

Minutes
July 13, 2010

President Matt Zaborsky called the meeting to order at 7:30, and after introductions Ellen Bogage approved the agenda and Arnie Gordon seconded it. Barbara Falcigno approved, and Arnie Gordon seconded, the minutes.

MESSAGE from PRESIDENT

To clarify GOCA's policy for election year campaign activity, Matt Zaborsky read the board's new rules for GOCA's meetings.

1. During introductions at GOCA's monthly meetings, everyone is permitted to state only their name, position in the GOCA organization, and community represented. Candidates are to simply state their name, the position and district for which they are running, and the community in which they live.
2. During election years there will be a separate table in the back of the room for candidate literature. This would keep it separate from the table with the presenters' information and the agenda, minutes, and other GOCA/Olney related information.
3. During the Public Comments and Announcements segments of the meetings, only business related comments and announcements would be permitted by attendees. Political candidates could only discuss their campaign events before or after the official GOCA meeting time, before 7:30 and after 9:35 or whenever the meeting adjourns.

Notes:

1. A poster and handouts on the official GOCA table will inform all candidates of the GOCA meeting rules. GOCA By-Laws will be updated with these new rules.
2. These new rules will be announced during election years at the beginning of each GOCA meeting after the president introduces himself or herself.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Matt Zaborsky announced the next GOCA meeting is on September 14th. Arnie asked that the date be changed because of the conflict with the primary election that evening.

Danny Benn thanked those who had attended the Relay for Life.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

A. Update on the relocation of the First Baptist Church of Wheaton – Chuck Graefe

Mr. Graefe shared that on 07/13/10, 19 people testified against building the church on Emory Church Road in Olney and 14 testified in favor of it. He said that about six organizations favor Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 10-07, which specifies that Parking for more than 50 vehicles is allowed only if the entrance to the parking is located within 500 feet of: 1) an arterial road; or 2) a road at least 4 lanes wide.

Questions/Statements:

Barbara Falcigno reminded us the hearing will close 09/03/10 and urged us to send letters of support for ZTA 10-07 to council members.

Ellen Bogage pointed we need to ensure the ZTA is an agenda item in a Montgomery County Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee meeting and should send our emails to Mike Knapp.

B. Report on the ICC – State Highway Administration (SHA):

Ms. Melinda Peters, Director of the Intercounty Connector (ICC)

Ms. Carla Julian, Community Liaison for the ICC

Ms. Kate Mazzara, Project Engineer and Assistant District Engineer

Mr. Vernon Stinnett, Assistant District Engineer for Maintenance

Mr. Kay Adenaiya, Traffic Team Leader for Montgomery County

Ms. Christy Fang, Traffic Engineer

Ms. Peters shared that 80% of Contract A has been completed, and it would be finished in late 2010 or early 2011. She recommended we visit the website <http://www.iccproject.com/> for ICC progress. Carla Julian said that the five lanes northbound on the ICC Georgia Avenue Bridge will be reduced to three lanes by the end of the summer and the three lanes south will open in mid-late September. There is a temporary connection to Route 28 that will prevent a burden at Route 28 and 97. Also, cues for turns have been added to Route 28 between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road.

Arnie Gordon pointed out there is an abrupt beginning of a sound wall facing Norbeck Meadows, and Carla Julian said a taper panel would be added. Paul Jarosinski expressed concern about the three north-bound lanes on Georgia being shut for two weeks, but Melinda Peters said no lanes would be closed during rush hour. Paula Kahla asked for a description of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Route 28, and Ms. Peters said changes are still being made in the phases regarding thru lanes and turn lanes. Paul Jarosinski asked if SHA would be responsible for the traffic signals, and Ms. Peters said the county would control the timing and maintenance of the signals. Johnnie Roth asked for the location of a water source and turn-around areas for emergency vehicles, and Ms. Peters said there will be one location on Contract A, Muncaster Mill. She also shared there would be a park and ride lot at Georgia Avenue and the ICC and an express bus. Sharon Dooley asked where the bus will go, and Ms. Peters said there would be four routes opening in September going to Baltimore Washington Airport, Fort Meade, and two other locations, tying into Metro and other points around the county.

Then Mr. Adenaiya, Ms. Mazzara, Mr. Ms. Fang, and Mr. Stinnett read ICC questions submitted by GOCA and SHA's responses to the questions. GOCA's questions/statements are in bold.

1. Left turn signals should be installed for vehicles on Prince Philip Drive making left turns onto Route 108. Currently, Route 108 has left turn signals for turns onto Prince Philip Drive - so we are assuming it should not be too difficult to install an additional left turn light.

Our traffic section will evaluate this location for any operational changes. This type of evaluation usually takes 90 days to complete.

2. Route 108 & 97 intersection continues to be a bottleneck and nightmare for pedestrians. Also, sidewalks at the corner of these roads are still unfinished after installing countdown walk lights. There is also a triangle shape concrete island near the corner in front of the 6-12 store that remains unfinished. Many walkers have complained about safety issues - when can we expect these issues to be resolved? What is the status of conversations with Mr. Bossi and Olney residents regarding the possibility of elevated crosswalk at 97/108 intersection? Is this possible -why/why not?

