



DRAFT MINUTES – September 12, 2006

The meeting was called to order by Second Vice President Jay Feinberg. The July 2006 minutes were approved with no additions or corrections. The agenda was accepted.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- John Austin noted that he was presenting a proposal to the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee for an underpass for Rte. 108 primarily in front of the Shoppes of Olney, the Olney Village Center and the Olney Town Shopping Center. The grade of the roadway in that area drops down in such a way that lends it self to constructing underpass there. Then a town hall could be built on top of the underpass and pedestrian access between those two shopping areas would be facilitated.
- Roy Peck noted that State Highway Administration (SHA) is moving ahead with the acquisition of land on Georgia Avenue in the ICC right-of-way.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report – Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$2,237.53. He received a check from the Sanford Foundation from Joe's Ride and Stride for \$2,200 to go primarily towards expenses for Olney Days.

Correspondence Report – No report.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington reminded everyone that Olney Community Night and Taste of Olney will take place at Longwood Recreation Center on October 4th, 5 - 8:30 pm and encouraged everyone to attend.

Civic Federation Report– No report.

Membership Committee – No report.

Land Use Report – No report

Transportation Committee – Dave Eskenazi had noticed that traffic seemed to be backing up more on Georgia Avenue from Rte. 28 towards Old Baltimore Rd and beyond and he asked if anyone was aware of causes other than the normal increase in September when schools reopen. He was trying to determine if there was a problem that might be corrected by an adjustment in the timing of the light at Rte. 28 without causing a significant problem for traffic on Rte. 28. Roy Peck noted that he had received an email from the SHA telling him traffic at that intersection would be getting worse and SHA had plans to improve the intersection by 2030. Dave noted the improvement of that intersection was one that is planned, but is being deferred currently because so much of the State's funding is going toward the construction of the Inter-County Connector (ICC). GOCA is trying to get the State to move the project forward so it can be done at the same time as the construction of the ICC interchange at Georgia. Lt. Croom noted that the construction on Muncaster Road is still impacting Georgia Avenue traffic, but it should be completed by October 13th. He also noted that there are now real-time cameras at the Georgia Ave/Rte 28 intersection that the County's traffic management staff monitor to adjust the cycle to try to alleviate or reduce problems when there are traffic backups at the corner and the cycles are programmed to favor southbound traffic during the am rush hour and northbound traffic in the pm rush hour.

President's Report – Jay Feinberg reported for John Lyons that:

- One of the main issues the officers have been working on recently is the development plan for the Hyde property adjacent to the Good Counsel High School site. The main issue of concern relates to the proposal to use grinder pumps for sewer pipes that they propose to connect to an extension of the sewer pipe put in for Good Counsel High School. The developer has requested conditional approval from the

County Council, where the sewer and water category change request is currently being considered. John sent a letter proposing a compromise position for the conditional approval that would return the proposal to the Park and Planning Commission (P&P) to review all the issues and come up with solution to the question of the design of the sewer and water system for the site. The language John proposed on behalf of GOCA was intended to reflect that a conditional approval by the County Council not be construed by the Planning Board to pre-ordain any aspect of or decisions concerning the preliminary plan or site plan for the remainder of the Hyde parcel including, without limitation to the total number and location of units, whether or not grinder pumps can be used on the site, and the number of units that can be transferred from the Good Counsel portion of the site to the Hyde property. GOCA is trying to work with P&P and the developer to work out a design that is fair to all the parties AND consistent with the Olney Master Plan.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

An Overview of the Draft Upper Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan – Jay introduced Lyn Coleman, Trail Planning Supervisor, Maryland-National Capital Parks & Planning (P&P). Lyn noted that she began working for P&P in 1977 and the Olney Master Plan revision was her first task. She has always enjoyed working with GOCA because she sees it as one of the model organizations she has worked with over the years in terms of their effectiveness. She recalled that she and Royce Hansen, who was then Chair of the Planning Board attended a meeting in Olney where he said he wanted to get to Olney in the worst way, so he took Georgia Avenue. So, she found it ironic that nearly 30 years later, Royce is chair of the Planning Board again and Georgia Ave traffic is an issue again. About 10 years ago, she moved to the P&P's Parks Department to work on the trails program in the County. In 1994, the Planning Board adopted the comprehensive Countywide vision for parks and trails. This trail system integrates natural and hard surface trails into one system. Then the Board directed staff to go back and look at sections of the plan regionally in more detail. They have completed a trail corridor plan for the Muddy Branch Stream Valley Park in Potomac, and the trail plan for the Rachel Carson Greenway.

They are now working on the Upper Rock Creek Trail Corridor Plan. She identified the area that is under study. They identified existing sanctioned trails in the Upper Rock Creek area. Sanctioned trails are those that are named, signed, mapped, and regularly maintained. They include trails around Lake Frank, Lake Needwood, the Agricultural History Farm Park, Oaks Landfill, and the Rachel Carson Conservation Park. She showed another map showing proposed connections between these existing sanctioned trails that will link the Rock Creek trail system to the Patuxent River trail system with a natural surface trail network. It will be done by extending the natural surface trail from the Upper Rock Creel area to Lake Needwood to the Agricultural History Farm Park through the Blue Marsh trails through a trail gap they need to find a path through to the Rachel Carson Park and to the Patuxent River. On the eastern side, they will be linking Lake Frank, using the bike path and natural trail corridor proposed along the ICC right-of-way, up the North Branch, through the hard-surface and natural trail corridor in Norbeck Grove across Bowie Mill and on through Olney Mill to the Oakley Cabin historic trail and then somehow through Brookeville to the Rachel Carson Greenway. When the trail system is complete, people will be able to walk from Lake Frank or Lake Needwood to the Patuxent River through natural surface trails. There are also hard-surface trails (hiker-biker trails) and in Olney they are just completing 2 ends of a segment of existing trails. There is a trail that ends at Bowie Mill and a segment around Lake Frank and the trail they are proposing would connect these two segments. It would use the ICC and a segment that will be built in a subdivision that has already been approved in the Upper Rock Creek Planning Area. People in Olney would be able to get on the path at Rte. 108 and continue to the Rock Creek Hiker-Biker trail on to the Capital Crescent Trail.

They are just starting the process for getting this proposed trail approved. There has been one meeting at the Agricultural History Farm Park. There will be more and she circulated a sign-up sheet for people interested in being notified about upcoming meetings. At the first meeting, there was a small, but enthusiastic crowd, that were pleased with the plan for connectivity between the various trails and system-wide approach. One issue when they developed the Rachel Carson Greenway was that it was developed as an interpretation of Rachel Carson's conversation principles and so, bikes are not permitted on the trail. P&P promised that in looking at and developing this system, they would make it friendly to multiple users, so this system of trails will be open to hikers, bikers, and equestrians. They also looking at Class 1 shared-used bike paths (paths along the curb or edge of roadways. Where possible they try to have them drop down onto trails off the roadway such as along Rte. 108. There is a potential link if the golf course ever develops. There is a bike path along Emory Rd. So they will try to make connections between bikeways and park trails. The Planning Board has approved the work program and scope of the

process. The next step is to have another public meeting that goes into more detail on the alignment of the proposed trails. Then they go to the Planning Board for their approval and the approved bikeway goes into P&P's budget process where it competes with other Parks Dept. projects for a portion of the Parks Dept budget. That is why it is important that the community keep informed of the plan and is aware when pieces are being built by developers and when it becomes important for the County to build the connecting piece.

The following are some of the points made during the discussion of Ms. Coleman's presentation:

