

DRAFT MINUTES – June 10, 2008

The meeting was called to order by President Sharon Dooley. The minutes from the May meeting were approved with 2 changes on Pg 3 to Del Montgomery's comments, Ln 3 rewording reference to the internet, and the last Ln inserting the words "and health care workers", and 1 change on Pg 4, changing Membership Committee to Membership Report. The agenda was accepted with no additions.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- The Literacy Council is 50 years old. They currently have 500 tutors and help about 1100 students. However, they need more volunteers to help the 350 people on their waiting list. We were asked to let our members associations, and other organizations we network with know about their need for volunteers. They hold monthly orientation meetings where volunteers are trained. And, once trained, volunteers meet with the students they are tutoring 1hr – 2 times a week at local libraries, at the tutors' and the students' convenience. Tutors must be over 18 years old. The Council runs 2 programs, an ESOL program that works on language skills and a Literacy program that works on reading. The people being tutored are all adults and eager to learn.
- Paul Jarosinski noted that the current SHA data shows that 17,000 cars from the proposed ICC spur will need to turn left from Georgia Avenue onto the ICC across the southbound traffic on Georgia.
- Arnie Gordon reminded everyone about the Special Election on June 17th for the District 4 Congressional Seat and encouraged everyone to vote.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Current and Future CIP Recreation Department Projects in the Olney Area – Robin Riley, representing Jeff Bourne, Rec. Dept, Division Chief who was unable to attend at the last moment due to illness, noted that the Recreation Department has a development plan that was just renewed for the next 20 years. They want to make it a 5-year plan so that it is more consistent with the Parks Department. Over the next fiscal year, they will be updating the plan and they are looking for input from groups like GOCA. Robin displayed a map showing where the gaps in recreation facilities are around the County which showed that Olney is one of the areas having a gap.

Robin noted that the design and construction of the Mid-County Recreation Center, a new, 33,000 sq. ft. community center on Queensguard Rd on the east side of Layhill Rd, is underway. It is expected to be completed between 2009 and 2010; and there will be a public hearing on the design shortly. There is also a plan for a new outdoor pool in the Olney area, but a site has not been identified yet. They are looking at a combination of an indoor/outdoor facility because the outdoor pool can only be used for 3 months out of the year. This would allow a more steady revenue stream that would allow them to recoup the costs of construction more quickly.

Robin also noted that people should use the access cards the Recreation Department asks those using their facilities to present when they enter because it shows usage of facilities. The cards are free, but there are additional memberships that can be purchased for the use of features such as weight rooms, or for swimming programs. Access card data also helps with planning life-cycle replacements of equipment and making the most effective use of funding for replacing equipment.

The following are some of the points made during the question and answer period:

- Olney Manor Park is currently built out and there is no room for an outdoor pool. Parking is difficult there during the softball season. But, it is the Parks Dept's responsibility, especially for designating handicap spaces.
- Robin was involved in the development of the skate board park at Olney Manor and the Parks Dept. is now looking for a site for a BMX bike park.
- The timeline for construction of a new center is about 8 years, from beginning to end.
- There is still a large need in the northern areas of the County for recreation facilities.
- It would be helpful to do a comprehensive gym study. They did an inventory last year, but now they need to do an analysis of usage. Her sense is that there is more of a need in the down-county areas. They need a collaboration to do a complete inventory because they only have access to data on usage of Rec. Dept. facilities and there are a lot of other private facilities that have gym space the public uses.

- Getting to a 5-year planning cycle will lead to more discussions between the Rec and Parks Depts.
- The multiple features of an outdoor pool include lap lanes, a play area, and a “beach” entrance into the pool.
- Some funding for planning and design of the renovations of the Ross Boddy Center are scheduled for FY09 with the maximum amount of money programmed for FY11. There is some replacement funding in the current budget for some limited improvements there.
- There has been a decrease in the senior population involved in sports. And, youth sports are starting to specialize more.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer’s Report – No Report

Correspondence Report – Sharon Dooley reported that the correspondence included a notice of denial of a request by the Parks & Planning Commission for 3 houses in Sunshine, a preliminary plan for the Sunrise Senior Living Center on Rte. 108, a letter announcing an informal meeting on the Oaks Landfill Methane Energy Project, 10-year sewer and water plan amendments including the Wheaton Baptist Church on Emory Church Road, an announcement of 2 vacancies on the Board of Appeals, and a letter from the Zambelli Fireworks Co. regarding pricing increases next year.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington noted that the Chamber had held its annual awards dinner and officer installation just prior to the GOCA meeting. He noted that Brenda Egeland had been recognized for her work revitalizing their website. He also noted that National Night Out will take place on Tuesday, August 5th.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) Report– Helene Rosenheim noted that the OTCAC had participated in the town meeting during Olney Days and that Kim Damion had been selected as the newest member of Committee. She was nominated by the Carl M. Freeman Co for their seat on the Committee. Helene noted, too, that they are continuing to work on the illustrative concept for the Olney Master Plan and are beginning to work more on the development guidelines which is the second part of the concept. They are also working on a concept plan for a civic center in the town center.

Civic Federation Report – Arnie Gordon reported that the Civic Federation discussed (1) a proposal by Councilmember Leventhal to make a residence in Hillsmead Park a single affordable-housing project for a specific family. The Civic Federation feels it is a poor use of affordable housing funds; and (2) the proposal to charge for parking at certain libraries to address parking abuses near Metro stations which they also oppose. He also noted that they had referred the issue of proposed ambulance fees to committee so they will not likely have a position before September.

Membership Report – Matt Zaborsky reported that he is continuing to contact the 14 associations that have not paid dues from yet. The 20 paid associations are shown in bold on the GOCA website.

Land Use Report – No Report

President’s Report – Sharon Dooley noted that she has received several emails about the speed cameras on Georgia Avenue just north of King William Drive and one asking why the speed limit on Georgia Avenue coming into the town center is 30 mph, but it is 35 mph on Rte. 108.

OLD BUSINESS

State Highway Administration Issues – Sharon Dooley reported that she had written to the State Highway Administration (SHA) requesting the status of the decision on the ICC spur on Georgia Avenue, and requesting again that the ICC not be opened until it is complete. She had received an email reply that did not really supply answers to all of her questions and indicated that they would have more information by the end of June. Del. Montgomery had noted that she had heard from SHA and it appears they are seriously considering Roy’s approach, but they are going to open the road in phases. She also noted that the governor wants the road to move ahead, so he is not very interested in considering alternatives at this point. Contracts have been issued and he feels pressed to move ahead. She and Del. Kaiser tried to stop the Garvey funds, but they were only able to get 40 of the 70 votes they needed to pass the legislation.

Paul Jarosinski noted that the Cherrywood HOA is considering filing a complaint because they had not been notified by the SHA, as the HOA had requested, about the recent public meetings on the ICC. Cherrywood is also

concerned about why they are not getting any answers to some of their questions about why we can not do the connection the community asked for. He noted, too, that the funding for the spur will be available in July, so he is not surprised that we will not be getting answers until the end of June. Dave Eskenazi suggested that the community needs to continue to push with the delegation and with SHA. Paul felt that GOCA still needs to show traffic analysis to show how adding 56,000 cars north and south to the Rte. 28/97 intersection will impact it. Arnie Gordon noted this will also negatively impact Emory Lane. Sharon indicated she would forward her letter to the Delegations for both District 14 and 19 and ask them to contact SHA to oppose the spur and in support of Roy's approach. It was noted that we need to convince the shopping center owner at Rte. 28 that Roy's approach will not be negatively impact the center.

Norman Holly with Leisure World's Impact group noted that they had sent a letter to the Governor, who forwarded it to Neal Pedersen. Mr. Pedersen met with them, but they felt he had not been very responsive. They collected 3,000-4,000 signatures from Leisure World residents and they are willing to join forces with other organizations to express their opposition to the ICC. Mr. Holly also noted that there has not been any discussion in the State Legislature of the fact that the road will cost \$4 billion more than projected based on 2004 dollars. Without a guarantee that the State will get the future Garvey bonds from the Federal Government, they believe it is possible that they will not have the funds needed to complete the whole road and Phase A may be all that gets built.

With respect to pedestrian safety issues on Rte. 108, Sharon read an email reply from the SHA engineer, Jeffrey Wentz, in which he indicated that they could not implement any of the recommendations GOCA made for addressing the problems at the entrance to the Olney Shopping Center, in several cases because of a lack of funding in the FY09 budget and a lot of competition for those funds. It may be possible to have the red arrow on Rte. 108 at Rte. 97 heading east for the right turn on red when a pedestrian pushes a button to cross Rte. 108. She noted that she had replied indicating that we would be willing to be part of a pilot program. She also noted that Sgt. Pries, the daytime sergeant at the Olney Satellite Station, is planning to distribute information to local high school students on pedestrian safety through PROJECT CHANGE and OBGC. It was also suggested that people write stories to the Gazette about unsafe incidents they have been involved with.

Olney Town Meeting – Steve Cohen noted that GOCA had held a town meeting during this year's Olney Days. He had been very pleased with the level of participation in the discussion of all four of the topics covered – youth/education, public safety, transportation/transit, and the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee's draft Illustrative Concept of the Olney Master Plan. The facility, Oakdale Emory Church, had been excellent and the Church was very accommodating. He was, however, disappointed in the turnout which was approximately 50 people. One nice thing was that they heard from people they normally would not hear from at a GOCA meeting.

Olney Days 2008 – Helene Rosenheim noted that she had declared the weekend a success. The rain had not only reduced the turnout of spectators for the parade, but it had probably cut the parade in half. But aside from that, all the other events had come off very well with good turnouts. She is still calculating the cost of the event, but noted that there had been several new costs this year. There will be a wrap up meeting shortly to help identify what worked and didn't work so things can be improved next year.

Channel 21 TV Show About Olney – Lisa Stancik reported that the tape of the first episode of the Olney Loop is "in the can." It will be aired sometime during July, but she does not have an exact date and time yet. It includes a 15-minute segment where a number of people answered the top ten questions they received. She asked for volunteers to help respond to future questions for this monthly program.

NEW BUSINESS

Proposed Ambulance Fees – Arnie Gordon reported that Civic Federation had been contacted by the County Executive seeking their support of legislation that would allow the County to collect fees paid by health insurance companies will pay for ambulance service. No one would be denied service, and patients will not be asked or approached about payment until the point when they are asked to complete other admissions paperwork at the hospital. Sharon noted that representatives from the Dept. of Fire and Rescue Services and the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department will give presentations at the July GOCA meeting.

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

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Donodeo

Kathleen Donodeo, Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Benny Bienvenue (Our House Youth Home), Art Brodsky (Cherrywood), Joe Buffington (Chamber of Commerce), Keith Carlson (Hallowell), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Andrea Cunningham (Olney Oaks), Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Jim Haddow (Hallowell), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Norman Holly (Leisure World), Paul Jarosinski, Sharon & Jim Lasewell (Hallowell), Walter Lee (Environ, OTCAC), Diane Littlefield (Olney Acres), Jeannette Mendonca (Senator Rona Kramer's Office), Bill Mercado (Mercado Consultants), Ryan Mercado (RPMS), Del. Karen Montgomery (District 14), Astrid Pages (James Creek), Ravi Parkhia (TMGH), Robin Riley (Dept. of Rec.), Keith Robinson (Brookeville Knolls), Helene Rosenheim (Highlands/MCRSC/OTCAC), Robin Shea (Oatland Farm), Everal Smith (Olney Oaks), Lisa Stancik (Homeland Village), Lori & Louis Wilen (Cherrywood), Catherine Womack (James Creek), and Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows).