

GREATER OLNEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
2026-04-14 Representatives DRAFT Meeting Minutes

APPROVED:

The 2026-04-14 Representatives Meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) was conducted in-person in the Oak Ballroom, Sandy Spring Vol Fire Dept, Sandy Spring, MD and online via Zoom Web Teleconference.

President Curtis Chappell called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm [EST.i](#)

A quorum was present.. V= Attended virtually

Officers

- Curtis Chappell, President (Olney Oaks SF)
- Matt Quinn, Exec Vice President (Cherrywood)
- Thomas Canavan, 1st Vice President (Hallowell)
- Irina Norell, 2nd President (Norbeck Meadows)
- Kristen Quinn, Corresponding Secretary (Norbeck Meadows)
- Helene Rosenheim, Recording Secretary (Highlands of Olney)

Members

- Maria Bender (Brookville Knolls)
- Jackie Benn (Fair Hill Farm)
- Alden English (SEROCA)
- Conrad Hocking (Lake Hallowell) -V
- Paul Jaorsinski (Cherrywood)
- Joe Krempsky (Brookeville Manor)
- Tim Lighter (Oatland Farm) - V
- Diane Littlefield (Olney Acres)
- Liz Lyons (James Creek)
- Mike Payne (Olney Oaks SF)
- Jim Smith (Oatland Farms)

- Ann Strain (Cherrywood)
- Lou Welantetz (Preserve at Small's Nursery)

Guests

- Alicia Contreras-Donello (Candidate for Dist 14 Del))
- Annie Dunn, SSVFD - V
- Ketedar Gindhry
- Abi Green (Prabu Selvam campaign)
- Howie Greif (Lake Hallowell) - V
- Judy Hruz, Greater Olney News - V
- Kevin Konagof
- Aaron Kraut, Chief of Staff, County Councilmember Dawn Luedtke, Dist 7
- Eli Kritikos
- Theo Kritikos
- Nancy Lamon-Kritikos (Oak Grove)
- Glen McEwen - V
- Kate Pomeroy
- Julie R
- Ginny Sardon
- Dr. Prabu Selvam (Candidate - County Council)
- Ira Ungar
- Mike Weiner

Agenda/Minutes Approval

- April 14, 2026 agenda accepted with 2 additions: Welcome to Olney signs, Hines Rd improvements
- March 10, 2026 minutes approved with no additions or corrections:

Announcements

Candidates Forum for County Executive, May 17th, 6:00 pm, Olney Theatre

Prabu Selvam, Candidate for Montgomery County Council and Alicia Contreras-Donello, Candidate for Delegate,, MD District 14 introduced themselves.

Guest Speakers

Montgomery County Board of Education Member-At-Large, Rita Montoya chose to not attend to provide an update and overview of current issues with schools in the Olney area because we had not provided questions to her 2 weeks prior to our meeting.

Aaron Kraut noted there was funding proposed to make some small fixes over the summer to a number of local schools that could be done without needing a holding school. It was suggested that we invite the Superintendent of schools or other School Board member to a future meeting.

Update on Olney Community Center (Old bank building at Georgia Av and Spartan Rd) - Matt Quinn

Matt noted that Aaron Kraut has been helping us coordinate with the Department of General Services that is responsible for renovating the bank building on the corner of Georgia Av and Spartan Rd that was purchased by the State and turned over to the County for use as a community center for the Olney community.

The Olney Chamber of Commerce is leading discussions with the County on how the interior of the building should be laid out and bringing the building up to code, including adding an elevator. But the Chamber, GOCA, the Olney Civic Fund and the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee will be involved in those discussions and the use of the building.

Discussion of Proposed Montgomery County Property Tax Increase - Irina Norell

Irina provided an overview of a 6% increase in property taxes being proposed by the County Executive in the FY2027 Operating Budget. The members then discussed the issue. The consensus was that the County Executive and County Council need to look for places where cuts could be made in the current operating budget before considering whether to or how much to increase property taxes, especially since there are other cost increases for residents in addition to this proposed increase.

Paul Jarosinski moved that a small group of designated members (Paul, Irina Norell, Mike Payne and Lou Welantetz) be authorized to draft a letter to the County Council with cc's to the County Executive, the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools, reflecting our concerns about the proposed property tax increase and that it should not be approved before cuts in the operating budget are considered; that we need to live within our means. The letter should include some principles that the Council should consider as they evaluate the proposal to increase property taxes. The motion was seconded by Maria Bender and passed unanimously.

