

Minutes  
July 10, 2012

## **CALL TO ORDER**

President Barbara Falcigno called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. and delegates then introduced themselves.

## **SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

### **1) Presentation by Commander John Damsky of the 4<sup>th</sup> District, Deputy Mark Yamada, 4<sup>th</sup> District Traffic Sargent Andy Lautermilk, and Officer Sharif Hidayat**

At the start of the presentation, each officer introduced themselves and meticulously described their particular areas of enforcement such as traffic enforcement and community relations. Next, the officers addressed the concerns of GOCA members in a short question and answer session, which revolved around the procedures of mobile and stationary speed camera operation and the destination for revenues derived from speeding citations, signage on the roads, teenage crime issues (such as vandalism and teen drug use), pan-handling on the corner roads, and traffic enforcement.

In particular, the officers spoke at great length on speed camera locations. Determination for each speed camera is decided by the make-up of the local infrastructure with the determining factors being the location of schools, churches, and the like. After a location for the speed camera is established, the decision is taken to a civilian review board. After months of traffic study of that area, a decision is made by the civilian review board whether the location is the appropriate place for speed camera for the welfare of the community.

Next, the officers stressed that easiest way to contact the police for speed camera concerns, complaints, crimes, or other issues is through the Montgomery County police website (<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/poltmlpl.asp>) or call the station at their non-emergency number, 240-773-5500. Further, the local Olney satellite police substation is currently being manned, is in the budget, and is undergoing renovations. Do not hesitate to call the substation. When calling, please be specific with your problem. Remember the time of day, day of the week, and nature of the issue when calling, and any other useful details the officers may need. Be mindful that concerned citizens are the best resources for police. Finally, please remember not to approach anyone that seems suspicious.

Lastly, they provided examples of several foiled crimes and alerted the audience to criminal financial schemes in the Olney area, such as a fraudulent tree-cutting service and home improvement work from West Virginia contractors who target the elderly. Their vehicles have West Virginia tags. The officers also addressed concerns in situations involving communications and procedures in emergency situations such the county-wide power outage in late June's horrendous storm.

## **PUBLIC HOA AND CIVIC ASSOCIATION DISCUSSION**

An hour long public roundtable discussion was held between the various Olney HOAs and civic associations about the issues, problems, and solutions that the town of Olney is facing within the individual communities.

## CALL TO ORDER

President Barbara Falcigno called the meeting to order at 8:30 p.m.

Arnie Gordon moved to approve the June 6, 2012 minutes as amended and Ed Weisel seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously. Arnie Gordon moved to approve the amended agenda and Ed Weisel seconded with additions to the agenda concerning the Ron Berger Park Dedication.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

There was public acknowledgement of thanks to the Harris Teeter Grocery Store for the hundreds of bags of ice, distributed free of charge to customers, during the power outage at the end of June.

Matt Zaborsky announced that on Monday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at 6:30 p.m. at the Remax Building there will be a presentation regarding the redevelopment project located at Trotter's Glen.

## SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

### **1) At-Large-Councilmember Marc Elrich speaks on the development of the Bus-Rapid Transit System and funding for the Bus-Rapid Transit System**

Mr. Elrich began his presentation by discussing his political background. He started by being elected to the County Council in 2006. With a background in the railway system, Mr. Elrich wanted to find new ways to end the massive amounts of congestion in the transportation system in Montgomery County through a railway system. Unfortunately, his research concluded that there is no new room in Montgomery County's infrastructure for the rail system.

As such, he was intrigued with the new and growing trend of the Bus-Rapid Transit System (BRT) in American cities and globally. Consequently, the County Executive had a preliminary study done on the feasibility on BRT in Montgomery County and it was concluded that the system could be built and would result in adequate ridership, a have positive effect on traffic, and a reduce the future levels of congestion to manageable levels. Also, the BRT would serve to attract high quality businesses because of the availability of various forms of transit from vehicular to BRT transportation.

Therefore, a second study was done by the county council for a 160 mile system of tracking. The study concluded that all buses had to be of high quality with "gold-plated service," holding 140 to 200 passengers. Further, all BRT routes would be linear. No side trips through neighborhoods. Ride-On routes will be changed to feed onto the BRT system, similar to shuttles. During rush hour, buses will pick up riders from a stop every 4-6 minutes, providing a high degree of commuting speed and connectivity. The daily ridership fare would be similar to that of Ride-On through a Smart Card with no interaction with the bus driver.

With 160 miles of tracking, Montgomery County's BRT system is projected to be the largest system of its kind in the country and is based upon the system used in Eugene, Oregon since that city has a similar density of population as Montgomery County, MD. With the primary goal of moving commuters from home to work, this system promises not to increase sprawl. Additionally, the advantage to the BRT is that it can be built through a single tracking system down the median of a roadway, traversing in one direction in the morning from one stop and reversing that direction in the evening. Both trips allow for optimal peak directional movement.

Several roadway options are under consideration for the BRT, such as Rockville Pike, Route 29, Connecticut Avenue (Aspen Hill to Bethesda), and north of the Rockville metro station. There would be 2-3 bus depots where the BRT would start. Ideally, spacing would be a half a mile between stops but will vary based on the density of population.

The proposed system is estimated at 1.8 billion dollars with 4-6 BRT transit lanes. The total cost of six transit lanes alone is estimated to be 600 million dollars with that portion to be paid by the state. However, the state of Maryland likes the BRT proposal because the project extends the life of the current highway system by reducing wear and tear on the highways as commuters leave their cars and for the BRT in their workday commute. The other portion would be paid by the Maryland commercial sector.

