

DRAFT MINUTES – April 14, 2009

The meeting was called to order by President Sharon Dooley. The minutes from the March meeting were approved. The agenda was accepted.

Public Comments

- Roy Peck talked of the problems with dump trucks on Emory Lane not staying within the ICC work zone. It was suggested that Roy should take a picture and send it to Terri at the Gazette. Captain Nancy Demmie offered to provide GOCA with the name of the police contact assigned to the ICC.
- Matt Zaborsky informed the meeting of the new Dog Park at the Olney Manor Park planned to open by the end of the Summer or early Fall. Currently two possible sites were being considered and there was a map available on the Parks website. Bids were being taken now from proposed contractors.
- Matt Zaborsky asked for a show of hands from delegates of those interested in reinstating Community Conversation prior to the GOCA delegates meeting. These sessions had been poorly attended in the past but were a good way to get some informal information on prevalent issues. Most in attendance felt that the meetings were long enough already and there seemed to be very little interest among those present.
- Bob Beard of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee and Lori Wilen, informed the meeting of the new lights currently being installed at Olney Manor Park. These would be tournament quality and would replace all the existing lights.
- Ms. Holt of the Sandy Spring museum passed out information flyers on the upcoming summer camps at the museum which would provide attendees with lots of hands on participation and adult supervision. Ms. Holt talked about the museum gala the following Saturday and invited all to attend. She also asked for volunteers for the Strawberry Festival in June which this year was going to begin with a parade honoring Dr. Byrd. Flyers were passed out about the festival.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Volunteerism in the County: Sharon Dooley welcomed the first of the presenters to talk on the subject of volunteerism in the County. Bunny Gordon was introduced from VASAP (The Victim Assistance and Sexual Assault Program). Bunny had been with the program 8 years and said that the program was made up of 35 men and women all who would be the first to the scene of an assault or rape who could talk to the victim and help them when they were most vulnerable. Each outreach volunteer had to attend a series of specialized trainings. Bunny passed out informational flyers on VASAP and another sheet on the trainings and responsibilities of volunteers. She told the group that the assigned volunteer would stay with the victim through the whole of the process until the victim was ready to leave either the police station or hospital. She asked that those interested in volunteering their time contact the address on the flyer. VASAP is manned 24/7 365 days a year so is always in need of good volunteers.

Next to present on the subject of volunteerism in the County was Reed Dewey, Director of the Montgomery County Volunteer Center. Mr. Dewey passed around an informational pamphlet which outlines the services available at the Montgomery County Volunteer Center. Mr. Dewey's goal currently was to get civic associations involved in promoting volunteering in the County. Mr. Dewey talked of the opportunities for volunteers and also the opportunities available to leaders for trainings and brown bag monthly meetings where leadership in the County is discussed. The whole plan is to make it a positive experience to volunteer and to be a leader of volunteers. Mr. Dewey mentioned the hopes to set up a special group in the future for volunteer leaders and also position shadowing opportunities for volunteers. Mr. Dewey passed along his email address: Reed.Dewey@montgomerycountymd.gov and hoped that those interested in volunteering, leadership positions or just those with questions email him.

Local Police Update: Sharon Dooley introduced Captain Nancy Demmie, other representatives from the local police force and a representative from the State's Attorney's Office for our district. Captain Demmie told us that in the County in general there are very few rapes. In the past month for the Wheaton district there had been no rapes or murders. Of the rapes that do occur nearly all are acquaintance rapes and many have alcohol attributed to them. In the County as a whole very few rapes are stranger rapes. In the past month in the district encompassing Olney there was 18 robberies. There had been 13 in the previous month. There had been just 4 aggravated assaults in a 6 month period. Burglary was the more prevalent crime with 21 residential burglaries in the last 6 months of which 5 were unlocked garage doors. Safe neighborhoods often become complacent, Captain Demmie explained and to help with this it was hoped that the blue card campaign would be starting up again. Of the residential burglaries only 7 were forced entry. Auto theft was on the decline each month with 15 stolen cars in the last 4 month period. The biggest problem in our community was theft from autos.

This was an opportunistic crime, Captain Demmie told us. She said that even if a GPS was not visible often where it had been suctioned to the windshield there was a very visible spot. Money was often left in cars along with laptops, cell phones and other electrical devices. Cars were often left unlocked. Captain Demmie thanked GOCA for their contribution to the 4 bikes, uniforms, etc., that were being donated to the Olney sub-station. It was hoped that once the first bikes were in use after the officers who will be using them had completed a rigorous training in bike school, there would be an event to introduce the bikes to the community. Currently the media was working with the police on this event. Questions were asked about the safety of metro stations and the bus stops at the stations as well as shopping centers and malls and Captain Demmie informed us that quite often the people that were at and about at metro stations were homeless folks who lend to the perception of these areas being unsafe. 7 extra officers had been assigned to patrol these areas. Captain Demmie told us that the manager of the Westfield Center was very proactive regarding crime and that he does all he can within his power to keep the mall safe. It was hoped that Dick's Sporting Goods would come to Wheaton in January 2010. Captain Demmie finished her presentation by advising us of a new law regarding recreational and commercial vehicle parking on residential streets. Green warning cards were going to be placed on vehicles on residential streets that were deemed to be more than 10,000 lbs., more than 1 ton capacity, or longer than 21 feet, or more than 8feet high. Questions were asked about neighborhood vandalism. Captain Demmie said that most of the vandalism can be attributed to kids. The police will follow up on every call and apprehend when they can but she emphasized that although these crimes seemed petty they should be reported to the non emergency number. The more calls they received the better because over time they could piece together suspect descriptions, etc., from the information received from multiple reports. Questions were asked about the usage of the Park and Ride Facility at 97 and Norbeck. We were informed that the facility is used and that there is a police presence at the facility. Captain Demmie wrapped up her presentation by encouraging the community to call with any reports of any crimes and to watch for the date of the event to be announced to unveil the bikes.

The last presenter in this unit was Joy Young of Crime Solvers of Montgomery County Maryland, Inc. Ms. Young told the meeting that Crime Solvers was part of the larger international organization, Crimestoppers. Crime Solvers works very closely with the police force and State's Attorney's office. They ask for tips which could come from a family member, a stranger, a friend of the family or just somebody to happen to pass by. Tippers are given a monetary award up to \$1,000 for any tip leading to the arrest and indictment in connection to specific felony crimes. Currently Crime Solvers is in desperate need of funds to be able to pay for tips. Most of the current tips were about drug deals in neighborhoods and typically there would be 2 tips a week but that was very general as some weeks there could be a lot more and some weeks none at all.

The representative from the State's Attorney's office made a brief comment at this point stating that her office was working very actively on drug activity which was largely based on calls coming in.

Aunt Hattie's Place: Sharon Dooley introduced Dr. Hattie Washington and Gregory Dillon who presented architectural drawings of the proposed addition to Aunt Hattie's Place. Dr. Washington told us that she is currently in her 12 the year as a foster home for boys between the ages of 12 and 19. She told us of her success and that she currently has 5 boys in college including one at Hopkins and one at Frostburg. She pushes to have them housed in a family situation but when that is not possible she offers Aunt Hattie's place as a viable nurturing, family oriented alternative. She has other facilities in the Baltimore area and all facilities have 24 hour supervision with 3 shifts a day covering a 24 hour period. For the proposed new Aunt Hattie's Place, Dr. Washington planned to live in the old house which she is currently sharing with the boys and have the new home for the boys in the back. She was also proposing a bonus room over the new garage to house college boys who would return to Aunt Hattie's Place during college vacations. These would be boys who did not have families to return to. Dr. Washington feels that she has been very lucky in her life and sees this as her way as giving back to the community and sees Aunt Hattie's Place as her ministry in life. Currently there is a trailer on site at the property and the contract was being signed and Dr. Washington hoped to move forward with the construction as soon as possible. All present agreed that the drawings were beautiful and in keeping with the residential neighborhood. Dr. Washington finished her presentation by saying how proud she was to be one of the few foster homes being chosen and allowed to build when others are being forced to close.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

Treasurer's Report:

Roy reported there was \$7,968.36 in the checking account before expenses and deposits he had learned of at the meeting tonight. He advised that he would be passing the books to Matt Zaborsky who would take them for the next month and give the report at the next meeting while he was away.

Correspondence Report:

Ruth advised that she was checking the P.O. Box regularly as 2 more dues checks were expected. Sharon reported receiving a letter in the mail that the Planning Board had approved the application for Sunrise but this crossed with correspondence that Sunrise had sold the property and was withdrawing their application.

Chamber of Commerce Report:

Joe Buffington asked that he be allowed to talk next meeting about a Buy Local campaign that the Chamber was launching.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee Report:

Bob Beard said he had 3 quick points to make. The first was that he wanted to thank GOCA for the award to Jim and Nancy. Secondly, there was an idea that as a temporary measure that there be red flags available at the intersection of 97 and 108 that pedestrians could pick up and carry across; and thirdly that the Town Center Advisory Committee in future would be using the Community Room at the Buffington Building instead of the library for their meetings on the 4th Tuesday of each month. Answering a question regarding the lower shopping center, Bob Beard said that at this time the shopping center was scheduled to have just a facelift and that no applications had to be made to Parks and Planning if no actual changes in the structure were happening.

Civic Federation Report:

Arnie reported that the Civic Federation had met and unanimously adopted to support Ike's budget even though it look liked there was going to be the prospect of a \$750 million deficit next year and at least 400 positions eliminated. It also was looking likely that STEP increases were going to be eliminated next year along with Cola's.

Transportation Report:

Dave reported that he had been involved in a conversation regarding the cross hatching in front of the library restricting right turns and was hoping that this was going to be reviewed. Dave asked that consideration be given to the intersection of Muncaster Mill and Emory Lane and also the right turn on to Georgia Avenue from Emory Lane. Dave also asked State Highways that in future GOCA and the Chamber be notified of lane closures as a result of the ICC construction so that the word can be gotten to the community. Dave was referring to an incident where a construction crew from the ICC had hit a gas line reducing traffic to 1 lane on Georgia Avenue. It was felt that no effort was being made to detour traffic when necessary and that Georgia Avenue could become a parking lot on occasions. Dave asked State Highways that somebody is made responsible for informing homes and businesses of such issues as the dangers from a gas line being hit and that nobody is notified. Dave has been chasing the ICC folks on a number of issues including the various different responses he had received to clear cutting trees. Dave felt that their had to be better means of communication to be keep us in the loop and preserve the quality of life while the ICC was being constructed. Roy talked of a newspaper article entitled "No more salt please" mentioning ammonia being put in water and leaching lead in the water of especially older homes.

Membership Report:

Matt Zaborsky reported that we had received \$2300 in dues and \$800 in fireworks contributions. He believed that North Creek was coming back as part of GOCA. He stated that at this time he did not foresee us receiving any further fireworks donations from HOA's or Civic Associations. When questioned on the neighbor of voting delegates, Matt said that we had 27 HOA/Civic Associations as members of GOCA with 54 votes. Paul Jarosinski asked that at the next meeting numbers be provided of what is needed for quorum including Presidents for life with votes so that we could adhere to the GOCA Bylaws. Matt said he would provide these figures at the May meeting. Matt then talked about the reinstatement of committees and asked that delegates please contact any Executive Board member if they would like to express an interest in serving on a committee.

President's Report:

Sharon stated that she had spoken as one of 9 speakers from Olney at the Board of Transportation hearings regarding the #53 bus. There were 30 people from Olney at the meeting and Sharon presented the Board with a petition containing over 250 names. She was planning on testifying at the budget hearings on the same issue on Thursday. Sharon had submitted a letter asking to speak since the number of speakers was being limited.

Olney Days Report:

Helene circulated a sign up sheet for volunteers. Town Center had granted permission for the Sunday band concert from 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Project Change was in the process of getting a band from each of the high schools – Blake, Sherwood and Magruder. Rocketeria was in charge of providing the professional band. This event was being advertised as family oriented and not teen oriented. The only likely expense at this time would be for security as Rocketeria was picking up all the other expenses connected to this event.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEROCA had planned to come and talk about the proposed church on Emory Church but they were having a meeting that tonight and were planning to come next month to GOCA to give an update and state their position.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Wilen

Lori Wilen, Recording Secretary

PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE:

Roy Peck (GOCA); Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows); Terri Hogan (Gazette); Jackie Benn (Fair Hill Farm); Danny Benn (Fair Hill Farm); Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village); Charles Kuebler (James Creek); Walter Lee (Townes at Environ); Joy Young (Crime Solvers of Montgomery County, MD, Inc.); Shan Holt (Sandy Spring Museum); Bob Beard (Homeland Village); Selena Singleton (Office of Donna Edwards); Therese Lynn Robinson (Olney Oaks); Joe Buffington (Olney Chamber of Commerce); Keith Carlson (Hallowell); Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood); Fran Sloan (Cherrywood); Helene Rosenheim (Mid County Regional Services Center); Reed Dewey (Montgomery County Volunteer Center); Ellen Bogage (Victoria Springs); Jim Haddow (Hallowell); Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows); Sharon Dooley (James Creek); Lori Wilen (Cherrywood); Larry Solomon (Norbeck Grove); Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows)