



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

## MINUTES – October 12, 2004

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, approval of the September minutes was tabled till November as the minutes were not complete. The agenda was approved with no additions.

### SPECIAL PRESENTATION

**Montgomery County Police Department 4D's Citizens Academy Coming to Olney** – Rob Musser, an investigator with the Gang Task Force of the Montgomery County Police Department reported that District 4 offers the 4D (4<sup>th</sup> District) Citizens Academy in memory of Officer Mattingly, an officer who died in service. Officer Mattingly had a vision for enhancing relations with the community. Through the 4D Academy citizens learn what police do, and things like why they park at certain angles, etc. The participants determine the topics that will be discussed from a list of 100 topics. The 4D Academy lasts for 6 weeks. The program run recently in the Wheaton Central Business District had 25 participants who are active citizens in the community. The program in Olney will take place during January and February. Officer Musser indicated that all attending the meeting would be eligible. The next 4D Academy will take place in Aspen Hill, and then will go back to Wheaton and offer it in Spanish. They will just keep rotating the program through these communities. Officer Musser asked that GOCA help publicize and promote the 4D Academy, noting that there is no charge for the program. They do a background check to be sure participants do not have an extensive criminal record and are not part of a subversive group. Ron Berger noted that he had participated in the program in Wheaton and he felt it is a great program and anyone able to spare the time will find the program very worthwhile.

**An Update on Police Department's District 4 New Deployment Plan** - Lt. Ron Hardy, second in command in District 4, noted that he has been on the Force for 25 years and in Wheaton for the last 10 years as a Sgt. and a Lt., of which he has served 6 years on the permanent midnight shift. There are 90 square miles in the District. There are two permanent daytime sergeants who each work 4 10-hour days with 1 day of overlap. The daytime sergeants are Nancy Hudson and William Holden. The two night shift sergeants have applied for special assignments so will leaving soon and they are still adjusting the rest of the staff. Lt. Hardy is one of 2 lieutenants on the evening shift and he is in charge of the John sector. Lt. Hardy noted that Chief Manger has asked for more staff for the whole County. The sectors are divided based on the level of calls for service and response time. Each has approximately 1/3 of the calls. The John sector is large, but most of the calls are from the Olney and Good Hope areas.

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

- District 4 currently has 115 healthy officers, but their full complement is 125-130 officers. The education officers (EFO) in the high schools report directly to the District Commander. Blake High School is the only school in the district that does not have an EFO currently, but will be getting one shortly. Councilmember Knapp noted that the Council's Public Safety Committee has supported 2 new recruit classes this year. The Committee has also asked the Chief to determine the real number of officers that are needed on the street so they can determine if they need to add more classes.
- It was suggested that the County should pay more of the costs related to the Olney Satellite Station.
- Lt. Hardy noted that they do not have staff dedicated to the satellite station, but staff assigned to the John sector find the satellite station a great tool. Once it is expanded, they will begin to use it more, including for roll calls. They had taken the staff away from there earlier because they had a 30% lose of staff because of the large number of retirements over the last 2 years. They needed to deploy officers more efficiently to provide more coverage throughout the District.
- The Department has run 2 classes of 60 each year for the last 2 years. Of those, they lost approximately half for a variety of reasons, including losing interest in this type of work and accepting employment in other localities.
- The officers are going to packet writing reporting which uses a wireless computer system that they are now testing. Once tested, they will go to electronically transmitting directly into their database and will be able to run checks on tags, etc. through the wireless system.
- There will be 2-3 officers to each J-beat for the 6 pm-1 am shifts, 2-3 officers 8:30 pm - 6 am, and 1 additional officer from 9 pm – 1 am, with a sergeant in the sector exclusively. Officers will be in their cars, constantly surveilling and responding to calls. In the case of priority calls, e.g. burglaries, life-threatening situations, response times may be 7-20 minutes, and in non-emergency situations, response times may be 1-2 hours as officers get free.
- The mother of a young man who was beaten up at McDonald's the previous week noted that it took 25 minutes for the police to respond to calls regarding the incident. She suggested that the police need to be more responsive and for that to happen, the community has to press for more funding for additional police. A situation was also noted in Norbeck Hills where a resident attacked another resident and it took 30 minutes for police to respond.

- Officer Bruce Beardsley, the District 4 Community Relations Officer, introduced himself and noted that communities that are dealing with an ongoing problem such as youth drinking and loitering, should contact him so he will get a group of officers out to try to address the problem. He can be contacted at 240 773-5524 or at [bruce.beardsley@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:bruce.beardsley@montgomerycountymd.gov).
  - The new deployment has not helped response times yet, and, probably won't do as much as expected until they get more officers. But, the new deployment does improve familiarity of officers with the area and problem spots.
  - It was suggested that there may be a way to identify volunteers who could get training that would allow them to have more limited police powers. The officers noted that that they do have more positions to help train people on what to look for and how to respond.
- Councilmember Knapp noted that they had a similar situation during the last budget cycle. The levels of staffing had not gone up for many years, even with 3 classes a year the number of officers was just marginally increasing. They will be taking a look at this issue again which is why they had asked Chief Manger for a realistic sense of the number of officers they need on the street.
- If incidents are not reported to the police, they do not become part of the statistical data the Department maintains, so the data does not reflect the real situation and don't become part of the basis for requesting additional staff. Chief Manger is the first manager in years to prepare a staffing plan to send to the County Council. The more information citizens get to the police, the better they can get at requesting and allocating resources.
  - It was noted to Councilmember Knapp that it is clear that Olney is not the same as it used to be, that there are increasing problems and incidents. As the community went through the master plan review process, they talked about appropriate densities, looked at schools and roads. But there was not a lot of discussion of other public facilities such as police protection. It may be necessary, though, for the Council to consider public safety impacts as they make decisions about densities in planning areas. Mr. Knapp noted that they did have that kind of discussion last year in working on the budget, and found that they had not been focusing on this as much as they needed to in the past, but they are trying to focus on it more now. If they have a realistic idea of the number of officers needed, they can structure recruiting to address the need as quickly as possible. In their first look, they found that they needed 700 additional officers, but they cannot bring in that many new officers in one year.
  - The new deployment plan increases the familiarity of officers with an area and that significantly impacts the community's perception that police are more aware of the issues and can address them more effectively.
  - Problems have increased in Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) developments since the HOC focus has changed from just building subsidized housing for sale to providing Section 8 housing that they manage. Residents in Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) developments who commit violations can be evicted, but it takes time and requires persistent. However, currently parents are not held responsible if their children do something wrong in an HOC development and there may need to be a change in HOC policies to make parents more responsible and accountable. There need to be strategies for increasing community awareness about the options available to them.
  - The Norbeck Hills Homeowners Association hired 2 off-duty police officers to help protect their development. It was suggested that until the County is able to adequately increase staffing levels, the greater Olney community may need to pull together to do the same thing for the larger area.

## OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

**President's Report** – Steve Smet reported that Mark Solomon, owner of the Silo Inn property had gotten the site cleared of all the debris that had been being dumped there. There does not appear to be any new dumping.

**Treasurer's Report** - Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$7,247.20. Helene R. noted that work at the Olney Library has just been completed to replace the brick sidewalks with concrete sidewalks. The County had replaced the sidewalk because the brick made snow removal difficult and a number of people had fallen on the bricks which was getting costly for the County. So, the County's risk assessment staff determined that the brick sidewalk needed to be removed. However, in the process, the benches in front of the Library had to be removed. The benches were nearly 30 years old and needed to be replaced, however, there were no funds in the sidewalk replacement project for that. So, the Friends of the Olney Library are looking for some groups or merchants to donate \$300 each to cover the cost of the bench replacement. The names of the donors will be displayed prominently So, Helene moved that:

**GOCA DONATE \$300 TO THE FRIENDS OF THE OLNEY LIBRARY TO PAY FOR A BENCH THAT WILL HAVE GOCA'S NAME ON THE FRONT TO BE PLACED IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY.**

The motion was seconded by Susan Petrocci. The motion passed with no additional discussion.

**Membership Committee Report** – John Lyons reported that GOCA currently has 21 member associations, which is a few down from last year. He has compiled a list of associations he would like to try to find a good contact for and to develop a strategy for doing that. The following are associations that have been members in the passed, but did not rejoin in response to the last dues letter which we need to follow up on: Briars Acres, Brookeville Knolls, Hallowell, Lake Hallowell, and North Creek.

**Land Use Committee Report** – John Lyons reported that at the Olney Coalition Meeting they discussed having Steve Silverman address the next GOCA meeting on his philosophy on a number of land use issues. John moved that:

**GOCA INVITE COUNCILMEMBERS SILVERMAN, KNAPP, AND PRAISNER TO THE NOVEMBER MEETING TO DISCUSS LAND USE ISSUES IN OLNEY**

The motion was seconded by Barbara Falcigno and passed with no further discussion. The County Council may take a straw vote on the draft Olney Master Plan before their holiday break so now is the time to communicate with them. He suggested that we use an email network to help us understand the issues involved in the hopes that our area civic and homeowners associations communicate to the Council on issues of interest or concern to them.

John summarized the testimony at the hearings on a variety of zoning text amendments (ZTA) and the Olney Master Plan and the reaction to it. On the ZTA on the Rural Neighborhood Cluster zone, there is some hesitation to go with the idea of the "in perpetuity" of open space and the Council may try to approve some uses that may not be desired by the community. With respect to the Master Plan, some developers are still calling for more density. There was some recognition of the mismatch for development and infrastructure. He doesn't expect any staging of the development, but they will look at the plan as a whole. The Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee has held one worksession. They have deferred action on the Bowie Mill site, but have recognized the difference in the road east and west of Cashell. They seem to be more supportive of the Planning Board recommendation versus that of the County Executive on the changes to Heritage Hills Dr, but they are not sure about Queen Elizabeth Drive yet. The Committee seems to like the Planning Board's idea relating to Appomattox. After the hearing, he and Steve Smet met with Council President Steve Silverman who reassured them that the initial master plan proposal made by the Housing Opportunities Commission for the Bowie Mill site will not happen, but he wants to talk more about what could happen there. Mr. Silverman had not seen a lot of opportunities in the town center area for a community center. But he sees an opportunity since Freeman Associates has property outside the town center area that they want to develop more densely. With the combination of the centers there may be some concessions on the other property that may result in the development of the community center.

More than 80 people tried to sign up to testify on the MPDU policies, but only 47 got to speak. Most seemed to say the proposed changes were good. There were some questions about extending them to large lot zones because they are generally away from the support services and facilities that are desirable for the success of MPDU development. Also, attorneys from the Department of Permitting Services approached GOCA about agreeing to a postponement of the zoning change action on the Silo Inn site that the property owner is seeking. The Planning Board hearing on the Washington Christian Academy is tentatively scheduled for the first week in December. SEROCA has no formal decision on its position. They will meet with the representatives from the Academy one more time and will then take a position. The proposal for the Tung development in the Christie Estates seems to be moving forward. It now calls for 13 units that are being squeezed into the existing development as an in-fill project. The County Executive is still concerned about some aspects of the plan. The Greater Washington Board of Trade has set October 31<sup>st</sup> at the deadline for comments on the Inter-County Connector, but the Draft Environmental Impact Statement does not come out until November. Since this seems unreasonable, groups are being encouraged to write to the Board of Trade to ask that they extend the deadline for comments.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Jackie Benn noted that she had copies of information on the three ballot questions that she had gotten at the last Civic Federation meeting.
- The new officers of the Olney Coalition are: President - Barbara Falcigno, Secretary - Andrea Ansury, and Treasurer – John Mathers. John Lyons commented Nancy Wendt, the outgoing Coalition president, for all the work she has done.
- Roy Peck noted that he is still working to terminate Norm's Farm's lease.
- Jay Feinberg clarified that the funding the Chamber currently has collected, including the \$10,000 from the County is for the expansion of the police satellite station. The Chamber still needs to collect money for the ongoing operating costs from the community.
- Helene R. noted that there several budget items being proposed by the Park and Planning Commission that may be of interest involving a number of ideas being considered for public-private partnerships for park facilities. One includes putting a tennis bubble at Olney Manor Park.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**Update on the Draft Olney Master Plan** – Khalid Afzal presented an overview of the first draft of the definition of the new town center zone being developed to implement the concepts for the town center portion of the Plan, noting that his supervisor has not seen it yet. They have moved ahead with developing the definition because of a request from the County Council to have it before they begin their discussion of the draft Olney Master Plan. The first PHED committee worksession on Oct 25<sup>th</sup> will focus on transportation issues. The zoning text amendment will likely not be discussed until mid-November. The Planning Board staff asked that the town center and 32-acre Bowie Mill sites be discussed last.

Under the standard method of development, there is a cap of 8 units per acre, with 2-5 story buildings. Small lots could use this zone. Under the optional method, the developers must do more for the community. Since Carl Freeman now owns both the Olney Village and Olney Town Shopping, this may be a site for a community center. There are some lease considerations with the Olney Town Shopping, so they may not be able to do much for approximately 8 years. The Park & Planning (P&P) staff still needs to talk with the Freeman staff to discuss the possibility in more detail.

The P&P staff tried to write zoning text to support the ideas and goals already in the master plan. Much of it involves design standards. They want to keep the buildings close to the street. Developers can build 3 stories under the standard method, but if

they want to go to 5 stories they will be required to provide site plans. Khalid would prefer to stay away from stating actual footage limitations in a plan of this life span. It may limit creativity in the design of space. Permitting 5 stories was intended to provide the flexibility to encourage mixed use and to add more character. Now almost all of the town center area is flat, linear shopping centers. The standards should prevent large-type stores. The list of uses included in this zone is based on what is currently permitted in the C-2 zone. Adult entertainment is listed because it is currently in the C-2 zone and he did not know if he could eliminate it on his own. The staff still needs to discuss the list in more detail before he eliminates anything. John Lyons suggested that since residential development is a key part of the concept, it should not be difficult to make an argument for excluding the adult entertainment use. Their staff also still needs to apply local area transportation tests. They will be submitting a draft outline of what the zone should be to the PHED Committee the first week in November, not as the actual ZTA.

Steve Smet noted that in testifying to the County Council, GOCA's position was that Cashell Rd be reclassified so that traffic calming methods can be used. Khalid noted that the PHED Committee can ask staff to look at adding calming measures to the road without downgrading the road classification. John Lyons suggested describing the goals of the calming measures and not address the classification of the road. It was noted that the Committee is leaning towards downgrading all of the arterial roads to primary because it might help to eliminate some of the truck traffic on these roads and would force trucks onto the main roads.

Following this discussion the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helene Rosenheim*

Helene Rosenheim  
Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Ofc Bruce Beardsley, Jackie and Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Rick Coburn, Andrea Cunningham, Brenda Egeland, Sandy Emblers, Dave Eskenazi, Barbara Falcigno, Jay Feinberg, Brenda M. Flaim, Robert Hausman, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Christine Hull, Mary Hull, Mike Knapp, John Lyons, Roy Peck, Susan Petrocci, Ingrid Romer, Helene Rosenheim, Steve Smet, Larry Solomon, Mike Sullivan, and Nancy Wendt