



Greater Olney Civic Association

Post Office Box 212 Olney, Maryland 20830

www.goca.org

MINUTES – November 12, 2002

The meeting was called to order by Executive Vice President Steve Smet. President Art Brodsky began presiding during Public Comments. The minutes were approved with 2 corrections. The agenda was approved with one addition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ed Weisel suggested that GOCA correspond to the newly-elected officials to get their feelings on some of the transportation projects we are interested in, e.g., grade separation at the Rte 97/28 intersection, Muncaster Mill Rd, Brookeville Bypass, Georgia Avenue Busway, widening Rte 28 between Georgia Avenue and the Rte 28/198 connector. Ed also suggested inviting Marilyn Praisner and Mike Knapp to a future meeting. Art noted that Mike Knapp had called to say that he would attend a future meeting if he was not able to attend the November meeting.
- Dale Pearlman suggested that speed limits be reduced by 10 mphs after dark and that there be more speed limit signs with the time of day when active as a way to reduce the number of accidents involving hitting deer running out into the street.. Steve Smet referred her to GOCA's Traffic Safety Committee because they are looking at a number of issues such as this. Chuck Keyserling added that he had attended several of the County's deer hunting meetings and had learned that in this area deer have no natural predators and their numbers grow to match their food supply. The controlled hunts did seem to help, but he was not sure if the reduced speeds would keep from killing the deer. Ron Berger indicated that he would check to see if County officials had ever considered the concept of reducing speeds and seeing what their reaction might be. Part of the difficulty is that roads like Georgia Ave and Rte. 108 are State roads which would require dealing with the State Highway Administration's District Engineer instead of or in addition to County officials.
- Ed Weisel also noted a Sierra Club Seminar on Nov.23rd on How To Win Land Use Issues.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Welcome to Capt Patricia Walker to District 4 – Art B. noted that Capt. Walker was not able to attend, but will attend the December meeting.

OFFICER/COMMITTEE REPORTS

President's Report – Art reported that:

- The Park and Planning Commission's (P&P) Planning Board held its first worksession on the Draft Upper Rock Creek Master Plan
- On Nov 17th the Montgomery County Marathon in the Park will take place from 7:30 am – 1:00 pm and will involve several local roads, e.g., Redland Road, Muncaster Mill Road, Veirs Mill Road, Randolph Road, and Connecticut Ave.
- Activity on GOCA's website, www.goca.org is still slow. He encouraged people to check it out and to tell their friends and neighbors about it.

Treasurer's Report

Roy Peck reported that with \$3,460.84 in our money market account and \$1,134.07 in checking, the current balance is \$4,594.91.

Chamber of Commerce Report

Art noted that he had heard from Wendy Walker that there had been a legal log jam in transferring money that had been donated for the expansion of the police substation. She has been working on the problem and hopes to have things on track within the next few weeks.

Transportation Report

Dave Eskenazi reported that:

- The road club the Buffingtons and Freeman Associates are participating in to mitigate traffic their developments will create are being asked to restrip Spartan Rd at Georgia Av to create 3 eastbound lanes
- Rte 28 at Rte 97 is to have an extra turn lane
- He asked State Highway Administration (SHA) to consider having road clubs such as the Buffington/Freeman club make improvements to the Spartan Rd/Rte.108 intersection.
- On Dec 9th there will be a public hearing on the intersection improvement alternatives for the Rte 28/Rte 97 intersection at Redland Middle School. Displays of the various alternative will be available beginning at 5:30 pm with staff available to answer questions and they will begin taking testimony at 7:00 pm, beginning with about a 30 minute presentation of all the alternatives. GOCA's position throughout this process has been to support a grade-separated configuration with Georgia Av going under and Rte 28 being at-grade. Copies of the information packet that was mailed to out by SHA in the Aspen Hill, Twinbrook, and White Oak Libraries.

