

Executive Board Meeting Minutes
February 10th, 2015

CALL TO ORDER

President John Webster called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. and the GOCA representatives, alternates, and members of the public introduced themselves. A motion was made and seconded to approve the January 2015 minutes. The minutes were approved unanimously.

A motion was made and seconded to approve amended the February agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENTS and ANNOUNCEMENTS – Della Dorsey spoke about the many events that are occurring at the Olney Library for the month of February. They can be viewed at the following website <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/library/branches/olney.html>

PESTICIDE BILL (COUNTY BILL 52-14) Lee Lofthus moderated a panel discussion on this bill. Panelists included: Chris Gillis, Aide to Council President Leventhal, John Poulos, Director of Grounds, Our Lady of Good Counsel HS, Brian Blake, Montgomery County Branch Manager, McFall & Berry Landscape Mgmt, Phil Catron, President, Natural Lawn and Tom Ritter, Agronomist. Chris Gillis spoke about the positive impact this bill would have on the children and elderly for Montgomery County. He quoted from studies conducted in Canada and Europe. The rest of the panel did not support the bill. They felt it was up to the State of Maryland and the federal department of the Environmental Protection Agency to manage these issues. If this bill were passed, costs for lawn maintenance would escalate in a very substantial manner. There would be a detrimental impact on sports fields as these fields would have a higher concentration of weeds which could not stand up to the constant use, compared to grass. They all spoke about how they practice Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM is an effective and environmentally sensitive approach to pest management that relies on a combination of common-sense practices. IPM programs use current, comprehensive information on the life cycles of pests and weed control and their interaction with the environment. This practice has reduced, in a significant way, the amount of pesticides used.

Questions were asked around IPM and the cost and outcome if the bill were to pass. Chris Gillis, stating that he was a councilman's aide and not a scientist, did not believe there would be an impact other than the health and safety of our children. It was noted that this bill had no impact on MCPS properties or on golf courses. All of the panelists disagreed. When questioned about utilizing data from Montgomery County's Health and Human Services Department, to determine if this was a need in the county, Chris Gillis stated they did not. There was also a concern raised about Lyme disease in the county and what impact this bill would have. The panelists agreed the bill could increase the incidence of Lyme disease.

The GOCA executive board passed the following resolution after a second and some discussion:

**GOCA Resolution Regarding Proposed County Bill 52-14
Restricting Pesticides and Fertilizers**

Background: the Montgomery County Council is considering a bill (Bill 52-14, introduced by Council Member George Leventhal) that would effectively ban all but a few County-approved "essential" pesticides and fertilizers in Montgomery County. The stated purpose of the Bill is "to minimize potential exposure to

toxic pesticides in the places where children are most likely to encounter pesticides, namely lawns and athletic fields.” [G. Leventhal email 1/22/2015 to GOCA].

The bill enacts a general prohibition on homeowner use on their own property of all but a few county-approved pesticides, including application of pesticides to control lawn pests and infestations, and requires homeowners to post signs in yards when pesticides/fertilizers have been applied. The bill requires the County to develop new standards regulating the size, color, content, materials, visibility, and other characteristics of the homeowner signs to be posted. The bill also restricts the County’s own application of pesticides on county property. Agricultural areas, gardens, and golf courses are exempted.

The Bill will require extensive additional county regulation, and require additional oversight and enforcement by the County’s Department of Environmental Protection. The bill will require businesses to post disclosure notices to purchasers, and requires an annual County inspection of all persons who sell at retail any pesticides. The Bill defines weeds as “pests,” and therefore the Bill appears to regulate/ban certain fertilizers and weed control applications as well as insect control applications.

The bill cites restrictions placed on pesticides by Ontario and other Canadian provinces in 2009 and a 2013 General Accounting Office (GAO) report regarding the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as evidence supporting the need for the ban. Pesticide classification standards issued by the European Commission, among others, will be used by the County as a basis for determining the permissibility of certain pesticides.

Resolution

Whereas the Bill’s author cites a 2013 GAO report as a basis for proposing the ban, ***GAO did not make any recommendations that restricted or banned pesticides***; instead, the report recommended that EPA automate the tracking of “conditional registrations” of products, install improved manual tracking until an automated system is developed, and review and ensure EPA’s website is “clear, concise, and accurate.” [GAO Report “EPA Should Take Steps to Improve Its Oversight of Conditional Registrations,” GAO-13-145 August 2013];

Whereas Montgomery County is facing budget shortfalls and the County Executive has warned residents he will seek to raise property taxes as a result [Washington Post, January 30, 2015, B1], it is irresponsible for the Council to impose a vast and unfunded pesticide regulatory structure on County residents that will require tax increases to be fully funded;

Whereas GOCA has received overwhelmingly negative comments on the bill from Olney residents and businesses, including concerns the proposed bill will result in higher taxes; higher consumer prices; higher lawn care prices; excessive weed growth resulting in Montgomery County properties being placed at a disadvantage compared to Howard, Fairfax, and other nearby counties; result in Olney residents relying on ineffective pest control products and ineffective fertilizers that expose Olney properties to pest infestations and sub-quality lawn conditions; and impose onerous requirements on homeowners to display County-approved signage, etc;

Whereas both the federal government and the State of Maryland have existing environmental and pesticide regulatory agencies and laws that provide oversight of pesticide applications, and also have well-established testing and compliance resources, there is no justification for Montgomery County creating a costly and redundant regulatory process; further, there is no evidence the County possesses the extensive infrastructure to test and regulate such products; creating such expertise and infrastructure will be expensive, with the costs passed directly to county residents, businesses, and manufacturers;

Whereas the purported health risks to children that are the stated premise for the Bill have not been substantiated by any relevant scientific data; further, the cited health risks to children and others from currently marketed products occurs in acute exposure cases (e.g. ingesting the pesticide directly); and further, exempting the significant agricultural areas and golf courses from the ban creates an arbitrary and confusing policy that offers no actual protections for children, the Chesapeake Bay, etc.;

Whereas GOCA believes the bill is a costly but ineffective “feel good” proposal based on dubious medical presumptions, that it unnecessarily duplicates existing federal and State regulations, and that it creates a

burdensome and costly regulatory oversight program that places both Olney residents and businesses at a disadvantage;

Whereas GOCA believes existing federal and State environmental and oversight regulations adequately protect county residents from the potential health hazards that are the objectives of the proposed bill;

Now therefore be it resolved that the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) should formally state its strong objections to Bill 52-14, in writing, with the Montgomery County Council.

This passed with 23 yes votes, 2 no votes and 3 abstentions.

MCPS CHANGE IN BELL TIMES PROPOSAL Todd Watkins, Director of Transportation, MCPS and Brian Edwards, former Director of Transportation MCPS, spoke about the impact of changing the school start times and bus schedules. It was noted that the MCPS Board of Education had passed the changing of the start times earlier in the day. Both Todd Watkins and Brian Edwards did not feel there would be any impact to providing bus service to MCPS students.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS

Transportation Committee Barbara Falcigno reported. All transportation meeting agendas and minutes are now posted on the GOCA website. The 97/28 grade separation project was moved lower on the County Council's priority list, from number 5 to number 8. The committee will work to try to improve this. Construction at 97 and Old Baltimore continues. Signs are not clear and will be corrected. Barbara introduced a motion regarding House Bill 271 (quarterly audits of speed monitoring systems) on behalf of the Traffic Camera Task Force:

Whereas certain members of the State House of Delegates have proposed an amendment to the current Maryland Transportation Code requiring local jurisdictions to obtain quarterly independent audits of their speed monitoring systems; and

Whereas this proposed legislation would also require the results of the audits to be kept on file and admitted as evidence in certain proceedings

Now therefore be it resolved that GOCA supports the proposed legislation. Furthermore GOCA recommends the independent audits be completed by a qualified and accredited independent person or entity. It also recommends that the results of the quarterly audits be posted to the jurisdiction's website for public review.

This passed with 24 yes votes, 2 no votes and 1 abstentions.

There is not a county funded BRT study for 97 into Olney.

The transportation committee discussed the Independent Transit Authority (ITA), as presented by County Executive Leggett. There is a strong belief that this will be introduced again.

Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board Greg Intoccia reported. The county executive is looking for new funding methods for transit issues

Public Policy & Community Affairs Committee Matt Quinn reported. The PPCA met for the 1st time in January. PPCA purpose is posted on the GOCA website. Howard Greif will focus on County legislative issues. We are looking for someone to focus on State issues. We will also be looking at land use issues impacting Olney. The current members include Howard Greif, Della Dorsey, Mark Hill and Matt Quinn.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee Jim Smith reported. Creating a document to recommend an Olney town commons and where it would be placed. Will be meeting with local property owners with the intent of working with them. Currently have 12 members.

Legislative Update, Bob Reel reported. At the State level there are 706 house bills and 488 senate bills. Highlights include: 4 tax issues the governor is focusing on. Repeal of the "Rain Tax, repeal taxes on retiree income. Tax relief for small businesses up to \$10,000 on personal property. Repeal of the automatic increase on the gas tax. A bill was submitted in the state senate to eliminate the use of plastic bags and charge 10 cents per paper bag. A bill was introduced called the "Death with Dignity "bill. A bill to repeal the monthly e-z-pass fee has been introduced. A bill to prohibit hydraulic fracturing was introduced.

At the County level looking to exempt or reduce to the developer impact taxes relating to MPDUs. The Common Ownership Communities officer education requirement was approved.

Bylaws Committee, Kathy Curtis reported on the process of working through bylaw changes to include the specific change as presented by the Cherrywood HOA (part of the March agenda).

2015 Membership Renewals, Greg Intoccia reported that there are currently 21 members have paid their dues. Members have until March 31st to stay current. On the second page of the members form is info about Olney Days and the Police substation.

Correspondence Report, Jackie Benn had no new correspondence

Chamber of Commerce Report (www.olneymd.org) Joe Buffington reported. Working to get a report on the use of funds for the Olney Police substation. Goddard School will have their grand opening Saturday the 21st of February. All are invited.

Nominations are being accepted for the 10th Anniversary Greater Olney-Sandy Spring ATHENA Award. The deadline to submit a nomination is March 6, 2015.

Nominating Committee, Barbara Falcigno reported,

Below are winners for the following awards for 2014 presented at Good Counsel HS on March 8th:

GOCA Citizen of the Year - Jim Smith

Contribution to the Community - Howard Greif, Jessica Weiss and Dan McNickle

Youth Contribution to the Community - Elizabeth Homick

Heritage Award - George Brown

GOCA worker of the Year - Lee Lofthus

NEW BUSINESS

Election of 2015 Officers.

The following were elected to serve by acclimation for 2015:

John Webster, President -Manor Oaks,
Greg Intoccia, Executive Vice President - Ashley Hollow
Matt Quinn, 1st Vice President – Cherrywood,
Bill Calomeris, 2nd Vice President - Olney Mill
Jody Broseker, Recording Secretary –Brookville Knolls
Jackie Benn, Corresponding Secretary - Fair Hill Farm
Kathy Curtis, Treasurer - Lake Hallowell.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Quinn, Recording Secretary

In attendance:

GOCA Executive Board

John Webster, President -Manor Oaks, Greg Intoccia, Executive Vice President - Ashley Hollow - Oak Grove, Bob Reel, 2nd Vice President - Victoria Springs, Matt Quinn, Recording Secretary – Cherrywood, Jackie Benn, Corresponding Secretary - Fair Hill Farm, Kathy Curtis, Treasurer - Lake Hallowell. Barbara Falcigno (Immediate Past President, Olney Oaks),

Judy Broseker, (Brookeville Knolls) Lydia Rapport (Camelback Village) Mark Hill (Camelback Village) Jenni Davis (Cherrywood), Helene Rosenheim (Highlands of Olney), Howard Greif, (Lake Hallowell)), Ed Weisel, (Norbeck Meadows) Matt Zaborsky(Norbeck Meadows) (Jim Smith, (Oatland Farm) Lee Lofthus, (Oatland Farm) Bill Calomeris (Olney Mill), Carolyn Knight, (Olney Oaks) Meg Pease-Fye, (SEROCA) Alden English (SEROCA), Louis Saporito (James Creek), Ann Marie Saporito (James Creek), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village), Joe Corbett (Williamsburg Village)

Invited Guests

Terri Hogan (The Gazette),

Public

Zack Kline, Jessica Brilloifiz, Brian Blake, John Poulos, Phil Catron, Eric Wenger, Matt Sandis, LingTan, Tom Ritter, Kim McCary, Joe Buffington, Todd Watkins, John Matthews, Ellen Bogage Barbara Ray, Kim McCary (Cherrywood) Tim Stellmann Della Dorsey