



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – July 9, 2002

The meeting was called to order by President Art Brodsky. Following introductions, the minutes were approved with two corrections and no additions. (Deleting repeated words in item (3) on page 3 and changing the name Kidel to Kidd in 4 places.) The agenda was approved with one addition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Paul requested that the minutes and agenda be available in a text format.
- Chuck Keyserling noted that he had noticed a large amount of standing water on Georgia Avenue driving to the meeting and was concerned because of the West Nile situation.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report – Art Brodsky noted that he did not have any comments.

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Treasurer's Report

Roy Peck reported that the current balance is \$4,425. Bobby Fletcher has given \$2,500 towards the Olney Days Festival and Dave Johannes will match that donation. We also collected \$2,600 from a number of our member associations and the community.

Chamber of Commerce Report

There was no Chamber Report.

Land Use Report

Jim Folk reported that he spoke to Park & Planning (P&P) staff concerning the Good Counsel High School development plan. The staff had met with the Good Counsel owners approximately 3 weeks earlier to present what they changes staff would like to see in their plan. Staff asked them to move their building further from Rte. 108 roughly to where the ballfields are now. The staff did not feel they were bound by the 52 acres Good Counsel is currently proposing to use and asked them to consider the whole 200 acres in identifying in the site for the school which might require a renegotiation agreement with Centex, the development company that owns the 200 acres. Staff wants them to preserve the rural character of the area. Staff was not taking a serious look at the transportation issues until the relocation of the building is resolved. At best, Good Counsel should not be going before the Planning Board until September or October. Good Counsel is surprised by the strength of the reaction by the community. The redevelopment plan for the Good Counsel site in Wheaton will be before the Planning Board on June 23rd. John Lyons added that they appear to be moving ahead with the road abandonment process for the portion of the Batchellor Forest Road from the point of the realignment towards Rte. 108 to Dr. Bird Drive. This portion of the road now separates their property into 2 pieces.

Transportation Report

Dave Eskenazi reported that:

- At the last meeting of the Rte 28/97 Intersection Focus Group participants were still at odds about deciding what to do at the intersection. A new problem they are considering is that the proposal to have M-83 cross Rte. 97 at grade complicates the design of this intersection. They are still considering where to put the intersection because if the move it north, it impacts The Preserve and White's Hardware.
- There will be a ribbon cutting for the opening of Norwood Rd between the Ednor Rd/Layhill intersection and New Hampshire Avenue. The road has been closed for 11 months and they are opening the road on schedule. Dave did not know when the Rte. 28/198 connector would open, but it seems to be on schedule as well.

- There have not been any meetings of the Brookeville Bypass. GOCA is in support of the Bypass, even though they are still trying to work out a solution to fixing the problem in Brookeville without dumping the problem in the back yards of residents in Olney. They thought they had a solution, but recently found a site along the proposed route that has some archeological value. They now have to consider the impact of the proposed alignment on this site.
- The State is spending \$10 million for safety improvements on Muncaster Mill regardless of the outcome with the M-83 realignment (discussed later in the meeting). They include: (1) straightening the curve at Avery, (2) putting in north and south turning lanes at Grist Mill Rd, (3) putting in a 3rd lane in front of Redland Middle School similar to the lane in front of Magruder HS, (4) putting in skid-resistant paving, and (5) improving other intersections near Redland Rd, such as Lisa Rd.
- Stanley Elswick reported that there was nothing new to report on the Ride-On 52 and 53 Routes. He expects there will be a meeting in the Fall.

OLD BUSINESS

Greater Olney Master Plan Study - Art Brodsky reported that the most interesting part of the process was the time spent at the last meeting discussing the design of the town center area. The attendees were divided into 5 groups and instructed to put together a plan as if they were starting with a clean slate and starting all over again. The groups had very similar outcomes. Most felt there should be one quadrant with a government services focus, e.g., a government center, the Library, etc. and 1 restaurant/recreation area. They all included mix-use development with residential development and activities in the town center area to extend the life of the center and draw more people into the town center area to shop, eat, spend time, etc. P&P staff is planning a meeting in September, before they issue their draft plan, to discuss roads. Chuck Keyserling noted that we need to be mindful of the needs of the elderly in terms of their ability to reach stores and facilities in the town center. Khalid Afzal, leader of P&P's Georgia Avenue Team, agreed that it had been a good session and that the staff had gotten a lot of information from the discussion. He is planning to have 3-4 evening meetings in September with a different topic being discussed at each meeting. Their overall schedule is still to have a Draft plan ready to be submitted to the Planning Board in December 2002. He is meeting with the Southeast Olney Rural Olney Civic Association (SEROCA) to discuss issues relating specifically to the southeast quadrant, the area with the largest amount of undeveloped residential acreage.

Ron Berger felt that the outline presented by P&P staff at that meeting seemed to be pretty true to the 1980 plan in concept and approach. There had been a lot of concern in the years prior to this study that revising the Master Plan would result in a big change in the character of the Olney area. He has been pleased with the way the staff has preserved the original goals of the 1980 plan. Not everyone agrees with everything they have outlined so far, but we seem to be heading in the right direction.

Helen Dodson asked for clarification of the map on Pg. 4 of the outline of the draft master plan to ensure that there were no plans to open Briars Rd at Rte. 108. It currently ends at the service road along Rte. 108. in the Olney Mill area. Mike Kay noted that we need to be mindful of security for women in designing the accesses into the various shopping centers in the town center area. He noted also that the Environ community did not want to see Appomattox Ave cut through to Georgia Avenue. In response to questions from Chuck Keyserling, Steve Smet noted that changing the classification of a portion of Cashell Road from Arterial to Primary would not change the level of service that Cashell would received in terms of snow removal. And, Khalid A. noted that the proposed residential zoning for the Norbeck Country Club was not included because of any current interest in developing that property residentially, but so that the issue would be addressed and considered in this master plan process in case some time in the future the Club is sold for development.

M-83 (Muncaster Mill Road) Alignment Proposals - Dave Eskenazi reported that there are 4 proposed alignments for M-83, the master plan alignment of Muncaster Mill Road between Shady Grove Road and Georgia Avenue:

1. From I-370 cross Winter's Run above Avery then to Georgia Avenue on the ICC alignment and to Rte. 28 with at grade intersections at Muncaster Mill and Georgia Ave and Muncaster Mill and Rte. 28.
2. Extending the Mid-County Highway to Muncaster Mill Rd, intersecting Muncaster Mill north of Avery, and then along the ICC right-of-way to Rte. 28 with at grade intersections.
3. Widening Muncaster Mill Road from Redland Rd to Rte. 28 into 4 lanes.
4. A hybrid of 2 and 3. using the new Midcounty Highway to Muncaster Mill and then following Muncaster Mill to Rte. 28.

Dave noted that GOCA had discussed these options at length last year and was not aware of any change in our position since then. Roy Peck noted that his parents own the property the Norman's Farm is currently located on, and in connection with that property, they had seen a map that showed an area being reserved at Georgia Ave for an overpass for M-83 over Georgia Ave and an at grade intersection for cars exiting at Georgia. He noted, too, that the State is acquiring land in the right-of-way for that intersection. Chuck Keyserling indicated that he felt P&P was leaning toward Option 1 which is the most costly and the most detrimental to Olney because of the at-grade intersection. Cary Lamari suggested that we need to consider the full picture of Georgia Ave and Rte. 28 and Muncaster Mill Rd in deciding on options for current and 2025 traffic counts.

Art asked if GOCA needed to change its position in support of Option 3 based on the position we took in last year's discussion of the options which are essentially the same as Options 1-4 now being considered, noting that at that time we had opposed options 1 and 2, preferring the options that involved widening Muncaster Mill. Dave E. thought we should still oppose Options 1 and 2 because of the impact on Georgia Ave with the addition of a new intersection so close to Rte. 28. He supported Option 4 because he felt it was a more effective way to move traffic, both within the County and across the County. In response to a question from Don Schmelter about whether Option 1, but with an above grade intersection at Georgia, would take more traffic off of Georgia, Muncaster Mill and Rte. 28, Dave noted that we would need better traffic counts from the State Highway Administration to know what traffic it would take from those roads. Dave noted, as did Chuck Keyserling, that it is still not clear what the purpose of this road is (e.g., aid traffic from Georgia Ave to employment centers in Gaithersburg, enhance east-west traffic in the County, etc.) and we need to know that to make a good decision. Mike Kelley suggested we might want to consider a combination of Options 3 and 4. That would put traffic more where we want to see it, while Option 4 moves traffic where it appears the County wants it. Ed Weisel added that he was not aware of any intention of extending M-83 north into Montgomery Village.