OLD BUSINESS

Proposed Commercial Development on the Silo Inn Property – Steve Smet noted that at the last meeting, Harvey Maizel had presented a proposal for developing the Silo Inn property with commercial development. The property the Victoria Springs development is on and the Silo Inn was on consisted of 52 acres zoned R-200 and 2 acres zoned commercial. Only the residential portion was sold to Winchester Homes. They couldn't sell the commercial portion then because the Tavenners were still leasing the space for their restaurants. The zoning allowed up to 32,000 sq. ft. because of the C-1 zoning. No plans were submitted for this area. The grandfathered commercial use was tied to the restaurants that were already then when previous master plans were done is now gone because the use is gone and the buildings have been removed. Also current zoning legislation prohibits using residential property for parking for commercial development.

Steve Smet moved that:

GOCA OPPOSE THE PLAN SUBMITTED BY HARVEY MAIZEL, ETAL, BECAUSE IT WILL CHANGE THE "GREENWAY" ENTRANCE CHARACTERISTICS TO OLNEY, THE PLAN APPEARS TO BE IN VIOLATION OF THE ZONING ORDINANCES, AND THE PLAN IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE UPCOMING MASTER PLAN.

Ed Weisel seconded the motion. The following points were made during the discussion of the motion:

- Maintaining the green entryway into Olney and reverting this property to the residential R-200 zone are concepts being recommended in the new Olney Master Plan.
- A question was asked about whether they can be required to do something similar in appearance to Norman's Farm Market.
- If this proposal fails, they can still move ahead if he can confine the structures and parking to the commercially zoned areas which may mean using some 2-story structures. However, this may not be economically viable.
- The Victoria Springs development is not opposed to what Mr. Maizel presented. They felt he would be a good, cooperative property owner. What they do not want to see is a gas station or 7/11 type operation which are things that are possible as special exceptions in a residential zone.
- With the Kirby proposal for a retirement community on Georgia Ave just north of Rte. 108 in the town center area, GOCA had decided to support it as long as that kind of use was recommended for this area in the master plan review process, noting again that the master plan review was recommending that this commercial zoning go back to residential.
- There were concerns expressed that Mr. Maizel had not given straight answers to some of the questions raised at the previous meeting. Coupled with the information Steve Smet had developed, the motion may be appropriate but it may need to be tempered so that there is no adverse affect on Victoria Springs.
- Supporting the master plan recommendation to restrict commercial development to the town center area protects the Victoria Springs from the treat of special exception uses. If the master plan is adopted with the current recommendations with respect to commercial development, it sends a public message to the government officials involved in making those kinds of decisions and to developers that what the community wants on this property is residential development.

Ed Weisel called the question and the motion passed.

Proposed Relocation of Good Counsel High School To Olney – John Lyons noted that there have been some major changes to the school's proposal that have been presented informally to the Park and Planning (P&P) staff. Their original plan involved straddling Batchellors Forest Rd. with some of the structures, and abandoning the portion of Batchellors Forest from where it bends for its realignment to Dr. Bird Drive. Now the development is all on one side of Batchellors Forest and they no longer need to apply for the abandonment of Batchellors Forest Rd. They still need to build the new piece of Batchellors Forest Rd. that goes past the Victory Housing project to Rte. 108 opposite Old Vic Boulevard. This is no formal written revised plan yet. And, they need to renegotiate with Centex, the contract purchaser for the whole acreage the school site it part of. Traffic concerns are still the same. They have one of their ingress and egress points on Rte. 108 Centex is getting frustrated with the pace of this whole

project which includes swapping the land in Olney for the land the school is currently located on in Wheaton. There is a meeting on December 19th on the Wheaton site, but it appears that the economics have changed on that project and Centex may be rethinking that project. Considering what Good Counsel still needs to do it is doubtful that the December 19th meeting will take place.

SEROCA's concern is that Batchellors Forest Rd is currently classified as an interim rural road, but the P&P staff is leaning towards classifying it as a primary road in the new master plan. The Rustic Road Advisory Commission (RRAC) has recommended that if the abandonment goes through, the portion of the road beginning at the end of the abandoned portion should retain its rustic classification. Dan Harding, on P&P transportation staff has suggested that it should begin at Farquhar Middle School because a public school should not be on a rustic road because of safety issues. The RRAC recently reconsidered their position since it did not seem that the abandonment was going forward and recommended that the whole road be rustic over Mr. Harding's objections. He asked that their recommendation include a proposal that a sidewalk be added near the school site later. Road capacity is an issue with respect to future development. A rustic road classification would not preclude future development, but it might limit the density because the road could not be improved.

Good Counsel High School indicated that they would prohibit students from using Batchellors Forest. John realized that was good for SEROCA, but that it was not good for the rest of Olney because it put more traffic on Old Baltimore Rd. To date, they have not submitted a comprehensive traffic mitigation plan to P&P. Special events traffic and parking is also an issue that does not seem to have been addressed yet either.

Greater Olney Master Plan Review – Art reminded everyone about P&P's Open House on November 13th at Sandy Spring Friends School from 4:00-9:00 pm. Ron Berger talked about some of the long range terms. P&P is proposing to relocate Olney Elementary to the used high school site on Bowie Mill Rd. That would free up the current site for another use such as for the government center, a common area for community events, and other similar uses we have been talking about at our town meeting and throughout the master plan process. They have introduced the idea and are looking for community reaction to the idea. Steve Smet noted that since Olney Elementary School was recently renovated, it is unlikely that this would happen anytime soon. But, a master plan is intended to be good for 10-20 years, so it could happen in the life of this master plan. Dave Eskenazi also noted that there is still a school site in the Norbeck Grove area dedicated for a 6th school site, but never built on. It was noted that the relocation P&P is proposing would keep the school within its current boundaries and that MCPS is indicating that the changes anticipated in the master plan changes should not warrant the addition of a 6th elementary. The new development would simply replace population moving on through the school system. Steve noted, too, that the staff had been looking for a way to provide a town center area somewhere in one of the shopping centers, but this would be very expensive and would likely mean having to allow for some 2-story development in the shopping center and a parking garage in the town center area as an incentive to the shopping center to dedicate the land needed for the government center. Since the County already owns both school sites, the staff felt relocating Olney Elementary was actually a more realistic option. Ron Berger moved that:

GOCA SUPPORT THE PARK AND PLANNING STAFF MASTER PLAN PROPOSAL TO RELOCATE OLNEY ELEMENTARY TO THE BOWIE MILL HIGH SCHOOL SITE OR OTHER APPROPRIATE SITES IN ORDER THAT THE EXISTING SCHOOL SITE CAN BE USED AS A GOVERNMENT CENTER AND COMMUNITY GATHERING SPOT.

Roy Peck seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

GOCA's 25th Annual Awards - Ron Berger reported that it is time to start collecting nominations for GOCA 2002 awards. He noted that for some unexplained reason the number of nominations we have been receiving has gone down, even though there is so much going on in this community. We get the nominations that are presented to the Executive Committee who then vote on the winners for the various categories.

Because this is the 25th celebration, we want to do something a little more elaborate than we normally have done, and to do something to recognize the past winners, particularly the 24 previous Citizens of the Year. We have reserved the Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department ballroom for a reception from 5-7 pm on Sunday, March 2, 2003. We don't plan to serve dinner, but a very nice hors d'oeuvre menu. We are not seeking contributions to fund this and hope to raise enough so that there would be some money left over for other GOCA activities such as the Olney Days Festival. Peter Monge, President of Montgomery General Hospital, and Hunter Hollar, President of the Sandy Spring National Bank, has agreed to co-sign a letter asking for corporate donations. They have each already pledged \$1,000 each with assurances that they will be recognized at this and any other events the money may help finance.

Olney Days Festival 2003 – Helene Rosenheim reported that the Olney Days Festival Planning Committee is continuing to meet. The Festival is planned for Friday, May 16 – Sunday, May 18th. In addition to the tongue-in-cheek Mr. & Mrs. Olney Contest the Mom's Club of Olney has agreed to organize, the Fletchers have approached the planning committee about adding another event. They have been bike riding with Joe Sanford's parents and they and some of their other friends would like to organize a bike ride to take place during the Olney Days Festival. The ride would be in Joe's memory and a way for the family to thank the community for all it did for them during Joe's illness. Because we plan to hold the Olney Library's puppet show later in the day on Saturday at Olney Manor Park instead of at Longwood mid-day Saturday, there are no other events currently planned for Saturday morning.

So this event could fit in then very nicely. They will provide all the volunteers to plan and run the event. There would be 3 levels to Joe's Ride. There would be a short course possibly within Olney Manor Park or a similar facility for the very young riders. Then there would be an intermediate course length, using side roads, hiker/biker trails and park trails for teenage and novice riders, and a third 20-30 mile course for adult and experienced riders. There would be a nominal entrance fee that would go towards funding this event and other Festival events and then riders will be encouraged to collect donations that would go to funds such as the brain tumor fund Joe helped raise funds for, or others the family may designate. This should be an exciting addition to the weekend and potentially a good fund raiser.

Moss Chiropractic Proposed Office Development - Steve Smet noted that the Mosses, owners of Moss Chiropractic, had come to a GOCA meeting several months ago to present an idea they had for building a residential appearing building on 2 adjacent properties on the southeast corner of Georgia Av and Old Baltimore Rd. to house their chiropractic practice. They did not plan to live there. There were several concerns that we raised at that meeting. This property is just outside the town center area bounded by Old Baltimore Rd on its southern edge. As mentioned earlier, the proposed recommendation for the new Olney Master Plan is to restrict commercial development to the town center area, with a goal of limiting commercial creep down Georgia Av. Steve felt that as much as we like the Mosses and would like to see them remain in Olney, it is important that their office be located in the right place. Art added that we are just trying to reinforce the position we have taken, especially since we want to be consistent with the position being taken with respect to the Silo Inn property. There were also concerns about the impact this practice would have on traffic at that corner, since the egress would be into the right-turn stacking lane from Georgia Av onto Old Baltimore Rd.

Steve felt that in fairness to the Mosses, we should let them know our position before they move to much further ahead with action on this property. Lee Kidd added that the Cherrywood HOA Board had taken a unanimous position in opposition to commercial development on that property, and he favored GOCA taking a position on it. There was some discussion of the need for a motion, since we have not heard anything further from the Mosses and that all that might be necessary would be to make sure they were aware of the master plan recommendations. This would impact any plans they might have for applying for a special exception for this site for use as a professional office, which is, in fact, a commercial use. Lee Kidd moved that:

GOCA SEND A LETTER TO DRS. MOSS STATING THAT GOCA OPPOSED THEIR PROPOSAL PRESENTED AT OUR JULY MEETING BECAUSE IT IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH THE CURRENT PROPOSED GREATER OLNEY MASTER PLAN.

The motion was seconded by Chuck Keyserling, and passed.

Following a few announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Helene Rosenheim

Helene Rosenheim'
Recording Secretary

People in attendance: Jackie and Danny Benn, Ron Berger, Art Brodsky, Joe Buffington, Rick Coburn, Stanley Elswick, Dave Eskenazi, Claire Iseli (Marilyn Praisner's Office), Anne Kaiser, Mike Kelley, Chuck Keyserling, Lee Kidd, John Lyons, Dale Ann Pearlman, Roy Peck, Helene Rosenheim, Don Schmelter, Paul Schroeder, Sandy Shulman, Steve Smet, Clara Smith, Ed Weisel, and Chuck Young.