

DRAFT MINUTES – December 9, 2008

The meeting was called to order by President Sharon Dooley. The minutes from the November meeting were approved with 3 corrections or no additions. The agenda was accepted with 1 addition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Hank Lieberman noted that in response to increasing concerns of the Sandy Spring Civic Association about the rise in crime, his family has proposed forming a security company. There were 130 crimes reported in Ashton and Sandy Spring in the last 90 days. This company would patrol along Rte. 108 in the vicinity of the Sandy Spring village center. He has also been approached by people in Olney to provide a similar service in that area. So, they are considering expanding their service to cover the area from Dr. Bird Dr. to Olney Mill Rd. He distributed a letter describing the service they propose to provide and contact information for any civic associations interested in contacting them.
- Ed Weisel expressed his concern about the ICC billboards on Georgia Avenue. In a county that has outlawed billboards, he did not think we needed billboards that did not provide any information other than that Governor O'Malley is building the road. He would like to see them removed.
- Paula Kahla noted that there is no lighting on Rte. 108 east of Prince Phillip Drive to Dr. Bird Dr. This makes it difficult to walk along this portion of Rte. 108 at night and pre-dawn because it is so dark. Kathleen Donedeo agreed and suggested writing a letter to the State Highway Administration (SHA) requesting the addition of some lighting there. Del. Kaiser noted that she would look into this to see why its not lit.
- Paul Jarosinski noted that he brought a map of the ICC/Rte. 97 interchange for anyone interested in looking at it. He added that the final map is still not available.
- Matt Zaborsky noted that the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board had held its November meeting in Olney and thanked everyone that attended. He thought it had been a good exchange and thanked everyone for the warm welcome.
- Lori Wilen noted that the Board of Education had voted that day to close schools for the Presidential inauguration and for subsequent inaugurations.

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee – Jim Smith noted that the Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) was created after the passage of the current Olney Master Plan. The OTCAC has 3 roles: to create an illustrative concept plan for the town center, to create a concept paper for a civic center/town commons, and to review development proposals for the town center and immediately surrounding areas for compatibility with the illustrative concept plan. The Committee is currently drafting the concept paper for the civic center/town commons and has compiled a list of a number of users and uses for such an area that they would be outlining at this meeting. He noted that at this point, their Committee was only asking for approval of the list of users they have identified rather than approval of the draft concept paper that was being distributed that evening. Then members of the OTCAC presented a brief description of the proposed users and uses.

Paula Kahla indicated that the Olney Chamber of Commerce would like a space in this municipal building that would serve as their office and as place where information about the area could be distributed to residents and visitors to the greater Olney area. It would be a benefit to their members and to the community. A second use she described was a police satellite office. The main station for District 4 is more than 7 miles south of the center of Olney and a satellite office is needed to improve response times to situations in the Olney area. While the trailer the police have been using has been helpful, a permanent space in the town center would be better. The police have given the Committee a description of their space needs.

Helene Rosenheim briefly outlined the desire of the youth in Olney to have a teen center in the town center that would provide a drug-free/alcohol-free space where high-school aged youth can hang out, possibly with a performance area, computer room, study areas, limited refreshment area, and a retail area where the youth could get some entrepreneurial experience. During the school day, the space could be used by other groups. The youth in PROJECT CHANGE have put together a list of uses they would like to see in a teen center. Helene also noted that, while the Mid-County Regional Center does not currently have an office in Olney, it might be useful to have a small space similar to the one they used to have in the Olney Library in the future. She also noted the need for meeting space in the area and described a combination of small, medium, and large-size meeting spaces that would be desirable.

Nancy DeLalio discussed the Library. The current Library is limited in size and has poor access. Relocating the Library in the town center would improve that. The children's activities and teen activities will benefit from a new facility. Information collected in preparing for the renovations to the existing library will be useful in designing a new building. The Committee will continue to work with the Library staff

Jim noted that this version of draft concept paper has been compiled and revised from public comments received to date. The Committee is currently designing an outreach program for this concept paper to continue to collect comments. Jim also noted that there are 3 possible ways of getting this town center. One is through a land swap with public property. Another is through a public-private partnership. We have a golden opportunity to form such a partnership with the Freeman Company. They are putting together a redevelopment plan using the new Mixed Use Town Center Zone which requires that 20% of the acreage be used for some public purpose. The third way is through public acquisition of private property, but this is very unlikely, especially with the current budget situation.

