

## **DRAFT MINUTES – March 11, 2008**

The meeting was called to order by President Sharon Dooley. The minutes from the February meeting were approved with no corrections or additions. The agenda was accepted with no additions.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Janet Terry invited everyone to attend Local Flavors, a fundraising event on March 30<sup>th</sup> for the Olney Farmers and Artists Market and the Sandy Spring Museum. The event will be at the Sandy Spring Friends School.
- Arnie Gordon noted that the Park & Planning Commission is holding an Inter-County Connector (ICC) Bikeway Public Meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Spencerville Park Activity Center from 7:00-9:00 pm.
- Barbara Beccles noted that Action in Montgomery, a countywide faith-based group that takes on issues identified by its member has taken on the issue of the renovation of 5 community centers County Executive had promised to include in his CIP budget. The Good Hope, Ross Boddy, and Fairland Centers, all of which serve historic Black communities, were not included. There will be an “Action” at the Ross Boddy Center on March 13<sup>th</sup>, from 7:15-8:30 pm. Several Council members will be in attendance and the public is encouraged to attend to offer their support. The Council will be voting on the budget soon.
- Sharon Dooley noted that the District 14 Democratic Club is hosting a Neighborhood Forum on Gang Activity on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Buffington Building that the public is encouraged to attend. Chief Manger and State's Attorney McCarthy will be participating in the program.
- Bob Beard invited anyone interested in participating with a Public Safety Subcommittee that GOCA is forming to contact him.

### **SPECIAL PRESENTATION**

**Olney Library Renovations**-Sharon Dooley introduced Joseph Eagan, the manager of the Olney Library to discuss the upcoming renovations planned for the Olney Library. Joseph noted that the Library is 26 years old and well beyond when it should have been renovated. The following are some of the points made during his presentation and the question and answer period that followed:

- The way libraries function has changed over those 26 years and they have identified things that need to be changed to meet the needs of a contemporary library.
- The redesign will give them about 4,000 additional square feet of usable public space and the building will still be one-story.
- The estimated timeline is: Spring 2008 – complete conceptual plans and hold a public meeting to get comments on those plans; September 2009 – close facility to begin expansion and renovation; September 2010 – re-open renovated and expanded facility. Closing the facility makes the renovation go faster and less expensive.
- A large amount of the cost is to make the building more “green”.
- One goal of the redesign is to create a drive-up book drop.
- They will not be getting any additional staff, so the redesign needs to allow the staff to work more efficiently.
- The only parking they may lose is the spaces in the half circle in front of the building, but they already have more parking than they need for their existing size. So they will not need additional parking for the added space.
- They will weed their collection, store what they want to have when they reopen and sell the rest at Wheaton Library.
- Their architects have had a great deal of experience designing libraries.
- It will take about 6-8 weeks to clean out and store their collection after the library closes (can't do it while it is open) and then another 6-8 weeks at the end of the renovation to bring the collection back and get organized.
- There are no funds to relocate the library at this time to an alternative site and the timeframe is not working now.
- Staff will be reassigned to other libraries while they are closed, but they are hoping to continue to hold programs in other facilities in the area.
- The builder will probably not be selected for another year.
- They may look into a library kiosk to use while they are closed, but it is very costly.

- Some of the common themes in the comments they receive at meetings with staff and with the public are: the lack of visibility of the building from the road, a lack of focal point to the building, the inability to tell which is the front of the building, a lack of enough windows and natural light; a children's area that is not large enough, and no good teen area.
- The Library Advisory Committee (LAC) was not active when Mr. Eagan came to the Library, but he has re-energized it. He would like a representative from Homeland Village to serve on the LAC and they will work closely with Homeland's HOA as they move through the renovation process.

### **OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Treasurer's Report** – Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$8,063.41. Expenditures of \$457.00 during the last month included costs for the GOCA Awards Ceremony and for attendance of one of the GOCA officers at the County's Affordable Housing Conference.

**Correspondence Report** – Bob Beard reported that the correspondence included a postcard from SHA on the ICC, and vacancy announcements from Brookville for a town clerk and a manager for the Brookeville Academy.

**Olney Chamber of Commerce Report** – Joe Buffington thanked Barbara Falcigno for her service as GOCA President. He also noted that the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee made a presentation on the draft Illustrative Concept Plan for the town center at the Chamber's Breakfast meeting in February. There was a lot of discussion about the plan and the Chamber is still collecting comments from their members. Also, they have been talking with State Highway Administration (SHA) staff about the problems at the Rte. 108 entrance to the Olney Shopping Center. SHA's suggestion for making that entrance right in-right out only is off the table. One possibility being discussed is placing the flexible poles that fold down when driven over to help delineate when cars should move into the right turn lane that runs from the post office to Rte. 97. Traffic levels at Headwaters Dr and Homeland Village Dr do not warrant traffic signals. Bob Beard reminded people that they should wait until after they pass Homeland Village Dr to move into the lane to turn right at the shopping center or at Rte. 97.

**Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC)** – Jim Smith reported that there were 11 guests at the last OTCAC meeting providing comments on the draft illustrative concept plan that have helped to improve the plan. There were concerns expressed about the absence of a small property owner on the Committee. The member from the Freeman Companies represents large property owners and the Committee felt that the member from the Chamber of Commerce represented the small property owners. However, the sense from the comments was that the Chamber represents small business owners, but not necessarily small property owners. The Committee is looking at addressing that issue. Another concern was the potential for increased rents after redevelopment and the impact on businesses renting space. Joe Buffington, Jr. gave a presentation focusing on the idea of identifying areas or building that are not necessarily designated historic, but are worth preserving to retain the character of the town center area of Olney. Some commenters felt Olney already had a nice design and did not want to be a Rockville or Kentlands. However, Jim felt that we did need a plan for growth and the Mixed-Use Town Center Zone provides the best model for moving forward. He noted, too, that Lisa Stancik had submitted a series of comments that addressed physical features in the town center and suggestions relating to the mix of businesses in the town center that have been forwarded to the Freeman Companies. He noted that the Committee is trying to be responsive to the comments they are receiving.

Bob Beard has been voted in by the Committee as the representative from GOCA. Since their last meeting, Sunita Bhatia has resigned because of increased work commitments and Mike Reilly is stepping down as the representative for the Freeman Companies and they will be nominating a replacement for him. The comment period for the draft illustrative concept plan has been extended to June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Joe Buffington noted that when he spoke at the OTCAC meeting he had outlined 5 concerns he had about the plan and noted that while he had attended several meeting where representatives of the OTCAC had spoken prior to the unveiling of the draft plan and he never understand the scope of what this plan was to do. He thought the Committee would be addressing things like façade materials, signage, streetscape, etc.; not a revamping of the whole town center. He also thought a 3-D plan would help give people a better sense of the relative height of buildings and that the plan needed a key to help understand the color of the buildings on the plan. He felt there was not enough representation of people in the town center on the Committee and they need more feedback. He noted that with no budget, it will be difficult for the Committee to properly advertise the plan. They have been told that it is up to the property owners to decide if they want to redevelop their land and how it will be redeveloped, but he noted that there have been instances in other areas where private land has been taken by eminent domain for public purpose use. Dr. Buffington felt the Committee needed to make presentations to each of the individual homeowners associations in the area. Sharon Dooley noted the town meeting that will take place during Olney Days that will include discussion of the Plan. There will also be another meeting at the Library to provide a long

period of time to ask questions about the plan. Barbara Falcigno noted that the Plan puts pictures to the words of the Master Plan to make it more understandable.

**Civic Federation Report** – Arnie Gordon reported that Chief Tom Carr, MC Fire and Rescue Service, spoke to the Federation about their budget situation and its impact on their effort to get their response time from 12 minutes to 6 minutes. They are considering whether to ask the County Executive to allow voters to turn absentee ballots in at County libraries.

**Membership Committee** – No report.

**Land Use Report** – Barbara Falcigno noted that

She testified before the Planning Board on the development proposal for the First Baptist Church of Wheaton for the Doherty property on Emory Church Road opposing the sewer and water category change requested by Church. GOCA had passed a motion some time ago opposing the category change because the 30% of impervious surfaces in the plan substantially exceeds the 9% impervious cap imposed in that area by the rural neighborhood cluster zone approved in the current Olney Master Plan. She had to leave before the Planning Board took any action, so did not know the final outcome. But the staff had recommended deferral until submission of their site plan. It goes to the Council next week and she plans to testify before the Technology and Environmental Committee.

Chuck Graefe testified for SEROCA in opposition to the plan. He felt that there needs to be a requirement for private institutional facilities (PIF's) to confer with abutting property owners and civic/homeowners associations in the sewer/water category change process; and that there needed to be some development guidelines for PIFs. David Reille, another SEROCA resident noted that they had put together a 2 page petition opposing the sewer/water category change and the construction of the church on this site. The plan includes a 2-story building a large parking lot. He asked for more support from GOCA in their opposition and noted that they might need some financial support in acquiring some legal support for their effort to oppose the proposal. Khalid Afzal noted that the sewer/water category change process does not require an applicant to communicate with abutting property owners, but they will be required to when they get to the site plan stage. The Park & Planning staff recommended denial, but the Planning Board said that they would approve the change if the Church was able to put together an acceptable site plan. The difficulty is that normally a site plan cannot be put together until the sewer/water category change is approved.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**InterCounty Connector (ICC) Update** - Sharon Dooley noted that GOCA had received a request from the Leisure World community for GOCA to sign a letter with them opposing the ICC. She noted that Dist 19 Delegates Roger Manno and Ben Kramer and Senator Mike Lennett have been working with the SHA on their proposed interim solution for traffic on Georgia Ave wanting to continue east or coming from the west when Phase A of the ICC ending at Georgia Ave is opened prior to Phase B being completed. Del. Manno noted it is clear that there has been an increasing awareness that the interim solution SHA is proposing will impact increasing numbers of communities. He commended Roy Peck and others for getting the SHA to consider their alternative solutions that move the end of Phase A to Rte. 28 directly. Del. Manno noted, too, that regardless of the pros or cons of any of the proposed solutions, most people do not want to see Phase A opened until Phase B is completed. The goal of the road is to carry traffic from I-370 to I-95, not to Georgia Ave; but despite the traffic problems created by opening the road at Georgia Ave while the rest of the road is being completed, SHA does not want to give up the revenue generated by the tolls from use of Phase A during the time the rest of the road is being built. While the road had been approved as a limited access road, he noted that within a few miles of the east of Georgia Ave there are 3 entrances, including the one at Georgia Ave.

Mr. Manno suggested that if a way of mitigating that revenue loss if the road is not opened can be found, the State may be willing to consider not opening the road. A suggestion he is making involves eliminating the interchange at Layhill Road which apparently was added to the plan late in the design of the road, keeping Phase A closed until the rest of the road is completed eliminating the need for two interim roads. The combined savings from those essentially equals the amount of the lost revenues. Several communities have agreed to sign a joint letter sending these recommendations to the State and are asking GOCA to sign the letter as well. In discussing the proposal, Paul Jarosinski noted that this seemed consistent with GOCA's earlier position in opposing the construction of the ICC. Sharon Dooley noted that Odessa Phillips, with SHA, had indicated to her (1) that SHA is still reviewing Roy's proposal which Odessa indicated may have some problems because it did not accommodate traffic in both directions, and (2) that the proposal to open Phase A of the ICC prior to completion of the full road is

to address traffic mitigation issues, not because of the revenue it would generate. Sharon noted this was a new position from SHA that is different from statements Odessa made at previous meetings where she said it was a question of revenue generation. Roy Peck indicated that he did not think that SHA was studying his proposal which did address two-way traffic, but some variation of it that only provided for one-way traffic. Del. Manno noted that he is trying to unify associations along this length of the road to strengthen their positions with the State.

**Arnie Gordon moved that it be resolved that:**

- (1) GOCA, IN CONCERT WITH OTHER CIVIC ASSOCIATIONS NOT WITHIN THE GREATER OLNEY AREA, SUPPORT, AS ITS MAIN OBJECTIVE, THE COMPLETION OF THE INTER-COUNTY CONNECTOR (ICC) BEFORE OPENING ANY INTERCHANGES PLANNED FOR GEORGIA AVENUE OR RTE 28 OR LAYHILL ROAD, AND**
- (2) GOCA OPPOSE ANY EXIT FROM THE ICC ONTO LAYHILL ROAD, IN ITS JUDGMENT SAME BEING UNNECESSARY AND DESTRUCTIVE OF LOCAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND THE ENVIRONMENT, AND**
- (3) SHOULD THE STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION DECIDE AGAINST OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE AS OUTLINED IN (1) ABOVE, GOCA REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE OPENING OF A TEMPORARY INTERSECTION AT RTE. 28 PRIOR TO OPENING OF THE GEORGIA AVENUE INTERCHANGE FOR THE ICC.**

**The motion was seconded by Steve Cohen and passed overwhelmingly.**

Before adjourning the meeting, Bob Beard reiterated that there will be a town meeting on Saturday, May 17<sup>th</sup>, during Olney Days 2008, between Joe's Ride and Stride and the Fun Fair and Fireworks at a location TBD. The program will consist of a 4-member panel discussing public safety, the OTCAC's draft illustrative concept plan, youth & education, and traffic & transit issues, followed by breakout sessions to discuss each of these topics. That event is being coordinated by Bob, Steve Cohen, and Matt Zaborski.

Following a few additional announcements, the meeting was adjourned at 10:15 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Kathleen Donedeo*

Kathleen Donedeo, Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:**

Khalid Afzal (M-NCPPC), Bob Beard (Homeland Village), Barbara Beccles (Norbeck Hills), Jackie and Danny Benn (Fair Hill Farms), Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Brad Branch (Olney Mill), Art Brodsky (Cherrywood), Bette & Dr. Joe Buffington (Buffington RE/MAX Real Estate), Joe Buffington, Jr (Chamber of Commerce), Keith Carlson (Hallowell), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Joseph Eagan (Olney Library), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), Jay Feinberg (Olney Oaks), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Chuck Graefe (SEROCA), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Dave Homick (Norbeck Farms Estates), Bill Jacobs (Highlands Condo Assn), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Debbie Kantes (Williamsburg Village BS Tr 264), Carolyn Knight (Olney Oaks), Anthony Laing (Olney Mill), Walter Lee (Environ, OTCAC), Del. Roger Manno (Dist 19), Tripp Marites (Williamsburg Village BS Tr 264), Jeremy Neufeld (Ashley Hollow BS Tr 264), Roy Peck (Norbeck Meadows), David Reile (SEROCA), Helene Rosenheim (Highlands/MCRSC/OTCAC). Jim Smith (Oatland Farms/OTCAC), Amato Stellato (Norbeck Farm Estates), Lisa Stancik (Homeland Village), Bret & Justine Stine (Brookeville Farms BS Tr 264), Anne Stretch (Cherrywood), Janet Terry (Olney Farmers & Artist Market), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), and Louis Wilen (Cherrywood).