

**Executive Board Meeting Minutes**  
December 8, 2015

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Gregory Intoccia called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. He told the group that John Webster had resigned as president for personal reasons and that, under GOCA bylaws, when the president does not serve his entire term, the executive vice president would become president and fulfill the remainder of the term. Therefore, as executive vice president, Intoccia will fulfill the role of president. He asked for any questions. There were no questions.

GOCA representatives, alternates, invited guests and members of the public then introduced themselves.

Intoccia asked for a motion to approve the November 10, 2015 minutes. Barbara Falcigno made a motion to approve the minutes; Matt Quinn seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Intoccia asked for a motion to approve the December 8 meeting agenda. A motion was made and seconded to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Matt Zaborsky told the Board that Olney police have cautioned residents that thieves are stealing packages left by delivery services at the front door. They are suggesting that residents ask a neighbor to take in their packages when they cannot be at home to receive the packages. He said that this theft is happening all over Montgomery County.

Barbara Falcigno reported that the Olney Civic Fund will host a reception in the Buffington Building in the Community Room on January 6, 2016 to talk about their accomplishments, future plans and invite people to join the group.

Terry Hogan reported that a new issue of the Greater Olney News would be in mailboxes today or tomorrow. Everyone in Olney, Ashton, Brookeville as well as some outlying areas will get a copy.

Jim Smith appealed to the Board for support of the Olney Civic Fund. He said in the last few months they have lost several of their members and they need volunteers for fundraising (especially for Olney Days), donor relations, communications, and leadership. He noted that because of Olney Civic Fund fundraising, Olney Days is now running a surplus and is no longer a drain on the GOCA budget. He asked GOCA members to join their Board. They need volunteers specifically for their Gifting Committee, help with donor relations, help with communications and the website, and leadership in terms of officers and committee chairs. He asked the delegates to consider joining the Olney Civic Fund group.

## **OFFICERS/COMMITTEE/LIAISON REPORTS**

**Correspondence Report** - Jackie Benn was not present and no report was made.

**Chamber of Commerce Report** – Joe Buffington was not present and no report was made.

### **Transportation Committee**

Barbara Falcigno recapped her report from the month before on a new commuter service, which would take Olney residents to the Glenmont metro for \$149 a month, five days a week, both ways. She also noted that the ITA has been pulled, but that the County Executive would try to find a way to fund it anyway. She noted that the upcoming Transportation Committee meeting they would attempt to determine where their focus should be. She noted that traffic congestion is a bigger problem county-wide than just for Olney. They will try to determine the focus of their committee. She said there are smaller things the committee can do but, as a committee, they cannot fix Georgia Avenue congestion. That is a larger issue than the goals of the GOCA Transportation Committee and beyond its scope and mission. She noted that on December 6 on the PBS news hour there will be some input on the Route 97/28 interchange as the most congested in Montgomery County and a bill by Hans Reimer requesting federal dollars to remedy this.

### **Public Policy & Community Affairs Committee**

Matt Quinn reported that he has met with several elected officials in order to keep Olney top of mind with them with regard to the transportation issue. He reminded them that traffic congestion is a much larger issue than in Olney and that federal funding support is needed.

He said he would report on the solar farm issue later in the meeting.

### **Treasurers Report**

Kathy Curtis presented the GOCA 2016 budget with 2015 actual income and expenses. She noted that income, expenses and revenue are relatively constant with some changes, one of which is web hosting and domain registration. Help is needed with updating the GOCA website, which is currently the responsibility of the president. She asked for a volunteer to host and upkeep the website. If a volunteer cannot be found, \$600 has been added to the budget for a person to spend two hours per month on the website. A question arose regarding hiring a full time person to handle the website. A suggestion was made to fund this added expense by increasing HOA dues. Matt Zaborsky explained that raising dues would be a hardship for smaller HOAs. Curtis also said that if an August event for GOCA delegates is undertaken, the funds are there for it. There are also funds budgeted for lawsuit monitoring, which is a non-cash expense.

Joe Corbett asked Curtis to explain the Pepco expense. Barbara Falcigno explained that this expense is for lighting the Olney sign.

### **Officer and Award Nominations**

Matt Zaborsky reported that recruitment is continuing for the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> vice president vacancies. They are also looking for a recording secretary. Lee Loftus has agreed to accept a nomination to become a GOCA officer as a first or second vice president. Zaborsky said they are looking for people who are interested in becoming a GOCA officer and rise up through the ranks. He noted that it is not required that an officer be a GOCA delegate. He said there are descriptions of all officers and duties on the

GOCA website. He asked GOCA delegates to use their HOA newsletters to publicize the search for GOCA officers. Officer candidates will be announced at the January 12, 2016 GOCA meeting.

He said nominations are being taken for the GOCA Awards including Olney Citizen of the Year in order to identify and recognize people who have contributed to Olney. A nomination form is on the GOCA.org website.

A question was raised regarding the commitment for GOCA officers. Greg Intoccia said that officers carry out strategic work as part of a team. More information can be found on the GOCA website on the responsibilities of officers. He noted that officers are required to attend monthly GOCA meetings as well as a monthly officers meeting.

### **Membership Committee**

Greg Intoccia reported that he made a presentation on November 11 to Norbeck Chase Condo Townhouse. They are interested in joining GOCA.

### **Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board**

Greg Intoccia, chair of the Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board (MCCAB), presented a request made to the County Executive for funding for a multi-function county and community services center and town commons in accordance with the 2005 Olney Master Plan. The MCCAB has specifically requested funding for a feasibility study to identify the best approach, location and implementation strategy for a town commons in Olney. He noted that Councilmember Nancy Navarro has joined with MCCAB in support of this request. Intoccia said that he hopes to get support for this initiative from the County. He said that at the last MCCAB meeting they discussed the plans and vision for an Olney Town Center and the new membership requested that someone from the Town Center Advisory Committee make a presentation on this. As a result of this presentation, Councilmember Navarro came forward and sent a letter to the County Executive to reinforce the need for a feasibility study on this initiative. Intoccia said the County Executive has now twice heard information on the issue and said he was hopeful that a resolution and vote of support for this concept would be considered by GOCA and a third letter sent to the County Executive. He said this would show a coordinated effort of support.

### **OLNEY TOWN CENTER FACILITY PLANNING STUDY**

Intoccia then introduced Jim Smith, chair of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) who presented background for a feasibility study for an Olney Civic Center/Town Commons. He noted that Lydia Rappolt is vice chair of this committee.

Smith said there are three purposes for the OTCAC: first, to develop an illustrative concept plan for the Town Center, which was done several years ago and shows how a Town Center would look if developed according to current zoning; second, to create a concept plan for a Civic Center/Town Commons, which is what we are currently engaged in. The goal is to complete a draft plan by January 2016 and vote on it in March. The third charge is to provide public input for redevelopment for a Town Center before the planning board. He said that OTCAC is an advisory committee to the Montgomery County Planning Board, so when there is redevelopment within the zoning boundaries of the Town Center, 90 acres and all four quadrants of Olney, they have input.

He next presented the concept plan for the Olney Town Center. He said the next step is a feasibility study to be conducted by Montgomery County government. A GOCA taskforce was formed in 2000 to lobby the County for a Civic Center for public services used by Olney residents. A private developer, Joshua Freeman, placed a “written in stone” sentiment in the Town Center saying that Olney needs an identity represented in the land and public spaces, both formal and informal, enclosed and alfresco. The sentiment is on a rock in a planter in front of Panera. In 2005, the Master Plan included a provision for a committee to be formed to carry the ball for the Town Center and a concept plan. In 2008, a preliminary concept paper was presented, but uncertainty regarding developers and the economy intruded. The uses put forth in that paper were voted on. There were 13 yes, 3 no and one abstention. Since then, much has changed. Uses for a Town Commons/Civic Center are now different. The committee has met with different stakeholders and is ready to get the concept out for public input. The Olney Master Plan calls for about one acre at the center of town for a variety of public partnership mechanisms including dedication and land exchanges and zoning. So, there are mechanisms for creating the space. However, the plan cannot say exactly where the Town Commons should be located. Acquisition of private property, land exchange and incentive zoning (CRT zoning) are not popular. The space should be centrally located and designed to accommodate a variety of functions including public events. There will be four major sections in the concept plan. The committee will reevaluate space needs of potential clients and identify local and government champions. Questions are, what uses will there be for a Civic Center/Town Commons and who would use them. Joe Corbett asked the meaning of “tenants”. Smith said they could be private tenants or commercial. They are currently trying to establish dialog with the largest landowners in the town center who are ready to develop in a large way, but there are not many and we are not aware of any currently ready to upgrade.

The committee will identify suitable entities for public/private partnerships that would make the deal work. They are looking at Rockville Town Square, Silver Spring, and Wheaton each of which could provide models for how public/private facilities work. Possible tenants include a police station, chamber of commerce or visitors center, community meeting space and storage for civic groups and teen center, senior center, although there is no senior interest in this, recreation space to eat etc. or a gym, concert pavilion, public uses, bands, e.g. the Olney Days parade could terminate in the concert pavilion. It could be a focal point for meeting. A Town Center could become part of Olney’s identity for local bands as well as chamber events as well as the Community Night Out. All commercial entities would benefit.

The Committee is asking for a feasibility study for a Town Commons concept plan. The first step for the County is to do a feasibility study. The Committee wants the professionals to do this work and to weigh the uses we have and answer our important questions such as, what is the market for the services we propose; what are the most likely public/private partnerships that would create and maintain the facility; what size facility can be expected through the redevelopment of a shopping center e.g. a five, ten, or 15 acre shopping center; what locations in the town center are candidates; what land swap options are there. Longwood is up for some major redevelopment work in the surrounding areas, which would create land for a town center. What options like those should be considered as well as space needs for the proposed uses. The committee attempted to do this seven years ago with the town center plan. One of the uses was a police satellite substation. Smith thinks those questions should be part of the feasibility study. Also, how do the needs of the concept plan compare with County plans? A feasibility study would weigh the needs of Olney with those of other areas in the County. Now is the time to communicate plans for the feasibility study to the County Executive, since on January 15, he will put out

his list of what will be included in the capital improvement program (CIP) from 2017-2022. We want to be on that list from the start rather than fight to be on it later when it's established. He said that tonight the committee is asking for GOCA's support for the resolution asking the County Executive for a feasibility study to be placed on the CIP list.

Smith then took questions. There was a question on by-in from stakeholders, even though a number of groups were mentioned with possible interest in the concept. Have these groups been contacted for their support? Also, have Olney residents relayed support for a referendum on this? Smith indicated that residents have expressed their needs, but the committee has not attempted to collect signatures for this. Open meetings have been held over the past few months and Olney residents were invited to the meetings. In attendance were people representing the cultural arts, e.g. the Olney Theatre, the Band, Project Change, Rocketeria, and Rock the Lot. The second meeting had several more people who expressed their needs, and whose ideas we want to include. Another question arose as to whether area commercial establishments were contacted relative to their needs.

Barbara Falcigno said that historically, when the Olney Master Plan was updated in 2005, a survey was sent out to Olney residents which indicated that there is support for what the residents envisioned. A lot of ideas for a civic center came from Olney residents. She noted that OTCAC has no funds to do anything that was suggested. Helene Rosenheim said that since the concept is so generic and broad, a feasibility study is needed to get a more clear cut product. Greg suggested engaging the community through the private sector to ask residents to write letters to the County Executive. Alden English felt that if this is delayed, all the open spaces could eventually be used up and there would be no incentive for a business to move in the future. Smith said there are still a few places where this could go, e.g. houses on north High Street, which are converting to commercial uses. Third Street also has space. He felt the best place would be through the redevelopment of a shopping center, e.g. a 15 acre spot where 20% would be set aside for public use e.g. Town Commons. We should be prepared for this.

Residents, through their HOAs, should be asked to write letters. GOCA should push this information to the HOAs. There are thousands of people out there and these letters would have clout with the stakeholders. A comment was made that we are already filing in all the open spaces in Olney.

Matt Zaborsky asked, relative to private/public partnerships, whether the Committee has identified any private entities that would be part of that, perhaps Freeman. Smith said he has no information on that. The "private" part would probably be the landowner who would get some benefit from this. Another private partner could be an art non-profit. Zaborsky asked if there any projections on cost of a building/civic center. Smith had no idea and that's why a feasibility study is needed. Joe Corbett felt that the only way this would happen is if there is a developer whom we would ask to consider including a center. Maybe the appropriate thing to do is to ask the County to say that, if a major development is made, a requirement would be that the developer would at least consider including a civic center. He said that GOCA has not been able to determine where it would go. It could only be done if the County was going to spend a lot of money, or someone was developing a major project and we asked them to consider the Town Center as a part of that.

Greg Intoccia said that a piece to the feasibility study could include a land swap. For example, instead of refreshing Longwood Recreation at its existing location, which is overdue, its relocation to a more central place like near the hospital, could be coupled with another civic function co-located there plus

purchasing the land there from the hospital while providing the hospital with other land from the County. They would jump at this opportunity because they can bring in more patients or patrons with a different, more populated, location in the County. This would generate a space that is open and the funding could be obtained from that land swap. He suggested looking at a relatively new functional facility that has been built near the intersection of Layhill Road and Queensguard Road in Layhill, which could give us an idea of what a potential civic center facility could look like. We could use this as a model for our project, making the additional changes that we think would be appropriate. He felt we should be optimistic, creative, and show interest. He felt the feasibility study is appropriate.

Joe Corbett noted, relative to a land swap, people may be opposed to living next to a Town Commons/Civic Center. We should consider what kind of a land swap it is. We once considered building a Civic Center where Olney Elementary is, but there was a lot of opposition to that and it never happened. Intoccia said that a land swap is only an idea at this point and suggested that we remain creative with ideas. That's why we want a professional study performed on this.

A question arose on how much land would be needed for a Town Center. Intoccia said that perhaps 10 acres would be needed. Matt Quinn asked whether the Chamber of Commerce has weighed in on this by writing a letter. Smith said they are planning to write a letter. Barbara Falcigno said that, regarding Joe Corbett's question on the land next to Longwood, it is zoned residential, so a commercial facility could not be built there. Howard Grief said this is a no brainer. If a private entity wants to build something, we need to be ready. The County may say no. There is nothing that says the Town Center all needs to be in one area. We need the resolution. Smith said it is proactive. The concept is amorphous so we need to be ready with the concept. Matt Quinn said there is currently no motion for a resolution, which is under New Business.

A question arose on whether is there a model existing for a civic center now? Smith noted Gaithersburg Town Commons could be a model, as well as Veterans Plaza (a smaller version), in Silver Spring. To convince a private organization to partner, there is no better way than to bring people in from other areas to events and to have a prototype of ours to point to, a unifying concept of examples that are successful. A question arose on funding from the State. We should lobby the State for funds and enlist Delegate Zucker to help.

### **PROPOSED MCPS SOLAR FARM ALONG CASHELL ROAD**

Matt Quinn said that Montgomery County public schools (MCPS) has several different pieces of property, three of which they have identified and one is in Olney, where they want to put a solar farm. One particular location is on Cashell Road. It's about an 18 acre plot of land. The process they use is to identify locations and educate the community about the project. The last date for public comment regarding their initial phase is January 1, so GOCA does not feel that we have enough information to take a stand right now. So, he is not asking GOCA to take a stand right now. MCPS will collect information and present it to the County who will say to move forward or not. If they do move forward, they will go through the Montgomery County planning process. For these types of projects, there is a section 7-112 of mandatory approval process when the planning department will get involved and we can say whether or not we support this project. The two HOAs that will be impacted are Norbeck Meadows and Cherrywood. The question we've asked MCPS is whether they will ever need that property for a school, because that particular property was set aside for a middle school. Views currently are that they will not need a school. The planning process takes about six years to go from an

identified need in an area to building a school. There is no need at the moment to require a middle school at Cashell. The solar farm contract will last 10 years. If during that 10 year period they need it, they can ask Sun Edison to pull their solar out and they can build a middle school. After 10 years, it will revert to an annual with a lot of one-year contracts. We have asked about health issues related to solar farms. At a 10 foot level there is less electro-magnetic energy than from a washer and dryer. There appears to be no health issues. MCPS say they care about property values. There is no design yet, only a concept. The design phase comes when it goes to the planning department. It will generate enough energy to save about \$60,000 per year. Another issue is that Sun Energy is volatile and their stock is down in the \$5 range. If they go through reorganization, that would be a working facility and a valuable asset and no issue if it is acquired. If they fail to perform, the County can cancel their contract.

He then took questions. He said they will put a green buffer, no razor wire. Greg asked if this would generate income for county schools. Quinn said this would generate energy and they would get a credit for excess energy generated. Intoccia asked what the timing for this and for GOCA is. Quinn said that federal and state grants and the solar farm would need to be up and running by December 2016. It would take about 3 months to build and have it before the planning board by midsummer. Intoccia asked what we are hearing with regard to opposition or objections.

Ed Weisel said that concerns included the impact on property values and aesthetics plays a substantial role. He said it is so far down the road, that if we need an answer now, the answer is no. A lot of people regarding the Master Plan say that if MPCPS ever decides they don't need this property for public schools, it should be used for MPDUs. There is a lot of discussion about various benefits of two types of uses. The underlying zoning for the property is R-200 and the use they are proposing is electric generation – light industrial use. If we end up after 10 years, do we have a piece of property in our community which can be used for other light industrial purposes?

Intoccia said the biggest concern would be an eyesore aesthetically and we must position it so that it's not a problem. He asked whether this was addressed. Weisel said it was not addressed in any detail. No one made any commitments as to aesthetic mediation. The property on Dr. Bird is one that Sun Edison built and is an indication of the work they do. The projects they do are all surrounded by chain link fence and barbed wire over the top. That would not be acceptable to Norbeck Meadows. There was another comment that solar is being seen more and more around Olney. There are panels in Sandy Spring with significant screening and considerable buffers. Solar panels are conspicuous from the air but not from the ground level.

Matt Quinn said they would continue the conversation with MCPS and weigh in with their planning board. We will see the design before the work is done. He noted a story in the Greater Olney News regarding this. He said the Committee will ask MCPS to present this project to GOCA in 2016. They must get approval first from the MC School Board and then GOCA can weigh in and negotiate some of these issues regarding mitigation. Shawn Gallagher said we would be able to see the design then.

There was a question regarding whether the solar power is generated for the school. Quinn said it is and the extra power can be sold back at a discount.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Jim Smith made a motion for GOCA to adopt the resolution below. Barbara Falcigno seconded.

Discussion ensued. Matt Zaborsky noted that there is support for this resolution from Nancy Navarro, the Mid Council Advisory Board, and District 14 and 19 state legislative teams. A question arose on whether this is correct. Falcigno said it is correct and showed the letters written by them. Stacy Levine made a motion to change the wording in the resolution from “facility study” to “feasibility study”, a more general term, and add “cost, location and scope” of the project. Howard Greif seconded the motion. Additional changes were made to the final/amended resolution below, and Quinn called for a vote on the amended Resolution.

Joe Corbett was concerned with the open-ended language regarding “location” of a civic center, which could become a magnet for residents from other locations in the County if it produced major, county-wide events. He said he is opposed to this since Olney is a quiet community. He is not interested in attracting huge crowds into Olney. He felt the amended resolution is too open-ended with respect to the scope and location, and should have some limitations. The civic center should serve the needs of Olney residents. Corbett felt that Olney should propose the scope and not the County. It should be a civic center with County buy-in. If the County were to undertake a large project, we should ask them to *consider* including a civic center as an option. Greg Intoccia asked whether it was necessary to change the language further. Barbara Falcigno and Lee Loftus noted that the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph describes this. Corbett said he was reacting to what was suggested as a way to fund the project. Smith noted that the Olney Farmers Market, the Olney Theater and others are “destination” locations. The civic center would attract people from outside Olney if it has a band shell.

Helene Rosenheim noted that most events in Olney are directed to Olney’s 50,000 residents. It would be a plus for merchants to produce an event that draws this number. It is not the goal to make this a regional destination. Howard Greif noted that this is just a study that needs to happen.

## **Resolution**

Adopted by GOCA Dec 8, 2015

Whereas the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) is on record since 2000 in request of County action to create a Civic Center to house a mix of public uses within the town center; and

Whereas the Olney Master Plan has identified the need for “...a major public open space that would serve as a town commons, and...a civic center that would house the various public services currently located in and around the Town Center”; and

Whereas the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee has conducted a community survey to identify the current use needs of numerous local organizations soon to be released under the title Concept Plan for an Olney Civic Center and Town Commons; and

Whereas the concept of a Civic Center and Town Commons has the support of Council Member Nancy Navarro, the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board, and the District 14 and 19 state legislative teams; and

Whereas a facility planning study is usually the first course of action for County public facility projects GOCA hereby requests that the County Executive include in the 2017-2022 Capital Improvement Program plan a feasibility study to consider the location, scope, and cost for an Olney Civic Center and Town Commons.



**20 Approved**  
**2 Opposed**  
**The motion carried.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted  
Judy Broseker, Recording Secretary

In attendance:

### **GOCA Executive Board**

Greg Intoccia, President - Ashley Hollow; Matt Quinn, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Cherrywood; Judy Broseker, Recording Secretary - Brookeville Knolls; Kathy Curtis, Treasurer – Lake Hollowell; Barbara Falcigno, Immediate Past President - Olney Oaks

### **GOCA Delegates and Alternates**

Lydia Rappolt, (Camelback Village), Jonathan Arias (Hallowell), Don Schmelter (Highlands of Olney), Helene Rosenheim, (Highlands of Olney), Howard Greif (Lake Hallowell), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows), Dave Miller (Norbeck Meadows), Lee Loftus (Oatland Farm), Jim Smith (Oatland Farm), Jay Feinberg (Olney Oaks), Stacy Levine (Reserve at Fair Hill), Alden English (SEROCA), Bob Reel (Victoria Springs), Sharon Dooley (Village of James Creek), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village), Joe Corbett (Williamsburg Village)

### **Public**

Terri Hogan (Lake Hallowell/ Greater Olney News), Barbara Roy (Brookeville), Michelle (Office of Congressman John Sarbanes)