

Executive Board Meeting Minutes
July 11, 2017

CALL TO ORDER

President Gregory Intoccia called the meeting to order at 7:33 p.m. GOCA representatives, alternates, invited guests and members of the public introduced themselves.

Intoccia asked for a motion to approve the June 13, 2017 minutes. Dave Miller made a motion to approve the minutes. Jackie Benn seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Intoccia noted that two changes needed to be made to the agenda for today's meeting. Item number 2 should read "Approval of June Minutes" instead of "Approval of May Minutes" and item number 3 should read "Approval of July Agenda" instead of "Approval of June Agenda." Intoccia asked for a motion to approve the revised agenda for today's meeting. Jackie Benn made a motion to approve the revised agenda. Carolyn Knight seconded the motion. The revised agenda was approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Jay Feinberg requested some information on the Beer & Wine store. Dave Miller commented that there are new owners. Miller also stated that GOCA is looking into the maintenance of the corner since it has been neglected. He would like to make the corner into a small village green.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE COUNTY – COUNCIL PRESIDENT ROGER BERLINER

President Greg Intoccia introduced Roger Berliner, Council President. Intoccia stated that GOCA appreciates Berliner's chairmanship of the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy and Environment Committee. Intoccia also mentioned that this is Berliner's second time as Council President and that he is a member of the Health and Human Services Committee. Prior to the meeting, GOCA gave Roger Berliner a wide range of topics to address.

Council President Roger Berliner began the presentation by stating that he attended the Olney Farmers Market last Sunday. He commended Olney on having such a nice farmers market. Berliner stated that he would discuss the following items:

- Is Montgomery County doing enough on regional transportation issues?

- What are the roles of the Council, County Executive, and school board to maintain good oversight on spending and programs? How does the Council decide how much money is spent on schools?
- What is his view on whether the County's policies toward economic development and business need redirection?
- Do our current zoning requirements allow sufficient input from the local community?

Regarding regional transportation issues, Berliner stated that fixing Metro is the most important item for our region. When Metro does not work, everyone's commute is much worse. Berliner's opinion is that people had been focusing on the short term instead of the long term. He is very pleased with the new general manager for Metro, Paul Wiedefeld, since he is focusing on the long term. Under Wiedefeld's tenure was the first time that the system was shut down. Berliner stated that a dedicated source of funding for Metro is needed (\$10 - \$15 million). He mentioned that a proposal for a moderate sales tax in Montgomery and Prince George's County dedicated to Metro will be introduced in the legislative session in January. This has to be a regional effort with support in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and Maryland. Since Virginia's session is the shortest, they will vote on the legislation first. If the legislation is passed in Virginia, then it will be voted on by the Montgomery County Council.

Berliner also stated that the Council would like Governor Hogan to add capacity on Interstate- 270 to the American Legion Bridge. Virginia's high occupancy toll lanes have worked well to finance improvements in Virginia. However, Governor Hogan does not support having high occupancy toll lanes in Maryland. Berliner said that the Council opposes building a second crossing over the Potomac since such a crossing would go through the Agricultural Reserve. He also said that if capacity is added on I-270 to the American Legion Bridge, then a second crossing over the Potomac will not be needed.

Berliner mentioned that he would like Montgomery County to get state of the art traffic systems which can make a difference on traffic of 10 – 15%. He also stated that Bus Rapid Transit will be part of our County's future. He acknowledged that the BRT proposal for Olney was not handled appropriately. However, he said that having dedicated lanes for a BRT system is the cheapest form of mass transit.

Regarding spending on schools, Berliner stated that the Council has no line item authority. The Council writes a check based on the School Board's request. The School Board decides how the money is spent. He said that our school system is facing challenges because of the changing demographics in the County. Berliner stated that it is important for us to have a strong relationship with the School Board.

