

MINUTES – February 21, 2006

The meeting was called to order by President John Lyons, who noted that the meeting had been postponed from February 14, 2006. The January 2006 minutes were approved with no corrections or additions. The agenda was approved with no additions or corrections.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ron Berger reminded those present that GOCA Awards ballots needed to be received by him by the end of the meeting to be counted.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report – Roy Peck reported that he had received \$80 in fees for banner at the corner of Rtes 97/108 and there have been no payments since the last report. The current balance is \$5,211.84.

Correspondence Report – Jay Feinberg was not present and Ron Berger noted that we had received a preliminary site plan for a church on the southwest corner of Norbeck and Layhill Roads.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – No report.

Civic Federation Report– Jackie Benn reported that Dr. Glenn Orlin, Montgomery County Office of Budget and Management, spoke at their last meeting about the County's FY2007-2012 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that is being sent to the County Council and she distributed some handouts with more detailed information about the County Executive's CIP.

Membership Committee – Art Brodsky reported that he is beginning the 2006 GOCA membership drive. He will be emailing or mailing Membership forms to each of the existing 31 members, but he also had forms at the meeting for delegates present that evening to pick up. He will also be trying to get additional developments to join GOCA this year.

President's /Land Use Report – John noted that we are following a number of proposed developments. There is proposed development on Georgia Ave on the site of the Marian Fathers Assisted Living Retirement facility. A substantial development is being proposed on the unused portion of that land. The developer has been talking with the abutting Oak Grove Homeowners Association regarding the possibility of addressing their storm water management requirements by tying into Oak Grove's storm water management facility. Park & Planning (P&P) staff is still looking at how to deal with that. Jon Morrison, an Oak Grove resident, noted that there are some problems with their storm water management ponds that this developer might be willing to address at no cost to the Oak Grove HOA, but the HOA has not taken a position on the proposal yet. John noted that GOCA generally has a more global perspective and looks at issues like traffic impacts and unusual situations that might become a precedent for future development, such as an arrangement like this that might allow a developer to get extra density on a site that they might not otherwise be able to achieve if they have to provide the storm water management on their own site. John also asked that the Oak Grove HOA keep GOCA informed about this situation as it develops.

Of the proposed development plans in the southeast quadrant: (1) The plan for the Pollinger property, where the Trotter's Glen Golf Course is currently located, is under a cloud of litigation and is not moving very quickly for the moment. (2) The plan for the Hyde property near Good Counsel High School is moving faster, but there is some question about the density on that site. SEROCA is actively working with P&P staff, which has expressed a lot of concerns about number of units, especially on the side using public sewer and water. It appears that they may need to use grinder pumps to access the sewer and, generally, WSSC does not like grinder pumps in residential settings, but rather to have the sewer feed by gravity. The decision on whether they can use grinder pumps will significantly impact the density they will be able to achieve. (3) Northwest Investment property that exits on Old Baltimore Rd. and the Casey property across from Farquhar Middle School are moving forward, but not as quickly as the Hyde property. They are all under the RNC zone and the density is based on 1 unit per 3 acres. The zone

is intended to preserve open space and requires that at least 65% of the land be left open and allows the homes to be clustered on relatively small lots to help achieve that.

GOCA testified at 2 hearings since the last meeting. John testified before the County Council on multi-use sewer systems in the Agricultural Reserve and closing a loophole. Councilmember Knapp noted that the Council adopted legislation that would limit the size of the sewer system for private institutional facilities (PIF) in the Agricultural Reserve to the aggregate size of the sewer systems for the residential development the acreage would yield at the rate of 1 unit per 25 acres, up to a limit of 5,000 gallons. Mr. Knapp also briefly discussed 2 other proposals relating to the Agricultural Reserve that the Council is looking at. One allows farmers to sell development rights for land they cannot develop residentially under the current Rural Transfer Density (RTD) zone at market value and in exchange placing an agricultural easement on the land and that land could be sold to other farmers. This would allow them to receive essentially the same return they would have gotten if they had sold the land to a developer.

The Council is also looking at the question of whether you can resell your property to a PIF for development if you have already sold off the residential development rights, and at clarifying language relating to the definition of the zone. Another proposal is placing a moratorium on the use of sand mounds in lieu of septic fields. There are some questions about the environmental impact of this newer technology and the intent is to limit their use until the questions can be resolved about their true effectiveness. The third relates to the "tot-lot" law that allows farmers to build homes for their children in addition to the residential development the RTD zone would yield on their acreage. There are some ambiguities in the law and people have developed tot-lots supposedly for their children, but have immediately sold to them to people who are not their children. The proposal being considered is intended to clarify the intent of the provisions of this law.

Art Brodsky testified at a hearing on Feb 19th before the Parks & Planning Commission's Planning Board on ways to improve the planning processes. Much of the testimony was complaints about what the Planning Board had done to or for people. GOCA's testimony was along the lines of the items that had been discussed at previous GOCA meetings relating largely to procedural matters. Barbara Falcigno had also testified for the Olney Coalition.

The deadline for submitting comments on the ICC Draft Environmental Impact Statement was extended to the end of that week. Some organizations were trying to get it extended beyond that, but John did not think they would be successful. So he planned to submit GOCA's comments by the end of the week, and asked anyone who still wanted to submit comments to him for inclusion in what he was writing needed to do so within the next day or two.

Dave Eskenazi reported that the developer of the Silo Inn site had submitted a traffic study that they felt met the warrants for a traffic signal at Georgia Ave. and Emory Church Rd. The SHA staff had indicated to him that they did not feel a full traffic light was warranted, but were considering a flashing traffic light. P&P was not aware that the application for the traffic light had been submitted. Dave pointed out to SHA that there had not been any real problems with traffic movements going from the site heading north on Georgia Ave. during the years the Silo Inn and Mr. T's were in operation. He asked SHA to keep GOCA informed about their decision making process.

