



# Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

[www.goca.org](http://www.goca.org)

## MINUTES – September 10, 2002

The meeting was called to order by Executive Vice President Steve Smet. Following introductions, the minutes were approved with no corrections and no additions.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Chuck Keyserling reported on some of the key points raised at the September 5<sup>th</sup> Greater Olney Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) meeting. There was a large group from the Highlands of Olney community opposing the recommendation that the portion of Buehler Rd behind the Sandy Spring Bank be cut through for vehicular traffic. Another major concern raised was the impact of the western parkway on Georgia Avenue and on traffic coming out of Olney, particularly during the AM rush hour. There were concerns raised as well about the proposal to build an at-grade intersection for the parkway intersection at the same time that the State is conducting an in-depth study of an intersection a few hundred yards from the ICC right-of-way.

### OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Correspondence Report** – Don Schmelter noted that the GOCA website has been revised to include Forums which provide individuals an opportunity to post comments on various topics of concern to the community. He noted, too, that GOCA's webmaster will be at the October meeting to demonstrate the new web pages. In the meantime, he encouraged everyone to visit the newly revised site.

### Chamber of Commerce Report

Joe Buffington reported that the Chamber will be holding an open house at its new office on September 26<sup>th</sup> from 7:30-9:30 am. The new office is on the second floor of the Olney Shopping Center. He encouraged everyone to come by to see the office. He noted, also, that Community Night will be on Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, from 5-8:30 pm at Longwood Recreation Center.

Joe also mentioned that the Community Room the meeting was taking place in available to other groups for evening meetings. There is a \$25 maintenance fee to cover their costs for having a maintenance person open, lock, and clean the room before and after these meetings. There may also be other times when the room can be rented for parties and other events. The room does have audio-visual equipment including a T1 connection for internet access. He expressed his hope that the connection could be used for displaying information relative to topics of discussion at future GOCA meetings.

### Transportation Report

Dave Eskenazi reported that:

- He had recently attended a focus group meeting for the Rte 97/28 intersection. The leading option calls for a separated interchange north of the intersection with Georgia Ave at grade and Rte. 28 going underneath. This alignment would also eliminate the curve on the east side of Georgia. Heading west on Rte. 28, the alignment would change at the beginning of the s-curve near the golf driving range, go behind the Park and Ride lot, cross Georgia Ave, go behind White's Hardware, and continue over and connect with Muncaster Mill where it meets Rte. 28. There are some other alignments they are considering, but they are similar to ones considered before. One issue they are struggling with is what happens if the western parkway alignment chosen uses the ICC right-of-way and crosses Georgia with another bridge just north of the Rte. 28 crossing. There is also an issue with what happens to the junkyard. There should be one more focus group meeting.

A representative from The Preserve asked when GOCA would be take a position on the options, and how they should let GOCA know what their position is. Dave indicated that GOCA will take a position formally once this goes to the next phase in which State Highway Administration (SHA) solicits positions. At that point The Preserve needs to let GOCA know as soon as possible what their position is and any concerns they have, as well as letting them be known to Park and Planning, SHA, and the Council. They do not need to wait till the end of the process. Dave was aware that SHA is trying to address the concerns of The Preserve about their access to Rte. 28. The only position GOCA has taken so far is that just widening the intersection is not acceptable and they should not use an overpass to cross Georgia, but one of the roads should be at grade and the other should go under. The County agencies will also make their recommendations at that time. It was suggested that we might have SHA present the options to GOCA at an upcoming meeting.

- There had also been a meeting on the Brookeville Bypass that had ended in kind of chaos. The State came up with some archeological findings that they wanted to try to protect and wanted to move the alignment. GOCA and Brookeville objected. State Highway Administration (SHA) decided to go with the alignment they had come into the meeting with. As you drive north, just passed Longwood the road would head off to the left just next to their ball field behind the backstop and the house sitting there, then curve over and cross Brookeville Road at the bottom of the hill below Brookeville. Then it would go back and meet Georgia again at the point after the turn at the stop sign and the right-hand curve. The issue is how the new road will cross Brookeville Rd. Should it be a 20ft overpass which would move it closer to Olney and the homes on Dubarry, Leana Ct, and Islander or should it be at-grade with a traffic circle at Brookeville Rd. GOCA has supported the at-grade crossing. Brookeville has favored that because they are anxious to get the road out of Brookeville and feel the at-grade crossing would be approved faster since they believe GOCA would fight the overpass and delay things further. Dave believes SHA will recommend alignment Option 7 which is the at-grade crossing. A decision should be made in about a month.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

At this point, Art Brodsky arrived and took over running the meeting.