Olney has over 40,000 people and the uses they identified are all things that are needed by the community and should be in the town center. The Committee is aware of the tight budget situations now, but we have this opportunity that they do not want to miss by pursuing this now so that we have a plan that is ready when funding is more available.

The following are some of the points made during the question and answer period that followed their presentation:

- The Freeman Company is responsible for the redevelopment of their 2 shopping centers, the Olney Village Center and the Olney Town Shopping Center. The Committee has met with Mike Reilly, a Vice President in charge of this project and Chris Garland, their planner for this project. The company is amenable to having a civic center as an anchor of their center, especially if the Library is a part of the mix.
- The Library manager has seemed resistant to moving the Library because we don't know when this redevelopment will occur. But, the Master Plan time frame is approximately 20 years, and the redevelopment of the lower center could be staged. So that allows time for planning that could work with the County's capital improvement process.
- There was some concern about incorporating a skateboard element in this plan since the community pushed to have a skate board park at Olney Manor Park to discourage youth from skateboarding in the shopping centers in the town center.
- There was a question about activities at night when the stores were closed.
- A concern was raised about private uses in a seemingly "government building", but it was noted this could be worked out through public/private memorandums of understanding and similar tools.
- It would be good to have more active uses when the town commons is not being used for community events, which could be encourage with things like outside tables for the restaurants in the town center.
- The town center needs to be Ride-On/Metrobus accessible with good service. The OTCAC has talked about creating a shuttle bus system that would circulate throughout the town center to make it more pedestrian-friendly and to facilitate moving from one quadrant to the other. A tram with a loop route could be a fundraiser for an organization to help coordinate activities in the town center. And, we need to think outside the box in designing that system. Rickshaws might be an option for this. Bethesda has a circulating bus that is probably paid for by the Partnership.
- The Silver Spring merchants don't seem to mind the band concerts and noise in the newly redeveloped area that is extremely active now.
- Having the police satellite station in the town center will allow officers to not have to go into Wheaton as much.
- It will be the responsibility of developers to creatively address the need for any additional parking needed to support their development plans.
- With respect to the teen center, it was suggested that the Committee look at how the needs of the youth can be addressed by existing facilities such as Longwood Recreation Center.
- The Bethesda Urban Partnership would be a good model for our community and may be something the OTCAC may want to pursue.
- The OTCAC is now the main cheerleader for the concepts included in this paper, but in order to accomplish the goals of this proposal, we will need wide community support for these ideas. So involving the community in this process through the Committee's outreach efforts is key to our success.
- It was suggested that as the plans evolve that the Committee look carefully at overlapping uses so, for example, we do not end up with empty meeting room space during the day. We will need to be creative in designing co-shared space so the space is used effectively. This idea should be stressed more in the concept paper.

Sharon Dooley took a straw vote for the proposed uses in the civic center/town commons area. The list of uses was supported with a vote of 17 for, 1 opposed, and 3 abstentions.

Proposed Moss Professional Building on N. High Street – No presentation, the Mosses did not attend.

Dave Eskenazi noted that the Mosses had come to GOCA a number of years ago with a proposal for a building on the southeast corner of Georgia Avenue and Old Baltimore Road. He is pleased to see that they are now looking at a location within the town center. Jim Smith noted that the Mosses had given the OTCAC a preliminary presentation on their proposal and the key issue of concern to the Park and Planning Commission staff is the orientation of the building. The main entrance to the building is currently on N. High Street, and the staff would prefer that it face 3rd Street, which is currently a road that is only on paper, but could be developed if that area were redeveloped. This would not prevent them from having a second entrance from being part of the plan, especially since 3rd Street may not be developed for some time. But, the orientation of the building should be mindful of that future goal.