An elevated crosswalk at the intersection of Route 108 and Headwaters Drive will not be installed by the SHA. If you would like us to conduct a pedestrian safety study, please send an official request to the Assistant District Engineer for Montgomery County / Prince Georges County Ms. Felecia Murphy. This evaluation will require the order of the traffic movement counts and it will not be collected till the public schools open again in September.

3. The count down walk light to the left of Sherwood High School sign (this is at the 108 & 97 intersection) when standing in front of this sign is turned too far to the right. The walk light needs to be turned very slightly to the left so walkers can view the sign as they walk across Route 97.

Already contacted Montgomery County who maintains all traffic signals and asked that they investigate and make any needed adjustments to the positioning of the signal.

4. Route 108 intersection with Spartan Road is very deteriorated with several major cracks in the asphalt. Perhaps this repair could be sooner rather than later to avoid major potholes developing?

Our maintenance forces will perform interim patching; however, at this time a larger project is not scheduled for this fiscal year or next fiscal year.

5. Is it possible for SHA to install the posts (these are the posts behind the Sherwood High School wall at the corner of 97 & 108) that we use to hang banners on in concrete so they are not as wobbly? Perhaps this could be done when completing the concrete work needed to rectify issues raised in item 2 above? Is it possible to install pulleys on these posts to make it easier to hang banners?

The posts were erected and an agreement was signed stating that SHA would allow banners on the erected posts. These posts were installed last year by our maintenance forces to facilitate the hanging of banners. SHA does not typically install posts for this purpose and at this time can not commit to placing them in concrete or adding a pulley system. The agreement will allow for GOCA to place them in concrete provided they are set in their current location and add a pulley system. In the future if there is work at this location we may be able to accommodate the concrete request.

6. What is SHA/State strategy for dealing with the anticipated large influx of cars onto the 97/28 intersection once the ICC is opened? We have been told to expect an additional 13,000+ vehicles/day flowing through this intersection. Do you have, or is there any, new data on the effect of this additional volume of traffic along Route 97/Emory Lane and 97/108 intersections? Note, both of these intersections are north of 97/28.

We will need to contact Melinda Peters to obtain this information.

7. What is the status of the 97/28 intersection? We have been informed by some elected officials that the design is partially done. Specifically, we'd like to know how far along is the design work for this intersection? If this design work was funded, how much longer before the design work is completed? How much funding is actually needed to complete this design work?

Due to funding deferral, the project is currently on-hold for preliminary engineering. The previous design was about 30% completion. However, once the funding is reallocated, we will need to re-evaluate the previous design based on the new Stormwater Management Act of 2007 and updated traffic projection including ICC Build and MD 28 Corridor project. It will take approximately 12-18 months to complete the design and establish final right-of-way needs. An additional \$1.1M is needed to complete the design activities.

This interchange project includes several business relocations. Please be aware that once the design completes, it may take another 18-24 months for right-of-way acquisition before construction may start.

8. What is the status of the Brookeville bypass on route 97? Is it ready for funding and how long to complete once funded?

This project completed planning in 2004 and received a record of decision. The SHA with MDOT is working towards Smart Growth exception with the Board of Public Works because portions of this project runs outside the Priority Funding Area. Currently, this project is on hold other than the work we are doing with the Smart Growth exception. Once fully funded design, design will take anywhere from 1-2 years. If funded for construction, it could take anywhere from 1-3 years. In October 2009, The Montgomery County Council approved \$10 million to be advanced to SHA in FY11 for the design and r/w for the bypass. But due to current financial issues at the County, they think this funding could be delayed.

9. Status of a traffic light at Route 108/Bowie Mill Road intersection? This has been a request for over 4 years now.

A full signal is currently in design.

10. In terms of Brian Young's appearance at GOCA on July 13, the Sandy Spring Civic Assn has contacted him and others at MSHA about the critical need for a traffic light at the above intersection, as well as a left turn lane on Dr. Bird to Norwood, and straightening out Dr. Bird as it approaches Norwood. (Norwood is both on Rte 182 and continues to Route 108.) SSCA had a delegation from MSHA in January to discuss this situation. MSHA has nearly completed the engineering design for the intersection but at present it is doubtful they will have funding for this coming fiscal year. However, it is helpful to continue to let them (and our elected representatives) know the need for signal is much needed.

There is a geometric improvement project at this location which includes the installation of a traffic signal. At this time the project is not funded so there is no schedule for construction activities would begin.

11. The intersection of Emory Lane and Georgia (97) remains very deceptive. Drivers approaching Georgia from the west and seeking to make a right turn are deceived by the present lane arrangement into believing that the right lane to which they are entering to go south bound on Georgia is empty. What is needed to avoid accidents (there have been several already including a fatality) at that intersection, is an entry lane and island to make right turns. Since this is now to be an approach to the ICC it seems this can be done more readily and is more necessary. Soon there will be a lot more traffic in the right (south bound) lane of Georgia in order to go westbound (right) on to the ICC entry ramp.