**Good Counsel High School Proposed Relocation to Olney** – John Lyons reported that SEROCA has hired a traffic expert who is a retired professor from the University of Maryland to do a critical analysis in the traffic study submitted by Good Counsel's traffic engineer. Their expert identified a number of deficiencies in some of the methodologies used, the data, and assumptions they made. SEROCA's traffic expert communicated directly with Good Counsel's traffic engineer to get additional information, and essentially got confirmation that there were a number of erroneous assumptions and data sources that were not reliable. SEROCA then wrote a letter to Park and Planning (P&P) indicating some of these deficiencies and suggesting that Good Counsel's study had underestimated the impacts on traffic. Park and Planning staff has taken note of these concerns and indicated that they would follow-up to confirm that these deficiencies do exist. And, if they do, they agreed there would be a problem with their study. Art Brodsky noted that he had spoken with Ron Welke, head of the Traffic Division for P&P to see if Good Counsel had submitted a traffic mitigation plan. Mr. Welke indicated that he did not expect them to submit their traffic mitigation plan for at least another 3 weeks. John Rice added that at an earlier meeting, we had indicated that the process for abandoning the end of Batchellors Forest near Dr. Bird Drive was underway. He wanted to report that that process has come to a halt. Art also noted that he has spoken with several County Council members and has conveyed our concerns about the impact on traffic. Nancy Dacek shares our concerns.

**Greater Olney Master Plan Review** - John Lyons reported that at a recent Master Plan Advisory Group (MPAG) meeting on Capital transportation there was a number of residents from the Highlands of Olney and others interested in Buehler Rd who made a strong statement about their concerns about the proposal in the outline concept plan to open the final piece of Buehler Rd behind the Sandy Spring Bank. P&P staff indicated at that time that they were rethinking that recommendation, and that no final decision has been made yet. They agreed that there did not seem to be any underlying reason to open it for vehicular connectivity and would reserve judgment for now on their final position for either a vehicular connection or just a bikeway/pedestrian access through this area until the meeting on the town center area. A couple of things happened with respect to the southeast rural area. Staff has decided that a portion of Batchellors Forest Rd and some others in that area should be designated rural rustic roads which means they cannot be improved which impacts on the pace of development along those roads.

P&P staff also decided to delete one of their recommendations for making a connection from Rte. 28 through Barnesridge to Batchellors Forest near Farquhar Middle School because it did not really make sense. None of these decisions are final yet, but staff has basically concluded that some of these may not make sense in connection with all of their plans for the southeast quadrant. A fair portion of the meeting also dealt with the western parkway. Because this road crosses through several master plan areas, what happens will likely ultimately be guided by the County's Transportation Policy Report that the County Council will be taking up soon. P&P staff acknowledges that they heard our community's concerns, but that the western parkway issue will not be decided in this master plan review process. Chuck noted that he had received a letter from County Council President Steve Silverman that indicated the decision on the parkway would be dealt with in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan review process that is much further along than ours and recommended that groups plan to testify on it at the public hearing for this. John noted that he felt the Transportation Policy Report would be dealt with by the Council long before the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan works its way to the Council.

Don Schmelter noted that the schedule for the remaining meetings is Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> on parks and recreation, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> on the Patuxent Watershed and protection of natural resources, Sept 24<sup>th</sup> on the town center area, and on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> on land use. At each meeting the relevant P&P staff will give about a half hour presentation of what concepts they are thinking about for the master plan and the remaining time is open discussion of the recommendations they are proposing. Staff is still projecting release of the staff draft in mid-December.

**Olney Police Satellite Station** – Art Brodsky reported that the current plan is to put an addition onto the back of the existing trailer to add space for more offices, bring in plumbing and some electricity. These improvements will cost between \$18,000-\$20,000. The good news is that the Police Department has agreed to put \$10,000 towards this and the Chamber had collected

and then recollected most of the money they had previously collected, and someone has volunteered to do much of the electrical work that represents a large part of the expense. So, Phil Wilk, who is overseeing this expansion for the Chamber, is confident that this can be accomplished.

**Proposed Kirby Retirement Development Plan** – Art Brodsky reported that Jeff Kirby has been active in seeking support from the County Council, specifically with Nancy Dacek. Art had met with Ms. Dacek to discuss some of Jeff's concerns. Jeff had expressed concern that the resolution we passed tied our final recommendation to the recommendations for that property coming out of the master plan review process because he felt it meant he had to wait until the master plan review process was completed. Art brought our minutes which reflected that at least the draft plan needed to be out to be sure this was consistent with what is being proposed for the town center area. Art noted to Ms. Dacek that we had gone into so much detail with this project because we are concerned about preserving what is left of the rural entryway into Olney, especially what is seen coming south from Brookeville. Jeff is proposing a 50 ft tall building that is not consistent with the other building around it. Art noted that we were not totally opposed to his proposal, but our comments were directed at ensuring that what he puts in fits in with the land use and character of what is around there now. There is also a technical issue on rezoning relating to whether this proposal should be a special exception or done through a zoning text amendment. Khalid Afzal, of P&P, and Jeff Kirby are working on that. But Art explained to Ms. Dacek that this was not an issue that had been presented to GOCA in any of Jeff's discussions with us and GOCA had not taken a position on it. Art did not have any more current information on where that stands.

**Upper Rock Creek Master Plan Review** – Art had a note from Rich Kopanda who was unable to be at the meeting. In it Rich indicated that there was not much new to report, but that he had not been happy with the way the process had gone. Rich did not think the staff report reflected a lot of the input from the community. Chuck Keyserling noted that the western parkway recommendations were different from the option GOCA had voted for and that many of the residents in that area had also supported the option calling for widening Muncaster Mill instead of using the ICC right-of-way. Helen Dodson noted that Khalid had indicated at one of our earlier meetings that this plan was recommending an increase in housing density from 450 units to 500 units, but that according to the paper the increase is to 600 units. She questioned why he would say it was only to 500 when it was to 600 and felt GOCA should express its concerns about this additional density. Art added that our master plan review is being done very differently and should have a different result. Chuck suggested that we testify on the western parkway which we have taken a position on and perhaps submit written comments later on other issues after our next meeting. Chuck noted that most people in the area of the proposed developments prefer that the area remain on septic and well and that sewer and water not be brought in. John Lyons was concerned about the fact that the process seems to have ignored the consensus of the advisory group. He felt GOCA should express its concerns about the process because of its impact on master plan review process we are in ourselves. Ron Berger agreed that we should note the deficiencies in the process, and that with the information from Council member Silverman concerning the western parkway, we should comment on this. And, while we may not need to take a firm position on septic and well vs sewer and water, we do need to review to plan to see if there are things we have concerns about because of their impact on the Olney community. He noted to, that we have a committee structure for reviewing the draft to identify issues that impact Olney and Rich Kopanda would be a part of that process since he was our delegate to this advisory group.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Proposed Wincester Development near Norbeck Rd and Georgia Ave** – John Lyons reported that Khalid Afzal let him know about a proposal that had been brought into P&P that would impact the southeast quadrant. As a part of the master plan process developers come forward with proposals that may require a rezoning of land so that it can be done as a part of the comprehensive analysis of the master plan process. This is the case with this proposal. Most of the southeast quadrant is zoned for RE-2 and RE-5 clustering which is fairly low density. But there is a triangular area south of the ICC right-of-way and between Norbeck Rd and Georgia Avenue that will be relatively small and isolated from the rest of the southeast quadrant if a road is built on the ICC right-of-way. There are several homes, but the area is not particularly developed except for the golf driving range. The Norbeck Homeowners Association has had an eye on this area since most of the homeowners in this area have been locked in by the ICC. Cary Lamari, who is part of this Association and is a member of the Olney MPAG has suggested that there should be some conditional rezoning proposal in the master plan in the event the road is put through. John suggested, however, that we may not want to take any position until some deposition has been made for the right-of-way. He also noted that some of the homes in that area were believed to be substandard and that the area needs redevelopment. However, staff has indicated some work has already been done in that area, the homes are not substandard and there is no pressing need for redevelopment. The Wincester proposal is based on an assemblage of properties of about 40 acres that is currently very low density with about 40 detached units. Wincester is proposing a rezoning to PD 11/13 which would yield 440 units. 34% would be apartments, 24.5% would be duplex/townhouses and 1.5 % would be single-family. Part of the proposal does include the existing driving range with its blinding lights. The plan also includes constructing some sort of commercial/retail to support the residential units. So the driving range would be replaced with some sort of planned development. There is not any more detail available yet. But, John's initial reaction was that this was his worst kind of nightmare and would be the beginning of the pressure for the spread of dense development in the southeast quadrant. Since Cary had supported some kind of redevelopment in that area, he spoke to him about this proposal. Cary agreed that while he supported redevelopment, he shared John's concerns about this level of density of this proposal. Often developers will come forward near the end of the master plan process after much of the wrangling has taken place. So, Khalid felt that since Wincester had come forward pretty early in the process he might follow through with the trying to develop the property. John felt they might not be discouraged that easily. A question was raised about how someone can propose 440 residential units

in the same area where they are proposing to put an expanded intersection. Chuck noted that this is the kind of proposal that will come forward with a road like the western parkway.

**GOCA's 2002 Awards** – Ron Berger noted that this March GOCA will be presenting Awards for the 25<sup>th</sup> time and we would like to do something a little more elaborate than we normally do. We have begun to narrow down some of the alternatives, but still haven't made any final decision. It will depend on what things will cost, what our treasury can afford, what, if any, corporate funding we may solicit. Basically we are looking at doing something more than the usual cheese and crackers/cookies we normally serve. We will, at a minimum, invite all previous Citizens of the Year and it is likely that we will not hold it at Longwood because it may not be big enough for what we have in mind. We are considering using the new ballroom at the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department Station 4. Ron encouraged anyone with ideas about what we should or shouldn't do, groups that would be interested in providing funds or in-kind services, or other ideas to contact him.

There were a few announcements at the end of the meeting and a suggestion that GOCA might want to thank the County for completing the Norwood Rd project in a timely fashion. Dave E. noted that he had encouraged them to have a ribbon-cutting ceremony so that the County could get some recognition for doing what they had said and completing the project on time. Following this discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim'  
Recording Secretary

**People in attendance:** Mark Anchor, Jackie Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Joe Buffington, Helen Dodson, Dave Eskenazi, Philip Falcone, Jim Folk, Tom Godbout, Chuck Keyserling, Lee Kidd, John Lyons, Bob Poveromo, Jim and Mary Rice, Don Schmelter, Paul Schroeder, Steve Smet, Mark Torrance, and Ed Weisel.