** – The following points were made during the discussion of this proposal:

- Traffic is a real issue with this proposal.
- It doesn't seem that they have adequate play areas for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders.
- This needs to be considered as a private school that provides something different than a public school.
- They will need a special exception because it not a religious school.
- The abutting property owners do not want to see a school on this site.
- With a public school site, abutting houses are generally separated from the school building by large ball fields.
- Much of the after-school activities would be outside with 50 children near the houses.

Arnold Gordon moved that:

**WHEREAS THE SITE SOUGHT BY THE WINCHESTER SCHOOL IS EXTREMELY SMALL AND WILL NOT ACCOMMODATE THE PARKING REQUISITE TO A FACILITY WITH AN EVENTUAL ENROLLMENT OF 180 IN GRADES 1-6;**  
**WHEREAS THIS FACILITY WILL CREATE TRAFFIC FLOWS THAT WILL UNDULY BURDEN THE NEIGHBORING COMMUNITY, ENDANGER PEDESTRIANS AND MOTORISTS, AND, WHEREAS THIS SITE WILL HAVE A DEGREE OF IMPERVIOUSNESS MORE THAN 25%, BE IT RESOLVED GOCA OPPOSE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS ROCK HILL ROAD SITE AS PRESENTED.**

The motion was seconded by Jackie Benn. In the discussion of the motion, the following points were added:

- The school will be run by Mrs. Rhim and her son.
- If the Board of Appelas grants a special exception for the proposed used, the Board will need to impose a lot of conditions which Mrs. Rhim could be held to.

Following the discussion, the motion passed with 3 abstentions.

**Olney Mill Neighborhood Trail** – The following points were made during the discussion of the presentation by Lyn Coleman.

- If there is currently sufficient opposition to construction of this trail now, P&P would just not do it now, but in Fiscal Year 2007.
- Dennis Twombly felt that the flyer that had been distributed had been inflammatory. There are existing problems with Gray Haven Dr that do not have anything to do with this proposed trail, and described the trail as hard surfaced. An abutting property owner felt they had not been given full information and that they didn't have a fair voice in the discussion. Dennis felt that Olney Mill's Board overwhelmingly support the trail, with only 100 people opposed to the trail out of 1,000 residents in their development.
- When it comes to looking at this in Fiscal Year 2007, in the normal timetable, P&P will go beyond Olney Mill. To have P&P look at this ahead of schedule, there will need to be a consensus within Olney Mill since the path of the trail is largely in Olney Mill.

No position was taken at this time.

**Pulte-Dell Webb Proposal on the Freeman Property** – Susan Petrocci moved that:

**GOCA OPPOSE THE PULTE-DELL WEBB PROPOSAL ON THE FREEMAN/PULTE PROPERTY OF 334 UNITS FOR AN ADULT COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDED DENSITY OF .33 UNITS PER ACRE WITH A VARIETY OF HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES.**

Chuck Young seconded the motion. The following points were made in the discussion of the motion:

- The PHED Committee will present the Draft Upper Rock Creek Master Plan to the full Council the following week, so a letter need to go out by the following Friday.
- We may not want to specify that the density be 110 units because there may be an acceptable use that would make a higher density acceptable.
- The Planning Board said that 110 would be the maximum density without there being an environmental impact on the headwaters of Rock Creek.
- Chuck Young suggested that we are looking at overall increases in density in the Master Plan areas, we need to try to keep densities down as much as possible.
- The effective imperviousness of 6.8% that Mr. Coniglio described uses an experimental storm water management approach used recently in the County, but it has not been tested enough. This is an environmentally sensitive area and is not a place to experiment.
- The PHED Committee said that 585 was too intense for this site and all three members supported the density of .33 per acre with a 110 unit maximum density. They felt that would be pushing the imperviousness cap. They felt this was a good product but in a bad site, and asked the Planning Board to locate another site. The PHED Committee also supports the area as a special protection area which significantly effects the design features in this area.
- If the Committee is supporting 110 units, we should support that density.
- The community has spent 4 years trying to get the message to the County Council to protect the headwaters of the Upper Rock Creek and while the Committee has recognized there are competing issues, they have decided that protecting the headwaters is a key priority.
- It is important to show that the community is not opposed to the concept of affordable housing, but wants to ensure that developments make sense in the place being proposed. So we may want to oppose the development as presented, but support a mix of housing to include affordable opportunities.
- On the other hand, it might weaken our position by interjecting the issue of affordable housing since the real issue here is density.
- If we acquiesce to higher density here than ever anticipated, it could create problems with the Draft Olney Master Plan.

Following the discussion, the motion passed.

After a few brief announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helene Rosenheim*

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Khalid Afzal, Jim Barnsley, Jackie and Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Bob Browning, Joe Buffington, Rick Coburn, Steve Cogniglio, Grace & John Colacicco, Jean Craver, Martha Cunningham, Dennis Delizzio, Brian Donnelly, Stanley Elswick, Dave Eskenazi, Jay Feinberg, Mark Feinworth, John Fennel, Dawn Green, Arnold Gordon, Elaine Gurganus, Bill Hicks, Robert Hausman, Sue Hennings, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Kathy Hughes, Chuck Keyserling, Jody Kline, Pete Kregwit, John Lyons, Valerie Murray, Thomas Nost, Art Paholski, Phil Perrine, Susan Petrocci, Mary Rhim; Helene Rosenheim, Don Schmelter, Barbara Seliger, Robin Shea, Tom Sholtis, Ken Silverstein, Steve Smet, Dave Tatwell, Dennis Twombly, Nancy Wendt, and Chuck Young