



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – February 10, 2004

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, the January minutes were approved with one correction (current balance in the Treasury Report should have been \$7,846.92, not \$3,393.87) and no additions. The agenda was approved with no corrections and one addition.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

No President's Report

Correspondence Report – Don Schmelter noted that there was no correspondence to report on.

Treasurer's Report - Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$8,406.92. Roy noted an outstanding bill for a rental for the last Awards Ceremony dating back to March 2002 and receipt of a \$500 donation towards fireworks.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington reported that their last meeting got iced out. The Chamber is working with GOCA to get Capt. Patty Walker to come out to talk with us about the Police Satellite Station.

Membership Committee Report – John Lyons reported that he would be mailing out letters to our member associations by the end of the week with the request for dues, the names of their GOCA delegates, and donations for Olney Days fireworks. For some associations the forms will be sent to their management companies, and often this is the only address we have for an association. Those concerned about what information their management company is providing, should contact that company.

Land Use Committee Report – John Lyons reported that Susan Petrocci and some others have noted a couple of reports have been put out by P&P concerning Housing Montgomery progress, including issues relating to affordable housing, that have some bearing on our Master Plan discussions. There is a February memo from the Montgomery Housing Partnership to the Planning Board that he recommended everyone read. He also noted another report of interest, "Housing Montgomery: Housing the People that Make Montgomery County Work". Similarly the County Council PHED Committee has issued a memorandum and a report, both issued within the last week, on this topic. There was a Council hearing on this topic last week in which discussions included MPDU and large-lot properties, and other affordable housing initiatives, special needs housing including senior citizen housing. And the varieties of initiatives that are underway to make these things having. These documents give a sense on what the policy makers are thinking about this topic. Nancy Wendt noted that she would send the URL's for the reports to Helene so they can be placed on the GOCA website.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Khalid Afzal noted that in August he had mentioned a National Center for Bicycling and Walking will be holding a Walkable Communities Workshop in Silver Spring on May 5th. The Council of Governments has accepted the Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission's (P&P) recommendation to include the Olney Town Center in the discussions in the workshop. They want to invite a wide cross-section of people to participate, people who are most likely to be interested or invested in making the area more walkable, as well as people who can help identify solutions and/or help bring about recommended changes. Khalid is looking for volunteers, including citizens, business owners, and government representatives. The workshop will be from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. This workshop can help the community develop some ideas for ways to make the Olney Town Center area more pedestrian-friendly.

- Norbeck Meadows will be introducing a resolution under New Business relating to a resolution adopted by Montgomery Co. Civic Federation try to get the 10,000 signatures needed to get a proposal to amend the County Charter to make all the County Council seats districtmatic placed as a ballot question on the November 2nd election ballot. Also, they will be hosting an anti-ICC discussion on February 26th at Cashell Elementary at 7:00 pm. The speaker is the same speaker on the GOCA agenda.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Anti-ICC Alternatives – Steve Smet introduced Brian Henry, a representative of the Audobon Naturalist Society, where he directs the Save Our Communities program. The program is opposing the Inter-County Connector and recommend investing in transit, improving existing roads, and building homes and jobs closer together. He briefly outlined the Audobon Society's position.

The ICC process was restarted in Spring, 2003 when Governor Ehrlich put \$19 million for a study of the ICC. This is different study because under a Presidential Executive Order to complete the study on an accelerated basis. This means completing a study that normally takes 4 years, in two years which means aspects of the study are not done as thoroughly as they should be. Also, they are only considering road construction solutions, which is a concern. The SHA held a number of public workshops to show the public the highway alternatives. Based on comments received, they have focused on certain areas for study over the winter. In June, they will hold another round of public workshops to show the progress of the study. A draft environmental impact statement will be released in the Fall, and in the Summer 2005 a final statement will be released.

The Society opposes the ICC because a Federal study in 1997 showed that the ICC would not result in any significant improvement in congestion on I-95, I-270, or the Capital Beltway. In addition, vehicle miles traveled if the ICC is built will increase. The new information to bring to us is the ballooning and expanding cost of this project. Governor Ehrlich has indicated that land acquisition and construction of this project will be \$1.7 billion. But the true cost of the road is over \$3 billion. The funding scheme for \$1 billion of the \$1.7 billion is something called Garbee Bonds. This is a risky because this amount is guaranteed through future Federal transportation allocations to Maryland. In the first two years of a 30 year loan, Maryland would be paying \$118 million of its Federal transportation dollars on this project. And, in the subsequent 28 years, this bond payment would be \$70 million dollars every year. So, until about 2033, \$70 million would come out of our Federal transportation funding to pay for this project and would, therefore, not be available for other needed road projects within the State and within the County. This analysis was the Dept of Legislative Services who did an in-depth economic analysis of this funding mechanism and did not recommend this approach be used. Many legislators are concerned about this. The third reason oppose the ICC is the extensive environmental impact of the project. It will take 140 acres of parkland, cause huge damage to stream and wetland areas, mature forest, the habitat for over 20 threatened and rare species. It impacts water quality in our three stream valley areas – the Rock Creek, Patuxent, and Northwest Branch watershed areas. This is another concern and cost to be added.

Save Our Communities is about a better transportation future, about ways to address our traffic problems and future growth without building a major road. It can be done through investing in transit, making sure that we improve existing roads, and balancing home and jobs throughout the region so can create livable, walkable communities that reduce commutes and take traffic off the roads. Their goal is to educate the public about these concerns. The ICC precludes these types of solutions because of its high costs. Brian noted a traffic study commissioned by the Montgomery County Council in 2001 that did traffic modeling on 2 road scenarios, one a road-focused scenario, and one on growth and transportation policies using the same kinds of strategies he had just discussed. They found that the transit scenario competed very favorably with the road scenario, cost less, and has less environmental impact on our communities, air pollution and our parks. This is a competitive approach. The differences in travel time was nearly insignificant, vehicular miles traveled were less in some cases, and if we aggressively invest in these policies we can have a better transportation future that doesn't include investing in an ICC. Save Our Communities is working to education people throughout and even outside of the County. They are working create a network of citizens who are calling for a different transportation solution. Within the next week they will be launching a website. They have gotten hundreds of names of people interested in getting information on these alternatives. They have gotten hundreds of critical comments to give to SHA, have gotten letters to the editor printed, and want to do more. They plan to meet with legislators in Annapolis and are planning a Lobby Day on Feb. 16th. They are holding neighborhood letter-writing events to more people knowledgeable about this issue, more widely distributing educational information, sending out email alerts so people are more aware of what is happening, holding alignment walks in the Spring in some areas that would be impacted, and continuing to meet at forums such as this meeting and the Norbeck Meadows meeting. They are asking people who feel strongly about this position to endorse their campaign. He understood that GOCA has taken a firm position in the past opposing the ICC, asked us to do that again and left an endorsement form. He encourages us to send organizational letters to our County and State legislators opposing the ICC and expressing our concerns about the funding proposal. He also suggested designating someone as a contact to help spread the information, to co-sponsor or speak at events, and to co-signing letters to the editor.

Some of the points made in the discussion that followed:

- Other organizations already in the Coalition are primarily environmental groups – the Audobon Naturalist Society, the Sierra Club-particularly the Montgomery Chapter, the Environmental Working Group, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Maryland Native Plant Society, the Maryland Inter-County Connector Coalition, Coalition for Smarter Growth, Solutions Not Sprawl. But is also important for citizens groups to make a strong statement on these issues be their voices are important to this process and can carry a lot of weight in this decision process. This is definitely not a done-deal.
- What they are proposing is a 6-lane, limited access highway with interchanges, not traffic lights. It would be similar to the B&W Parkway, but with 3 lanes in each direction. They are proposing to use tolls as part of the funding source. They are proposing variable-priced tolls at different times of the day as high as \$4.50 in order to get the road congestion-free.
- A concern with having this a toll road is that there is a great potential for backups at toll booths that could significantly impact rush hour traffic and create problems in emergencies.
- A toll plan is not in stone, nor have the mechanism for accomplishing this been determined, but it has been identified as a source of revenue to repay the bonds.
- If two studies have already shown that the road has too great an environmental impact, there is a concern about what will have with this abbreviated study and with who will be doing this study. Brian noted that the Maryland State Highway Administration will be doing the study and that the Bush Administration does have a different view with respect to environmental impacts.
- A concern was noted for the potential for increased truck and vehicular traffic on the County's major north-south roads such as Georgia Ave, if the middle of the County is opened up for more east-west traffic by building the ICC.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Olney Manor Skateboard Park – Cynthia Schneider, a parent of a skateboarder, and member of Friends of the Olney Skateboard Park (FOOS) came to thank GOCA for its support of their effort. She noted that as she was speaking Helene Rosenheim was presenting testimony on behalf of GOCA before the County Council stressing the civic involvement of the kids in this effort and what it has meant for them. She wrote about how they pulled together to get the 200 signatures on petitions, to go to countless meetings, testify over and over up through each stage of our civic system, and how they have stayed involved and engaged. They speak eloquently about they just want a safe place to express themselves through this athletic activity. Learn new tricks, teach younger skateboarders, and get them off the streets and out of our parking lots. The hope is that based on the testimony of the skaters and Helene the Council will approve the funding now rather than in the FY2007 budget year as proposed by the County Executive. This delay would be a great disappointment to the skaters who have been working on this for 3 years. They are hoping to have something in place by next summer. They are working with the local tennis associations that also use the Park. They have been tasked with raising a certain amount of the funding for the park and they have already gotten an assurance from Giant Food that they will support the project and as a result will be to have their name prominently on the facility.

