



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

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

## MINUTES – February 8, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President Stephen Smet. Following introductions, the January 2005 minutes were approved with no additions or corrections. The agenda was approved with 2 additions.

### OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Steve Smet noted that this would be his last President's Report and that we would be discussing the Draft Olney Master Plan again as we have at many of the past meetings. This plan will not be reviewed again for the next 20-25 years so it is important that the community discuss all the issues to try to reach some consensus.

#### TREASURER'S REPORT

Roy Peck reported that the current bank account balance is \$7,413.66 which includes \$130 in receipts for banners.

#### LAND USE COMMITTEE

John Lyons reported that Elisabeth Deal, Executive Director, Olney Boys & Girls Community Sports Assn. (OBGC), brought information about their concept for developing the 32-acre Bowie Mill site that she will present later when the site is discussed under Old Business. At that time, he planned to introduce a motion for GOCA to support their proposal that would provide both workforce housing for the underserved population that does not qualify for housing programs such as the MPDU program but might otherwise be priced out of the housing market in the County along with some needed recreational facilities..

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Chuck Keyserling expressed his concern about the downgrading of the classification of Cashell making it all primary. His concern is that once downgraded, there will be pressure to put in speed humps. His experience with them on roads like Needwood Rd. causes him to believe the speed humps have many problems associated with them. Mr. Silverman noted that he would look into the policy issue impacting the decision to put the speed humps on Needwood. Often there is a balance that they are trying to reach with the installation of these types of speed calming devices.
- Arnie Gordon noted that Verizon is making a mess of many people's yards as they install optic-fiber cable throughout the area. He asked if anyone was going to reseed all of the damaged lawns. Jackie Benn noted that Verizon will come back in the spring and reseed the lawns. It was also noted that there are approximately 400 contractors working on this installation and at times they get to a site before Ms. Utility has come through or after their markings have washed away in the rain or snow and have cut other utility lines. Mr. Silverman noted that DPS has imposed a number of fines on them already. They are continuing to get complaints and if Verizon does not seem to be responsive, DPS is willing to issue stop-work orders.
- Jackie Benn noted Spartan Road has a lot of problems with speeding traffic, so they are setting up a speed monitoring device to help make people more aware of how fast they are going above the speed limit.
- A Blake High School student won the Teen Jeopardy contest earlier that evening.
- Helene Rosenheim noted that the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department is having a blood drive on February 17<sup>th</sup>.
- Ron Berger noted that Community Concerts has decided to officially dissolve their organization. Interest in the concerts had waned and they had stopped planning the events, and they recently voted to cease operations. They are dividing their remaining funds between Blake, Sherwood, and Magruder High Schools.

#### OLD BUSINESS

**Update on the Olney Master Plan/Conversation with Councilmember Steve Silverman** – Khalid Afzal reported that the proposal for the town Center has been presented to the Planning, Housing & Economic Development (PHED) Committee at a worksession. Density has been an issue. Some want more, some want less. They are going with 15 units per acre and an FAR of 1.0. The current surrounding densities range from 8 – 21 units per acres. The building types vary from apartments to single-family units. Environ and Tamarron will be most directly affected when the Freeman shopping centers are developed. Tamarron has 4-story buildings. The maximum building height proposed in the zone is 5 stories or 70 ft. If there is a 100 ft setback, you can put up a 5-story building. At 80 ft at the edges of the zone, there would be no setback. Khalid showed a variety of illustrations of street walls of different building heights, street widths, sidewalks, parking lanes and green areas instead of large parking lots in front of buildings as in traditional shopping centers. The zone would permit one car deep front-end in parking and encourages a variety of façade designs. Buildings can be setback for a public use like a park. There can be parking garages,

but they need to be carefully worked into the façade design. Buildings may have retail uses on the street level. Facades could be set back for outdoor cafes. The zone allows for 5-story buildings, but not all will be 5 stories. Most will likely be 3 stories.

Khalid presented some illustrations of possible road designs within the town center. Major roads in the plan would have 120' rights-of-way with 4 traffic lanes from façade to façade. From the median, there would be 2 – 12' lanes, a 4' bike lane, 5' grass, 6' sidewalk, 12' green space, building. There can be flexibility in the 25' on each side of the road, but the building cannot go into the 120'. A business district street would have a 70' right-of-way. It would have 2- 12' lanes, an 8' parking lane, 15' on each side for sidewalk and a panel of green. Again, the building would be go in the 70' space. The can be an additional 10-15' of setback for a public use. With a 60' street right-of-way, there would be 32' of lanes and parking, and 14' of sidewalk and grass panel. With a 50' road, there would be 26' paved with 12' of sidewalk and grass panel on each side. Plus there can also be additional setback for public use.

