

DRAFT MINUTES – October 9, 2008

The meeting was called to order by President Sharon Dooley. The minutes from the September meeting were approved with 2 typographical corrections (Pg 1 copies should be copays, repaving should be patching and 1 addition of the Membership Report. The agenda was accepted with 1 change (Bob Beard to speak for the OTCAC) and 1 addition to New Business.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Janet Terry noted that the Olney Farmers Market organizers have suggested having a special Buy Local, Eat Local Night in Olney to encourage people to shop in Olney and support local businesses. You would pick a night and set hours such as 4:00-8:00 pm. The Farmers Market would distribute flyers and advertise all the participating stores at the Market. They would ask each participating business to pay \$35 to cover costs of promoting the event. They have spoken to several merchants who thought it was a good idea. Joe Buffington thought the Olney Chamber would support this idea and Sharon Dooley suggested presenting the idea to the Chamber. Janet asked GOCA's help getting the word out. Ruth Laughner noted that the Market is holding a raffle drawing and encouraged those at the meeting to purchase a chance.
- Eric Bailey, Special Events Coordinator for Olney Theatre, noted that there is a lot happening at the Theatre. Jim Petosa has decided to stay and is in his 30th year with the Theatre. They have a new managing director. National Players is starting their 60th year. The Theatre is celebrating its 70th year. Tickets are on sale for the Tray McIntyre Dance Troupe, a nationally recognized dance troupe, and on November 8th there will be an after-performance "meet and greet" with the Troupe. The 70th Anniversary Gala was postponed from October to December 8th so that it could include the cast of Peter Pan in the event with a theme of Never Grow Up. They are still looking for items for a silent auction. They are hoping for a large community support and a profitable event so that the theatre can continue for another 70 years.
- Arnie Gordon noted that Civic Federation is hosting the first of five seminars on Oct. 18th in the lobby auditorium of the Executive Office Building. The topic for this seminar is "Procedures & Laws in the Zoning Process. Future topics are: "Special Exceptions – How To Get Them & How To Oppose Them," "Liability of Civic Groups and Their Officers," "Lobbying Elected Officials," Processing an Appeal of Tax Assessment." Paul Jarosinski asked that the dates be posted on the GOCA website or in the minutes.
- Arnie also noted that there will be a meeting the following Thursday night with the St. Peter's Athletic Association regarding their interest in leasing the Oakdale Middle School site on Cashell Rd. The Association has indicated that they do not plan to put in lights, or build anything other than a storage shed, There are concerns that they will build more than they indicate, about security at night, and parking. The Norbeck Meadows CA does not oppose this use, but want some of these issues addressed in the terms of their lease.
- Roy Peck noted that the Norbeck Meadows CA is sponsoring a "bulb dig" on the berm on Georgia Avenue in the ICC right-of-way on Community Service Day on October 25th from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. The State Highway Administration (SHA) has agreed to let the public remove the bulbs, but anyone interested in participated needed to let Roy know ahead of time, so SHA could have enough hard hats and neon vests for each person. Individuals under 18 can't dig, but can work along the bike path and help there. The bulbs can not be sold. Sharon Dooley thanked Roy for coordinating this event.
- Brenda Egeland, the GOCA webmaster, noted that she would be making some major changes to the website over the next few weeks and encouraged people to visit the website and let her know of any problems they see or comments they have. Anyone with comments, or interested in helping her manage the website should contact her at webmaster@goca.org.
- Ed Weisel read a letter he sent to the State legislators regarding problems with deer in Montgomery County. The deer are foraging around people's homes and the deer he's seen appear undernourished. He was hoping to encourage them to implement a deer management program to relocate the deer to a less residential area or at least set up temporary feeding stations. It was noted that the County will do controlled hunts during the winter.
- Paul Jarosinski noted that with the projected State budget deficits and the delay of other road projects, some legislators are talking about stopping the ICC and using the ICC funding for other State road projects.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

League of Women Voter's Overview of the 2008 Election Ballot Questions– Sharon Dooley introduced Melkic Jeffries to present an overview of the four ballot questions. She noted that the League of Women Voters was founded in 1920 to help women become more informed voters. Their organization both lobbies and prepared pro and con information on candidates and issues. She then outlined the pros and cons of the 4 ballot questions on the November 2008 ballot.

PEPCO Tree Cutting Policy – This discussion was postponed as the PEPCO representatives were not at the meeting.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report – Roy Peck reported that the current balance in the accounts had been \$5,275.17. With receipts, including \$2,600 from Joe's Ride and checks written that evening the new balance is \$7,848.17. Matt Zaborsky asked that the minutes reflect that he had signed a \$25 stipend check to the League of Women Voters under protest as he objected to GOCA having to pay the stipend.

Correspondence Report – Bob Beard reported that the correspondence included a letter from Zambelli explaining that there will be an increase in the cost of next year's fireworks, applications for a variety of County volunteer boards, the Recycling newsletter, and a notice about Potomac Day 10/18.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington thanks the community for its support of this year's Olney Community Night and Taste of Olney.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) Report– Bob Beard reported that the OTCAC approved the Illustrative Town Center Concept of the Olney Master Plan. This completes phase 1 of 3 the Committee is charged with. This will be presented to the Planning Board and the Phed Committee over the next few months. In Phase 2, they are working on getting input on a concept plan for a town commons/civic center to learn what the community wants included in that design. We have already talked with the Farmers' Market. The third phase is development designs for the town center to encourage continuity in appearance throughout the town center.

Bob also noted that Joe Buffington is chairing a subcommittee of the small property owners and some residents in the town center. He noted what a valuable member Jim Haddow has been of the Outreach Committee. One top questions they have heard through their outreach efforts has been about the movie theatre. In recent conversations with the Freeman Co. the Committee has learned that they are working very hard to continue having a movie operator, but it may not be the current operator, and they do not have a date for redevelopment of the lower shopping center. It will be designed so that the plan can be extended into the upper center in the future when they are ready to redo the top center. That won't happen for a number of years.

Civic Federation Report – Arnie Gordon noted that they also had a presentation by the League of Women Voters and voted to oppose the question on slot machines and to support the Ficker amendment, Question B. In addition, they voted to support the forest conservation legislation introduced to the County Council by Councilmember Marc Elrich.

Membership Report – Matt Zaborsky reported that we currently have 26 paid member associations. The most recent to submit dues was Williamsburg Village. He is expecting to receive payment from Christie Estates by the end of the week. He thanked those who have paid their dues for their continued support of GOCA.

President's Report – Sharon Dooley noted the good article in the Gazette outlining all that is going on in Olney because it shows what a vibrant community Olney is. She testified before the County Council regarding issues with the Farmers Market relating to their dealings with the Health Department on vendors providing sample of their food for shoppers to taste. They have been telling the Market that vendors cannot give samples. Another issue they are trying to resolve relates to restaurants with a license having to pay for an additional license fee every two weeks to provide food at the Market.

There will be a public hearing before the Park and Planning Commission's Planning Board the following Thursday on the Sunshine Senior Living project on Rte. 108. There was a consensus that it was a concern that the developer did not come back to present the changes to their plan. Barbara Falcigno noted that they had reduced

the number of beds in their facility and they have been working with the Rings with respect to the lighting so it would not negatively affect the Rings' property,

OLD BUSINESS

State Highway Administration Issues – Sharon Dooley reported that the Chamber is continuing to work with SHA and had received a letter from them relating to a number of issues at the entrance to the Olney Shopping Center. The letter had not been sent to GOCA directly. She hoped to continue working with the Chamber on this issue. Sharon also noted that SHA will not be using all of the \$5 million from the State's street safety fund intended for use to build the temporary spur for the ICC with the alternative they are building. So, she asked SHA about the possibility of that unused balance to fund some of the proposed improvements for Rte. 97/108 intersection. Roy Peck noted a letter he received regarding SHA plans to restrip Emory Rd at Georgia Avenue to create 1 dedicated left lane, 1 left turn-straight-right turn lane, and 1 right turn lane. Bob Beard noted that coming from the Olney Manor Park, they recently changed the lanes so there is one left turn lane and one straight-right turn lane and he felt it should be the other way around with the left turn and straight traffic in one lane, so the right turns did not have to wait for the straight traffic to get the green light. Dave Eskenazi noted that we have been working with SHA on a number of issues and should be getting an update from them shortly since they had agreed to report their progress periodically to GOCA on some of the outstanding issues.

Ambulance Fee Proposal – Sharon noted that GOCA had tabled action on the County's proposal to collect ambulance fees till the Council had done worked on it more. Arnie Gordon noted that the Civic Federation had opposed the fees, even for out-of-county residents. Sharon noted that he son is a firefighter and he had indicated to her that jurisdictions all over the country collect these fees. Matt Zaborsky noted that Montgomery County is the only jurisdiction in the area that doesn't collect the fees. Sharon also noted that the proposed fees are lower than the fees in most of the surrounding jurisdictions. There was some discussion about the need for the legislation to make it clear that the funding raised through these fees will go to the Fire and Rescue Service.

The motion made by Arnie Gordon at the June 2008 meeting that had been tabled stated that:

GOCA ENDORSE THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE'S EFFORTS TO COLLECT AMBULANCE FEES BY REFERRAL TO PATIENTS' HEALTH INSURANCE WITHOUT THE PATIENTS BEING SUBJECT TO DEDUCTIBLES OR COPAYS AND WITH THE UNINSURED NOT BEING BILLED FOR SUCH FEES.

THE MOTION HAD BEEN SECONDED BY KEITH SNYDER. FOLLOWING A BRIEF DISCUSSION, THE MOTION PASSED.

Funding for Bicycles for the County Police's Olney Satellite Facility – Sharon noted that there had been a proposal at the last meeting that GOCA donate enough money to pay for half of one of the 3 bicycles the police were trying to purchase for patrolling in the Olney area. Since the article appeared in the Gazette, a resident had offered to pay for one and the Chamber is paying for one. After reviewing the budget, there is sufficient funds in the budget to allow GOCA to make the donation discussed the previous month.

Bob Beard moved that:

GOCA DONATE \$600 TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF A BICYCLE FOR THE POLICE DEPARTMENT'S OLNIEY SATELLITE STATION.

The motion was seconded by Paul Jarosinski and passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board – Matt Zaborsky, who represents the Olney community on the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board and currently serves as their Vice Chair, gave a brief overview of this board. The Board has created by the County in 1978 and has 15 members from throughout the Mid-County Region area. Increased community outreach is one of their goals for the 2008-2009 year. Some of the issues they have dealt with recently include the ambulance fees and code enforcement issues. A major part of their role is to advise the County Executive and County Council on issues of concern to resident of the Mid-County service area. That area extends east and west of Georgia Avenue from the Beltway to the Howard County line.

Proposed County Forest Conservation Legislation – Arnie Gordon noted that Councilmember Marc Elrich had introduced legislation to tighten regulations relating to cutting trees in the County to protect the County's tree

canopy which had been reduced by 80%. The loss of the tree canopy leads to flooding and other environmental problems. The legislation would extend coverage of the regulation to County government development projects as well. The legislation would apply to project involving more than 40,000 sq. ft. Beginning at 40,000 sq. ft, 5,000 sq. ft. of tree coverage must be retained. It was noted that Park and Planning has opposed the legislation because they feel they have a better amendment to propose, but Sharon did not agree that it was better.

Arnie Gordon moved that:

GOCA SUPPORT COUNCILMEMBER ELRICH'S AMENDMENTS TO THE FOREST CONSERVATION LEGISLATION.

Ed Weisel seconded the motion and after a brief discussion, the motion passed.

Following a reminder that there will be a 9/11 vigil at the Rte. 97/108 intersection on Thursday at 7:30 pm, the meeting was adjourned at 10:27 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Donodeo

Kathleen Donodeo, Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Bob Beard (Homeland Village), Jackie & Danny Benn (Fair Hill Farm), Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Benny Bienvenue (Our House), Brad Branch (Olney Mill), Joe Buffington (Olney Chamber), Keith Carlson (Hallowell), Jovan Chapman (Sanmore Hill), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Jim Haddow (Hallowell), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Ruth Laughner (Olney Farmers Market), Walter Lee (Environ, OTCAC), Astrid Pages (James Creek), Roy Peck (Norbeck Meadows), Theresa Kyne Robinson (Olney Oaks), Helene Rosenheim (Highlands/MCRSC/OTCAC), Janet Terry (Olney Farmers Market), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Lori Wilen (Cherrywood), and Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows).