

DRAFT MINUTES – November 13, 2007

The meeting was called to order by President Barbara Falcigno. The October 2007 minutes were approved. The agenda was accepted with no changes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Cashell Elementary will be undergoing a complete renovation and everyone with any connection to the school is invited to an open house from 2:00-4:00 pm on Dec 2nd where all attending will “hug” the school. The students will be bussed to North Lake Elementary during the construction. And, the RFP recently issued for renovations of Redland Middle School only covered 75% of the proposed renovations. This will impact the students and property values because of a perception that the school is not all it should be. The school was designed when open space teaching techniques were being used, but they do not teach that way any longer so that is why the full renovation is needed. The PTA is asking that people attend the budget hearing at the Board of Education on the upcoming Thursday to support the cluster testimony and requested a letter of support from GOCA.
- Donna Edwards, candidate for the District 4 House of Representatives seat introduced herself, noting that she was attending the meeting to learn about the issues impacting the community. She will also be at the home of Joe Corbett the following Saturday and people were invited to come by to meet her.
- Arnie Gordon noted that the Civic Federation voted unanimously at their last meeting to support having the ICC Phase A go to Rte. 28 instead of the interim road solution the State Highway Administration (SHA) is currently proposing.
- Sharon Dooley noted that GOCA was hoping to start a new tradition by asking those attending its December meeting bring some non-perishable food items that will be donated to Manna.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Discussion of State Road Issues in the Greater Olney Area – Barbara Falcigno presented an overview of the issues that GOCA had identified to Darrell Mobley, District 3 Chief Engineer, SHA and his traffic engineer Anyesha Mookhesjce on a bus tour along Rtes 97 and 108. Mr. Mobley thanked Barbara for the invitation to attend this meeting and for the tour which gave him an opportunity to see the problem areas first hand. His area of responsibility is the implementation, maintenance, and traffic design in Montgomery and Prince Georges Counties. He introduced Jeffrey Wentz, the Asst. District Engineer for Montgomery County; Anyesha M., his traffic engineer, and Theresa Fountain, a new member of his staff. **Anyesha reported on the results of her analysis of each of the problems identified during the bus tour, noting either the status of projects or proposed solutions:**

- Tree Trimming on Rte. 97 north of Prince Philip Dr. – Done
- Emory Lane/Rte. 97 intersection – By the end of the year, the left turn phasing on Rte. 97 will be modified in both directions from exclusive/permissive to exclusive only. She forgot to check on the issue of cars making rights from Emory onto southbound Rte. 97 being fooled by the lack of cars in the southbound right-turn lane on Rte. 97 rather than checking the first through lane. She will review that situation
- Traffic light at Emory Church Rd and Rte. 97 – Estimated traffic did not warrant a full light. The flashing light is all that was required of the shopping center owner. SHA will monitor traffic at that intersection.
- Bowie Mill Rd & Rte. 108 intersection – The left-turn movement on westbound Rte. 108 will be signalized and is currently in the Concept Development Stage. That takes about a year and then the project moves to the System 4 Presentation Stage where it competes for funding (about 14-15 months), then it competes for funding for construction. The developer of the Bowie Mill site could be required to contribute to the funding of this light if they are at the appropriate stage of their development process when they are ready to put the light in.
- Eastbound Rte. 108 at Old Baltimore Rd and Old Vic Rd - By the end of the year, weather-permitting, new signs will be posted on the west side of the intersection showing 2 straight-through lanes and 1 right-turn only lane.
- Rte 97 at Rte 108 – By end of year, will cross hatch the cross walk and restripe the edge line for the right turn ramp. It was noted that signage is needed on the median on the southwest corner to identify the right turn light button. Khalid Afzal noted that there needs to be a change in the thinking about traffic in the town center,

especially, as traffic is only going to increase. We need to think of pedestrians as vehicles and they should possibly have more rights than cars. He added that we will need to think of this as the town center is being redesigned.

- Eastbound Rte 108 at Olney Shopping Center – The intersection is 400 ft. from the Rte. 97 intersection. She did not think the suggestion to have the light work like the ones at a firehouse would work because it would constantly be activated unlike a firehouse light that is only activated in emergencies. She suggested instead working with the merchants in the center to get agreement to make it a right-turn in/right-turn out only access. It was noted, however, that that would make it extremely difficult for northbound Rte. 97 traffic to get into the center. Others suggested putting a light at the entrance to the Library rather than the Shopping Center which would create opportunities for left-turn movements into the center. And, it was noted that she look at the configuration of the lights in front of the firehouse on Muncaster Mill Rd at Shady Grove Rd. The lights there actually work together except when the fire trucks need to leave the firehouse in response to an emergency. Anyesha will look at this again which is different than the lights in front of many firehouses.
- Dr. Bird Dr at Norwood Road – A project to widen the intersection, add turning islands and a signal as well as flattening the curve between there and Rte. 108 are funded for preliminary engineering only.
- Projects in the pipeline include: (1) signalization studies at Rte. 108 at Spartan Rd, Prince Philip Dr, and Old Baltimore Rd., (2) evaluation of traffic operations along Rte. 108 between Brookeville Rd & Muncaster Rd., and (3) evaluation of bus stops along Rtes. 97 and 108 for ADA compatibility. They will coordinate with Ride-On and WMATA for any changes needed at the bus stops.

She encouraged anyone with additional questions or issues to either contact Mr. Jeffrey Wentz, Asst. District Engineer, Traffic at 9300 Kenilworth Ave, Greenbelt, MD 20770; 301 513-7358; (fax) 301 513-7403; or jwentz@sha.state.md.us. Or Anyesha Mookherjee, Traffic Engineer at the same address or at 301 513-7498.

The Rte. 28/97 Interim road was discussed next. Roger Carriker, a SHA engineer with the ICC Project, noted that with the construction of the Phase A of the Inter-County Connector (ICC) from Rte. I-370 ending at Rte. 97, there is an issue of how to get traffic wanting to continue east passed Rte. 97 without worsening the already failing Rte. 28/97 intersection. SHA is proposing an interim solution that involves building a temporary spur road opposite Thistlebridge Rd, just north of Rte. 28 across to Rte. 28 near Norbeck Blvd (the entrance to Leisure World). They will also add 2 lanes to a portion of Rte. 28 to absorb the additional traffic. There would not be a left turn from the spur to go south on Rte. 97. Eastbound traffic on Rte. 28 wanting to get onto the ICC could use this to avoid the Rte. 28/97 intersection as well. This way the access to the Park and Ride Lot is not impacted. The spur will be signalized and be synchronized with the light at Rte. 28. Two stacking lanes would be built in the median that will allow approximately 600 cars to travel eastward per hour.

The following are some of the points made when the floor was opened for questions on the interim road:

- When asked why they are not just going straight across to Rte. 28, the engineer indicated that they had looked at that option but decided against it because (1) they did not plan to have an interchange there so they would have to build a ramp and take it down when the road was completed (2), they had not done a NEPPA study for that, (3) the roads would be at different grades, and (4) they would have to close the interim interchange to complete Phase B so there would not be anywhere for that traffic to go till the full road was opened except through the Rte. 28/97 intersection. They noted that the spur road could be left in place after the ICC is completed and until the Rte. 28/97 intersection improvements are built.
- When asked if the decision on the use of the spur was final, the response was that this is the solution the SHA Administrator had selected.
- It was noted that everyone heading south on Rte. 97 from the Olney or north across Rte. 28 would now have to deal with 3 traffic lights where we now have 1 while we wait through this nightmare for the ICC to be completed and for the Rte. 28 improvement to take place.
- There was concern expressed that if the interim solution goes in, the Rte. 28/97 will never be built.
- When asked if there had been any opportunity for public input on this proposal, there was no response, but it was noted that there is an environmental study being done on this proposal now.
- It was also noted that the Transportation Fund is currently depleted and will continue to be depleted as oil costs go up, so other projects that have been promised will continue to be squeezed out.
- It was also noted that the RFP for the ICC indicates that they are to maintain roadways intersecting with the ICC and nearby intersections and they will double the traffic on Rte. 97 by opening the road when Phase A is completed instead of waiting until the whole road is completed. Mr. Carricker noted that they did look at not opening Phase A until the full road is completed, but someone at a level above him felt it would be good to begin generating toll revenues.
- When asked how he could support Olney having to deal with a mess for 5 or more years, Del. Ben Kramer noted that he did not have any impact on where the situation is now since he has only been in office for 9 months. He also noted that not funding the ICC is not an option for the governor or the Legislature since the

Garvey Bond money for the ICC cannot be redirected. Gregg Smith encouraged Del. Kramer to co-sponsor the Frosch bill to defund the ICC, adding that the bill is stuck in the Rules Committee. He suggested that the money is not lost because it comes out of future funding and the State is not getting additional funding for the ICC; the State is directing how that funding is used.

- The level of service for the interim road will be at Level D and the Rte. 28/97 intersection will still be at F. It was suggested that only a portion of the traffic coming off the ICC will need to go on to Rte. 28, so they don't need a full intersection at Rte. 28 if they continued the ICC to Rte. 28. It might be acceptable to let those cars wait through multiple light cycles on the ICC rather than on Georgia Avenue.
- Citing a report from Council staff member Glenn Orlin, Roy Peck noted that the report indicated that with or without the ICC, Rte. 28 will still get worse than it is today.
- SHA is considering keeping the interim light at the ICC interchange permanently because of the hiker-biker trail on the ICC.

Status of the Rte. 28/97 Interchange was discussed next. Roger Carricker, the Rte 28/97 intersection project manager, noted that the proposed improvements to the Rte. 28/97 intersection received NEEPA approval in 2003. The plan is now at the 30% design level. The proposal would move Rte. 28 700 ft north of where it intersects with Rte. 97 now and will go under Rte. 97. This would eliminate the traffic light on Georgia Avenue. There would be 4 traffic lights on Rte. 28 with 2 ramps that would carry traffic to Rte. 115 and to Norbeck Boulevard. The current left egress to Thistlebridge Dr will go away when the Rte. 97 busway is built. The State does not currently own all of the right-of-way to do this. They estimate that it will take 2 years to acquire the remaining right-of-way needed to complete the project, and 3 years to build the improvement. The project is currently 5th on the County's State road project priority list. John Kramer noted that Neil Peterson with SHA had indicated that he would be willing to fund the design further so that the project is ready to go in advance of the funding to build being available. The project manager indicated that they did have money to put out a request for bids for a design/build contract. There are new rules for design/build projects to allow design before the acquisition of land.

The following are some of the discussion following this portion of the presentation:

- The estimated cost of the interim road is \$5.7 million.
- They do not anticipate having to reroute traffic during the construction of the interchange and the interim road.
- In response to a repeat of the question about when the proposed interim solution became a done deal, Del Ben Kramer noted that when they realized what the impact on Georgia Ave would be with Phase A ending there, he contacted County Executive Leggett and they met jointly with SHA which was where this proposal came up. Once they were aware of it, he and Senator Rona Kramer presented it to GOCA to be sure the community without them supporting or not supporting the proposal, but with their understanding that a decision had been made to build the interim road.
- In response to a question about the process for getting funding, the SHA staff commented that the community input they are now getting is valuable to them, They met with the Norbeck Meadows Civic Assn and got some good ideas that they will take back and consider. The Administrator told the staff to move quickly because of the timing of the ICC construction. They are securing funding from the Office of Traffic and Safety Contracts and moving forward. There is dedicated public outreach for the interim road that is separate from the ICC outreach. If they hear enough negative comments and reactions to the proposed interim road, they will have to rethink the proposal.
- At this point in the Q & A's, Mr. Mobley intervened noting that he had brought his whole staff and the engineers on these other projects to discuss the issues, but that the questions that were continuing to be asked should be directed to the people above them that are making the policy decisions.
- The work currently being done on Georgia Ave is some small improvements for the pedestrian crossings and some ICC work.
- Barbara noted that we did appreciate them coming, and noting that whether or not we support the ICC, we all just want to get the best situation we can get. A representative from Leisure World's administrative staff noted that they felt the interim road would be an improvement over directing the traffic to the Rte. 28/97 intersection.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report – Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$5,973.41.

Correspondence Report – No report.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – No report.

Olney Town Center Advisory (OTCAC) Committee Report – No report

Civic Federation Report– No additional report beyond announcement during Public Comments.

Membership Committee – Bob Beard reported that he wanted to acknowledge civic and homeowners associations that had been members every year for the last 10 years, and those that had been members for most of those ten years. He also expressed GOCA's appreciation for the generosity of those associations that had donated \$1,450 towards the costs of this year's Olney Days.

President's Report – Barbara Falcigno noted that the County Council had voted on the new Growth Policy that day. And, the development proposal for the Hyde Property adjacent to Good Counsel High School will be going before the Planning Board shortly.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

2008 GOCA Officers Nominations – Barbara Falcigno noted that the election of GOCA's 2008 officers would take place in February for a term that goes from February – January. She encouraged people to step up to take on more responsibility and to help continue GOCA's leadership. Ron Berger added that he would be contacting people to see if they would be interested in serving as an officer, so people should be giving it some thought.

2007 GOCA Awards Nominations – Barbara noted that the Annual GOCA Awards Ceremony is one of GOCA's highlight functions of the year that is well attended by residents and elected officials. Awards are presented in a variety of categories: Howard J. Garber Memorial to the Citizen of the Year, Contribution to Community, Olney Heritage, and GOCA Worker of the Year. Over the years, these awards have been given to almost every type of individual or group you can think of, for a wide range of efforts on behalf of the community. She noted, too, that the GOCA members cannot be aware of all that is happening in the community, so we rely on the community to let us know about people and groups that should be recognized. The nomination form will be available for downloading from the GOCA website very shortly. She asked everyone to begin to think of those who should be nominated to receive awards that will be presented on Sunday, March 2, 2008 at Longwood Recreation Center.

Discussion of the Special Presentations

(1) Rte 97 & Rte 108 Issues Identified During the SHA Bus Tour – It was noted that it is very difficult for pedestrians to cross Rte. 97 on the south side of Rte. 108 because of the right turn on red at that corner. Several solutions were discussed and the SHA traffic engineer will look at this issue, along with the left turns into the Olney Shopping Center from Rte. 108. It was suggested that a light at the Library would help create a gap for the cars turning into the shopping center. With respect to the problem of poor visibility for cars turning left from Rte. 97 onto Emory Lane, it was noted that if cars stay back on Emory, they can see around the traffic making left coming southbound on Rte. 97. It was also suggested that an article in the Gazette educating people about some of these issues may be a good idea. It was also noted that there is a need for a sidewalk on the east side of Georgia Ave from the Willow Manor to Queen Elizabeth Dr.

(2) ICC Interim Road Solution – It was noted that traffic already backs up on Rte. 28 from Norbeck Boulevard to Georgia Ave during rush hour.

Arnie Gordon moved that:

GOCA OPPOSE THE PRESENT "INTERIM IMPROVEMENT" FOR THE ICC EXIT AT GEORGIA AVENUE AND SPUR TO RTE. 28 AS NOW BEING PROPOSED BY SHA.

GOCA RECOMMENDS THAT THE ICC EXIT TO GEORGIA AVENUE NOT BE OPENED UNTIL THE ICC IS EXTENDED TO AT LEAST TO RTE. 28 ON ITS PRESENT ROUTE.

GOCA FURTHER RECOMMENDS THAT A TEMPORARY EXIT BE CONSTRUCTED AT RTE. 28 TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOREGOING.

GOCA FURTHER RECOMMENDS THAT PHASE A OF THE ICC BE CHANGED TO PUT THE ICC THROUGH TO SUCH EXIT AT RTE. 28 AND UNTIL, AS, AND IF SUCH CHANGE IS MADE, THE ICC NOT EXIT TO GEORGIA AVE UNLESS THE SHA IS PREPARED TO COMPLETE CONSTRUCTION OF THE DESIGNED GRADE-SEPARATED INTERSECTION AT RTE. 97 & 28.

The motion was seconded by Gina Angiola.