Because all in Montgomery County benefit from the homeowner to the developer, a taskforce proposed a tax of \$500 for those who live within a ½ mile range of the BRT.

Mr. Elrich is adamantly against this idea. He believes the commercial property owners/developers owners should bear the brunt of the cost, as is done in the northern Virginia model. In his plan, all commercial property owners will pay a 5-7% tax on commercial property county-wide. In addition, both commercial property owners and owners of undeveloped land within a ½ mile of the BRT would pay an additional 5-7 % tax. Finally, they will also contribute to a 30 year bond payment so as to soften the cost of the BRT and share the burden with the state of Maryland. Under this plan, this Montgomery County tax base can grow substantially without harming the residential property owner. Maryland can also cut funding on in the capital improvement budget for creating new roads and use those funds for BRT.

One unfortunate occurrence with the BRT is the diminishing of bike lanes because of the need for space on the roadway.

If you feel this is beneficial for Montgomery County, ask the County Executive for new and innovative ideas to fund the BRT project that conforms to the Master Plan.

Mr. Elrich then conducted a question and answer session from GOCA members.

As a result of the presentation, Arnie Gordon proposed the following resolution:

GOCA supports the concept of the Bus Rapid Transit System in Montgomery County but opposes any special tax district on county residents to finance it.

Seconded by Matt Zaborsky. Motion carried unanimously.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

### **The Ron Berger Park Dedication**

President Falcigno spoke with Katy Stuckey and received the policy for the naming of parks. According to the new policy, there are two types of naming: philanthropic naming for those who have donated substantial sums of money to the Maryland Parks & Planning Commission and commemorative naming for those who are recognized for their service to Montgomery County.

With commemorative naming, the Commission must fund the commemoration itself without financial assistance from the county government for upkeep and maintenance. As such, commemorative naming is not free and the Commission has charged a \$2000 fee for the commemorative naming of Norbeck Meadows Park Playground in the name of Ron Berger. Normally a \$10,000 fee is charged. However, the Commission reduced the fee substantially for of all the good civic works Ron Berger had done for the community. Arnie Gordon made a resolution that:

GOCA contribute \$1000 to the commemoration of the Norbeck Meadows Park Playground to be matched by Norbeck Meadows Civic Association in the sum of \$1000 for the total of \$2000.

Seconded by Anne Marie Saporito. Motion carried unanimously.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next GOCA meeting will be on Tuesday, September 11 10, 2012.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Barbara Falcigno made a motion to adjourn, Matt Zaborsky seconded by at 9:54 p.m. The meeting was adjourned.

## **Respectfully submitted,**

Mark K. Hill, Recording Secretary

## **GOCA Executive Board**

Barbara Barry (Perspective Woods), Joe Corbett (Williamsburg Village), Sharon Dooley (past president, Janus Creek), Della Dorsey (Camelback Village), Barbara Falcigno (President), Kathy Curtis (2nd Vice President, Lake Hallowell), Meg Pease-Fye (1st Vice President, SEROCA), Lori Goodwin (Hallowell), Carolyn Knight (Olney Oaks), Chuck Graefe (SEROCA), Mark K. Hill (Recording Secretary, Camelback Village), Jeff Kahan (Christie Estates), Andrea Keller (Fair Hill Farm), Howard Grief (Corresponding Secretary, Norbeck Grove), Ruth Laughner (Treasurer, Williamsburg Village), Lydia Rappolt (Camelback Village), Helene Rosenheim (past President, Highlands), Jim Smith (Oatland Farm), John Webster (Executive Vice President, Manor Oaks), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Matt Zaborsky (past President, Norbeck Meadows), Greg Intoccia (Ashley Hallow), Av Wofsey (Norbeck Hills), Anne Stretch (Cherrywood), Robin Shea (Oatland Farm), Gregory Pomiter (Briar Acres), Lelsa Saredy (Manor Oaks), Mike Greenhut (Olney Village), Vicky Aceto (Olney Square), Nancy Hautf (Lake Hallowell), Clare Cahill (Lake Hallowell), Aleka Kapaton (Tanterra),

## **Invited Guests**

At-Large-Councilmember Marc Elrich, Commander John Damsky of the 4th District, Deputy Mark Yamada, 4th District Traffic Sargent Andy Lautermilk, and Officer Sharif Hidayat, Terri Hogan (Gazette).

## **Public**

Barbara Ray (Brookville), Ann Marie Saporito (James Creek), Lou Saporito (James Creek), Evan Francis (Olney Square), Tim Francis (Olney Square), (Norbeck Meadows), Judy Brosckir (Brookeville), Linda Lapkoff (Camelback Village), Mary Keir (Brookeville Knolls), Nadene Neel (Homeland), Rich Hastings (Batchelor's Forest), Troy Kimmel (Lake Hallowell), Julie Small (Lake Hallowell), Larry Solomon (Norbeck Grove), Robert McCrary (Cherrywood), Kim McCrary (Cherrywood), Trish Toven (Flower Valley Citizens Assoc.), Judy Brosckir (Brookeville Knolls), Steve Eisenberg (Brookeville Knolls), John Lauer (Camelback Village), Dale Ann Pearlman (Norbeck Hills, Diane Littlefield (Olney Acres), Alya Ortezar (Hallowell), Maria Bender (Brookeville Knolls), Alden English (SEROCA), Ayo Apollon, Joe Morrison (Oak Grove), Larry Lauer (Olney Mill), Arnold Gordon (Norbeck Meadows).



