



GREATER OLNEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

2024-2-13 Representatives Meeting

- Minutes -

The 2024-2-13 Representatives Meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) was conducted in-person in the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department Ballroom as well as online via Zoom Web Teleconference.

President Helene Rosenheim called the meeting to order at 7:09pm 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)
- Irina Norell, Executive Vice President (Norbeck Meadows) (Transportation Committee)
- Curtis Chappell, First Vice President (Olney Square)
- Matt Quinn, Second Vice President (Cherrywood)
- Jeff Duce (Norbeck Grove)*
- Tina Craun, Treasurer-elect*
- Jamie Goad, Corresponding Secretary (Norbeck Meadows)
- John Seng, Recording Secretary, Transportation Committee

Members

- Mindy Badin (GOCA Transportation Committee) (Olney Mill)
- Maria Bender (Brookeville Knolls)*
- Alden English (SEROCA)*
- Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks)*
- Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood)*

- Lee Kidd (Cherrywood)*
- Carolyn Knight (Olney Oaks)
- Joe Krempasky (Brookeville Knolls)*
- Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres Civic Assn.)*
- Juris Mohseni (Village of James Creek)*
- Kristen Quinn (SEROCA)
- Jim Smith (Oatland Farm)
- Carol Sullivan (Cherrywood)
- Kelly Wasik (Tanterra)*
- Louis Wilen (Cherrywood)*

Guests

- Aaron Kraut, Staff, Montgomery County Councilmember Dawn Luedtke (District 7)
- John Lippincott (Brighton Knolls)
- Kristen Quinn (Norbeck Meadows)
- Sarah Payne
- Alan Sachs
- Valerie Smith (Brighton Knolls)
- Craig Thornton (Brighton Knolls)
- Kate Thornton (Brighton Knolls)
- Ira Ungar

Introductions

The meeting was initiated with introductions of in-person and online attendees.

Approval of Agenda for February 13, 2024

The first agenda item was a video update on the Bowie Mill Parkway, but the video was never shared with GOCA. The agenda item was not addressed.

Kate Thornton requested an agenda addition on Camp Rippling Brook status, which Helene granted. The agenda was approved as amended.

Approval of Minutes from January 9, 2024

Two changes were requested to the January minutes by Maria Bender. No opposition to the minutes as amended. Minutes approved unanimously.

Maryland State Legislative Updates

- **Bill MC 8-24 Restrictions on Use of Real Property – Limitation**

Helene reported that for MC 8-24, after the last meeting she sent an email to Del. Moon's office conveying GOCA concerns and objections to the language of the bill as it existed. She invited him to come to the February meeting to share more about the bill. There was no response, so Helene spoke to Del. Moon's staff person via phone who indicated that they were not pursuing the bill. The bill was "not ready for prime time" was how he described it. They didn't anticipate any action during this legislative session so therefore there wasn't any real need for Delegate Moon to speak to GOCA.

But GOCA learned that there was a first reading of MC 8-24 on February 9. Helene called Del. Moon's office but did not receive a reply as yet.

Maria Bender indicated that Epic of Montgomery County reported that the MC 8-24 has a new number (HB 1300) and a meeting in the Maryland General Assembly was scheduled for the next Thursday. The bill is scheduled for a hearing in the House Environment and Transportation Committee on March 8, 1:00pm.

Paul Jarosinski referred to the January minutes documenting that GOCA agreed to send its position on this to the State delegation, yet we never did correspond to them why GOCA opposed MC 8-24. Helene responded that it was true that we did not write a formal letter, but that she emailed GOCA's concerns to Mr. Moon and also discussed them with the District 14 delegation.

Paul shared that if GOCA had sent the letter with GOCA's opinion on the bill that maybe Del. Moon would have pulled the bill. Paul requested that GOCA needs to put its position on paper and post it on the website the next day, so people can send in their comments about this bill and copy GOCA's position opposing MC 8-24.

Paul added that Maria pushed for GOCA to discuss the issue and vote last month, so that GOCA would have been on the record before legislators decided to not pull the bill and proceed. He said GOCA should post its resolutions on the GOCA website so that member organizations can attach that document to their comments. This process has been GOCA's policy in the past.

John Seng described his opinion of HB 1300 as a horrible bill. He said that the real issue is how the bill advanced this far in Montgomery County with perhaps hundreds and hundreds of HOAs, compared to GOCA with 30 community association members.

Paul shared that the Montgomery County Civic Federation says the bill should be "dumped," and if legislators want to rework it, they should work with HOAs in the next year to develop a bill that that's not so draconian. Matt Quinn, Helene and Paul discussed the letter and timing to send the GOCA position to legislators.

Discussion took place regarding follow-up letter and timing.

PG/MC 112-24 Funding for People's Counsel position in Mont. Co.

Helene reported that GOCA sent a letter supporting PG/MC 112-24 to bill sponsor Sen. Ben Kramer. Mr. Kramer called Helene few days later and asked her to reach out to the district 14 delegation stating its support because

County Executive Marc Elrich and Park and Planning do not support the bill. She forwarded the letter to the district 14. Delegation.

Paul Jarosinski elaborated that he spoke to Sen. Kramer also who shared that the current version of the bill is in trouble. Further, Council President (Andrew) Friedson has been in Annapolis during the work week, lobbying the delegates not to approve this bill, sharing a lot of false stories, for example, that the bill is bad for minorities, when the bill is just the opposite. It's the minorities who can't afford to hire a lawyer to figure out how the planning process works. Paul indicated that Mr. Kramer is drafting an amendment that he will probably submit to give Mr. Friedson and County Executive Elrich until September 30 to work out an alternate plan. If the alternate plan didn't work, then Kramer's bill would take effect, and the State would fund the Office of the People's Counsel, and we we'd have it operational again hasn't been operational for 10 years, like they have experienced in Prince George's County.

Maria requested that the information be posted on the GOCA website in order to access the appropriate wording.

[Zoom call technical interruption]

Camp Rippling Brook Application – Community Update

Kate Thornton from Brighton Knolls neighbors proposed that at the March meeting we engage in a more in-depth discussion relative to the status of this project.

The Planning board has set its meeting for April 11. Kate said the developer has not yet filed their plan. She added the planning staff was still waiting on comments from the State.

Kate suggested that if GOCA were to take a position relative to the Camp, the Association needs a full discussion to decide how to address development of the Camp. They've renamed the development the Rippling Brook Nature Preschool and Summer Camp.

She recalled that the entire Camp Rippling Brook presentation was about the Camp, with 350 children and a preschool for 60. Kate said that the developers asked for a waiver from putting in a bike way and a walk way, claiming that it's a hardship for them. The Washington Area Bicyclist Association opposes the waiver request. Also, the developers want to chop down 16 special specimen trees that are protected by the County.

The biggest issue for Brighton Knolls is that the Camp's approval would be opening the gate for other developers along New Hampshire Avenue in the Brinklow area north of Ashton, to commercialize their community. She believes the community should have a full understanding of the development's impact; and that the development conflicts with the Olney master plan which sets out to protect the rural spaces in the neighborhood and the watershed. She raised other issues and concerns related the septic and water service.

Maria requested documents in advance to help prepare for the March meeting. Kate agreed to share their documentation confidentially.

Maria asked Helene, does that mean that mean GOCA will vote on supporting or not supporting the Camp at the March meeting? Helene agreed that GOCA would address the issue in March. Maria requested that GOCA ensure as many people participate in the March meeting as possible.

7:45 pm Transportation Committee Report

John Seng, Chair; Mindy Baden, Committee Member

The Transportation Committee's been active over the past months on three key items. He thanked Mindy Badin and other representatives from the working group on the MD 200 ICC highway speed and noise issue.

- **Bill 11-24, Speed Cameras on the ICC**

The Montgomery County Delegation to the State Assembly moved what was called MC 11-24, calling for placement of 4 speed cameras on the ICC, to the House of Delegates. The bill is now HB 1369.

He shared that in over the past approximately 13 years since the road was built, it's grown increasingly unsafe, noisier and faster. He acknowledged that not everyone appreciates speed cameras. He said that speed cameras work effectively in Maryland, yet the State still suffered its worst year in roadway deaths in 17 years with 600. He would welcome better ideas than the proven speed camera technology that exists today.

He requested additional community support for HB 1369, and thanked Helene and Mindy Badin on the Transportation Committee who have already testified on behalf of GOCA in favor of this bill.

He appreciated that Olney district-area Senators Kramer and Zucker sponsored this bill with co-sponsorship of their delegation members.

- **New GOCA webpage: *GOCA RoadReport***

The Transportation Committee created a web portal called GOCA Road Report on the GOCA site for residents to report issues related to roads, road safety and quality: For example, road safety signs being obscured or potholes, cross walk lines that are faded, vegetation covering up a speed limit or warning or hazard signs. GOCA RoadReport explains simply how to distinguish Maryland State from Montgomery County roads and offers direct links to the appropriate government transportation office.

The *GOCA RoadReport* website is <https://www.goca.org/road-report/>. HOAs and community associations should share the link in their newsletters to residents.

- **Maryland Exhibition Driving – General Assembly Bills**

GOCA Transportation Committee members, others in Montgomery County and SafeRoadsMD support two bills working their way through the Maryland General Assembly relating to the increased incidence of street takeovers and exhibition driving. The bills are SB 442 and HB 601. These cross-filed bills in the Maryland State Legislature would substantially increase the punishments for exhibition driving. John shared that over the previous weekend, Takoma Park suffered an exhibition event with hundreds of onlookers and dozens of vehicles screeching around in circles, people hanging out the windows and taking selfies. These events are spontaneous but well-organized and big budget events managed by, effectively, criminals. The police are often outnumbered and reluctant to arrest participants.

Matt Quinn asked if these bills would impact the speeding that's occurring on our highways with reports from law enforcement of speeds reaching 160 miles per hour on MD 200; and whether these particular bills would apply.

John replied that, in a perfect world, yes, especially if multiple vehicles were racing. The issue is that law enforcement would have to apprehend the violators, a different challenge given policies to not conduct high-speed pursuits. He added that the (MDTA ICC) authority needs to take a creative approach to apprehending speeding motorcyclists.

Helene announced a motion introduced for GOCA to support these two bills. Results were 12 in favor, none opposed. Helene indicated the motion passed, 12-0.

- **Further Discussion**

Paul requested whether Aaron Kraut (representing Councilmember Dawn Luedtke) could speak to a hearing at the end of the month on Montgomery County Bill 2-24.

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John indicated that Councilmember Will Jawando introduced a bill that would forbid law enforcement from asking drivers for permission to search vehicles.

Aaron reported that there is a public hearing February 27 and that Councilmember Luedtke has serious concerns with the bill.

John suggested that a smaller group of GOCA leadership reach out to meet with Mr. Jawando to better understand his priorities as an At-Large Councilmember. GOCA volunteers spend many hours reacting to his draft bills. Matt Quinn added that if we asked Will Jawando for a meeting, we'll probably get the meeting. So that's something we should do.

Discussion took place regarding vehicle search guidance.

Curtis Chappell offered that in a larger discussion, it might also be helpful to have someone from our police department present, and that GOCA does welcome law enforcement representatives throughout the year.

Mindy shared that her understanding was that the bill was made without any police department input. She did not agree it would be a good idea to have the police attending the same meeting with Mr. Jawando. Louis Wilen shared his opinion that the police department representative and Will Jawando are both professionals. GOCA could seat them at different tables, but he didn't think there would be a problem with them both attending the same meeting and expressing opposing opinions, which GOCA does frequently. Louis felt it's ideal actually to have them both there at the same time, so that when one of them makes a point, the other can then respond immediately with their position.

