



GREATER OLNEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

2024-1-09 Representatives Meeting

- Minutes -

The 2024-1-09 Representatives Meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) was held online via Zoom Web Teleconference. The meeting had been scheduled to take place in the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department Ballroom, but severe weather necessitated reverting to conducting the meeting virtually.

President Helene Rosenheim called the meeting to order at 7:35pm EST, with recording Secretary John Seng present online.

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, Treasurer (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)*
- Mike Dickerson (Olney Oaks)*
- Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks)*
- Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood)*

- Lee Kidd (Cherrywood)*
- Carolyn Knight
- Joe Krempasky (Brookeville Knolls)*
- Sandra Loughlin (Norbeck Meadows)
- Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres Civic Assn.)*
- Juris Mohseni (Village of James Creek)*
- Jim Smith (Oatland Farm HOA)*
- Carol Sullivan (Cherrywood)
- Ira Ungar
- Edward Weisel (Norbeck Meadows Civic Assn.)*
- Louis Wilen (Cherrywood)*

Guests

- Paul Geller
- Judith Hruz
- Jabari Jackson
- Cary Lamari (Guest)
- Sandra Loughlin, EPAM (Guest)
- Staff, Montgomery County Councilmember Dawn Luedtke (District 7)
- Alan Sachs
- Craig Thornton (Brighton Knolls)
- Kelly Wasik (Tanterra)

Approval of Agenda for January 9, 2024 Meeting

On the agenda was "Maryland State Legislative Update on MC 8-24, Restrictions on the Use of Real Property – Limitation." Dan Reed, Regional Policy Director for Greater Greater Washington had been invited to speak on

“Why this bill was introduced/The Goals of the bill,” But Helene Rosenheim communicated that he was not able to attend.

Helene indicated that the discussion of bill MC 8-24, including a motion to vote to oppose the bill, would be moved to New Business.

Curtis Chappell requested that the presentation by Dan Reed of Greater Greater Washington Maryland State of a Legislative Update on MC 8-24 be deleted as an agenda item.

Approval of Minutes from November 14, 2023

No changes to the November minutes. No opposition as presented. Minutes approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes from December 12, 2023 Meeting

The December minutes were changed to correct a mistake that incorrectly attributed Paul Jarosinski’s reference to the “Olney Civic Fund” since he had actually referred to the “Montgomery County Civic Federation.” The corrections have been made to the minutes. No other changes to the December minutes. No opposition as presented with edits as approved. Minutes approved unanimously.

Announcements

- Curtis spoke about the Olney Barrel Aged Beer event and updated on this fundraiser for the non-profit relief organization Olney Help. This “great opportunity to give back to local community” is scheduled February 3 at Good Shepherd Church of Olney. Many GOCA members volunteer to ensure the event’s success.
- Helene mentioned for that for Olney Days, GOCA needs a coordinator for the parade and a coordinator for the shredding event, and asked for volunteers.

Olney Art Association – Celebrating its 50th Anniversary, President, Olney Art Association

President – David Terrar, (president@olneyartassociation.org, <https://www.olneyartassociation.org/>) introduced himself and provided his background as president of the Olney Art Association (OAA) for approximately seven years, and that OAA is about 50 years old, with 90 paid members. Key points Mr. Terrar made included:

- OAA is a community based organization. They accept anybody who is interested in art who wants to learn how to do art. They welcome anybody who's might have an extensive history in art. He exhibited online some examples of their art.
- The organization realizes how important art is to people. They have a group that does some painting for hospitals and medical facilities. People who are suffering can look at art and be “transported to someplace else, and away from the worry and the fear and the anxiety of their medical condition.”

Helene asked how GOCA could help with a liaison for the OAA 50th anniversary celebration. David replied that anyone interested should come and join them. The group would benefit from someone to act as a media relations contact. Barbara Falcigno indicated that she would add OAA to the Olney Civic Fund nonprofit list; and further suggested that OAA connect with the Olney Chamber of Commerce. Helene offered to arrange for GOCA to post future OAA events on the GOCA calendar.

New Starting Time for GOCA Meeting – 7:00 pm

Helene shared that GOCA officers decided to change the monthly meeting time to 7:00 pm, after 40 years of beginning at 7:30 pm. After discussion, it was confirmed that the meetings will continue to be hybrid (in-person and Zoom).

Reports

Treasurer's Report Jeff Duce, Treasurer

After approximately three years of service, Jeff is stepping down as Treasurer. Jim Smith will review the books and Tina Craun will be able to begin with a "clean slate." GOCA is sending out the membership renewal form, with a cover message of GOCA accomplishments, to all management companies, organization presidents and alternates. Jeff encouraged representatives to complete the renewal forms and forward to their management companies for payment. He thanked Alden English for arranging for the Sandy Spring Firehouse meeting location.

Transportation Committee Report, John Seng, Chair

John reported on legislation introduced in the Maryland General Assembly to combat exhibition driving and street takeovers. The bills are SB 442 and HB 601. He briefly described recent illegal street takeovers in Silver Spring and elsewhere in Maryland. He and the Maryland Coalition for Roadway Safety are monitoring the bills, and working with Delegate Mary Lehman of District 21 to advocate for their passage.

He also shared background about a bill entitled MC 11-24 introduced by Sen. Ben Kramer (District 19) and Sen. Craig Zucker (District 14), whose districts include Olney, calling for four speed cameras on the MD 200 Intercounty Connector. He also shared about some Olney road safety concerns submitted by residents and follow-up actions being taken.

Olney Chamber of Commerce, Matt Quinn, Chamber Member

No update to report.

President's Report Helene Rosenheim, President

GOCA Awards - Helene announced that GOCA is continuing to accept nominations for the GOCA Awards. The awards celebrate individuals or groups that have made a significant contribution in the Olney community. GOCA may rename the Awards, depending upon collaboration with the Olney Civic Fund. The tentative date is March 10.

New Business

- **Discussion and Vote on Proposed Local Montgomery County Bill MC 8 – 24**

Lee Kidd questioned whether there would be a vote about MC 8 – 24, related to the draft bill language's provisions on the restrictions of HOAs in regulating community real estate properties, since GOCA couldn't wait until March.

Much discussion occurred over whether a vote would be taken at the meeting for GOCA to oppose the bill and communicate the position to the bill sponsor Delegate Moon. Some discussants communicated that GOCA required more information before taking a position on the draft bill, and proposed postponing a vote after receiving more information. Other members preferred GOCA commenting on the bill's language as written, especially given the steady pace and brevity of the Maryland General Assembly session, only three months; and taking a vote during the meeting and requesting that a letter be sent to Del. Moon to communicate GOCA's opinion on the Bill draft.

Paul Jarosinski pointed out that a decision was made in the December meeting to address MC 8-24 in the January meeting, that the matter was of critical importance to Olney HOA members and that the January meeting should include a discussion and vote.

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Helene indicated that GOCA did not have a full understanding of the bill and why it was written. Maria Bender replied that waiting until March would be too late. Debate continued as to whether the intent agreed upon at the December meeting was to vote to take a position against the bill vs. learn more and continue the discussion.

Maria Bender moved to vote whether or not to support this item for legislature as written (MC) 8 – 24. Paul seconded the motion.

During discussion, Matt Quinn commented he believes the desire of the bill is to find a way to provide more affordable housing if (government) can take the zoning aspects away and build more affordable housing. Since HOAs across Montgomery County have covenants that restrict a variety of things, Matt believes lawmakers are looking to undermine the authority of HOAs. As he reads the bill, we (GOCA) “would be crazy to support it,” and he said that HOAs across Montgomery County will oppose it. “GOCA needs to get out in front of this sooner rather than later” and “We need to make sure our District 14 team is aware of our position”... “If we wait too long, I think that’s not a good mark on GOCA.”

Helene responded that GOCA didn’t need a formal motion (or resolution) to oppose the legislation in order to “convey to our delegates that we have concerns about the bill.”

John Seng suggested that the motion could be revised to say GOCA opposes the bill as currently written, and reserved the right to change our opinion after review of finalized legislation.

Craig Thornton asked how many HOAs on the call had taken a formal vote on the MC 8-24 as written. The answer was Brookeville Knolls and Cherrywood have opposed.

Barbara Falcigno suggested that the entire topic and discussion be moved to New Business. She added that she preferred voting with a no, but explaining objections that lead to the “no” vote. Joe Krempasky indicated we need to be able to take a vote on the bill as presented.

Helene said that we need a motion supporting or opposing MC 8-24.

Edward Weisel commented that the government has no right to come and impair the obligations and contracts with HOAs.

Curtis asked Aaron Kraut, chief of staff for Montgomery County Councilmember Dawn Luedtke, in attendance, to comment. Aaron offered the following points:

- He differentiated between State and County government legislative bodies, and shared that the Council meets occasionally to talk about local bills.
- Councilmembers had the same concerns about this bill that would be a dramatic change to the rights of HOA’s common ownership communities and so on.
- The understanding at that time was that the bill sponsors were going to make amendments to clarify that the bill would still not allow anyone to build anything that's not already allowed by the underlying zoning. “For instance, if it's a single family home zone which I think is the situation most of us are in by usurping the HOA authority to make rules. Someone still can come in and then build a town home or a multi-family unit.”
- What I understand it to be aimed at would actually be more at, although I’m not a hundred percent sure on it, but it would be more in that accessory dwelling units which are now allowed by County law in most single family zones. But at the current moment, HOAs in their own rules can say no ADUs allowed.
- The Council actually November 27th decided to hold they did not want to take a position. They had some of the same concerns that have been expressed here

Sandra Loughlin recommended that GOCA amend the motion to be specific as to the current language, so that we don't just say as presently cast, because the language may change and to be very specific about the date of the language

John Seng related that one can't buy a home in Brooke Manor Estates without signing this binding HOA agreement. It's a condition of purchase of the property.

Curtis updated and then read the motion on the table as: To oppose the MC 8-24 legislation as of January 9, 2024, as written because it usurps the authority of HOAs and existing contractual requirements and restrictions between HOAs and residents.

Maria Bender made the motion as read, with Paul Jarosinski seconding. Votes were polled by Corresponding Secretary Jamie Goad: The motion passed, 12 in favor, none against, with five abstentions. Motion passed.

- **Supporting PG/MC 112-24 The People's Counsel Bill**

At the December meeting Paul proposed that GOCA support the bill PG/MC 112 - 24, which provides funding for the People's Counsel position. The position existed for 13 years, or more, but unfunded. Barbara Falcigno seconded the motion. (Paul requested an edit to an error in the December minutes to correct "PC" to "PG" in the bill's name. John replied that the correction would be made.)

Helene asked for any further comments, to which there were none. The motion carried, 13 favored, none opposed, with 3 abstentions. Motion carried.

Paul asked whether something would be sent to the State delegation, to which Helene replied that GOCA would communicate with them.

- **Presentation of 2024 GOCA Officers Ballot**

Helene announced that voting on the next slate of officers for 2024 would take place at the February meeting. Current candidates are Irina Norell – president; John Seng - first vice president; Curtis - second vice president; Tina Craun – treasurer; and Helene Rosenheim will fill in for recording secretary unless another person steps up.

GOCA would have unfilled executive Vice President and corresponding secretary positions.

GOCA will publish a final ballot before the next meeting and vote on it at the end of the February meeting. The new officers would take over at that point.

Adjournment

John Seng moved to adjourn the meeting, with Ed Weisel seconding. Helen adjourned the meeting.