Two assemblages have been presented to Park & Planning. One is along Third Ave west of Georgia Ave where 5 acres have been assembled, but this is not large enough for the optional mixed use. The maximum development would be 7 or 8 residences. A second is on Morningwood, just west of Georgia Ave. It consists of 1.15 acres. With the optional mixed use development the maximum density would be 17.2 units, but the shape of the property would likely only be able to build 16 units. The concept plan developed by the Freeman Company is just that and is not the real plan. They will not be able to do anything in the Village Center for 8-10 years because of some of their leases, so initially the new development will be on the Olney Town Shopping Center side of the property.

Councilmember Steve Silverman, chair of the PHED Committee, expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to talk with the community about the draft master plan. He will be working with the OBG on their proposal for the Bowie Mill site. They are trying to find a space for the Olney Library which he was pleased has Sunday hours now. He is also pleased that Brooke Grove Elementary is getting all-day kindergarten next year. Mr. Silverman outlined some of the decisions that have already been made by the Council regarding the draft plan. They support the thrust of the plan to keep Olney a satellite town. He did not think that any action of the PHED Committee and the Council to date had significantly changed that concept. There will be more housing than in the 1980 Plan. They recognize that the town center is not a regional center, but a local center. The town center will have a true mix of residential and commercial development as they have created elsewhere, but on a smaller scale than Silver Spring, Rockville, or Bethesda. The Council wants to make the civic center a reality; and he sees the Freeman property providing an opportunity to do that. The differences he has with the plan from Park and Planning's (P&P) recommendations are on the margins and about 40-50 residential units in the entire plan.

The PHED Committee did not vote on the density of the Southeast Quadrant. The Bowie Mill site will clearly not be a school. Montgomery County Public Schools gave it up the site 9 years ago. Only 20 acres of the site is buildable so the site is not viable for their use. The issue on the Bowie Mill site is that the Planning Board recommended 78 housing units on the site, which GOCA and the Olney Coalition supported, and the Council wants to add an additional 39 units which would bring the total units to 117 with other resolutions such as for MPDUs and work force housing which is housing for people with combined income levels over \$100,000 such as starting police officers, firefighters, and teachers. The majority of the Council supported the 117 units. With respect to the Silo Inn site, he, and 8 of the 9 Councilmembers recognize that this is a unique set of circumstances. In light of the history of the site and the current construction, there are many reasons for their current position. The site had been commercial in the past, the project as presented is a good project, the local homeowners association supports the development proposal, and it does not do any fundamental harm to the Master Plan. He noted that while there might be a disagreement on whether the Council decision was a good one, he does not think this decision sets a precedent for the commercialization of Georgia Avenue. The convergence of circumstances on this site is unique. Only Councilmember Praisner disagreed with the rest of the Council. He sees great opportunities in the town center and wants to talk more with the community about them. They want to be sure that the density in the town center is not too great and that there is adequate public space which is why they decided on a requirement for 20% public use space. In the areas adjacent to existing residential development the maximum height will be 4 stories so the new buildings do not loom over the existing ones. When they look at other areas like Germantown which has a town center in its plan, the development did not work out exactly as they had envisioned. But, with Josh Freeman's interest, he believes this will be the town center people want.

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

- The PHED Committee will meet during the following week to discuss the zoning text amendment for the mixed-use town center zone and the town center portion of the draft master plan. Then, mid March, the full council will vote on a resolution that incorporates all the straw vote decisions they have made. They hope to be done working on the master plan before they begin working on the budget. Then the plan goes back to P&P for preparation of the sectional map amendment to implement the changes they vote on which will take about 3-4 months. The plan would give the Freeman Company some economic incentives for providing the public space in the town center. A portion of the Freeman development could happen within the next 5 years, and the rest of the town center area will likely take 5-10 years to play out. He expects that the Council will take action if the community is behind the concept.

- MCPS has assured the Council that the demographics resulting from the increases in residential development proposed in the draft plan represents a small increase spread over 3 high school clusters. They believe the existing schools and the 2 undeveloped sites they still hold will adequately accommodate any increase in school populations.

- Accessibility is covered by the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Parking is provided, just not necessarily in front of buildings. Khalid feels the type of development being proposed for the town center provides more accessibility than development with parking lots in front of the buildings.
- The Executive Department, through the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, will determine the disposition of the Bowie Mill site. The idea of swapping the density from the Bowie Mill site to the Southeast Quadrant has been discussed, but no action was taken on that.
- The Planning Board makes ultimate height determinations and the master plan sets parameters for development.
- There is a perception that certain local groups have more influence on decisions in this process than other as in the case of the Silo Inn property vs. the Bowie Mill site. Mr. Silverman reiterated that there were multiple reasons for the decision on the Silo Inn site. Mr. Silverman and Mr. Leventhal have discussed whether they want to have a higher level of MPDUs than normal (20%) in the area. They agree that on County-owned land, they should maximize the affordable housing. This is how they arrived at 117 units on the Bowie Mill site with 50% being MPDU and work force housing. This is just a goal and the County Executive can set a different goal when the site is disposed of.
- A Victoria Springs resident expressed disappointment in the statements made about the Silo Inn site in the last Olney Gazette and expressed their appreciation for the action taken by the Council on this site. She has been waiting for 10 years since the Silo Inn closed for new commercial development.
- Brooke Grove Elementary is already over capacity and there is concern about where children that move into the town center area will go to school. There was also a question whether the Tamarron buildings were 4 stories and a concern that the new development would dwarf the existing development. Mr. Silverman restated that MCPS had indicated that any new capacity could be addressed through the use of the sites on Cashell Road and in Oatlands Farm, and, if needed, through boundary changes.
- Mr. Silverman prefers that the building height limits in the town center area be expressed in feet. The typical height of a story may change over time and the buildings may end up being something other than desired.
- It was suggested that if the ICC is built, the Golden Bear property will effectively come out of the Olney Planning Area, at least visually.
- Khalid noted that there are 800-1,000 residential units left if nothing is added to the expected buildout in the 1980 Master Plan. With the new plan they are adding another 700-800 units including what is happening in the town center area.
- There are no plans for adding capacity to Rtes 97 or 108 and a concern was expressed that the first few developers that come along will use up all the capacity and later developers will not be able to build. Khalid noted that every development will have to go through the Local Area Review. If there isn't capacity, they can devise some traffic mitigation solutions including programs to get people out of their cars. Developers all over the County have to deal with traffic congestions.
- The Dept of Housing and Community Affairs is suppose to come back to the Council with a plan for implementing the concept of the work force housing program by the end of February or mid-March. The Council can refer to work force housing in a master plan as long as they have a general idea of what the program will be, even if the legislation has not been fleshed out yet.
- The changes to the Annual Growth Policy (AGP) have lifted restrictions on development, but we are not seeing any impacts from that yet because developers are still working on plans already in place and in the pipeline. It may change later. At the same time AGP is opened up, Local Area Review standards have been increased and looks more at how local areas are really being affected.
- Mr. Silverman noted that the County has not spend enough on transportation solutions. And, the Council felt that Local Area Review is more strategic than putting a moratorium on large area policy review.

**Update on District 4 Police Deployment/Introduction of new Lieutenant** – Capt. Patty Walker introduced Lieutenant Willie Parker-Loan who was recently assigned to her district and who will be responsible for the John Sector. Capt. Walker also noted that Lt. Ron Hardy had been reassigned to Special Investigations. Lt. Parker-Loan noted that he has been with the Department since 1989. He was a patrol officer in Silver Spring, a Detective-Cpl in Rockville and Silver Spring, a supervisor in Internal Affairs, and then went back to Silver Spring. He was promoted to Lieutenant 4 weeks ago and has 14 years left to serve. He looks forward to learning more about the District 4 area.

Capt Walker also noted that the new deployment structure went into place on August 1<sup>st</sup>. District 4 has the second largest population of the 6 districts and the largest Latino population in the County is the Wheaton Central Business District. The District is 89 sq. miles. The District is divided into sectors based on level of activity and calls for service. The J2 sector is the largest in the District, but that is because of the lower level of criminal activity and calls for service. The District is divided into 6 sectors, each with its own sergeant. Under the previous deployment there was 1 supervisor with 16-18 people assigned to them through 2 sectors. Now each sergeant will have 6-8 people assigned to them. Before, all of the officers rotated through day and evening shifts. Now officers will only be assigned to either day or evening shifts. This will help them become familiar with who is around during different times of the day and what things are likely to happen during their shifts. Now there will be 3 overlapping days so officers are spread out more evenly and they can respond more effectively. The response has been good, so far. They have done some restaffing recently, and they are now a full staffing levels currently called for in the District. She noted that this did not necessarily mean they have enough officer, but at least 95% of current slots are filled.

Mr. Silverman noted that the size of the County's police force should be compared to other suburban areas, not urban areas like New York City. Chief Manger has asked for 250 additional officers over the next 5 years to get the Police Force up to where a suburban district of our size should be. Capt. Walker added that this is the first time she is aware of that the Police have a plan like this. For the first two years after they are hired, the new officers will be in support position while they gain additional

experience. The Computer Crime unit is part of the Special Investigation Unit and while she is not certain what they are doing, she expects they are increasing their efforts with respect to identity-theft crimes. Mr. Silverman noted that gang prevention and computer crimes areas will be getting a part of the 250 positions rather than having them be beat officers. Capt. Walker also noted that there had been 20 burglaries recently in Olney with the burglars either entering through unlocked sliding doors or through open windows. They have not been taking large items. She asked that people call the police when they see people that don't belong in the area. They have some leads and are conducting an investigation. To date, an individual they thought was responsible did not have anything to do with the burglaries. Capt. Walker will return to a later meeting to discuss the new deployment and other issues of concern

**2004 GOCA Awards Balloting** – Ron Berger reported that we had received more ballots this year than usual for the 2004 GOCA Awards. And, there had been 2 ties in balloting that resulted in all the nominees being winners. The results were as follows:

Howard J. Garber Memorial Citizen of the Year Award: Betsy and Russ Sanford  
Marilyn Simonds

Contribution to Community Award: Friends of the Olney Skateboard Park (FOOS)  
Lil Litowsky  
Kulley Bancroft / Halsey Smith  
Fran Ware

Olney Heritage Award: Lisa McKillop  
Tim Sterling

GOCA Worker of the Year: Nancy Hull

Ron reminded everyone that the awards will be presented at Longwood Recreation Center on Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm. He encouraged all to attend and to bring friends and neighbors.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Olney Boys & Girls Community Sports Association's (OBGC) Development Proposal for the Bowie Mill Site** – Elisabeth Deal presented a very preliminary plan OBGC has put together as a possible solution for the Bowie Mill site in question in the Olney Master Plan review. They want to work with the community and build on the success of Freeman Fields. They have two design variations. One has residential units abutting the Daly Manor homes, a gymnasium in the middle of the site, and a swimming pool on the opposite edge of the site. The other puts the gymnasium between the stream valley and the PEPCO lines and the pool would be closer to the houses. The lighting would be designed so it would not impact the neighbors. The gymnasium would appear more like a barnlike structure, not made from cinder block. All of the housing they are proposing would be work force housing. OBGC turns away over 100 children a year for basketball. Others have restricted amounts of time on their courts. John Lyons moved that:

**(1) GOCA SUPPORTS THE OBGC CONCEPT TO DEVELOP THE 32-ACRE, FORMER MCPS SITE ON BOWIE MILL ROAD THAT WOULD INCLUDE: (i) APPROXIMATELY 60 WORKFORCE HOUSING UNITS (TARGETING THOSE WITH HOUSEHOLD INCOMES BETWEEN 65% and 120% OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S MEDIUM INCOME); (ii) A DOUBLE GYMNASIUM; AND POSSIBLY (iii) A COMPETITION-SIZE POOL. THE OBGC CONCEPT WOULD ADDRESS IMPORTANT PUBLIC NEEDS BY PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR TEACHERS, POLICE OFFICERS, FIREFIGHTERS, NURSES, AND OTHERS TO BUY HOMES IN THE COUNTY, AND BY PROVIDING MUCH NEEDED RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR THE OLNEY COMMUNITY.**

**(2) GOCA'S OFFICERS ARE AUTHORIZED TO TAKE ALL APPROPRIATE STEPS TO PUBLICIZE GOCA'S SUPPORT OF THE OBGC CONCEPT FOR THE 32-ACRE SITE AMONG DECISION MAKERS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES.**

**(3) GOCA'S OFFICERS ARE AUTHORIZED TO WORK WITH OBGC, THE OLNEY COALITION, AND THE ADJACENT NEIGHBORHOODS TO ENSURE THAT ALL COMMUNITY CONCERNS ARE ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED AS THE OBGC CONCEPT FOR THE 32-ACRE SITE PROGRESSES FROM THE CONCEPT STAGE THROUGH THE REGULATORY APPROVAL PROCESS TO IMPLEMENTATION.**

The motion was seconded by Arnie Gordon. The following points were made during a brief discussion of the motion:

- It is difficult to take a position since many of the details are not know and it is hard to say what other plans might surface through the disposal process.
- The Council will be taking action on the Master Plan soon, so time is short.
- A high school would generate more traffic than a gymnasium would.
- This would only be supporting a concept and agreeing to work with OBGC, a group that is a part of the Olney community and will have the community's interest at heart.