The letter needs to be drafted asap because the Council will be voting on the operating budget on May 14th. The letter will also be forwarded to our members as a sample they can use to draft their own letters along with information on how to submit them to the Council.

Committee Reports

- **Public Policy & Community Affairs Committee - Thomas Canavan**
 - The GOCA Fun Runs at the Olney Farmers and Artists Market are back beginning in April and will take place on the first Sunday of each month.
 - Overall, engagement with our Legislative Updates is strong and moving in the right direction, with a 57% open rate which is an increase over recent months.
 - The most clicked item across everything we sent out was the FUSUS Camera Program, the voluntary program in which the Mont. Co. Police Dept can access the recordings on citizens' Ring and similar devices.
 - He believes we need to be more proactive in learning about State and County legislation. This year's State Legislative session has ended.
 - Matt Quinn noted there were 900 bills in November and we ended up with 3,000 bills being voted on. We need to have a conversation with the District 14 & 19 delegations about how to look at and track bills. Aaron K. will let us know when the Council gets briefed on State bills that have local impact.
- **Transportation Committee - Mindy Baden, Chair**
 - Four bills that passed the Legislature and are going to the Governor for his signature were:
 - HB107 - SB366 Authorizing individuals guilty of repeated excessive speeding to participate in the Intelligent Speed Assistance Pilot Program in which a device is installed in a vehicle that prevents a vehicle from exceeding the speed limit).

- HB474 - SB698 Prohibiting a person from operating or towing a vehicle without making reasonable efforts to remove accumulated snow and ice from exposed vehicle surfaces
- HB256 - SB487 Authorizing the State Highway Administration to implement speed monitoring systems in areas determined to be of high risk to vulnerable road users.
- HB286 - SB0038 Requiring the Ignition Interlock System as a condition of modification of a suspended, restricted, or revoked, license, due to alcohol restrictions.

Hines Rd Improvements - Paul Jarosinski

Paul noted that there are plans to put concrete islands down Hines Rd to reduce speeding and to provide safe havens for pedestrians. However, the Cherrywood and Norbeck Hills residents both believe that the islands are not needed and that the money for this improvement would be better spend on resurfacing Hines Rd to repair the many pot-holes on this road and add crosswalks at a number of intersections on that road. Hines is not scheduled for resurfacing until 2029.

Welcome to Olney Signs - Jim Smith

Jim showed pictures of the current Welcome to Olney sign. One on Georgia Ave just north of the ICC that is a replacement of the sign removed when the ICC was under construction and lost. It was remade as an Eagle Scout project by replicating the sign that had been on Georgia Av just south of Gold Mine Rd, He also showed pictures of the remainder of the sign near Gold Mine Rd that was destroyed by plows during the heavy snow storms this past winter. Those signs currently list GOCA and the Olney Chamber of Commerce.

He proposed a joint project between GOCA, the Chamber and the Olney Civic Fund to replace the 2 existing signs on Georgia Ave marking the entrance into Olney and adding 2 similar signs on Rte. 108. The consensus was that GOCA should participate in that project and supported Jim moving ahead with the planning for that project.

Pulte Development Proposal on the Olney Golf Park Property - Helene Rosenheim

Helene noted that the Pulte company is proposing a 235 unit development on a property that under its current zoning would yield 22 units. There are a number of issues of concern related to this proposal and it is early in the development process. GOCA should look more closely into this proposal and convey those concerns to the Montgomery Co Planning Board and their staff. She would like to put together a subcommittee or 3 or 4 people to review this proposal and asked anyone interested in working on this contact her.

Alden English noted that his civic association, Southeast Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA) is holding a meeting Thursday, April 16th at 6:30 pm at the Olney [Library.at](#) which the developer will present their current plans.

Treasurer's Report - Nicholas Boss, Treasurer

Nick noted that 2026 GOCA dues are now due. Our member associations can complete the membership application and pay their dues online. Paul J. requested that the list of paid member associations be updated on the GOCA website.

More Announcements

Curtis C. noted that Olney Days will cover 2 weekends this year from April 24th - May 3rd and encouraged people to attend. He gave a quick rundown of the events..

Adjournment at 9:08 pm

Submitted by Helene Rosenheim Recording Secretary