

Minutes
September 14, 2010

President Matt Zaborsky called the meeting to order at 8:15, and after introductions Ruth Laughner approved the agenda and minutes and Barbara Falcigno seconded the approval. Members briefly discussed the timing of the posted minutes and whether or not it was important to receive them in emails and concluded the minutes would be emailed and posted a week before the meeting.

GUEST OF HONOR – John Damskey, Commander of Montgomery County’s 4th District

Cmdr. Damskey started his new position on August 1, 2010 and stressed the importance of community/police communication for even minor transgressions in solving crimes. Local crime is not more serious now, but Olney has a burglary trend, and last week the police caught a team of burglars that had stolen in the west section of Montgomery County and this week arrested those who had burglarized Johnson’s Florist and Garden Center. Cmdr. Damskey said that the police had also arrested individuals for the vandalism at B’nai Shalom Synagogue and robbery and assault at Starbucks. He credited online access for spreading the word and enabling the department to jail many transgressors.

Cmdr. Damskey stressed the importance of preventing burglaries and recommended we lock our doors and windows and install a motion detector light. Bob Beard shared his home had been burglarized and asked if the police was still offering to visit a family’s house for a safety check and Mr. Damskey said yes. Chuck Graefe asked that police look at the intersection of Emory Church Road and Georgia Avenue because of the possibility of accidents due to the way the cars are cueing in the middle of the road. The blinking light and U turns make it difficult to proceed. Cmdr. Damskey promised to send an officer who focuses on traffic lights to the intersection.

Barbara Falcigno said GOCA has been working with the State Highway Administration and would work with them after the community makes preference decisions. She also related that when she was president of Olney Oaks Homeowners Association residents did not want crime on the association’s website, and Cmdr. Damskey emphasized the need to put information of the website so transgressors can be found. He reported the police last week caught two Caucasian middle aged male heroin addicts responsible for 50 to 60 burglaries in Hartford and Baltimore counties.

Barbara asked about the status of the two bicycles that the community had provided to the police substation in Olney and Cmdr. Damskey promised to look into the matter. Theresa Kyne Robinson, thinking of an email from a resident who thought the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) communities were the source of crime in Olney, asked if the burglars were typically young or low income residents, and Cmdr. Damskey emphasized the criminals are of all ages, races, and incomes. In fact, the police have developed relationships with the residents of the HOC communities. Barbara Falcigno asked about the use of the police substation in Olney, and Cmdr. Damskey said that officers can serve the community better when they are away from the substation, and it is important they show up for roll call.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE/LIASON REPORTS

Treasurer, Acting: Ruth Laughner stated the current balance is \$10,808.78 and said that if anyone would like a year-to-date expense report, she could be contacted through her email address on the GOCA website under contacts. Roy Peck, the current treasurer, is not seeking reelection.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC): Bob Beard shared the committee was interested in maximizing the flexibility of the green space that Safeway has beautifully designed with storm water management and Americans with Disabilities Act compliance. Safeway is presenting its plan next month residents are encouraged to send suggestions to the committee’s website, info@olneytowncenter.org. The next meeting is two weeks from tonight on 9/28/10 with a retail agent from Freeman Builders, Inc. describing the process of selecting tenants. The meeting will begin at 7:00.

Membership Committee: Jim Haddow said two associations have recently paid their GOCA dues. There are 30 home owner association members; Camelback had not paid in the past five years but now has a new board of directors. North Creek and Olney Village civic associations and Olney Village Citizen Association still owe dues.

Transportation: Paul Jarosinski said the state will not make the changes at the Emory Lane/Georgia Avenue intersection he recommended. When in the right turn lane, it is difficult to see anyone in the other three lanes. Roy Peck had suggested the state paint dotted lines in one lane to the point of making the right turn. Mr. Jarosinski shared the coordinating group selected

at the July GOCA meeting had met in Councilwoman Nancy Navarro's office to discuss the Georgia Avenue/Route 28 intersection. The group had tried to meet in August but could not due to vacations and would try to set up a date tomorrow.

President's Report: Matt Zaborsky shared that the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission will soon make a recommendation to the planning board that Buehler Road, currently closed south of Spartan Road and north of King William Drive, be opened. Camelback Village and The Highlands are opposed to the proposal, but one homeowners association is not opposed. The commission will also recommend that Safeway sign a traffic mitigation agreement to pay the county money in lieu of improving the roads around Safeway. He has asked the county if the mitigation money has to be spent on Buehler Road, pointing out the guidelines state the money has to be spent in the Olney policy area. The proposal is based on the Olney Master Plan that connects Buehler Road. A public hearing in late October will be held to discuss this issue.

Mr. Zaborsky asked if there is interest in a GOCA seminar to facilitate information exchange between homeowner boards regarding topics such as the topics below:

1. How do you communicate with your community? – by email or newsletter?
2. How do you recruit members of the board?
3. How do you collect dues?
4. Who maintains your pool?
5. Who do you hire for the lawn contract?
6. What do you do about security?
7. What do you do about covenant violations?

Paul Jarosinski is the only current president and has difficulty collecting dues. He noted the board never collects the money even after foreclosure, but the Maryland Assembly has tried to pass a bill to help homeowners collect dues. Matt Zaborsky encouraged us to reach out to our legislators to help the bill pass. Barbara Barry asked if the seminar would be relevant for civic associations because they do not have as many tasks as homeowners associations. Barbara Falcigno, former president of GOCA and Olney Oaks, said the format of the seminar would be a panel in which each association president would share information on a particular topic. She noted that Ms. Barry's civic association holds an annual picnic, an idea she could share at the seminar.

Mr. Zaborsky shared that Khalid Afzal of the Montgomery County Planning Board and a representative for Pepco will present at the October 12 GOCA meeting. Mr. Zaborsky is still working on a speaker for the November meeting, and County Council Executive Ike Leggett will present in December.

Questions/Comments regarding President's Report:

1. Bob Beard shared the planning staff has differences of opinion on how the mitigation money should be spent. Mr. Beard and Jim Smith would prefer that the money be spent on a crosshatch between Giant and Safeway and a solution for pedestrian safety at Georgia Avenue, Route 108, and Spartan Road.
2. Matt Zaborsky noted that St. Peter's Catholic Church will lose property if Buehler Road is extended. He offered to give Father Kalita and Eric Stone contact information, and Father Kalita asked for a sketch because he had read the church will lose 200 yards.
3. Mr. Zaborsky said the extension of Buehler Road could take cars off Georgia Avenue and Route 108 and Prince Philip into the Town Center. He is aware of the impact to the surrounding area but encouraged us to look at the big picture.

Unfinished Business – Candidate Debate: Ron Berger

Mr. Berger said debates will be planned for County Council candidates for Districts 2 and 4, and Joe Buffington is offering a choice of three dates. The debate planners are also considering holding debates for Districts 14 and 19.

New Business: Ron Berger recommended we read the bylaw amendment on attendance from the agenda. The amendment states that if GOCA officers are absent for more than two meetings without good reason, they may lose their position. This amendment will be voted on at the October 12 meeting and will pass if three fourths of the executive board approves it. The amendment is below:

All officers are expected to attend the general and special meetings of the executive board. An officer who during his/her term of office is absent from more than two executive board meetings, and whose absence(s) are not due to illness or other good causes, may be removed from office upon recommendations of the officers committee and by resolution of the executive board, adopted by majority vote, declaring the officer's position to be vacant.

The amendment will pass if 3/4 of the members of the Executive Board present vote to adopt it.

Paul Jarosinski thinks the amendment is too harsh and noted that board members of his homeowners association, Cherrywood, will be terminated automatically after four absences. Matt Zaborsky noted that the Mid County Advisory Board's policy on attendance states that if a member misses more than two meetings in six months, the member's position is terminated. Ron Berger pointed out that he always states attendance is mandatory when recruiting board members and

expects those who agree to join the board will fulfill their responsibilities. Bob Beard shared that a decline in OTCAC members prompted a clarification of the attendance policy which he feels elevates the status of the volunteer job. Mr. Zaborsky said the meetings are 11 times a year and are scheduled in advance. Ron Berger said the proposal could be modified by the executive board. Mr. Zaborsky stated we will vote on the amendment at the October 12 meeting, and Paul Jarosinski recommended we notify everyone by mail that this topic will be on the agenda.

Matt Zaborsky shared that prior to the start of the October 12 GOCA meeting there will be an hour long “meet the candidates” session between 6:30 and 7:30.

Barbara Falcigno motioned and Ron Berger seconded the conclusion of the meeting at 9:30.

Respectfully submitted,
Theresa Kyne Robinson, Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Barbara Barry (Perspective Woods), Bob Beard (Homeland Village), Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Brad Branch (Olney Mill), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Kathy Curtis (Lake Hallowell), Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks), John Damsey (Montgomery County Police Department), Chuck Graefe (South East Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA)), Howard Grief (Norbeck Grove), Jim Haddow (Hallowell), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Reverend Thomas M. Kalita (Saint Peter’s Parish), Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village), Walter Lee (Townes at Environ), Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), Theresa Kyne Robinson (Olney Oaks), Eric Stone (Saint Peter’s Parish), Anne Stretch (Cherrywood), John Webster (Manor Oaks), Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows)