

**Executive Board Meeting Minutes**  
January 12, 2016

**CALL TO ORDER**

President Gregory Intoccia called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m.

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

Intoccia asked for a motion to approve the December 8, 2015 draft minutes. Barbara Falcigno made a motion to approve the minutes; Matt Zaborsky seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Intoccia said there was a change in the draft meeting agenda and there would be no Solar Farm presentation. He asked for a motion to approve the amended January 12, 2016 draft meeting agenda. Barbara Falcigno made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Matt Zarborsky seconded the motion and the agenda was approved unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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.

Howard Greif said there will be a meeting of the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) on January 26 at 8:30 pm in the Community Room. It will be a public meeting and hearing regarding the proposed concept plan for an alley connecting High Street and Morningwood.

Terry Hogan reported that a new issue of the Greater Olney News would be in mailboxes today or tomorrow. She asked for support for the paper's advertisers since January and February are very slow months for advertising.

**ANTICIPATED FY 2017 COUNTY OPERATING BUDGET**

Greg Intoccia presented the County Executive's anticipated 2017 operating budget, which focuses on County services and products. County Executive Leggett will present his formal budget to the County Council in March. The County Executive will also speak on his proposed budget on January 21 at the recreation center on the corner of Layhill Road and Queensguard. Intoccia encouraged the GOCA Executive Board to attend this informational meeting and to also look at the building as a model for a future Olney Civic Center.

Intoccia then gave a slide overview of the operating budget. He noted that discussion and questions would follow. The slides are also on the County website with the ability to drill down into details.

The slides show the County Executive's priorities, which include expenditures by function and an update FY 2016. Schools are most important, comprising 49% of the budget. The County Executive has significant input into the level of funding and the Board of Education then decides how it is carved up. Public safety comprises 13% of the budget, and debt service 8% and growing. This is because the economic downturn caused some projects to be put off and they are now being worked on. Those three budget items comprise over 70% of the budget. There are some other items like HHS, which brings the budget to about 80%. The discretionary part of the budget is 20%, but the part of the budget where citizens can have input is significantly less than that. The budget is over \$4 billion FY 2016.

The fiscal projection has revenue uncertainty. The State has lost the Wynne case, where the Court denied Maryland certain tax credits related to income taxes paid to other states. That means that Montgomery County is experiencing losses of \$183 million through FY 2019 and thereafter \$16 million annually. However, there was some advance planning and \$64 million was saved, but there are still significant problems ahead. Continuing challenges include uncertainty over what the State will provide the County, disappointing revenue growth, state budget uncertainty and high structural cost increases.

The fiscal outlook FY 2017 is that Montgomery County is on the path to sustainability. There is slowed growth in expenditures and increased reserves, which are expected to reach 10% by 2020. There has been some permanent long term reduction in costs such as the retiree health insurance. The shortfalls over time have been reduced, but \$179 million is needed to balance the FY 2017 budget. Currently in the budgeting process, the County Executive is taking input from citizens. The approval happens in June. Intoccia then summarized the County Executive's six point economic plan pointing out that he is continuing to push for the Montgomery County Independent Transit Authority (ITA). We have now twice seen the indication that the ITA plan is still in place and Intoccia urged the Board to keep that in mind.

Intoccia then turned to a discussion of issues and observations. He noted that the County executive wants to fix the traffic and congestion problem and suggested that GOCA participate in that process. He suggested that the group consider taking a regional approach and think of ways to fund various alternatives and then encourage State and Federal officials to take more of a regional approach. Focus on an individual issue on a shorter time horizon, perhaps, and do this in a structured approach so Montgomery County will not feel so pressured to go it alone. He suggested working on technology-neutral issues to get Federal buy-in. Maybe we could have a discussion on fixing the crumbling infrastructure if there is a technology-neutral approach to do it and have federal officials give their support since Montgomery County is resource restrained.

Another issue is the County liquor monopoly and the push to privatize liquor sales. Intoccia believes the County Executive would oppose the privatization because he thinks this would be a loss of \$30 million annually to the County. The County Executive also thinks privatization would cost county families \$100/year. Intoccia suggested the GOCA Board look at this issue.

He also suggested the Board look at the school budget, specifically school repairs, which could be a tipping point among teaching staff because of the increase in class size, for instance. It is anticipated that the State may not be generous this year, so the County Executive may not want to increase funding for schools. We want to see what the State does first. Another issue is that libraries will remain

vulnerable for funding. Funding has not returned to previous levels. He encouraged all interested Board members to attend the January 21 meeting with the County Executive.

Other issues include a Citizens Board from the private sector to look at the successes in Fairfax County. The GOCA Board may want to explore this as a group. Also, there are no new ideas on public safety or how health services are handled, but there may be plans for new ways that ambulances are used. For instance, mobile ambulances could move around all day to critical, higher call locations. He suggested the Board look at other issues on a case-by-case basis to see if GOCA should become involved.

Ed Weisel said that he is critical of the County Executive's way of using an end-run around the fiscal restraints placed on the County by the Charter. In his opinion, if there is to be an ITA, and it could be sold to the citizens, so be it. It should be considered a charter amendment. Intoccia said there is a charter commission, but he does not know the scope of its responsibilities. We should be aware of it and take a look at it. Weisel said he believed that a charter commission would be closely enough aligned with the county government that they would not accept a vote on an ITA by the citizens. If that were to be undertaken, it would probably have to be petitioned by a referendum.

Howard Greif asked how Montgomery County compares to other counties in Maryland as far as the money we are getting from Annapolis – is it 50%, 25%, or the top. Intoccia said he does not know the answer. Historically, we have been on the tail end. Matt Quinn said that for every dollar Montgomery County sends to Annapolis, the County only gets \$.16 back. Compared to Baltimore City, for every dollar they send, they might get \$1.00+ back. Greif said that every time we have State delegates speak to us, it seems that they bail. It seems that, even with our budget constraints, we are not getting the money from Annapolis. So, when we have them here next, we should hold them accountable for the money promised. Quinn said regarding the ITA, we don't know what this iteration would look like. If the County Executive wants to create an ITA that has the ability to raise funds and receive money from the County Council, it is not a big deal. The way it has been recently proposed, they would have the ability to tax, to borrow, eminent domain and a number of other things. None of that can occur unless the State gives the Counties the authority to do it. Currently there is no authority for that and there is nothing in front of the legislature asking for that to occur.

Jonathan Arias felt that a referendum is the appropriate way to go. The main drivers in Montgomery County are infrastructure, schools and quality of life. But the school system is struggling and, when a school system goes downhill, it is impossible to bring it back up. We're beginning to see this with demographic changes in the north and south of our county. To engage at this level, we must find ways to reshape GOCA and mobilize our citizen base. He does not think it's enough to write letters, no matter how well crafted, to our representatives. We must think of ourselves as an advocacy spearhead that is going to take political action to write letters and contact our representatives en mass. That is the way to affect these larger scale issues. He felt this would be an effective strategy.

Intoccia said that political effort is helpful. We have significant credibility on core Olney issues and we can leverage that on issues affecting others in the County besides Olney. Do we have the resources to do this? We have to focus on Olney issues first. He suggested that the Board look to members to get more involved.

Other comments included the terms of federal and state funding, especially for the transportation issues. Since many of the jobs are federal jobs, we should push for federal and state funding. This would be a major benefit.

Lee Lofthus said he would like to see other means of closing the budget gap besides increasing everyone's property taxes. We should see what other efforts the County is making to try to close the gap besides a property tax increase.

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

**Correspondence Report** - Jackie Benn passed around the correspondence folder noting there was not much new in it.

### **Town Center Advisory Report**

Jim Smith said that at the December 1 meeting, a forum was held for people interested in speaking at the OTCAC meeting with regard to the alley connection between Morningwood Drive and North High Street. A list of questions to ask the county engineering office was collected. One question was whether the alley would support two-way traffic. The answer was that the alley *could* support two-way traffic. Smith said we also wanted to know whether any privately owned land would be used for the alley connection. The answer was no, the alley connection would be on public right-of-way, but there would be easements required during the construction. Another question regarded parking availability as a result of the construction. The answer was there would be no parking available in the alley, and adjacent parking areas may have to be reconfigured. Also asked was whether speed controls would be installed. The answer was that traffic control engineers would be consulted and options for speed controls would be discussed at their next meeting. The next OTCAC meeting will be in two weeks, January 26, in this room (Community Room of the Buffington Building). The county engineering office will have their meeting first. There is an hour reserved for them at our meeting, which will follow.

Matt Zaborsky asked Smith to clarify the definition of an "alley". Smith showed slides of the position of the proposed alley. He said the cost would be modest and would be included in the current year CIP. There are between 10 and 12 feet of land that need to be cleared for the alley. The land is all public right-of-way and has been on the Master Plan as an alley, but has never been completed as an alley. Zaborsky asked whether the idea of the alley is for better access to the school and noted that the pushback may be traffic trying to get onto Georgia Avenue. Smith said the OTCAC has pursued this for the last four or five years when they first heard of the Goddard School construction. One of the goals of the Master Plan is to have a better connected Town Center. When there is a grid system in the Town Center, traffic can circulate better because there would be options for driving in the Town Center. He said they wanted to increase circulation in this area. The end of North High Street is as big a priority for the committee as the alley connection, and they have been pursuing this as well. Zaborsky noted that the end of North High Street would entail more money. Barbara Falcigno noted that there would be various utilities that would have to be moved. Smith said that in the past two CIPs, OTCAC has asked for both of these connections. The end of North High Street project would be very expensive and would need its own budget line item. Because of the Goddard School path, he thinks it's the right time to make that connection. It's just a matter of moving the barricade and some minor curb and gutter work. Matt Quinn asked whether GOCA has taken a position on this. Falcigno said that the Transportation Committee has a recommendation but is waiting until the OTCAC takes a position. The public will present their ideas on January 26 and that would be the time for GOCA to take a position. We should

take a position prior to the January 26 meeting. Zaborsky asked how the homeowners in attendance feel about this. One homeowner said that this doesn't make sense to bring traffic between the two parking lots to relieve congestion that has built up at McDonalds when the Master Plan shows it was meant to go through to the traffic light at the end of the street. It's on a curve at the end of the street also. He did not think anyone involved with this is on board with it.

Another comment arose from Tracy Vana, a Goddard School employee, concerning the amount of traffic coming from McDonalds through the narrow alley, which would be 10 feet from the Goddard building. She said there was mention at the OTCAC meeting of a study on this but she hasn't heard whether it will be done. Smith said that OTCAC does not do traffic studies. Vana was concerned about the traffic so close to the children coming to the Goddard School and the difficult parking conditions. Greg Intoccia suggested holding off on the discussion until there is a resolution.

### **Chamber of Commerce Report**

Joe Buffington was not present and no report was made.

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

Matt Quinn reported that a Verizon Wireless store would go into the site vacated by the Good Earth. GOCA approval was not needed for this because there will be no changes to the property. He said this would be a different Verizon Wireless store and Olney will now have two Verizon stores.

As for meetings with elected officials, he said that there has been good correspondence with his committee. There are 113 bills that have been introduced in the Maryland Senate and 67 House bills. He noted that the bills include a proposal for a State duck, a bill to change the Maryland State song, and best practices for self-driving cars. He also noted that that all Chesapeake Bay Bridge toll lanes will now have an EZ pay booth as well as a cash booth. Also considered are income tax credits for community college tuition for state taxes, but not federal. There is also a time and transparency bill for campaign contributions to be reported within 48 hours.

### **Transportation Committee**

Barbara Falcigno discussed the proposal to extend North High Street to Morningwood Drive with an alley. She showed slides from the Master Plan to create a network of roads getting onto Georgia Avenue. She said the grid system is the way all modern urban areas manage traffic. She said it comes down to money. To connect High Street directly to Morningwood is expensive due to the grade difference and the buried utilities. She said the committee is trying to get this project onto the CIP and have the County make the connection because the cost would be prohibitive for a private landowner. There are concerns regarding sight line distance because there would be some blind spots. Some comments regard parking for existing businesses and they would have to reconfigure their parking space. Other concerns are children crossing the parking lots to get to the Goddard School and the Olney Elementary.

She asked for comments. Tracy Vana, Goddard School staff, said that the safety of children being dropped off in the alley and having to walk to the Goddard entrance was a major concern. Parking for staff and parents were discussed and other options. Falcigno suggested waiting until the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting to discuss options. To Matt Zaborsky's question regarding where her employees park, Vana

said they park in two different parking lots. Also homeowners and businesses on North High Street had issues with the additional traffic the alley would create around their homes.

Howard Greif said that he has concerns that Morningwood would create greater traffic jams, especially during drive time, from the cars coming out of McDonalds. He suggested that a study of McDonald's traffic be done to evaluate the number of cars that would use this alley to go from McDonald's drive-in to Georgia Avenue. He has contacted McDonald's corporate office in an attempt to get data on the traffic through the area around their drive-through. Matt Quinn said that the issue is due to poor planning and execution originally within the grids in downtown Olney. We are attempting now to fix that grid with a resolution to create an alleyway from North High Street to Morningwood because it is too expensive to extend High Street to Morningwood. We are trying to correct a decades old problem. He was concerned that the proposed alley solution could create a lot of safety issues.

Jon Arias asked whether there has been any consideration to putting in a traffic signal at Georgia Avenue and High Street. Falcigno said Georgia is always backed up in the morning traffic and it takes many light cycles to get through on Georgia Avenue and another traffic light would not help.

Ed Weisel suggested a very low speed camera in the alley, e.g. 10 mph. Comments were raised regarding placing raised curbs to prevent speeding or turnarounds in the alleyway.

Zaborsky asked how much the alleyway would cost. Falcigno said \$70,000 - \$100,000, which would come out of the general transportation fund.

Jim Smith said that safety is the priority and suggested that the Goddard School staff could park in the lot next to the proposed alleyway instead of parents trying to take their children into Goddard and crossing the alleyway. Instead of the staff parking being on the right side of the alleyway, make that the parent's overflow parking. That is an excellent idea and there should be a sign that says "staff parking". He felt that would address the safety issues for children. Another idea is to lobby for a crosswalk there and a severe speed bump with a flashing light. He said they will talk to the County about all of these ideas.

Falcigno said that there is a meeting on January 26 for more discussion and noted that GOCA has not yet taken a formal position on this. She said the meeting would discuss all options and ideas. GOCA will take a position after this meeting.

### **Officer and Award Nominations**

Matt Zaborsky said that nominations for awards for contributions to the Olney community are still needed for the awards ceremony. The deadline to submit nominations has been extended to February 9. Contact Matt Zaborsky or Barbara Falcigno with nominations. Go to [GOCA.org](http://GOCA.org) for more information on awards being given.

Falcigno reported that nominations for new GOCA officers in 2016 are: Greg Intoccia, Ashley Hollow, President; Matt Quinn, Cherrywood, Executive vice president; Lee Lofthus, Ashley Hollow, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President; Matt Zaborsky, Norbeck Meadows, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President; Stacy Levine, Fair Hill Farm, Recording Secretary; Jackie Benn, Fair Hill Farm, Corresponding Secretary; Robert Hambrecht, Williamsburg Village, Treasurer. The Board will vote on the nominations at the next GOCA meeting.

### **Membership Committee**

Greg Intoccia reported that Norbeck Chase Condo Townhouse has submitted an application for GOCA membership.

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

Greg Intoccia, chair of the Mid-County Citizen's Advisory Board (MCCAB), said that the Board has submitted a letter regarding the constitution of the Board and how it is selected.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Intoccia asked for a motion to accept Norbeck Chase Condo Townhouse HOA as a GOCA member. Matt Zaborsky made a motion, which was seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Intoccia said that GOCA dues are now due and the deadline has been extended into February.

Ed Weisel said that the solar array letter, which was emailed to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) would be made available to the secretary. Regarding the opportunity for public comments on the solar array, he said there was little notice of the meeting and that, for Norbeck Meadows, the biggest problem was the mandatory referral and no leverage for the community to comment on the aesthetics of the solar array. The proposed solar array is within the limits of the geographic boundaries of Norbeck Meadows. He said that if MCPS goes forward with the project without any community input regarding commitment to aesthetics, we may go to litigation because we want the process to go forward by special exception.

Zaborsky said that the Awards Ceremony is scheduled for March 13 at Good Counsel High School from 2-4 pm.

### **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; Jackie Benn, Corresponding Secretary – Fair Hill Farm; Kathy Curtis, Treasurer – Lake Hallowell; Barbara Falcigno, Immediate Past President - Olney Oaks

### **GOCA Delegates and Alternates**

Beata DeLuigi (Batchelors Forest), Lydia Rappolt (Camelback Village), Danny Benn (Fair Hill Farm), Jonathan Arias (Hallowell), Don Schmelter (Highlands of Olney), Helene Rosenheim (Highlands of Olney), Howard Greif (Lake Hallowell), Perry Buckberg (Manor Oaks), Ed Weisel (Norbeck

Meadows), Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows), Lee Lofthus (Oatland Farm), Jim Smith (Oatland Farm), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village)

**Public**

Tracy Vana (The Goddard School), Terri Hogan (Greater Olney News), Ronald P. Debronsky (Norbeck Chase Townhouse HOA), Robert Hambrecht (Cohn Rezaich), Katherine Mullen ( Senator Roger Manno), Daphne Henesy Kurdziolek (Steven Kurdziolek, DMD), Joe Fritsch, Sasha Kiose (SunEdison), David Ochoa (SunEdison), Barbara Ray (Brookeville)