In the discussion of the motion, it was noted that:

- SHA had indicated they would have a problem completing Phase B if there is a functioning interchange at Rte. 28 and they would have to close the interchange before they could connect the two phases together
- It was also noted that they could avoid that by just building a short distance past the interim interchange, and the interchange could continue to function while they connected the two phases.
- SHA might have to obtain additional land to build an interchange at Rte. 28.
- Because only a portion of the traffic would be continuing on to Rte. 28, they would not need a full interchange, just a ramp off and a ramp on, so they might not need as much land as the SHA is anticipating.
- It would be preferable if Phase A were not opened until the full roadway is completed. Del. Kramer noted that they are trying to keep the road closed until it is all completed, but they are getting resistance.
- The motion provides the State with 3 options other than the interim plan now being proposed which is a bad idea.

The question was called and the motion passed overwhelmingly.

It was noted that there are three fiscal issues related to the Rte. 97/28 situation. SHA claims they are still on budget, even with the increases in construction costs. The Highway Trust Fund will be bankrupt in three years, so the ICC will consume over 21% of the money coming into the State through the Garvey Bond funding. In 2006, the Federal government rescinded some of their money, so the State took money out of bridge repair funds for the road studies. It is astounding to think that they just realized the problem that would be created by opening Phase A at Georgia Ave before completing the whole roadway.

Request from Redland Middle School PTA for support of full renovation originally proposed for the school - It was noted that we had supported Sherwood Elementary School in a similar request.

Arnie Gordon moved that:

GOCA SUPPORT THE PTA'S IN THE MAGRUDER CLUSTER, AND THE NORBECK MEADOWS CA AND CHERRYWOOD HOA IN THEIR REQUEST FOR FULL FUNDING OF THE FULLY-DESIGNED RENOVATION OF REDLAND MIDDLE SCHOOL.

The motion was seconded by Gina Angiola and passed unanimously.

Following the vote on this motion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Danny Benn

Danny Benn, Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Khalid Afzal (M-NCPPC), Gina Angiola (Norbeck Hills), Sgt. Jim Barnette (MCPD, Dist 4), Bob Beard (Homeland Village), Frank Benedeth (Cherrywood), Jackie & Danny Benn (Fairhill Farm), Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Joe Buffington (Olney Chamber), Keith Carlson (Hallowell), Roger Carriker (SHA, ICC Project), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Tim Cooke (SHA, ICC Project), Joe Corbett (Williamsburg Village), Susan & Bill Cottreu (Brookeville Knolls), Fran Counihan (SHA, ICC Project), Geovais & John Crouch (Cherrywood & Norbeck Grove), Regan Crump (Victoria Springs), Cmdr Nancy Demme (MCPD, Dist 4), Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Kathleen Donodeo (Hallowell), Patrick Dunn (Olney Acres), Brenda Egeland (Norbeck Grove), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), Jay Feinberg (Olney Oaks), Kevin B. Flannery (Leisure World), Jeffrey Folden (SHA), Theresa Fountain (SHA-Dist 3), Joe Fritsch (Highlands of Olney/Mid-County Rec. Adv. Bd), Anna & Anton Ganey (Cherrywood), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Matt Hein (Cherrywood), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Jack Howard (Cherrywood), Gwen & Russ Huntington (Cherrywood), Claire Islei (Councilmember Praisner's Office, Dist 4), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Henry Kahwaty (Victoria Springs), Debbie Kennard (Cherrywood), Sherry Kinikin (Councilmember Praisner's Office, Dist 4), Sylke Knuppel (Winchester Homes), John Kramer (Brooke Manor Estates), Walter Lee (Environ/OTCAC), Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), John Long (Winchester Homes), Eric Mellor (SHA, ICC Project), Jack Meyer (Norbeck Meadows), Darrell Mobley (SHA, Dist 3), Anyesha Mookhesjce (SHA- Dist 3), Roy Peck (Norbeck Meadows), Jason Robinson (Brookeville Knolls), Theresa K. Robinson (Olney Oaks), Helene Rosenheim (MCRSC), Bryna Selig (Brookeville Knolls), Gregg Smith (Sustainable Montgomery), Scott C. Spillers, Sr (Cherrywood), Lisa Stancik (Homeland Village), Ann Stretch (Cherrywood), Dan Walsh (Cherrywood), Michael Weddell (Preserve at Small's Nursery), (Jeffrey Wentz (SHA, Dist 3), Louis Wilen (Cherrywood), and Marlene & Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows)