



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – September 14, 2004

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, the July minutes was approved with one correction (pg 1, Bonlin should have been Donlin). The agenda was approved with 3 changes.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report – Steve Smet reported that

- The GOCA Corresponding Secretary position is still vacant. Noting that it was not a very time consuming job, he asked for a volunteer or the name of someone who might be interested.
- The County Council hearing on the Draft Olney Master Plan will take place on Tuesday, September 21st.
- John Lyons will be testifying at several hearings on a variety of zoning text amendments relating to land use issues – accessory apartments, the Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC) zone, and Moderately-Priced Dwelling Units.

Treasurer's Report - Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$7,232.20.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington reported that the Chamber's 25th Annual Community Night & Taste of Olney will take place on Wednesday, October 6th. He noted as well that this is the 40th Anniversary year for the Chamber, so this should be a big event. He noted as well that they are still working with the contractor on the Olney Police Satellite Facility.

Membership Committee Report – John Lyons reported that

Land Use Committee Report – John Lyons reported that the Draft Olney Master Plan seems to have done what it was suppose to have done. But, there is some language that needs to be tightened up. He, Art Brodsky, and the Olney Coalition will be meeting with Councilmember Mike Knapp to discuss their views on the Draft Plan.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Several members of Boy Scout Troop 89 of the Crossroads District of the Nation's Capitol, reported that they were attending the meeting to earn communications merit badges. They will be doing Christmas tree sales this winter. There will be order forms at Fletcher's Service Center or people can call the scouts. They will also be selling wreaths. Pick-up will be on December 4th. Their scout members will be attending a Religious Retreat the December 25th weekend. They meet at St. Peter's Catholic Church, but not all of their members are students there.
- Jackie Benn noted that the Environ developments; Fair Hill Farm, Champlain, Waterview, and the Towns; sent a letter to the Olney Village Center asking them to lower the lights behind the shopping center. The lights are too bright and are disturbing the Townes residents.
- Dave Eskenazi noted that he had spoken to the State Highway Administration (SHA) about the banners at Jerry's Pizza and Sub Shop at Rtes 97 & 108 which had been removed from the roadside, with one relocated to the side of the building roof. But, he was concerned now with the profusion of small signs they now put out each weekend for their Monday special. They are not attractive and seem excessive. Helene noted that she had spoken with the owner. They are being told by their corporate office to display the signs which are on their own property. As long as they note on the signs when they were put up, they are legal signs.
- Roy Peck noted that he is working to get a better tenant on the site of the Norm's Farm market stand on Georgia Ave just north of Rte. 28. He is taking the current tenant to court to get them to vacate the property.
- Ed Weisel noted that fees at the parking garage at the Glenmont Metro Station has gone up and now costs so much that taking Metro is becoming less worthwhile.
- Jackie Benn also noted that the Welcome to Olney sign looks much better now that the letters have been painted black.

OLD BUSINESS

Update on the Draft Olney Master Plan – Steve Smet noted that John Lyons was unexpectedly unable to attend, so there was no update on the Master Plan.

Proposed Development of the Silo Inn Site – Steve Smet reported that this development proposal is still in process. Finmarc, the development company that owns the site has resubmitted applications for building permits for the site for the 2-acre commercial portion of the site instead of the plan for the full 3 acres. They have also submitted a requested to SHA for a traffic light and a restricted access for Emory Church Road. There has been what appears to be some illegal dumping on the site,

possibly because there is no security fencing around the site. He had complained to Department of Permitting Services some time ago and will follow-up since nothing seems to be done to clean it up. Dave Eskenazi noted that SEROCA will likely object to any restrictions on Emory Church Road.

Winchester School Special Exception Application (Georgia Ave near Rock Hill Ln) – The Park & Planning Commission (P&P) Planning Board has recommended that the application for the Winchester School be denied. The applicant is still interested in the site so they are looking at some adjustments.

RNC Zoning Text Amendment – Steve Smet noted that John Lyons will be testifying before the County Council on the zoning text amendments attempting to fine-tune the Rural Neighborhood Cluster Zone and modify the Moderately-Price Dwelling Unit policies. A key point of the testimony is that all of these pieces of legislation are tied together and can have significant cumulative affects on the density of an area and the County. He will be stressing this by making repeating some key points at each of the individual hearings so, that they will be considered in all the separate discussion. Steve also noted that the hearing on the Master Plan will be on September 21st and written testimony will be excepted until September 28th.

NEW BUSINESS

Zoning Text Amendment for Accessory Apartments – Steve Smet noted that a zoning text amendment (ZTA) for accessory apartments was introduced recently by the County Executive. It would allow accessory apartments up to 12,000 sq. ft. on a site and can be a free-standing building. This would enable additional density without new buildings. The unforeseen consequence of this would be impact on traffic and possibly on other types of infrastructure, such as schools. This would apply County-wide and would supercede master plan recommendations. Claire Iseli noted that the ZTA removes the need for a special exception and replaces that with a set of regulations the Department of Housing and Community Development would enforce. Currently, you can not add on to a structure for use as an accessory apartment and it is not clear what the new ZTA would allow. The existing regulations includes guidance on setbacks, and the number of square footage required for each person that would continue to apply. Steve S. suggested that there needs to be some mechanism for community input that previously was possible through the special exception process. Karen Montgomery sited an example of a neighborhood she once lived in where the use of housing similar to the accessory apartments had been abused and resulted in the neighborhood becoming a slum. Houses had been converted into multiple apartments which dramatically increased density, cars were parked all over the lawns, the properties were not well maintained, etc. until the area became very run-down.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Steve Smet noted that a woman in Norbeck Meadows had been accosted recently while walking through the development and was interested in knowing if anyone had problems within the past few days with prowlers or burglars. Ron noted that the woman had been hit returning from her tool shed and didn't know what happened. She woke up on the ground with a head injury. She first thought she had just passed out, but later realized it was an injury from being struck in the head. Steve noted that his shed had been broken into a short time ago just after some contractors had been working across the street from his house. A generator was stolen and his fence was broken so they could remove it.

- Steve also noted that the next Norbeck Meadows Civic Association meeting will be on October 20. They will be discussing the on-going crime in their area and will have a short session on the ballot question on councilmatic districts.

Following the announcements the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Jackie Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Joe Buffington, Rick Coburn, Brenda Egeland, Dave Eskenazi, Jay Feinberg, David Feron, Dawn Green, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Dylan & Martin Holland, Claire Iseli, Del. Anne Kaiser, Daniel Knowles, Del. Karen Montgomery, Astrid Pages, Meg Pease-Fye, Roy Peck, Helene Rosenheim, Steve Smet, Michael Tyson, and Ed Weisel