A straw vote supported GOCA continuing its position in support of widening Muncaster Mill Rd. Art indicated that we would send a letter stating GOCA's position. Ed W. also suggested that we should consider alternative uses for the M-83 right-of-way.

Upper Rock Creek Update - Khalid Afzal noted that the fact that Steve Joseph, chair of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Advisory Group, had been removed from office as President of his homeowners association did not have any impact on their master plan review process. The process is far enough along that there are no more meetings of their Advisory Group. The Park & Planning is aware of the concerns of the Upper Rock Creek Coalition and is working with them. The Advisory Group had already made its recommendations to the staff and the Staff Draft should be submitted to the Planning Board August 1st. If the Planning Board okay's it, there will be a public hearing a couple months later.

Khalid also noted that Derick Berlage had been appointed that day as the new Chair of the Planning Board.

Skateboard Park Update - Mike Kay reported that they had met with Sue Maher, Director of the Recreation Department's Mid-County Area and they have worked out plans to share a bus with Damascus. There are several sponsors who have agreed to pay for bus time. There will be a bus for 5 weeks that will run go from the old Boston Market/Einstein Bagel building in the Village Mart to the Gaithersburg Skate Park. If it is well used, they will try to find funds to extend it till the beginning of school. It will leave Olney at 11:30 am and return at 4 pm. The driver will be a Rec. Dept. employee who will stay with the skateboarders. There is a \$6 entrance fee for the 12-4 pm session that will also allow them to go to the pool as long as they are on the bus when it is ready to leave. They can also purchase a session pass for \$85. They have also met with Nancy Dacek and Steve Silverman who are both supportive of trying to locate a facility in Olney. Councilmember Silverman's staff is doing more work on the zoning questions. The UpCounty Regional Center is looking at a joint venture with the Rec. Dept. to operate skateboard parks in Olney and Damascus and that seems very promising. There is an individual establishing a non-profit organization for fundraising purposes. He ended by noting that he is turning the reins of this project to Jimena Ryan because he is moving back to Florida. Art thanked him for all the work he had done on this.

Olney Village Mart Parking Waiver - Art Brodsky noted that he and Ron Berger had testified before Reggie Jetter, Permitting Services, in connection with the request from Freeman Associates for a waiver from 15% of their parking space requirement for the Olney Village Mart. In their testimony, they indicated that GOCA had no objection to granting a waiver, but cautioned that we were skeptical of their need for a 15% waiver. Art had received a copy of the opinion from Mr. Jetter approving the 15% waiver. In the letter, Mr. Jetter noted the testimony given by he and Ron, but also stated that there was no opposition to the waiver. When their testimony had not specific stated an opposition, it appeared that he completely disregarded GOCA concerns about the extent of the request. Ron had asked Mr. Jetter about what he remember from their testimony who indicated that he did remember the testimony, but he was not sure why the opinion indicated there was no opposition. Ron noted, too, that this was the first time Permitting Services had held this kind of hearing, so there is no real process in place. John Lyons added that this decision makes him feel that GOCA needs to be more careful when we want to say that we are generally okay with something, but we have some concerns. The deciding body may only hear that we are generally okay with whatever it is, and dismiss the rest and ignore our concerns.

NEW BUSINESS

Completion of Street Landscape Plan for Brooke Manor - Steve Smet noted that in the presentation on the Brooke Manor property, the developers had indicated that there were certain things being done and not all of them have been done. But what they told GOCA they would do may not be the same thing said in what they submitted for approval. The property owner of the corner property now being developed said they would continue the landscaping and fencing done on the rest of the property. But that is not being done. Steve will be checking to see what was submitted to see what can be done to get them to complete the street landscaping and fencing.

Proposal for a Non-resident home office on southeast corner of Georgia Ave and Old Baltimore Rd - Raymond and Gabriella Moss, owners of Moss Chiropractic currently located in the Olney Town Shopping Center, presented a proposal for relocating their practice to a property on the southeast corner of Georgia Ave and Old Baltimore Rd. The property is actually 2 lots, one with a house and one undeveloped right at that corner. Dr. Moss noted that they have been practicing in the area for 15 years and had moved into their current office 6 years ago. Their lease is about to expire and the rent is going up to a point that is no longer affordable for them. Plus, the Center's plans for expansion will not happen for another 6-7 years and they will not offer a lease longer than that time frame. So, they have been looking around for other leased space, but are finding similarly expensive rents. He noted that 80% of their clients live within 3 miles of their office. Because of the difficulty they were having finding affordable rental space, they decided to purchase these two lots when they became available. Approximately 3/4 of the lot is currently treed, leaving as many trees as possible.

The Mosses propose to build a house as far back from Georgia Ave as possible. This would be a non-residential use for which they would apply for a special exception. This would not be their primary residence, and it is not necessary for anyone else to live there either. They just have to be sure that they only use 1/2 the building for operating their practice. Their hours of operation would be 9:30 am -6:30 pm and from 12:30 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They are proposing an entrance into the property on Old Baltimore at the rear of the property and an exit from the existing curb cut onto Georgia Ave. This driveway is within the area of the deceleration turn lane for Old Baltimore.

The following points were made during the discussion of their proposal:

- There is an issue of commercial development creeping down Georgia Ave, something GOCA has taken a position against in previous special exception cases and in current master plan discussions. Mrs. Moss felt that she thinks of a commercial business as something with lights, signage, and longer hours. She did not see the type of home office they are proposing as a commercial use, that is was less obtrusive than a commercial use, and that their building would look just like a house.
- The site is 1.5 acres and they are proposing 15-20 spaces in the wooded area that wouldn't be seen from Georgia Ave. They would have a sign similar to the one Dr. Lee has for his dental office just south of the Sandy Spring Bank further north on Georgia Ave. They are proposing a 2-story building with siding and a porch. They would need 2,000 - 2,500 sq. ft. of space on the 1st floor and they can only use 50% of the total building space for their practice.
- If Good Counsel High School goes in as proposed, there will be a lot of additional traffic on Old Baltimore. Dr. Moss noted, however, that the Good Counsel traffic would occur earlier their office hours since they would not start seeing patients until 9:30.
- They will be meeting with SEROCA on July 20th. However, John Lyons noted that, while Old Baltimore is the boundary for the town center area, and this is on the southern side of that boundary, it is in the southeast quadrant of Olney which is an area that has a different quality to it than the town center area. SEROCA has taken a strong position in the past in opposition to other commercial uses in the southeast quadrant. They have taken a strong position for preserving the town center concept. He would need to hear more details, but is concerned about a parking lot for 15-20 spaces which he feels is pretty substantial. He also felt that the proposed use is a commercial use, even if it is a professional office.
- There was a concern raised about security with a parking lot that is not visible, particularly since no one will be in the building during the evenings.
- They purchased the property a week prior to this meeting and their lease in the shopping center is up in a year, so they need to do something quickly. They do not feel they have any other real options that are cost-effective for them. They want to make this idea work and asked for other suggestions and input.

Following these announcements, the meeting was adjourned:

- In the Hawlings River Restoration Study, EPA will be doing work in the Olney Mill, Lake Hallowell, and James Creek developments.
- Jim Goldberg noted that Primary Day is the same day as GOCA's September 10th meeting, and encouraged everyone to vote before coming to the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim'
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Khalid Afzal, Jackie Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Helen Dodson, Anthony D'Onofrio, Dave Eskenazi, Peter Esser, Stanley Elswick, Jim Folk, Jim Goldberg, Terri Hogan (Gazette), Clair Iseli, Michael Kay, Mike Kelley, Rona Kramer, Chuck Keyserling, Lee Kidd, Bill Lanson, John Lyons, Don Schmelter, Karen Montgomery, Raymond & Gabriella Moss, Danny Parker, Roy Peck, Holly Reed, Helene Rosenheim, Joe Sagona, Paul, Schader, Shelly Skolnick, Steve Smet, Ed Weisel, and Chuck Young.