



GREATER OLNEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

2023-11-14 Representatives Meeting

- Minutes -

The 2023-11-14 Representatives Meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) was held in-person at Cadence at Olney and online via Zoom Web Teleconference. President Helene Rosenheim called the meeting to order at 7:42pm EST, with recording Secretary John Seng present.

A quorum was present. Voting members denoted (*) as indicated. Those attending:

Officers

- Helene Rosenheim, President (Highlands of Olney)
- Curtis Chappell, First Vice President (Olney Square)
- Jeff Duce, Treasurer (Norbeck Grove)
- Jamie Goad, Corresponding Secretary (Norbeck Meadows)
- John Seng, Recording Secretary, Transportation Committee

Members

- Mindy Badin (GOCA Transportation Committee) (Olney Mill)
- Maria Bender (Brookeville Knolls HOA)*
- Mike Dickerson (Olney Oaks)*
- Alden English, South East Rural Olney Civic Assn. (SEROCA)*
- Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood)*
- Lee Kidd (Cherrywood)*
- Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres Civic Assn.)*
- Juris Mohseni (Village of James Creek)*
- Carol Sullivan (Cherrywood)
- Kelly Wasik (Tanterra)*
- Edward Weisel (Norbeck Meadows Civic Assn.)*

Guests

- Kathryn "Kate" Dadourian, Founder & Director, Camp Rippling Brook
- Alan and Claudia Dadourian
- Jody Kline, Attorney for K. Dadourian (Miller, Miller & Canby)
- Aaron Kraut (Chief of Staff, Montgomery County Councilmember Dawn Luedtke, District 7)
- Jon Agre, Brighton Knolls
- Teresa Agre, Brighton Knolls
- John Lippicott, Brighton Knolls
- Dan Peddicord, Brighton Knolls
- Patricia Peddicord, Brighton Knolls
- V. Ann Scлавounes, Brighton Knolls
- Craig Thorton, Brighton Knolls
- Kate Thorton, Brighton Knolls
- Craig Barnett
- Mark Beall
- Tina Craun
- Ryan McNally
- V. Ann Scлавounos
- Matthew Dowling
- Sarah Hayden
- Gerald Klein
- John Lippicott
- Jane Meushaw
- Allison Thomson

Approval of Agenda for November 14, 2023 Meeting

Curtis Chappell moved to approve the agenda without changes. All approved.

Development Proposal for Camp Rippling Brook, Brinklow, Owner, Kathryn Dadourian

Kate Dadourian presented an overview of the development plans for Camp Rippling Brook. Initially intended as a “nature preschool,” the focus is now on daycare. Kate shared that nature-based preschools have grown to about 250 of these schools in the US.

Camp Rippling Brook joined the Olney Chamber of Commerce this past year. Rippling Brook plans to demonstrate values of respect for all, teaching responsibility and keeping safety as a priority.

The group applied as a private educational institution. Being nature-based, they adopt an immersive approach, with physical educational and social experiences for children, with experiences that “last a lifetime.” Programs and activities will focus on fostering healthy development of interpersonal skills; development of self-confidence and character; allowing for exploration in a welcoming, fun and outdoor space environment.

The maximum enrollment will be 60 children, ages 2-5 years old. Hours: Monday - Friday from 7:30 am to 6 pm. Drop off would be 7:30 to 9 am, including some extended hours in the morning for children. The normal school day will be 9 am to 4 pm. Pickup and extended hours in the afternoon would be 4 pm to 6 pm.

Rippling Brook does not anticipate offering transportation for its preschool because these children are too young with car seat rules and laws, and can't ride in buses. The Rippling Brooke traffic study assumes that there are 1.75 children per car.

Their application falls under the category of private educational institution. The plan for this summer camp is to operate from June to August. The camp assumes 350 campers per week ages 3-1/2 to 15 years old.

Kate presented their site plan that was accepted by Montgomery County. Covers almost 31 acres. All pedestrian traffic does occur away from vehicle traffic. Kate reviewed access to the camp via New Hampshire on entry and exit.

She highlighted local employment opportunities providing first jobs for young adults, beginning 16 years old.

Kate then took questions from in-person and online participants.

The first query asked about the timeline from start to finish. Kate said she couldn't really accurately answer since that question depends upon zoning and the subsequent processes, eg, needing to apply to the subdivision portion as well, and other elements beyond the control of the Camp planners; and the school has still to be licensed. Targeting to open by next school year could occur with permitting and zoning secured. Then summer camp for 2025 could be an option. The intention is to eventually build a structure that could allow for 350 people in inclement weather.

Kate Thornton asked about the Rippling Brook business plan that would give neighboring residents more confidence of the organization's stability.

Ms. Dadourian responded that the business plan was not a subject of the presentation, but rather the zoning application. But Ms. Dadourian believes they prepared a sound business plan.

John Lippincott shared his serious concerns about traffic and that he hadn't heard anything to alleviate those concerns. What would Rippling Brook do to ameliorate an “inevitable backup that will occur from cars trying to turn left into that through that traffic stream [on New Hampshire Avenue]?”

Rippling Brook attorney Jody Kline replied that they intended to conduct another community meeting in the near future “where we will go into a lot of detail on the traffic study and the environmental issues which we couldn't do tonight for a couple reasons. But there it's it warrants more analysis and we will be doing that again the future.”

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Regarding a question about costs, Kate Dadourian replied with a current figure of \$395 per week, but that number may increase given overhead costs and is extremely low compared to other camps in the area. Kate answered a question about lighting, which will all point upwards.

John Agre asked about the planned capacity of Rippling Brook compared to other camps.? Kate Dadourian indicated about 500 for Camp Sonshine, and Sandy Spring in the 700 to 800 range weekly.

John Lippincott asked about the impact on water and septic tank utilization. The response: Would take longer to explain than time allotted in the meeting, but that there are significant differences between home drinking water and waste water use and a camp. Will be discussed at another meeting.

Kate Dadourian shared that if anybody wants an invitation to the next community meeting, to provide their name and contact information at the [Camp Rippling Brook website](#).

Approval of Minutes from October 10, 2023 Meeting

The minutes were approved as presented.

Subsequently, Maria Bender raised a question on the October minutes regarding the summary on the proposed Montgomery County Council STEP Act in the President's Report. Helene replied that GOCA had already registered opposition to the STEP Act and that the parts that concerned GOCA no longer remain in the bill. GOCA wasn't planning additional action. GOCA has not changed its position on that bill.

Paul Jarosinski described his concerns with what remains in the STEP Act: "It's another stab at the police department that we're that is spiraling downhill with open vacancies and retirements. And crime is rampant in the County. And the last thing we need to do is take another pot shot at the police."

Helene explained again that GOCA had already opposed the STEP Act. While the parts that particularly concerned GOCA were removed, GOCA's position of opposition still stands and no additional action was necessary. GOCA will review a new copy of the bill and determine if any additional statement is necessary to represent our position.

Announcements

None.

Treasurer's Report, Jeff Duce, Treasurer

Jeff reported that GOCA rented the banner space twice for November.

GOCA still seeks a Treasurer to take office next year. GOCA is looking for board members since there will be some turnover at the end of the year. GOCA has a \$3,000 budget. Interested candidates may write to GOCAOfficers@gmail.com.

Transportation Committee Report, John Seng

1. Mindy Baden developed a draft of content for an online portal on the GOCA website to provide a simple access point for residents of GOCA HOAs and community associations to report problems such as potholes, excess vegetation covering signs, speeding vehicles and other road hazards or repair needs.

Working title is: *RoadReport*. The portal would provide easily understood instructions for communicating concerns to the right State or County resources. Portal design and content now being reviewed by other Transportation Committee members. Committee will propose the design and configuration on the GOCA site. Will not require a vote by the board.

2. Two public inquiries received in October were sent to the Transportation committee.

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- a. A proposal from a homeowner to ask the State to consider a crosswalk at the intersection of Route 108 and Headwaters Drive. We assisted the homeowner in forwarding the request. After their study of the site, the State responded that the remedy we suggested would be worse than the problem that exists today. The resident observation and query was satisfactorily resolved and answered by MDOT.
 - b. At an intersection that situates adjacent to the Olney boundary - Route 108 and Tucker Lane – presented a potentially high risk for crashes due to stopped, concealed vehicles preparing to turn. In this case, MDOT replied with appreciation for the resident and GOCA raising the concern. The State is trimming back the shrubbery and modifying signs to clearly warn motorists to slow down before they round the corner and rear end a stopped vehicle.
3. Panhandling at Routes 108 and 97 intersection. The response from MDOT – that panhandling is not illegal unless it's aggressive – was not unknown to GOCA nor helpful in addressing the dangerous situation created by solicitors standing in the middle of the roadways at the intersection. These solicitors create potential for serious injury to themselves as well as to motorists who are put at greater risk due to distractions caused by the solicitors. GOCA will follow-up with MDOT to request signage to advise drivers of the need for road safety and alternatives to support legitimate community charities.

Paul Jarosinski reported of another accident (or crash) at the intersection of Old Baltimore and Georgia Avenue in the morning. Cherrywood has contacted the State to try to look at that intersection again. Paul requested that if anybody has further information about the incident to forward to him at CherrywoodHOA@Verizon.net. The State indicated they probably won't receive details for another 30 to 60 days.

President's Report – Helene Rosenheim, President

Helene Rosenheim shared that Alden English has coordinated with the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department and has received approval for GOCA to start meeting in their ballroom beginning in January. Since GOCA's access to the Cadence location extends through the end of 2023, the news is well-timed. GOCA will begin meeting at the new location in January.

The next GOCA meeting is scheduled for December 12, 2023, 7:00pm, at Cadence and virtually via Zoom.

Adjournment

Helen Rosenheim adjourned the meeting at 8:58pm.