- The proposal balances the need for affordable housing and for recreational facilities.

Following the discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

**Cross-County Hiker/Biker Trail** – Jon Morrison, a resident of The Preserve at Small's Nursery, and a bike rider, requested support from GOCA for a trail to go beside the Inter-County Connector (ICC) if it is built and in its right-of-way if the ICC is not built. The trail would accommodate both bike riders and walkers. The trail is proposed to be a combination of natural and paved connections between Rockville, Silver Spring, Olney Manor Park, and other areas. The Master Plan of Bikeways was just completed and was approved by the County Council with the whole ICC biker/hiker trail. But, the State Highway Administration is now saying it will only grade 7 of the 18 miles of trail. Other portions will be detoured off the ICC and, in some cases onto unsafe roads. SHA says there is no funding for grading this. Park trails are some of the most heavily used park facilities.

Joe Fritsch, the Chair of the Mid-County Recreation Advisory Board, noted that in Olney, the trail is diverted onto Emory Lane to Georgia Avenue, crosses Georgia and goes down the sidewalk which is right next to the roadway.

Chuck Young suggested that GOCA support the full trail. Some concerns were raised about supporting the trail when GOCA has so strongly opposed the construction of the ICC. Arnie Gordon expressed reluctance to take a position without going back to his association since they are immediately adjacent to the ICC right-of-way. Ed Weisel thought it might be premature to support this now and may dilute GOCA's position on the ICC. Steve Smet noted that trail connectivity was a goal of the master plan. Jon thought it was critical to comment now because if the trail is not included in the current Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the ICC, the State will not go back later to include it because they would need to redo the DEIS. Mr. Silverman noted that the deadline for comments to SHA is February 25<sup>th</sup>. Chuck Young did not agree that supporting the trail would necessarily dilute opposition to the ICC. It was suggested that any roads built in Olney should support pedestrian and cyclist. Therefore, Chuck moved that:

**GOCA SUPPORTS SAFE AND UNINTERRUPTED HIKER-BIKER TRAILS WITHIN THE RIGHT OF WAY OF ANY NEW MAJOR HIGHWAYS BUILT IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PROVIDING THEY UTILIZE BEST PRACTICE ENVIRONMENTAL MITIGATION EFFORTS.**

The motion was seconded by Barbara Falcigno and passed unanimously.

### **ELECTION OF 2005 GOCA OFFICERS**

Ron Berger presented the slate of GOCA Officers for 2005

President: John Lyons  
 Executive Vice President: Art Brodsky  
 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Susan Petrocci  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Jackie Benn  
 Recording Secretary: Danny Benn  
 Corresponding Secretary: Jay Feinberg  
 Treasurer: Roy Peck

Ron moved that since there was only one candidate for each position that **THE SLATE OF 2005 GOCA OFFICERS BE VOTED IN BY ACCLAMATION**. Arnie Gordon seconded the motion which passed unanimously. Ron congratulated the incoming officers and thanked the outgoing officers for their service. Dave Eskenazi thanked Helene Rosenheim for the many years she has prepared the minutes.

Following the election, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

*Helene Rosenheim*

Helene Rosenheim  
 Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Khalid Afzal, Theresa Barczy, Jackie and Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Sunita Bhatra, the Barry Bogage Family, Art Brodsky, Rick Coburn, Paula Cooley, Andrea Cunningham, Sharon Kay Dooley, Brenda Egeland, Dave Eskenazi, Barbara Falcigno, Jay Feinberg, Joe Fritsch, Arnold Gordon, Dawn Green, Robert Hausman, Marilyn & Joe Hess, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Clair Iseli (Marilyn Praisner's staff), John Kerekes, Dean Kimmel, John Lyons, Bill Michie, Jon Morrison, Lt. Willie Parker-Loan, Astrid Pages, Roy Peck, Susan Petrocci, Helene Rosenheim, Don Schmelter, Robin Shea, Sandy Shulman, Bob Sigillito, Councilmember Steve Silverman, Steve Smet, Capt. Patty Walker, Edward Weisel, and Chuck Young