

MINUTES – June 13, 2006

The meeting was called to order by President John Lyons. The May 2006 minutes were approved with no corrections or additions. The agenda was approved as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Danny Benn noted that the Relay for Life raised \$267,000 which made the Olney event the Number One money raiser in the County.
- Jackie Benn noted that there will be a hearing before the Park and Planning Commission's Planning Board on the Inter-County Connector on July 13th.
- Helene Rosenheim presented several Olney Days 2006 Parade trophies to several trophy recipients who had not picked them up after the end of the parade.
- John congratulated Hank Leiberman on another great Strawberry Festival and thanked him for attending the GOCA meeting again.
- Arnie Gordon announced that Norbeck Meadows CA will be hosting a District 19 State Legislature Night when 13 candidates will be attending on June 14th at 7:00 pm till they are finished.
- Del. Anne Kaiser, District 14, brought greetings from the others in the District 14 delegation. She noted that there would be a special session of the Legislature the next day on electricity rates regulations. It could provide rate relief for BG&E customers and the removal of the members of the Public Service Commission. The Commission would be restructured so it will be more consumer-friendly. They will be trying to build in some corrections to limit rate increases. They will fix problems with the PEPCO increases later because they are much less severe. She noted that this dramatic increase was a fix for the fact that the BG&E rates had been frozen for 7 years. Reregulation is not likely. She did expect that Governor Ehrlich would sign whatever legislation they pass.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Hillcrest Avenue Development Proposals - John Lyons noted that the first development proposal for the town center area had been submitted to the Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (P&P) since the approval of the new Olney Master Plan and the formation of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee. The developers, Paula and Danny Sayag are proposing an 8,000 sq. ft., 1-story commercial center. Paula explained that this proposal was smaller than their initial intention because of the requirements of the zone for a 10 ft. setback from the street with a wide sidewalk and the parking in the rear. There will be 47 parking spaces. To facilitate access to the building, they split the structure into 2 buildings with a walkway to the front of the building from the rear parking.

The Sayags will use 3,500 sq. ft. for a beauty salon they will operate and the remaining 4,500 sq. ft. will be leased to 1-3 tenants depending on their space needs. The building has a mezzanine so is a little taller and the front and rear of the building will be equally attractive. The entrances to the buildings will be on the front of the building and they are trying to get 3 on-street parking spaces. Handicapped parking will be on the side of the building closest to the front entrance. Khalid Afzal noted that the Dept. of Permitting Services (DPS) has a problem with the on-street parking, so that issue has not been resolved yet. The façade design will be compatible with surrounding development. They understand that their lighting needs to balance the need for providing a feeling of safety and the need to ensure that lighting does not bleed over. They will talk to their architect about the lighting. The building will have a foundation that will support a second floor. Paula noted that the owner of the house on the adjacent property on the corner of Hillcrest Dr and Georgia Ave are not interested in selling their property currently. They hope to start construction next winter. They have been delayed by storm water management issues with the DPS in the stream valley buffer. They do not have a date yet for a hearing before the Planning Board.

Aunt Hattie's Place Development Proposals in Sandy Spring - John Lyons introduced Dr. Hattie Washington and her attorney Joe Lapan with Linowes & Blocher to discuss the group home she is planning to build in Sandy Spring to house foster children. Dr. Washington noted that this would be the

3rd home she would have. She has one in Baltimore that houses 12 boys and one in Baltimore County that houses 6 boys. She explained how she began setting up these foster homes. In 1993, when she was Asst. Superintendent of Schools in Baltimore she began taking homeless children to her own home and she had to become certified as a foster parent. She quickly realized that there were more children than she could accommodate in her home, so in 1997 she opened her first group home in Baltimore.

The home in Sandy Spring that she wants to use for this 3rd home was left to her by her uncle, Robert Hill, the former Negro League professional baseball player that Ballfield 2 at Olney Manor Park is named for. She is currently using the house as her private residence and she will continue to live there after the building is expanded for use as a group foster home. The building currently consists of her house, a breezeway, an entertainment area, a 5-car garage and an apartment. All except her house will be demolished and a structure will be added behind the existing house for 12 boys plus 2 apartments for boys to return for visits while they are in college.

In both the R-200 underlying zoning and the Sandy Spring/Ashton Overlay Zone, Dr. Washington needs a special exception to operate a group home for the number of boys she wants to house. She could house 8 boys without a special exception, but the special exception would allow her to take in 16 boys. However, she only plans to house 14 consisting of space for 12 on a full-time basis and space for 2 to come back while at college. She was scheduled to go before the Planning Board in July, but that has been postponed to Sept 21st with the Board of Appeals hearing set for October 9th. Then the proposal has to go through the preliminary site plan process. Under the proposal, the driveway to the garage will go to a parking lot for staff and visitors, with additional parking in the circular driveway in front of her house. The zone requires 2 spaces per staff members and 2 per resident, but allows for less depending on the needs of the residents and none of their residents will have cars. So instead of providing 13 spaces called for under the special exception formula, they are only planning to provide 9 spaces, plus the driveway that can be used for any overflow parking that might be needed when the shifts are changing over. She plans to add a swimming pool and a sports court to the side and rear of the house. There will be a full gym in the basement with exercise equipment and a music room. The property backs up to the Olney Veterinary Clinic and the forested area separating them will remain.

The boys that come into her homes are often on medication for ADHD. She uses a behavior management program and is usually able to reduce or even eliminate the need for medication. When they do that, they need to have a lot of activities for the boys to participate in which they do by providing a wide range of sports and musical training. None of the boys that come to her facilities are adjudicated. They typically come into her program when they are 9 years old and stay until they are 18. The design of the facility conforms to the requirements of both the R-200 and the overlay zone, but she needed to get a special exception for the use and the number of boys she wants to house.

The Bancroft HOA does have some concerns about the use, but Dr. Washington felt it might be based on some misconceptions. She has been trying to set up a meeting with them to try to answer some questions, but they have not been able to put her on their agenda. The other two facilities have a full staff and a program director to manage the homes. While she will be living at this facility, she will continue with her college teaching position. So, she will have a similar staff at this facility with 24-hour coverage. They have raised \$500,000 of the construction costs and hope to raise the remainder through grants from the State and matching grants from the County.

The boys are referred by Health and Human Services and she will give priority to children from Montgomery County as much as possible. She has researched her liability issues and plans to fence the property. The boys will either attend local public schools or private schools if that best serves their needs.

Dr. Washington asked for GOCA's support of her proposal.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report – Roy Peck reported a current balance is \$2,550.70. Olney Days income from Joe's Ride and payment for Olney Days trophies are still outstanding.

Correspondence Report – Jackie Benn reported that there will be a P&P hearing on June 22nd on the development proposal for the Hyde property adjacent to the Good Counsel site.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington reported that National Night Out will take place on August 1st. The installation of their 2006-2007 officers and the presentation of their 2005 awards had taken place on June 1st. Scott Graeves was given the Business Person of the Year Award and scholarships were given to students from Blake, Magruder, and Sherwood High School.

Civic Federation Report– Arnie Gordon reported that he had been elected First Vice President. They have been looking into a question of a breach of forest conservation in the Sandy Spring/Ashton in relation to 25,000 sq. ft of forest that may have been destroyed. So far the County has not responded.

Membership Committee – Art Brodsky reported that to date, we have received dues payments from 18-19 associations. He will be contacting those associations that have not renewed from last year.

As an aside, Art also noted that he had applied for the position of Chair of the Parks & Planning Commission. He added that while he did not have any real expectation of being selected, he did not want the selection process to go through without there being a dissenting view.

President's Report – John Lyons noted that he had emailed Jeff Kirby regarding the issue of on-street parking and the glare of the lighting at the Willow Grove development on Georgia Avenue just north of Hillcrest and received a thoughtful reply. Jeff agreed to meet with someone from GOCA to discuss the lighting and felt that, over time, the parking situation would not be a problem. It was noted that there is no parking on Georgia Avenue between Wheaton and Howard County and we may need to contact SHA about this. John initially forgot to ask about the left turns onto southbound Georgia Ave and is waiting for Jeff's reply.

Khalid Afzal, P&P, had let him know that the State Highway Administration (SHA) is proposing to widen Georgia Avenue to 6 lanes between Rte. 28 and Old Baltimore Rd. Khalid does not support this proposal and has written to SHA stating why this proposal is a problem and inconsistent with the goals of the Olney Master Plan. John noted there were more important things to spend that money on. Khalid encouraged GOCA to communicate their concerns to SHA. **Barbara Falcigno moved that:**

GOCA WRITE TO THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION OPPOSING ANY PLANS TO WIDEN GEORGIA AVENUE TO 6 LANES BETWEEN RTE. 28 AND OLD BALTIMORE ROAD.

The motion was seconded by Ed Weisel. The motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Status of Development Proposals in the Southeast Quadrant – Bob Tworkowski, President, SEROCA, noted that he is building on the foundation that John Lyons had established while he was SEROCA president. There are 7 different developments proposed on the 2 ½ mile road, Batchellors Forest Rd which was designated as a rustic road in the new Olney Master Plan.

Gandel property – 56 acres, purchased by the Washington Christian Academy. They have exercised their right to buy the property. Their school is for 100-200 students. They will build their school within the next couple of years with a 4-6 year build-out. They have modified their design plan because they do not have enough money to complete the original plan.

Pollinger property – The property has been for sale several times, but most of them have not gone through to completion. The most recent developer has been working with SEROCA for about 6 months and had plan for the 200+ acre site for about 70 homes.

Casey property – This property is across from Farquhar Middle School. The developer's plan is for 30 homes. This is the most pristine viewscape on Batchellors Forest.,

Good Counsel High School – There will be 2,000 students and the school will open in January 2007. They have worked with Art Raimo and he has made a number of agreements for cars and busing for the arrivals and departures of their students.

Northwest Investments – The plan for this property is for 35-38 units.

Hyde property - This is the most controversial property for 2 reasons. They are going for a sewer and water category change. They are having difficulties being seweraged. They are developing a plan to pump sewerage to the sewer line for Good Counsel High School using grinder pumps or they can use gravity feed to a sewer line to the east that would have to cross 1000 ft of forested areas and cross a stream. With well and septic development, the area would probably only yield 6-7 units versus the 30 units possible using sewer and water. The acreage where the housing will go would normally only yield 20 units, even with the sewer and water connection. However, they are being allowed to transfer 9 units from the portion of the property where Good Counsel High School is being built. The P&P staff has recommended that the sewer and water category change on the Hyde property be denied because it is premature. There are still too many questions that are unresolved about the proposal, some relating to the density on the site. The Planning Board's recommendation goes to the County Council which makes the decision on the sewer category change request. The County Executive also makes a recommendation to the Council and his staff is recommending approval of the proposal to use the grinder pumps.

This is the first development to come up for consideration of a sewer and category change under the new Master Plan and this one does not appear to be consistent with the Master Plan that the community just spend 2 years working on and which specifically questions the suitability of using public sewer and water for this property. WSSC does not approve grinder pumps for individual residences, so recommended the gravity feed system to the sewer line at Excaliber Dr to the east. However, P&P staff did not recommend approval of the WSSC recommendation because of the environmental impacts. John felt it was important that GOCA write a letter requesting that the Council wait on a decision until all of the issues can be resolved, and he was prepared to testify at the sewer and water category change public hearing. **Ed Weisel moved that:**

GOCA WRITE A LETTER AND TESTIFY THAT ALL THE ISSUES RELATING TO THE SEWER AND WATER CATEGORY CHANGE AND THE DENSITY BE RESOLVED BEFORE DEVELOPMENT BE ALLOWED ON THIS SITE.

The motion was seconded by Barbara Falcigno and passed unanimously.

ICC Update – John Kramer reported that the State had gotten approval from the Federal Government to build the ICC. And, although it is not in writing yet, the Georgia Avenue interchange will be an underpass. The land excavated for the underpass will be used to create a berm on land in the Brooke Manor development. The first phase will be from Rte. 270 to Georgia Ave. The detail design and construction will be outsourced. Construction will start at both ends and work towards the center. Construction vehicles are not to use residential roads which is why they are starting at the ends and working in. John Kramer and Anthony Watkins will continue to work with SHA on the underpass design.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) – Jim Smith, Chair of the OTCAC, noted that the Committee had met the previous week. There have been 2 membership changes. Dan Dionisio who was serving as a representative of the Olney Boys and Girls Community Sports Assn. has resigned from the Committee and has been replaced with Joe Fritsch, Chair of the Mid-County Recreation Advisory Board. Jim Wallace, the representative for the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board is moving out of the area and will be replaced by another member of that Citizens Advisory Board. The Committee has been getting an overview of the applicable zoning ordinances and zoning techniques; and are planning to visit town center developments in Clarendon, VA and in Bowie to see how they were developed. They have switched their meeting date and will now be meeting on the third Monday of each month in the meeting room of the Sandy Spring Bank.

Olney Days 2006 – Helene Rosenheim noted that there are still some trophies to be delivered and the planning committee will have a wrap up meeting soon. John Lyons thanked Terri for the great coverage the Gazette had given the event.

Candidates Debates – Art Brodsky reported that we held the 3 debates and he felt that all three had been excellent debates and that the moderators did an great job. He noted that it had been newsworthy that Mr. Jones, one of the candidates for the District 4 Council seat had disclosed at our debate that he was pro-growth and pro-ICC. He was also disappointed that Mr. Knapp had not prepared any questions for his opponents. He also felt the candidates in the County Executive debate had done a good job. However, he was disappointed with the turnout. There had only been about 10 people at the District 2 debate, and, about 20 at the District 4 debate. There was a large attendance at the County Executive

debate, but much of that group was there to support the OBGC proposal for the Bowie Mill site. He was disappointed that the Gazette did not give the debates better coverage and did not even send a reporter to cover them, especially since they were jointly done by GOCA and the Olney Chamber of Commerce. They realized when they planned them that they seemed early since the primary is not until September, but there really wasn't any other time since it was not practical to do them during the summer and there would not have been enough time in September. But, there was valuable information gained through the debates. John Austin and Sharon Dooley both indicated that they thought the debates had been well done and Sharon thanked GOCA and the Chamber. John Lyons felt that GOCA and the Chamber should do them again. Brenda Egeland suggested sending candidates a set of questions and posting the answers on the GOCA website. Art asked people to submit questions to him.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion of the Special Presentations

Aunt Hattie's Place – Barbara Falcigno moved that:

GOCA support Dr. Washington's special exception application for Aunt Hattie's Place, a group home for foster boys in Sandy Spring.

The motion was seconded by Arnie Gordon. After a brief discussion in which it was noted that the fact that Dr. Washington will be living there herself should eliminate concerns about the program, the building will be environmentally friendly in terms of the building materials used, lighting, etc., the proposal has the support of the residents surrounding the existing homes in Baltimore and Baltimore Co., and there needs to be more programs like this on; **the motion passed unanimously.**

Following a reminder about the Muncaster Rd will be closed between Rte. 108 and Muncaster Mill Rd for 3 months during the summer, the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Danny Benn

Danny Benn
Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Khalid Afzal, John Austin, Jackie & Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Rick Coburn, Steve Cohen, Leslie Cronin, Dominique D'Anna, Brenda Egeland, Dave Eskenazi, Veronica Everett, Barbara Falcigno, Jay Feinberg, Tom Gallagher, Arnold Gordon, Officer S. Hidayat, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Claire Iseli, Del Anne Kaiser, Lee Kidd John Kramer, Joe Lapan, Hank Lierberman, John Lyons, Roy Peck, Helene Rosenheim, Paula & Danny Sayag, Jim Smith, Robert Tworkowski, Hattie Washington, Ed Weisel, and Basile Whitaker.