Our traffic section will evaluate this location for any operational changes. This type of evaluation usually takes 90 days to complete.

12. Also, the timing of the left turn right from Northbound Georgia Avenue (97) onto Emory Lane is very short - traffic backs up because once the left turn light is off it is extremely difficult to turn across southbound Georgia onto Emory Lane. Is it possible to have the left turn light stay green longer?

Our traffic section will contact Montgomery County Traffic Management Center to investigate the feasibility of extending the green time. A safety study should be conducted along eastbound Emory Lane regarding motorists making right turns onto southbound MD 97.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE/LIASON REPORTS

Treasurer: Ruth Laughner stated the current balance is \$10,778.78 and passed around the correspondence binder.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC): Walter Lee shared the committee had met with the Safeway design team, and Paul Jarosinski added there is no place to entertain teens because the movie theater and Blockbuster are closed.

Civic Federation: Arnie Gordon – The federation voted to restore school gardens after all 19 gardens had been cut from the county budget. He reported that 168 deer were killed in hunts in 2009 and 62 in 2010, and now there are 50 deer/square mile although the carrying capacity is 10 deer/square mile. Only two sharpshooter police had been employed by Park and Planning between 1999 and 2009.

Membership Committee: Jim Haddow said there are still five homeowners associations who owe dues.

Chamber of Commerce: Joe Buffington was not present at the meeting.

Transportation: Paul Jarosinski said the committee's meetings involved preparing for tonight's SHA presentation.

President's Report: Matt Zaborsky

Mr. Zaborsky shared he has met with Councilwoman Nancy Navarro's staff to increase priority for ZTA issues. Regarding Olney's opposition to the upcoming church on Emory Grove Road, Mr. Zaborsky said the many churches in Olney are evidence that Olney is not anti-church.

Ron Berger expressed a concern for the overlap of state and county duties and suggested GOCA have a 3-4 person coordinating group to ensure government transportation work is done. Dollie Kildee, Karen Montgomery, Paul Jarosinski, and Matt Zaborsky were chosen or volunteered for this coordinating group.

Unfinished Business – Candidate Debate: Ron Berger

Mr. Berger said on July 26th there will be a District 2 County Council candidates debate in the Buffington Building community meeting room (same location as GOCA meetings). He also announced that the Maryland District 14 House and Senate candidates' debate will be held on August 5th at Sandy Spring School. There are five democratic candidates and one republican candidate, Robin Ficker.

Barbara Barry asked for the time of the August 25th Maryland District 14 Senate and House candidate debate, and Mr. Zaborsky promised to email GOCA members the information and a request for questions for the candidates.

New Business

1. Matt Zaborsky is seeking ideas for future meetings and is interested in the demographer of Montgomery County Public Schools. Ellen Bogage and Arnie Gordon expressed an interest in having the county executive, Ike Leggett, present at a meeting.
2. The next meeting is scheduled for September 14th, which conflicts with the primary election. Eighteen members voted to keep the meeting on election night and six voted against holding the meeting that night.
3. Arnie Gordon favors putting resolutions on the agenda, and said if the bike resolution had been on the June agenda, he would have brought people against the bike trail. He asked if the by laws needed to be changed to reflect this and Ron Berger stated he does not think the by laws needed to be changed, but rather we could just adopt the new practice of including resolutions on the agenda. Ellen Bogage said GOCA should be a more deliberative body that does not take last minute issues and that we should ask all presenters if they are going to be asking something of us. Ron Berger pointed out that after a presentation we always discuss the issues of the presentation under new business and that GOCA must have some flexibility because sometimes nothing is being asked of us and sometimes a resolution is required. Ellen would like presenters to come to the officers before the GOCA meeting and suggested we take up this issue at our next board meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33.

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Kyne Robinson, Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Kay Adenaiya (Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)), Barbara Barry (Perspective Woods), Danny Benn (Fairhill Farm), Jackie Benn (Fairhill Farm), Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Ellen Bogage (Victoria Springs), Keith Carlson (Hallowell), Kathy Curtis (Lake Hallowell), Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), Christy Fang (SHA), Jay Goldman (Hallowell), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Chuck Graefe (South East Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA)), Jim Haddow (Hallowell), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Carla Julian (SHA), Paula Kahla (Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC)), Dolly Kildee (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Nancy Navarro), Nancy Kirschbaum (Olney Mill), Sam Kirschbaum (Olney Mill), Ken Knutson (MDTA - ICC), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village), Walter Lee (Townes at Environ), Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), Kate Mazarra (SHA), Karen Montgomery (Brookville), Buck Parr (Tanterra), Melinda Peters (SHA), Theresa Kyne Robinson (Olney Oaks), Johnie Roth (Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Department), Pam Saul (Office of Senator Rona Kramer), Serena Singleton (Office of Representative Donna Edwards), (Norbeck Meadows), Lisa Starl (Homeland Village), Vernon Stinnett (SHA), Anne Stretch (Cherrywood), Charles Warner (Manor Oaks), John Webster (Manor Oaks), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Lori Wilen (Cherrywood), Steve Wolf (Norbeck Hills), Michele Young (Norbeck Meadows), Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows)