



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – May 11, 2004

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, the April minutes were approved with no corrections or additions. The agenda was approved with no additions, but a change in the order of items.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Update on Expansion of the Olney Police Satellite Facility – Phil Wilk, Olney Chamber President, noted that plans for the Olney Police Satellite Facility expansion have been approved. They are waiting for the contractor, Keller Brothers, to get caught up from winter and rain delays on other projects and for the site to dry out. Keller Brothers has gotten their subcontractors to agree to free or minimal charges for their services. The project will begin the second week of June with a 4 week build-out. Phil introduced John Ferguson and Paula Kahla, both past Chamber presidents, and Capt Walker, the District 4 commander. Capt. Walker thanked the Chamber of Commerce for the incredible job they have done in connection with the satellite facility. She noted that the facility is still staffed 20 hours per month. Once the addition is done, they will staff the satellite facility more hours and will advertise those hours. Currently, 20-30 people stop by the facility to ask questions or report things. Once there are bathroom facilities there, the public will see an increase in the amount of times officers come by to complete work. They will also be going to a new deployment plan late in July or early in August. Olney will still be in the John sector, but it will have a dedicated staff. The same group of police will be working days as work evenings which should provide more accountability. Eventually, they hope to hold their roll-calls at the facility,

Phil explained that this will be a free-standing expansion that will butt up to the existing trailer with the same siding on both. The expansion will give the commanding officers a room of their own. The computers and files the officers use will move into the new area, about an 8' x 8' space; and the front area will be set up for volunteers. John Ferguson noted that now that the expansion is being done, they needed set up a way to collect donations to cover the continuing rental costs for the trailers. The Chamber has set up a relationship with the Montgomery County Foundation to collect the donations. It is a 501(c)3 organization that will administer and invest any donations they received. The Police Satellite Facility donations are kept separate from those of other organizations they are collecting funds for.

Donation checks for the Olney Police Satellite Facility should be made payable to the Olney Police Satellite –CMMF. Donations can be mailed to the Olney Chamber of Commerce at PO Box 550, Olney, MD 20830 or dropped off at Paula's Boutique, 3130 Olney-Sandy Spring Rd, Olney, MD 20832 in the Shoppes of Olney. Questions concerning the donations can be directed to the Chamber at 301 924-3555 or to Paula Kahla at 301 570-9431. Donations of \$250 or more will receive an acknowledgement from the Foundation, and donations under \$250 get their canceled check as a receipt.

Paula apologized for the difficulties they had originally in processing the donations they had received, and thanked the Keller Brothers for all their help with the expansion of the facility. They also thanked the Giant and the Sandy Spring Bank for agreeing to commit to this facility being there, in perpetuity. This includes allowing them to tap into the Giant's water line and the Bank's sewer line. The principal remaining continuing cost is the rent for the trailer, and the Chamber is relying on the community to provide that through their donations.

An Update on the Inter-County Connector Study

Steve Smet introduced Sam Raker, the Special Assistant to the Maryland Secretary of Transportation for Community Outreach for the Intercounty Connector (ICC), who introduced Wesley Mitchell, the ICC Project Manager, Ron Rye, and Dianna Rosborough, other ICC Study Team members. Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Rosborough gave a report on the status of the current ICC study that included: (1) a list of the Federal, State, and County agencies and other organizations that are involved in the study, (2) a brief overview of the history of the ICC project from 1950 to the present including the three Alternatives Public Workshops held in the Fall of 2003 that were used to narrow the number of alternatives currently being studied and the three upcoming public meetings in June 2004 at which the public will be given information developed to date on the options currently being studied; (3) a brief overview of goals of the ICC project and the current approach and processes being followed in conducting the current study; and (4) a list of ways the public can be involved in the study. They noted that the public has several ways to participate in the study that include: (1) visiting the ICC Study website at www.iccstudy.org. (2) calling 1-866-462-0020 during regular business hours; (3) attending public meetings and hearings; (4) reading publications such as the ICC newsletter, ICC fact sheets, and meeting announcements; (5) visiting one of the 25 Information Centers in the ICC study area and surrounding areas; (6) mailing comments to ICC Study Team, Maryland State Highway Administration, 707 Calvert Street, MS C-301, Baltimore, MD 21202; and (7) attending community briefings. In conducting the current study, the ICC Study team is looking at new techniques

and approaches, and going beyond some of the efforts normally taken by SHA in designing and constructing State roads to address environmental, human, and cultural impacts of the ICC such as providing connections as a part of the ICC project where road alignments split communities. The dates and locations are as follows:

- **Gaithersburg:** Tuesday, June 15th, Bohrer Park Activity Center, 506 S. Frederick Ave, 2:00 pm – 8:30 pm
- **Silver Spring:** Saturday, June 19th, James Blake High School, 300 Norwood Road, Silver Spring, MD 9:00 am – 2: 00 pm
- **Laurel:** Thursday, June 24th, American Legion Post 60, 2 Main St, 2:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Mr. Mitchell indicated that they anticipate releasing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to the public in the Fall 2004.

Some of the points made during their presentation include:

- In conducting the study, the State is looking at community mobility and safety. The goal is to improve access between economic growth centers and to provide the infrastructure needed to support local land use in Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties. 80% of the growth is already there that is based on this road.
- Two additional goals of this project are to enhance the State's environmental stewardship of this area and to advance homeland security by improving access and interconnectivity of agencies that would be addressing homeland security issues.
- The choice of the alternatives selected for more in-depth analysis was based on comments received at the November 2003 public meetings. The Corridor 1 option is the earlier master plan alignment east of Rte. 97 and the Corridor 2 alternative is somewhat north of the master plan alignment east of Rte. 97. The two corridors met at Gunpowder Rd near the Prince Georges border.
- This road will be a limited access and multi-modal highway with express bus service. It will have 6 lanes and noise barriers.
- Some of the features of the highway include (1) variable medians to reduce impacts on environmentally sensitive areas or intersected communities, (2) variable storm water treatments, (3) considerably longer bridges when crossing sensitive natural resources to minimize their impact, and (4) a hiker/biker trail plan.
- They are considering making this a toll road to supplement financing and to manage congestion. They will use new technology, the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) such as the Smart Tags that will facilitate the toll collection and reduce delays in traffic typically associated with toll booths.
- They are looking at going above and beyond what SHA normally does when designing and building a road to analyze the real impacts on the environment and on communities, and to minimize and mitigate the impacts of road.
- Though the plan will be evolving, they will present as much detail as possible at the meetings in June and will continue to assess the comments from those meetings and continue their analysis as they prepare to release the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in the Fall 2004. They will continue to work with the agencies involved in developing, reviewing and approving the DEIS all through the process to identify issues rather than waiting till the end so they will have time to identify them. .

The following points were made during the question and answer period following the presentation:

- Even though 80% of the development in the current study area is built, they are not looking at putting the alignment further north such as along the alignment of Rte 32. They did look at a number of alternatives, including Rte. 32, but based on the input from the public meetings and post studies shows that if they go as far north as Rte. 32 they will not be addressing the development pressures closer to DC, especially just north of the Beltway. There are also a number of environmental issues such as with the agricultural preserve and the Brighton Dam area. This road is intended to address existing traffic congestion. There is also a misconception that most of the traffic will go end to end on this highway. Actually the analysis shows that most of the trips they are trying to address do begin and end within the study area and most trips would only go 2-3 exits rather than traveling the length of the roadway.
- In response to questions about why the P.G. County Council still opposes the road, where excess traffic will go if the tolls are intended to limit access to the ICC and why they are holding the public meetings at sites that are only accessible by car, Mr. Mitchell indicated that the Council does have limited concerns that they hope will be addressed by a University of Maryland study that is currently underway, they are using land use expert panels to analyze the input on sprawl and with the hope of better addressing the issue in the areas where the project might contribute to sprawl, and in identifying sites for the public meetings they are looking for sites in central areas at the ends and middle of the study area that were large enough. The site in Laurel is near a MARC station.
- The current footprint of the road is a median of approximately 36' wide with 6 lanes which equals 140' from edge to edge with cut and fill slopes. With variable width medians, the width will average between 120'-130'. It will be designed for 60 mph speeds and will be somewhere between a parkway and an interstate highway. They are looking at designing long bridges over environmentally sensitive stream beds that are more esthetically pleasing, but have to balance that with the desire to minimize the width of the median. The project to realign the Rte. 97/Rte 28 intersection is a separate project. West of Rte. 97 Corridor 1 and 2 are the same, and east of Rte. 97 the corridors split and Corridor 2 goes north towards Burtonsville.
- In response to whether they considered making the road 2 45 mph lanes in each direction and improving Rte. 108 so they would be improving a number of roads versus building one big road, the ICC Team indicated that the '97 study did consider an alternative to upgrade existing roads. When they restarted the study they looked at some local networks and some local improvements are already underway, so they feel they have already done that.

- They are concerned with the impact of the road on air quality, including the impact on air quality from back ups at toll booth which is why they are considering “easy pass” gantry type facilities that use transponders. They can video tape cars with no transponders and bill them later. However, if the DEIS shows to great an impact on air quality they would not received Federal funding. There are a number of environmental groups that they are working with regularly. In areas of parks, if they need a bridge, they are looking at using retaining walls to shorten the area needed around the bridge. They are lowering the road in areas of communities. They are currently looking at putting the ICC under Rte. 97 and Rte. 115. They are also considering purchasing the land around the interchanges so the road doesn’t result in increases in the land use. They are working with the County as they identify areas to minimize sprawl, and buying land to have the Counties making public parks. At Lake Needwood, there is no physical impact, but they are still looking at visual impacts. They did a test with balloons elevated to the anticipated heights to see how visible it might be. There are many issues that challenge them when building an east-west road with intersections with north-south streams. They are working with the Park Service and M-NCPPC to get good information on what the real issues are along these areas. There will be more detailed plans at the June meetings.
- The study includes looking at a no-built alternative that involves looking at the impact of upgrades and improvements such as the Rte. 97/Randolph intersection improvements that will be completed by 2030. I-495 is in the ICC study area.
- The Federal Highway Administration requires that they consider the noise levels generated by the road. They look at the composition of the roadway, and the proximity of land uses. They have tested ambient noise levels and if it reaches 65 decibels, or it increases 10% over existing levels some noise abatement measures are wanted. To measure the cost-effectiveness of sound barriers they divide the cost by the number of houses affected. To be cost effective, the cost should average less than \$50,000 per house. The cost is averaged over the entire project.
- Clair Iseli, from Councilmember Praisner’s office asked about a copy of a letter from the Parks Service they received identifying 17 issues on which they disagreed with SHA such as narrowly looking at stream crossings and how they are addressing these concerns. Mr. Mitchell noted that they will be continuing to work with M-NCPPC and other agencies throughout the process. They will continue to make adjustments to their recommendations in response to comments and input they are receiving. While the Federal agencies did not identify Paint Branch as a crossing they needed to focus on, they will be looking at this crossing. They actually plan to look at every North-south stream crossing in the study area and any parkland left.
- The environmental impact statement will look at storm water management issues such as the need for more chemicals in freezing weather if bridges are longer. They are looking at ways to carry water beyond the streambeds rather than just letting water run-off the bridge to the watershed below.
- MDOT will come back to meet with SEROCA on May 25th to address some specific issues at the split of Corridor 1 and 2.
- Steve Smet suggested that they come back to the area near the proposed alignments to listen to the quiet, noting that the noise from traffic moving at 60 mph is very loud.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President’s Report – Steve Smet reported that Martha Cunningham, our recently elected Corresponding Secretary found that she was not going to be able to put the time into her office as she had hoped, and has resigned her position. Steve noted the primary responsibilities of the positions which involve checking the GOCA Post Office box regularly and distributing mail to the appropriate officers, as needed; assisting with sending out mail, and reporting on significant incoming and outgoing mail at the general GOCA monthly meeting. It also involves attending a GOCA Officers’ meeting each month as well. Officers are also encouraged to participate in other GOCA matters such as representing GOCA at other meetings and hearings, assisting with preparing GOCA positions on issues and presenting them to the appropriate individuals or bodies, such as the County Council and the M-NCPPC Planning Board. He asked anyone interested in taking on this position to contact him, noting that it was not a major time commitment...

Treasurer’s Report - Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$7,367.67 with a balance of \$2,200 being due for fireworks..

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington thanked GOCA for providing the Chamber with the time for their presentation and had no additional report.

Membership Committee Report – John Lyons reported that there were no new memberships received during the previous month and that our current membership is at 18 associations. He asked any representatives from associations that have not paid their dues to encourage their leadership to send in their dues.

Land Use Committee Report – John Lyons reported that:

- Marc Soloman, the owner of the Silo Inn property had come to the last meeting to request GOCA’s support of his proposal. We had indicated that we did not support his proposal for commercial development on that site because GOCA continues to support the Park & Planning (P&P) staff recommendation to rezone that entire property to the R-200 zone in the draft Olney Master Plan revisions now being considered by the Planning Board, as well as the staff recommendation to limit commercial development to the town center area. Since the last GOCA meeting, Mr. Soloman has requested a 6-month deferral of action on his Board of Appeals request for a waiver of the DEP decision that the grandfathered use had expired on the site, while he tries to work with the community. GOCA, which is participating in the Board of Appeals hearing, while not calling any witnesses, agreed to the delay in the hearing. In the meantime, at the most recent P&P Planning Board worksession on the Olney Master Plan, the Planning Board supported the staff recommendation to change the 2-acre commercially-zoned portion of the property R-200,

with very little discussion. We are now waiting to see what happens with the Board of Appeals process and what the Planning Board's final vote will be on May 20th.

OLD BUSINESS

Olney Coalition Report on the Bowie Mill site – Nancy Wendt reported on the Department of Public Works and Transportation's (DPWT) Administrative Hearing on May 5th to determine if administrative control for the Bowie Mill school site, along with 3 other sites, should be turned over to the Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) to be disposed of for affordable housing. The hearing was important because of the County's initiative to increase the stock of affordable housing in the County by first looking at publicly-owned sites, such as school sites the disposed of by the Board of Education. Typically these types of administrative hearings are attended by 304 people, but there were over 100 in attendance for this hearing. There was a well-organized presentation with over 25 people testifying, including representatives from GOCA, the PTA, and Civic Federation.

The following are some of the major points made through the testimony:

- The current ongoing master plan process that is considering the best use of this site is in conflict with this disposal process which could come up with a land use different than what the master plan process might arrive at. The two processes should not be going on simultaneously. There is a precedent for deferring disposal. Several years ago, a school site in Potomac that had similarly been disposed of by MCPS was scheduled to go through this same disposal by DPWT during the time their master plan was being reviewed. The Olney Coalition and GOCA asked that the disposal process be delayed until the end of the master plan process.
- There are currently 3 visions for how the land should be developed. The DHCA has suggested that it be developed as "work force" housing which is new housing stock envisioned to be affordable for individuals such as new teachers, police officers, firefighters and would be priced at 80-128% of the median County income. The Housing Opportunities Commission is the only agency so far to express any interest in using this property. They are developing a concept for a small village with a mixed use including some market rate units, some subsidized units, and a small retail area to support this housing. It would include apartments, with some townhouses on the edges of the property and could yield as much as 1,000 units. The Olney Coalition thinks this kind of density should be in the town center area, not on this site. The P&P staff is recommending that this be developed with R-200 zoning and that it be considered for affordable housing. With the bonus for MPDU development, this approach would yield 78 units. Of the three, the Coalition supports the P&P recommendation.
- The County has a history of under estimating school needs. The last Master Plan said no new schools would be needed during the life of the plan, but in actuality, 2 new schools were built since then and additions were added to other schools.
- The Coalition has suggested three options for the site. First, they believe the site should be given back to MCPS. Second, if the school system continues to insist that they do need it, it could be used to meet unaddressed needs for bikeways and trails in the Parks Dept's PROS plan. Third, the land could be sold by the County to a private developer to be developed under the R-200 zone, and the proceeds from the sale could be used to purchase land in the town center area for development, for example as the government center discussed in the draft master plan.
- The public record from the May 5th hearing will remain open until May 26th, so people were encouraged to write letters, if they are interested. Councilmembers Praisner, Knapp, and Silverman have indicated to the County Executive suggesting that it is inappropriate to take any further action on this site at this time.

Proposed Development of the Wincester School – Mr. Barnsley, a Rock Hill Road resident noted that the Board of Appeals hearing on this site is still set for June 4th. He also noted that the site is not actually on Rock Hill Road, which is a private road, but fronts on Georgia Ave. Steve Smet noted that GOCA continues to oppose this use because the site is too small, and the use would have negative traffic and environmental impacts. Mr. Barnsley also noted that there are deer and turkey vulgars on the site.

Olney Days 2004 – Helene Rosenheim reported that plans are progressing well for the weekend which is May 14th- 16th. Cold Stone Creamery has offered to provide small cups of ice cream for a competition for children as well as the 48 oz containers for the contest for the teenagers and adults. A sign-up sheet for volunteers was circulated, and she reminded people that if they were not able to work themselves, they should try to arrange for others to work sometime over the weekend.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of Special Presentations

Update on Expansion of the Olney Police Satellite Facility – The following points were made during the discussion of the Satellite Facility:

- In addition to the cost of the renovations, the community needs to raise \$1,200 a month for the rent on the trailer.
- This information should be sent to the civic and homeowners associations in the area so it can be included in their newsletters, and a Gazette article might be helpful.

- It is important to let the community know what the real needs are for the facility and why the Chamber is still asking for donations. It is important to make the community aware that if we want to have the police satellite facility here in Olney, that we have to pay for it.

Update on the Inter-County Connector Study – There was no additional discussion of this presentation.

Following this discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Gloria & Jim Barnsley, Jackie and Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Emmett Black, Josh Bokee, Brenda Egeland, Dave Eskenazi, Jay Feinberg, John Ferguson, Chuck Graefe, Joe Hess, John Hooley, Robert Hausman, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Claire Isli (Marilyn Praisner's office), Paula Kahla, John Lyons, Wesley Mitchell, Carol & Bill Macych, Astrid Pages, Art Paholski, Susan Petrocci, Sam Raker, Stuart Rochester, Donna Rosborough, Helene Rosenheim, Ron Rye, Robin Shea, Steve Smet, Larry Solomon, Nancy Wendt, Ed Weisel, and Chuck Young