- It is likely that the pieces being done on the ICC or by developers have to be in place before P&P would rank the segments the County would need to do high enough to make it through the budget process. When the ICC plans were being done, P&P was able to get the State to plan a bike path from Lake Frank to Lake Needwood. But they would not design the access from the ICC to the Oxbridge development in the Upper Rock Creek area because the portion of the trail that developer was building was not in place yet with their design. The State is putting in all the grading and doing some of the design work so the connections to developments can go easier when the developments are ready. This illustrates the power of planning. If they hadn't had this system of trails planned out already, she did not think they would have been able to get the State to agree to include any trail or design preparation for connection to other trails.
- Roy Peck noted that the State is doing a lot to facilitate pedestrian and bike traffic across the Beltway ramps at Georgia Ave and he thought they would need to do the same where the ICC crosses Georgia Ave, but noted that portion of the trail had been removed from the ICC plans. So, people have to come down Emory Rd, down Georgia and then need a way across the ICC ramps. He asked if any of that was part of their plans. Ms. Coleman was not certain if it was, but would look at that intersection to see if that it is mapped correctly and if not, would coordinate with the ICC design staff.
- One major problem now is that the trail on Emory Rd ends at Bowie Mill Road and crossing Bowie Mill will be difficult for pedestrians and bike riders. This is a problem where trails cross major roads. So, they will need to look at how to get across Bowie Mill safely.
- The natural surface trails were all done with volunteers. Lyn noted that there are volunteer coordinators for construction of trails and for maintenance of trails. The coordinator had asked her to remind people that they can go to the trails website at www.montgomerytrails.org to learn about the trails, to download maps, and to volunteer to help with the trails. The only real budget issue with the natural surface trails is when bridges are needed. But, if there are no bridges, and the community is ready, the volunteers can quickly put in a trail once the staff has marked the alignment of the path. People can join the meetings concerning these trails to have input on where access points should be. Local people are aware of rights of way and easements that can be used to construct the access paths more readily than staff can identify from maps. Hard surface trail alignments are determined by a design plan at a 30% design plan stage. On natural surface trails are best laid out in the field because they can actually see the environment issues that do not show up on plans. The proposed routes do give people some idea of the general location and then, the staff looks for input from the people in the area to point out areas where there are problems with the proposed alignment
- Lyn hoped that GOCA will get involved with the Rachel Carson Greenway Trail through Sandy Spring. She circulated copies of the proposed trail. There are 8 interpretive elements based on Rachel Carson's writings. Next May is the 100th anniversary of Rachel Carson's birth and P&P is planning a big party along the Greenway. They are having a small group of hikers from REI hike the whole trail. There will be events where children can take microscopes to do pond studies, fish lollapaloozas and more to celebrate her birthday and will end up with a huge birthday cake being served on Sunday. The events will take place from May 18-20th. Lyn noted that Rachel Carson is considered one of the century's most influential ecologists. She is considered the founder of the ecology movement. Her book Silent Springs led to the regulation of pesticides. She wrote the book while she lived in Silver Spring, and died two years after publishing the book. Her house will be on the walk and is reachable from the Greenway.

OLD BUSINESS

Dream Dinners Fundraiser – Jay introduced Yihung Mohs, the owner of Dream Dinners that opened recently in Cloverly. The company began about 4 years ago by 2 working moms who found that they could help busy moms by doing the shopping and preparations for ingredients for meals and all the moms have to do is assemble them, take them home, and cook them or freeze them for later use. The concept is that each month they offer a variety of entrees, their staff does the purchasing, cleaning, chopping, and other preparation of the ingredients. You go online to their website, schedule an appointment and select the meals you want to prepare. You come to their store, and they have all the ingredients ready. And, it takes about 10 minutes to assemble the ingredients, following their recipes, for a family size entree. And, by the end of a 2 hour session, you will have assembled 12 meals made with fresh ingredients, and no

preservatives. The meals can be used right away or frozen for cooking later. Her store has been open for about 4 months and is doing very well.

They offer a fundraiser that organizations and schools can do in which they give money to an organization sponsoring a fundraiser based on the amount of sales generate through their organization. Clients bring flyers indicating they are participating in the fundraiser. For clients who make 12 meals, they donate \$20 and for 6 meals, they donate \$10. They set up 4 week blocks of time when the families can participate. They also do private parties for up to 12 people who have a session exclusively for their group and refreshments are served and at the end of the party you have raised \$200 for your organization. Because you are assembling the fresh ingredients for your meals, they can accommodate for food allergies by you leaving out ingredients that are problems and they can substitute some ingredients.

Olney Satellite Police Facility Update – Paula Kahla reported that the Chamber finished an addition to the County Police's Olney Satellite Facility last November and she thanked all those who had contributed to and supported the expansion, including the Sandy Spring Bank and Giant Food. The Chamber had been looking for a more permanent location for nearly 8 years and did not see any real possibilities for the near future. And, until recently, the Police Department had not been able to staff the facility full time. They received a commitment from the Police to increase the staffing once running water and bathroom facilities could be added. The Board of Directors for the Facility determined that it would be more cost effective to purchase the trailer than to continue paying rent for it. The cost of the purchase of the trailer and the expansion was \$13,000. They are launching a fundraising campaign to raise the money to cover that cost. She distributed packets describing the level of donations they are requesting from the local homeowner associations, other community groups, businesses, and individuals. Paula also announced that Capt Patty Walker will be leaving as the District 4 Commander and Nancy Demmi will be replacing her.

Lt. Jacques Croom, the Deputy Commander for District 4 also thanked the community for its support of the satellite facility. He acknowledged the value of community policing and having police officers the community is familiar with. He noted that Capt. Walker is going to be in charge of the Homicide Division and that Capt. Demmi had been with District 4 earlier as a Deputy Commander. He noted that they are getting additional officers including several who will be graduating from the Police Academy soon. They are also increasing the number of volunteers that will be working at the facility. They will be putting signage outside the trailer to indicate when the volunteers are in the facility and other contact information when the volunteers are not there. This should make it easier for people to know when the volunteers are there. Lt. Croom also noted that if people have concerns or issues, they can contact him at 240 773 -5517. He also noted that Lt. Stone would begin working in the District on the following Monday.

The following are some of the points made during the discussion with Lt. Croom:

- Police officers are only allowed to take home their police cars if they live in the County. But, because many officers can't afford to live in the County, they move to nearby jurisdictions. Those officers have to return their cars to the Glenmont station at the end of their shifts for other officers to use. So, near the time of the shift changes, many of the officers are driving back to Wheaton and it is more difficult for them to respond to calls. They thought they had resolved that problem by letting officers take their cars home, but increasing numbers live outside the County.
- There are a total of 31 officers assigned to the Olney beats.
- There is a problem in the town center area of people jaywalking between the intersections, especially on Georgia Avenue, south of Rte. 108.
- There is a problem with cars parking on Georgia Avenue north of Rte. 108 in front of the elderly housing development on the east side of Georgia in the area marked off with diagonal white lines indicating the northbound lanes merging. Jay noted that he was going to be talking to the property owner about that as well.

Lighting Issues at Willow G – Jay Feinberg noted that, as he had mentioned earlier to Lt. Croom, he and Dave Eskenazi will be meeting with Jeff Kirby, the developer of Willow G, the elderly housing project on the Georgia Avenue, and his architect or contractor to discuss concerns about the brightness and direction of the lighting on the front side of their property. The light from them is blinding and GOCA has received a complaint from a resident about the glare of the mercury vapor or halogen lamps towards their property. In looking at their lighting, it does not appear that the lamps are not properly designed to direct the light down onto their property without bleeding out across Georgia Avenue.

NEW BUSINESS – No New Business

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned

Respectfully Submitted,

Danny Benn

Danny Benn
Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Gloria Allen (James Creek), John Austin (Sunshine Acres), Danny Benn (Fairhill Farms), Joe Buffington (Olney Chamber Liaison), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Lyn Coleman (MNCPPC), Lt. Jacques Croom (MCPD, Dst 4), Dominique D'Anna (Olney Mill), Brenda Egeland (Norbeck Grove), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Veronica Everett (Victoria Springs), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), Jay Feinberg (Olney Oaks), Joe Fritsch (Highlands, MCRAB), Greg Fury (Olney Mill), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Paula Kahla (Olney Chamber), Lee Kidd (Cherrywood), Walter Lee (Environ, OTCAC), Yihung Mohs (Dream Dinners), Jon Morrison (Oak Grove), Buck Parr (Tanterra), Roy Peck (Norbeck Meadonws), Susan Petrucci (Norbeck Meadows), Patricia Sandlin (BF Saul), Robin Shea (Oatland Farms), and, Jim Smith (Oatland Farms, OTCAC)