Regarding the County's policies on economic development and business needs, Berliner said that he feels redirection is needed. He stated that "government doesn't do it well." While Fairfax County has a favorable business climate, Montgomery County has an unfavorable reputation which needs to change so that businesses can prosper in our county. It will take time to see positive impact from the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. They are focusing on the big picture such as how to attract businesses to the county and branding. The Small Business Navigator was created to focus on small issues such as permitting issues. Business Solutions in County Government was also created. He mentioned that the liquor tax has made it hard for restaurants to thrive in Montgomery County.

Regarding zoning requirements, Berliner stated that zoning and land use are the hardest work that the Council does since the Council determines what can and should happen. He gave two examples – stopping the construction of a second outlet mall in Clarksburg and the success of the Pike & Rose Development in Bethesda.

The floor was opened for questions and discussion. A modest sales tax for Metro of 1 – 1.5% could generate \$70 million per year in Montgomery County. A lock box would be used to keep the Metro tax dedicated to Metro. Berliner stated that we will know very early in the process if the tax is passed in Virginia. If that happens, then the tax should pass in Maryland. In Maryland, the state pays for Metro while elsewhere the county pays for metro. Regarding the liquor tax, Berliner said that we sell less liquor in Montgomery County. We are the only county that has a monopoly on liquor. We are the wholesaler and the retailer. Howard Greif asked a question regarding the issue on the Planning Board elections which was mentioned in Bethesda Magazine. Berliner responded that even though the Council had decided that it would be unanimous whoever won, there was fallout regarding who won. He stated that the Planning Board is established under state law. He did not know who decided that there had to be a certain number of Republican and Democratic seats on the Planning Board. Dave Miller and Ed Weisel discussed the issues with the swale and culvert storm management system that they are having in Norbeck Meadows where the corrugated steel piping is rusting and the homeowners are responsible for fixing the culverts for a cost of \$2,500 - \$3,000. Berliner responded that he had not heard about this issue and requested Miller to provide him with additional information. A final question was asked regarding if young parents are welcomed to visit classrooms when they are considering moving to the area. It has been found that some principals consider it an intrusion to have a parent observe classes. Roger Berliner responded that this is a School Board and Superintendent issue. He said that there could be less openness because of increased security issues.

POST – MARYLAND LEGISLATIVE SESSION PERSPECTIVE – DELEGATE (DISTRICT 14) ANNE KAISER, MAJORITY LEADER

President Greg Intoccia introduced Anne Kaiser, Majority Leader in the Maryland House of Delegates. She is also Chair of the Ways and Means Committee. Intoccia commented that we would like to hear her leadership perspective.

Kaiser opened her presentation by stating that we are a citizen’s legislature; they are not full time legislators and hold other regular jobs. The delegates rely on the citizens for their expertise regarding the 1600 bills that we have each year. She emphasized that it is very easy to reach our local legislators.

She stated that the one disappointment from this legislative session was some of the pettiness that was displayed by some politicians regarding road issues.

Kaiser then discussed some of the successes from the session were the Hometown Heroes Bill where a tax credit was passed to thank the people that serve us, the manufacturing tax breaks where both sides worked together to expand jobs, Ethics Reform, giving the Attorney General the right to go after pharmaceutical companies that are price gauging epi-pens, the ban of fracking which are ruining our lands, and the bipartisan bills on opioid addiction. These successes show that people are working together trying to find solutions.

Kaiser ended the presentation by discussing unfinished business such as updating the funding formulas for schools, the need for school construction to keep up with the number of children in school, and bail reform.

Intoccia opened the floor for questions.

Howard Greif asked a question in reference to what can an HOA do to treat bamboo and other invasive species of plants that can no longer be treated with Round-Up. Kaiser said that she does not know anything about this issue and will look into it.

Matt Quinn asked Delegate Kaiser why someone would want to move here if the school system is getting worse and because of the transportation issues the County is facing. Kaiser responded that she does not think that the school system is getting worse. It is still ranked near the top. She said that we have to do more with school funding and construction, but funding is limited. The state aid for Montgomery County schools has increased.

Jackie Benn asked what can be done to keep retirees in Montgomery County. Kaiser responded that a lot of retirees are staying.

Intoccia thanked Delegate Kaiser for speaking at the GOCA meeting.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEES/LIAISON REPORTS

Public Policy & Community Affairs Committee (PP&CAC)

Greg Intoccia stated that SHA completed that study on Dunkin Donuts' traffic. GOCA expects to receive a report in the next month.

There will be a meeting on the opening of a Jiffy Lube near the intersection of MD 97 and MD 108 on 8/25th from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm in the Remax Building.

Councilmember Navarro's staff had informed GOCA that the MD 97/28 interchange had been removed from the priorities list. GOCA wrote a letter requesting that the priority be restored. County Executive Leggett and County Council President Berliner sent a letter to the Maryland Department of Transportation saying that the MD 97/28 interchange was back on the priorities list.

The CIP budget planning for 2019 – 2024 has begun. Intoccia made a pitch to Parks & Planning about Olney's Civic Center and Town Commons requesting that they give more attention to it as one unified concept instead of two separate concepts. GOCA also wrote a letter to the County Executive and County Council requesting that the Olney Civic Center and Town Commons be viewed as one unified project, and that funding planning proceed accordingly.

Transportation Committee Report

Emmet Tydings reported that the other big projects they are working on are the widening of MD 28 / 198.

Membership

There were no updates.

Correspondence Report

Jackie Benn passed the correspondence folder to the Board.

Mid County Citizens Advisory Board

Greg Intoccia stated that he and Billy Becker attended the meeting on the CIP budget planning for 2019 – 2024. He also said that he would like to get someone to speak to GOCA about the Rock Creek Water Shed Study and other environmental issues.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee

There were no updates since no one was present.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS

President Intoccia stated that there would be no GOCA meeting in August. Instead of having a meeting, plans are in the works for a social dinner on August 8th for GOCA representatives and their spouses / significant others. It will be held at the Montgomery Country Club, it will be business casual, and it will have a cash bar. He said that he hopes the delegates take the GOCA Officers up on the offer since this is an appropriate way to say thanks for all of the volunteer effort and watching what goes on in the community. A head count is needed 72 hours prior to the dinner.

Two delegates questioned why they are not receiving meeting announcement e-mails. It was confirmed that their names are on the sign-in sheets. Intoccia requested that they discuss this issue with him after the meeting.

Diana Littlefield, a delegate from Olney Acres, mentioned that during the bad storm three weeks ago the creek overflowed and there were huge logs coming down the street. She expressed concern with the creek backing up and wondering where the logs end up. Billy Becker gave her a contact from the Department of Environmental Protection.

Intoccia announced that Matt Zaborsky will be moving to Florida soon. He would like to let Matt know how much we appreciate what he has done for GOCA and the Olney community.

Intoccia also stated that Terri Hogan spoke with MTA and that the schedule for the commuter bus service to BWI will remain unchanged until July 2018. GOCA is pleased that we were made aware of this issue and could weigh in. The community should support this bus service. However, it is not over yet.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business, a motion was submitted to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Stacy Levine, Recording Secretary

In attendance:

GOCA Officers

Greg Intoccia, President – Ashley Hollow; Carolyn Knight – Executive Vice President; Billy Becker, 1st Vice President; David Miller, 2nd Vice President; Stacy Levine, Recording Secretary - The Reserve at Fair Hill; Jackie Benn, Corresponding Secretary – Fair Hill Farm; Robert Hambrecht, Treasurer – Williamsburg Village

GOCA Delegates and Alternates

Matt Quinn (Cherrywood), Lee Kidd (Cherrywood), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), Carol Frenkel (Olney Mill), Lorie Nelson (Olney Oaks), Jay Feinberg (Olney Oaks), Alden English (SEROCA), Hilary Phillips Rogers (Victoria Springs), Ruth Laughner (Williamsburg Village).

Invited Guests

Roger Berliner, Montgomery County Council President
Delegate Anne Kaiser, Majority Leader
Emmet Tydings, Chairman of Transportation Committee

Public

Terri Hogan (Greater Olney News), Alexis Reed (Councilmember Navarro's Office)