Helene Rosenheim reported later in the meeting that most of the testimony that evening was in opposition to the Montrose Parkway, so the issue of the skateboard park was a bit overshadowed. Park and Planning staff had recommended spending the money in FY 05 & 06, and the County Executive had retained the amount of money, but had moved it later in the 6-year cycle of the budget. They were testifying that the money should be spend and should be spent now. The skateboarders and adults with FOOS were ninth on the list and it appeared that the Council members received the testimony in a positive way. She was much later in the evening and the other 5 people in the group she testified with all spoke against the Parkway, so she was not sure how well her testimony stressing the importance of the role the youth played in getting this issue before them resonated with the Council.

GOCA Annual Awards – Ron Berger thanked everyone for taking the time to read the biographical sketches for this year's GOCA Awards nominees. He noted that the balloting was close, and the recipients of this year's awards are as follows:

Howard J. Garber Citizen of the Year – Joshua Freeman

Contribution to Community – Dennis Bogan, Chuck Kahanov, Nancy Wendt

GOCA Work of the Year – John Lyons

Olney Heritage – Yale Wiesberg

Report of the Olney Coalition – Nancy Wendt noted that the Olney Coalition was formed last Fall. The Olney Master Plan Review asked some questions that needed more probing and data gathering and the Coalition came together to do that. There are several homeowners associations that are members, most of which are also members of GOCA. In addition to their partnership with GOCA, they have partnered with the Upper Rock Creek Coalition as their master plan has been going through the County Council review process, the Shady Grove Alliance which is also tied to the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan, and more recently with the Sandy Spring-Ashton Civic Association on a zoning issue that concerns all of us. Their mission is preserve the semi-rural character of the Olney community and the qualities of life that brought us to Olney – fine schools, good roads, and a healthy environment. They monitor development, land use and zoning activity by attending Planning Board and County Council meetings and hearings, and strive to keep their members and the community aware of things that are happening by providing pros and cons of options based on the data-collection and research they have done so people will be informed as they prepare testimony and letters on these matters.

Nancy identified two types of issues, some that relate to the Olney Master Plan and others are broader issues that go beyond the Olney community. The Olney issues relate (1) to growth - how much is acceptable, where it should be, how it should be managed, and how we deal with the impacts of this growth as it puts more demands on our schools, roads, infrastructure and services we desire; and (2) to process disjoints – the master planning process run by the Park & Planning Commission, Housing Montgomery Initiative focused on affordable housing, and the Dept. of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) disposition process of County properties. These processes are not a connected as they believe they should be. The broader issues relate to zoning – RNC zone created in the Sandy Spring Master Plan, was used in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan and is recommended for use with the major undeveloped properties in the Olney Master Plan. Councilmember Praisner recently asked for a review of what aspects of this zone are working and which are not. Another issue is the Upper Rock Creek watershed which spans both the Upper Rock Creek and Olney Master Plans.

Scott Reiber reported on their activities related to traffic impacts. They did traffic counts on Olney Mill & Rte.108, Cashell/Wickam and Bowie Mill Rds, Bowie Mill & Muncaster Mill Rds, Needwood and Muncaster Mill Rds, and Bowie Mill/Bready and Blue Bell Rds. Fifteen volunteers counted cars for two hours in the am and two hours in the pm. They have shared the data with P&P, but there is some data they need to go back and fill in for certain periods of time and they have been asked by one of the Council members to do counts at some additional intersections. Critical lane values in Olney are 1,400. Their data collected to date in the Needwood/Muncaster Mill/Bowie Mill areas shows 1,700 trips in the am and 1,500 trips in the pm.

Brenda Egeland did an analysis of the impact on schools with full build-out projected in the draft Master Plan using a methodology used by the Upper Rock Creek Coalition. It involves calculating number of units projected for given properties based on zoning and numbers of acres. Then using pupil generation factors used by Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), they can project

the anticipated student generation at each school level. Then based on the location of the housing, and current school boundaries, they can project impact on each of the area schools, recognizing that school boundaries can change. The housing covered by the Olney Master Plan feed into the Sherwood, Magruder, Rockville, and Northeast Consortium and these schools are also affected by changes to the surrounding master plans that also feed into these schools. She did a similar, but less detailed analysis for the Sandy Spring –Ashton and the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan area that jointly yield about 1,000 -1,300 houses, the Shady Grove areas that will generate multi-thousands of homes and which that master plan indicates there will be need for another high school. In speaking to Bruce Crispell about the need for another high school and the Bowie Mill high school site, Bruce indicated while the County might need a new high school, it might not need it in the Olney Planning area. In looking at MCPS' capital improvements budget, their new school construction is focused in the I-270 corridor. The priorities of the operating budget are focusing on "targeted schools". Those are schools with high Free and Reduced Meals populations, large numbers of ESOL students, and high immigrant populations. Olney area schools are getting baseline operating funds, but don't have targeted schools. So we need to make sure as we get new growth, both the capital and operating budgets keep pace with that development in order to maintain the quality of our schools.

They also looked at how Olney stood relative to other planning areas and the County. They looked at Census data and found Olney has a higher percentage of population under age 19. Part of the affordable housing initiative is to provide housing that people that work in Montgomery County can afford to live in the County. Surprisingly we have the second highest population that reported working for the County, 11%, while the County average is 6.5%. The median household income, \$94,000 is higher than the County average. There is a higher percentage of housing in what is described as the unaffordable ranges, \$200-\$250,000 and \$250-\$300,000, but there is also a wide range of housing prices in this area. Relative the County, Olney has slightly more than an average percentage of affordable housing. Barbara Falcigno looked at housing on the ground and projected in the draft Master Plan and found a 23% growth projection. Following the pace of development, in the '80s growth was moderate and infrastructure was able to keep pace. In the '90's, with the TDR program, we got higher densities and the pace increased. Recently we have been in moratorium for building because infrastructure could not support more growth. Now, as discussion proceed at the Planning Board, it appears that there is a lot of pressure to increase densities on the few remaining undeveloped properties. As they open the sewer envelope in the southeast quadrant, you will get cluster development and the master plan build out comes fast in 4-5 years rather than 20 years. And, our infrastructure will fall behind and there is no money to bring them up to where they should be. There is a concern that the infrastructure that is already stretched, may get to breaking point.

While this has been going on, a separate process under the Housing Montgomery Initiative has been looking disposable or other County owned land that could be used for affordable housing. They identified 7 sites and the 32-acre site on Bowie Mill was the largest. That list has been narrowed to 4 sites and they are going through the disposition process. Councilmember Mike Subin had also requested a complete 30-year review of the MPDU program and that report was presented to the Council that day. They anticipate legislation being introduced by the second quarter changing the MPDU law changing the requirements. Some include MPDU's on large lots, lifting height restrictions in central business districts, and eliminating the buyouts. In the current disposal effort by DHCA, the Housing Opportunities Commission has responded that they are interested in the Bowie Mill site for development. At a PHED Committee meeting the day before, Planning Board Chair Derick Berlage noted to the Committee that if they develop the Bowie Mill site for affordable housing, they were not bound by the R-200 zoning which is half-acre lots with houses and townhouses. With the R-200 zone, this site would yield 64-78 units, 47 single-family, 19 market-rate townhouses, and 13 MPDU townhouses. But, if the County develops it, they are not limited to these numbers. The Coalition is trying to connect the process by suggesting that the master plan determine the land use for this property. Barbara described the Bowie Mill property as seen by Park and Planning and as the community sees the property based on assessments by Sierra Club, the Audobon Naturalist Society, and Maryland Native Plants after coming out to walk the property with representatives from the Coalition. The maps they showed reflect the streambeds and wetlands. This property is in the Williamsburg Run of the North Branch of the Rock Creek and is the last undevelopable land in that watershed. At the last Planning Board worksession there was interesting discussion among the Planning Board members about how many affordable housing units Olney needs and where they should go. For example, if more is put on the Golden Bear property in the wedge between Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Rd, can the Bowie Mill site be kept open since it is County-owned property. There is discussion by the Planning Board about looking at Olney as a whole to determine how many units the area can accommodate, and letting the Planning Board decide where they should go versus looking at each property individually and determining the maximum density each would accommodate without considering the issue globally. The Planning Board is trying to work that out and they are meeting with Chairman Berlage and two of the Planning Board members to discuss that.

Pam Neidhart did a survey of the surrounding neighbors of the 32-acre Bowie Mill site to get their thoughts on their concerns and their thoughts on possible uses of the land. It was in December before the holidays and they were pleased to get a 29% response. The main concerns were preserving the open space, preserving environment and water, and minimizing impact on roads and schools. Other lesser concerns included preserving visual character and compatibility, preventing loitering, and preventing light and noise pollution. As for land uses, the main was recreational, mixed use, public facility, and the least, housing. Some recreational uses suggested were hiking paths, biking trails, community outdoor pool, and possibly a library/community center. The Planning Board is still working on dealing with the issues and are genuinely looking at different ways of arranging the density throughout Olney rather than just looking at the each site in isolation. All Khalid could say was that they are not going with the staff draft, but he doesn't know yet where they will end up.

Nancy discussed the Rural Neighborhood Cluster zone that was created for the Sandy Spring – Ashton Master Plan. It was created to address the dominant goal of the community to preserve open space and rural character of the Sandy Spring area. This is a new zone that is still being refined. It is a concern to us because it is the zone being used extensively in both the Upper Rock Creek and the Olney Master Plans. They have been working with the Upper Rock Creek Coalition and the Sandy Spring Civic Association to understand what is happening with the zone and to identify ways the zone could be improved. They have been conducting interviews, 30 to date, 1/3 with people living in the Sandy Spring/Ashton area, 1/3 with people affected by the Upper Rock Creek and Olney Master Plans, and 1/3 with people in the planning profession or on the Council staff. They wrote their findings up and shared them with the County Council on January 16th prior to the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan came before Council for a straw vote on January 20th. At that session, Marilyn Praisner took their desires to heart and said that she would abstain from voting on rezoning the major properties in the Upper Rock Creek area before she has more information on what is and is not working in the RNC zone. She charged the Council staff to look at this issue and put together some recommendations. The data they provided is part of what Marlene Michelson is looking at to complete that assignment. In addition, the night before they did a focus group with the Sandy Spring Civic Association on their experience with the zone. There are other data collection efforts going on and they will share their findings with the Council. So far, it appears that people are generally happy with the fact that the RNC zone does preserve open space. In this zone, 65-85% must remain open space and the housing is placed on the remaining acres. A key issue with the open space land is who owns it or is responsible for it. Is it deemed to the homeowner associations? Is it held by the County, the State, or a land trust? In the Sandy Spring Master Plan area most of open space has conservation easements placed on it that were given to the Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc. The question in front of Marlene is how to make sure that open space set aside in the Upper Rock Creek and Olney Master Plan areas stays open space in perpetuity. One option is these conservation easements, and another is to create a new type of parkland that could never be built on. But there is concern among the community that if it were parkland, that restriction might be lifted if there was sufficient pressure for additional housing. The other issue is which areas should be designated as the open space area. In Sandy Spring, the major sites zoned RNC are Ashton Preserve, Bancroft, Dellabrooke. In all three, there are large houses on small lots clustered near the front edge of the property with some common area and one large open space contiguous area surrounding the clustered houses on the periphery of the property, as is called for in the current definition of the zone. The community felt that this did not end up achieving their goal of preserving the rural character because now when you drive down what they considered the two-lane country roads the vista is quite different now that you can see all of these dense developments so clearly from the road. The question they are looking at is are their different ways to use the open space; still set it aside, but configure it differently. The other major thing about what is working or not working is the fact that the RNC opens the sewer envelope. When the developer has less infrastructure to build such as less roads, driveways and sidewalks, the developments come in more quickly and comes in faster than County infrastructure can be provided. Nancy showed some pictures to illustrate what an RNC cluster development looks like as compared to the traditional RE-1 and RE-2 type of development.

Nancy ended by suggesting some actions they would like to move forward on with GOCA. They include pursuing inviting Elizabeth Davison or Melissa Benak from DHCA or the people who have put together the Montgomery Housing Initiative to come to give us an update on their thoughts and plans for the 32-acres as they go through the disposal process. Another is that they would like to come back next month to give an update on the MPDU policy changes.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Special Presentations

Anti-ICC Alternatives - John Lyons suggested that, after speaking with Brian Henry, that no action is necessary at this meeting, but that, if GOCA remains committed to our long-standing position on the ICC, we should consider signing some sort of endorsement next month of what this coalition is doing. There is a mechanism for doing this and we would be added to a list of groups working with them or supporting their effort. He would also suggest each of our member associations consider supporting this group as well. Ed Weisel offered to continue his work in connection the ICC as a volunteer to this coalition.

Proposed Change to the Current Councilmatic Structure - Arnie Gordon noted that Council currently consists of 9 Council members, 4 of whom are at-large. For those members, their constituencies consist of 900,000, soon to be a million people. This makes their constituency second largest behind the governor and US senators. US Representatives only represent 500,000+ individuals. He felt that the result is that the predominant influence of money on Council elections. These are not elections influenced by mass media, not by person-to-person contacts such as the doorbell ringing that has been traditional in the past. He suggested that the influence of money could be seen in all the things we talked about at this meeting. The previous evening the Montgomery County Civic Federation passed a resolution in which they seek to change the County Charter. It requires that they get 10,000 signatures by some time in June. He further felt that if we want to get a fair break in the County versus the influence of developers, we need to have council members who are more focused on smaller numbers of constituents. So, he moved that:

PROVIDED THAT SAME DOES NOT VIOLATE THE GOCA BY-LAWS, THAT GOCA SUPPORT THE EFFORT TO AMEND THE COUNTY CHARTER TO PROVIDE FOR THE ELECTION OF ALL COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBERS FROM SINGLE-MEMBER DISTRICTS; AND TO URGE GOCA'S CONSTITUENT ASSOCIATIONS AND THEIR MEMBERS TO CIRCULATE AND SIGN PETITIONS INITIATED BY THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION TO PLACE SUCH AMENDMENT ON THE NOVEMBER BALLOT; AND TO SUPPORT THE EFFORT TO OBTAIN A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE COUNTY'S

VOTERS IN SUPPORT OF THIS AMENDMENT. FURTHER, THAT THE GOCA EXECUTIVE BOARD APPOINT A COORDINATOR FOR THIS EFFORT TO WORK WITH ALL ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED.

The motion was seconded by John Lyons. The following points were made during the discussion of the motion:

- Arnie and Dale Tibbets attended the Charter meetings and this idea was discussed, but will not be reported out.
- Arnie also noted that with 9 single seats, there will be a greater opportunity for minority parties to have representation on the Council in proportion to their numbers in the population. He expects that many minority organizations and the Republican party will support this effort.
- Dave Eskenazi did not have a problem with us recommending that our member associations consider supporting this effort, but had some concerns that taking a stand on this issue goes beyond the scope of your role as defined in our by-laws. So, the officers will review them before taking any final action. Arnie noted that this was not a partisan action, but that the outcome would have a direct effect on our community. John Lyons felt it was an issue related to government structure and was not political or partisan.
- Data from Neighbor for a Better Montgomery suggests that the at-large Council members have to raise on average, 4 times what the single-district Council members have to raise. And, for the at-large members, the smallest percentage of that money raised from developers is 58%. Proportionately, individual Council members received similar portions of their money from developers, but the absolute numbers were 4 times higher for the at-large seats.
- Dave E. also noted that he believed the Council had originally been all single-district seats and he would like to know why they changed to the at-large structure. Arnie indicated that he would try to get more information on that for the next meeting or he would bring Dale Tibbets who is more expert on this issue.

Following the discussion, the motion passed.

Special Protection Area in the Upper Rock Creek Watershed Area – Susan Petrocici noted that in the Upper Rock Creek area, the community asked throughout the master plan process that a special protection area be established for the Upper Rock Creek watershed area. This would place an environmental overlay and an imperviousness cap as a result of the water quality issues in that area. One of the goals of that master plan was to protect the Class III streams in that area. The Class III streams are the highest quality that there are. Park and Planning said they did not have the staff to carry out this provision, so they would not recommend it. The community continued to testify before the County Council, one of the first thing the PHED Committee said was that it would be good to have a special protection area there. When told by P&P that while this might be a good idea, they did not have the staff to do that. This did not sit well with several members and when the plan went before the full Council for a straw vote, their first vote was to provide a special protection area (SPA) with an environmental overlay and an 8% imperviousness cap. Some of the effect of the SPA is that developers must do an initial water quality testing before they can develop undeveloped land. Over the first 10 years the development is in existence, water quality is maintained, and if it degrades, the developer, the County, and the State must work together to develop a remediation plan to correct whatever is causing the degradation. In most cases the degradation is due to development and not paying attention to the impacts of that development. The boundaries of the Upper Rock Creek watershed to not end at the boundaries of the Upper Rock Creek and Olney Master Plan area. The only properties that are in the Upper Rock Creek watershed area west of Georgia Ave that are undeveloped are along the North Branch. And there is a concern that you cannot protect the water quality if you are not placing the requirements of a special protection area on all of the streams that fall within that watershed. Therefore, she suggested that GOCA support placing a special protection area with an environmental overlay and an 8% imperviousness cap on the portion of the Upper Rock Creek watershed within the Olney Master Plan area. Then when those 3 developments are developed, the same requirements would be placed on them as well.

John Lyons noted raising a similar concern with P&P staff with respect to the southeast quadrant because it contains the headwaters of the Northwest Branch. He got the same reaction from the staff that this was too much work. When the Council voted for the SPA in the Upper Rock Creek area, he raised it again with staff who suggested it needed to be brought up before the Council directly as in the Upper Rock Creek area. He would like GOCA to consider doing that in the next few months.

Arnie Gordon moved that:

GOCA SEND A LETTER TO CHAIRMAN BERLAGE SUPPORTING THE EXTENSION OF THE UPPER ROCK CREEK WATERSHED SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA WITH THE OLNEY MASTER PLAN AREA. THE SPECIAL PROTECTION AREA SHOULD HAVE AN ENVIRONMENTAL OVERLAY AND AN IMPERVIOUS CAP OF 8% FOR THE UNDEVELOPED OR REDEVELOPABLE PROPERTIES JUST AS IT DOES IN THE UPPER ROCK CREEK MASTER PLAN, THEREFORE ENCOMPASSING THE ENTIRE UPPER ROCK CREEK WATERSHED AREA, REGARDLESS OF MASTER PLAN BOUNDARIES.

The motion was seconded by Barbara Falcigno. The motion passed unanimously.

2004 GOCA Officer Elections – Ron Berger reported that the slate of officers for 2004 presented at the January Executive Board meeting which had one vacant office is not complete and is as follows:

President – Steve Smet
 Executive Vice President – John Lyons
 1st Vice President – Chuck Young
 2nd Vice President – Jackie Benn
 Treasurer – Roy Peck
 Recording Secretary – Helene Rosenheim
 Corresponding Secretary – Martha Cunningham

Since there was only one candidate for each office, Arnie Gordon moved:

THAT THE SLATE OF 2004 GOCA OFFICERS BE ELECTED B Y ACCLAMATION.

The motion was seconded by Chuck Young and passed unanimously.

Ron thanked the officers for their service during the past year and added a special thank you to Don Smelter who was the only officer not returning this year.

Following an announcement that Olney Elementary will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary on May 8th, with a dedication on May 10th which is when the school actually opened, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim
 Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Khalid Afzal, Jackie Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Joe Buffington, Rick Coburn, Martha Cunningham, Brenda Egeland, Sandy Emblen, Dave Eskenazi, Barbara Falcigno, Mikel Ann Flannery, Arnold Gordon, Dawn Green, Brian Henry, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Kathy Hughes, Chuck Keyserling, John Lyons, Pam Neidhart, Alyce Ortuzar, Astrid Pages, Roy Peck, Susan Petrocci, Scott Reiber, Helene Rosenheim, Bill Scanlon, Cynthia Schneider, Don Schmelter, Robin Shea, Steve Smet, Ed Weisel, Nancy Wendt, and Chuck Young