OLD BUSINESS

Candidates Debates – Art Brodsky reported that the Candidates Debates Planning Committee had a good meeting a few weeks ago. They are 2/3rd of the way to getting the moderators they need for the 3 debates that are scheduled. They want to have 2 moderators at each debate, one from GOCA and one from the Chamber. Susan Petrocci, Ron Berger, and John Lyons will be the GOCA moderators and to date John Ferguson is one of the 3 Chamber moderators. Joe Buffington is working on lining up 2 additional moderators. They are working on the details of the format. It looks like the format will be to begin with Q & A's from the moderators and audience, reserving 30 minutes at the end for the candidates to ask each other questions.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee – John Lyons reported the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee is taking shape. Khalid Afzal, the P&P team leader for the Georgia Avenue Team has assembled 10-12 people. GOCA is one member and for at least the first year John will be the representative for GOCA. He, Barbara Falcigno, and Khalid had met with Marilyn Praisner and Mike Knapp in December to ask them to write to the Planning Board to explain in more detail what they saw as the mandate for the Advisory Committee, which they have done. John added that they all also recognized that this Committee needs to be functional, not dysfunctional; be thoughtful; be deliberate; be far-sighted; be balanced in its approach, and come up with workable concepts. The first meeting will likely be March 7th. He and the representative for the Olney Coalition

will give updates as the committee progresses. John asked that anyone who had thoughts on conceptual ideas, such as architectural style, that the Committee should think about let him know.

2005 GOCA Awards Balloting – Ron Berger noted that on March 5th at the Longwood Recreation Center GOCA will hold its annual awards ceremony, which is an important event for GOCA. It is an opportunity to help build Olney's sense of community and to recognize people who have made noteworthy contributions to the greater Olney community. We generally get a good turnout of elected officials, and this year the list includes Lt. Gov. Steele. Ron reminded everyone that this is not only an opportunity to show our appreciation to our award winners, but the reception preceding the actual awards presentations provides an opportunity to speak to our elected officials about any topic of interest to you. Before announcing the winners for this year, he noted that we had received more ballots this year than in a number of years and he thanked all those who had taken the time to consider the nominees and submit their ballots. The winners were for the:

Howard J. Garber Memorial Citizen of the Year Award: Barbara Falcigno
Contribution to Community Awards: John Kramer & Anthony Watkins, Kelsey Rood, and Terri Hogan
Olney Heritage Award: Bob Gill
GOCA Worker of the Year: Art Brodsky

Olney Days 2006 – Danny Benn reported that plans are underway for this year's festival, which will take place on May 19th – 21st. The next planning meeting will be on March 23rd at the home of Roni Septoff.

NEW BUSINESS

RNC Zoning Text Amendments – Barbara Falcigno reported on 4 zoning text amendments (ZTA) before the County Council that are attempting to improve the Rural Neighborhood Cluster (RNC) Zone, based on the experience with the implementation of the zone to date, primarily in the Sandy Spring area, and to meet needs in developing the Damascus Master Plan. Three of them relate to adding a new use, light industrial, as a permitted use in the zone. They were introduced by Park and Planning.

The fourth relates to who owns the 65% open space in the RNC zone. The proposed change is intended to ensure that the portion of the land in an RNC development that is to be conserved is left undeveloped in perpetuity. The zone contains language that says that the undeveloped land should have an easement placed on it or be dedicated as park land. In response to concerns that land dedicated as park land is not truly protected, because the Park and Planning Commission (P&P) has the ability to decide at some point in the future to put some type of development on the land, Councilmember Marilyn Praisner has introduced a ZTA to close that loophole by stating that everything has to be recorded in perpetuity. P&P is recommending against the ZTA because they do not feel it is necessary and that people should trust that they would not develop the land. John Lyons noted that the use of the RNC is increasing dramatically throughout the whole upper portion of the County, well beyond its initial use in Sandy Spring, Potomac, and Olney. Therefore, it is very important that this loophole be addressed.

2006 GOCA Officers Election

Ron Berger noted the current GOCA officers have completed a year in office and he commended them for the excellent leadership they have provided over the past year. The nominees for the 2006 GOCA officers include:

President – John Lyons
Executive Vice President – Art Brodsky
First Vice President – Barbara Falcigno
Second Vice President – Jay Feinberg
Treasurer – Roy Peck
Corresponding Secretary – Jackie Benn
Recording Secretary – Danny Benn

Ron moved that:

SINCE THERE IS ONLY ONE CANDIDATE FOR EACH OFFICE, THAT THE SLATE BE ELECTED BY ACCLAMATION.

Ed Weisel seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

John particularly thanked Susan Petrocci for her service, as she will not be continuing as First Vice President. She had not really wanted to serve, but did anyway.

Following the election and a few announcements including noting the deadline for nominations for the Chamber's Athena Awards and the other events listed at the bottom of the agenda, plus an anticipated groundbreaking by SHA for the ICC in June 2006, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danny Benn

Danny Benn
Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Jackie & Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Rick Coburn, Steve Cohen, Brenda Egeland, Dave Eskenazi, Veronica M. Everett, Barbara Falcigno, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Susan Hayner, Clair Iseli, Lee Kidd, Mike Knapp, John Lyons, Jon Morrison, Astrid Pages, Roy Peck, Susan Petrocci, Robin Shea, Julie Small, Jim Smith, and Ed Weisel.