- **Treasurer's Report Jeff Duce, Treasurer**

Helene noted Jeff Duce's absence due to a family commitment. But Jeff had asked Jim Smith to review the GOCA books in preparation for turning the books over to the new treasurer (Tina Craun), who will be elected subsequently in the meeting.

Jim said that Jeff provided him the binder with receipts, the membership forms and checks for the banners and other materials in it, and also provided a spreadsheet that he used to tabulate the income, expenses and other items. Jeff also granted access to the Sandy Spring Bank account. Jim verified the documents in the binders and found everything in good order for calendar year 2023. Jim said that Jeff did a great job as treasurer and the GOCA books are ready to transfer.

- **Olney Chamber of Commerce**

Matt Quinn reported that in December 2023, the Olney Chamber of Commerce President Fred Silver retired after six years. Senator Zucker presented Mr. Silver with an award. Matt didn't think the Olney Chamber would have existed through COVID without Fred.

Matt shared that he was elected to become the next Chamber President. Matt is passionate about local business: "When your local small business community is thriving, the rest of the community thrives."

On March 24, the Chamber's Community Day takes place at Good Counsel High School, free to the community, and including kids activities, a beer garden and food. About 5,000 people attended last year.

Terri Hogan is the executive director, serves as the face of the of the Chamber and works very hard.

- **GOCA Award Winners/GOCA Award Ceremony, 3/10/24 Helene Rosenheim**

Helene shared background on the GOCA Awards history and purpose to recognize the value of contributions to people outside of GOCA and the Chamber, both of which have been active for years.

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This year the Chamber approached GOCA and asked if they could join in the event as well. The Chamber presents several awards to businesses and business people in the community.

The upcoming GOCA Awards Ceremony will take place in the Good Counsel High School dining room March 10, beginning 2:00pm. There will be a reception for about an hour - attended by a lot of elected officials - with the awards presentations immediately following.

The Olney Civic Fund grants out money that they raise from events like Olney Days, gives out a series of grants each year to community nonprofits.

- **New Business**

Paul noted that GOCA supported the Bowie Mill Bikeway, as well as a concern with 1-1/2 acres of forest being wiped out by the work. He said the Cherrywood community did not support the tree removal aspect. He continued that the Bikeway plan is to replace those trees somewhere in the distant Damascus area. Paul said Cherrywood requested that the trees should be replaced in our area instead of up county.

Maria added her community has a lot of open area, but doesn't necessarily want to put more trees in the open area. They would be interested in replacing trees destroyed by a hurricane and a derecho.

Helene proposed sending out a survey to HOA members to ask if they have space to accommodate trees. GOCA could compile possible sites where the trees could be re-established.

- **New Business**

No new business

- **Election of 2024 GOCA Officers - Helene Rosenheim**

Helene review that the election slate is Irina Norell as President, John Seng as Executive Vice President, Matt Quinn, as first Vice President, Curtis Chappell as second Vice President and Tina Craun as the new treasurer. Helene will serve as recording secretary and technically corresponding secretary, currently vacant. However, Jamie Goad will stay on board until GOCA finds a replacement.

Voting took place in the room and online. The combined tally was 17-0 in favor of the slate as presented.

John Seng appealed to meeting participants to solicit their member residents to get involved with GOCA. GOCA needs more people who are interested in what's happening in Montgomery County and the State.

Helene and Irina mentioned that GOCA's been developing a plan for reaching out to all of HOAs and community association members; having an officer attend member association board meetings to explain what GOCA is and how GOCA supports and advocates for the community.

Helene shared that she's been part of GOCA for a long time, so it's been interesting to have stepped back in a leadership role again. The meeting applauded Helene for her service.

Adjournment

Curtis Chappell moved to adjourn the meeting with no opposition. Helene adjourned the meeting.