Proposed Maryland House Bill MC 910-09 - Delegate Anne Kaiser noted that this bill relates to property and recordation transfer taxes. County Executive Ike Leggett asked her to introduce this bill. She was asked to introduce it because she chairs the Montgomery County Affairs Committee. Bills can only be introduced by delegates, and the delegates are often asked to introduce proposed legislation. Sometimes they may not necessarily support the legislation, but believe it is an idea warrants discussion. And, the legislation that may be approved eventually often does not look like the original legislation that is introduced. The State Legislature has a 90-day session and about 1,500 or more local bills are introduced. The Montgomery County delegation holds a hearing in Rockville to get input from the community on their priorities. This year's hearing will take place on December 17th.

Del. Kaiser noted that there had been an Affordable Housing Task Force and this proposal is an initiative that grew out their work. It relates to residential property and is geared towards County employees. It would provide a tax credit towards the recordation/transfer tax on the purchase of a home. The idea is to keep people from having to pay this one-time fee. She noted that she supports the idea of affordable housing, and the neither she or Mr. Leggett are wedded to the current language of the proposed legislation, which may already be being revised. She encouraged people to send their comments to their legislators. If the legislation passes, it does not establish this tax credit. It is enabling legislation that simply give the County the authority to establish such a tax credit. There will be additional opportunities to submit comments after the session begins in January, if they are not able to provide comments to the Delegation on the 17th.

- Some of the comments made during the question and answer period:
- Currently there are no limits on income or the price of the house. And, it is clear the language of the legislation needs some work.
- The credit is limited to an individual's primary residence
- Del. Kaiser encouraged people to direct these questions to County Executive Leggett when he attends the January GOCA meeting. She is waiting to hear the full rationale for the legislation from him.
- This currently only applies to the County's portion of the recordation/transfer tax.
- No cost estimates for the bill have been provided yet.
- There are already exemptions for a first-time homebuyer.
- It may be better to look at expanding some existing tax credits, and they should be for all County residents, not just County employees.

OFFICERS/COMMITTEE REPORTS

Treasurer's Report – Roy Peck reported that the current balance in the accounts is \$7,673.17. He noted that a full report had been provided to the officers, but he could send it to anyone interested.

Correspondence Report – Bob Beard reported that the correspondence included a notice of an open house at Aunt Hattie's Place in Baltimore, receipt of a preliminary plan for a single-family house on a site on the northwest corner of Emory Rd and Cashell Dr described as the Oakdale school site, and a vacancy on the Board of Appeals for one of the Democratic seats with a deadline of January 5th.

Olney Chamber of Commerce Report – Joe Buffington reminded everyone about the Shop Local Night scheduled for Dec 10th, noting that the Olney Farmers and Artists Market website has a list of participating merchants. He noted that for every \$100 spent at local merchants, \$68 stays in the community, versus only \$48 staying in the community if spent at a chain store. He thanked the Farmers and Artists Market for putting this event together. The local merchants appreciated it.

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee – Bob Beard noted that the next meeting will take place on December 23rd. Chris Garland, newly with the Carl M. Freeman Companies will be representing them on the Advisory Committee. Also, Khalid Azfal has been assigned additional duties that will take him away from serving Olney as much as in the past and a new planner has been is being phased into covering the Olney area.

Civic Federation Report – Arnie Gordon noted that Civic Federation had been contacted by Delegate Lee regarding Bill 913-09 which would allow the County Council to regulate campaign financing. It would allow the Council to regulate reporting and the timing of reporting for County elected officials. It doesn't control funding, just the disclosure of funding sources. Arnie felt it was a good first step to controlling some aspects of the election of County positions.

Membership Report – Matt Zaborsky reported that we have received \$2,300 in dues and \$1,600 towards Olney Days. There are 29 paid associations. He has started billing for 2009 and encouraged those present to get their dues paid quickly. The By-Laws indicate that dues should be paid in January, so dues letters will be emailed to all member associations by the end of December.

Paul Jarosinski asked if the By-Laws mean that members must pay their dues by January to vote in the February elections. Ron Berger explained that we have always given associations several months to complete payment of their dues before considering them not in good standing. So all associations who had paid their 2008 dues are able to vote in the February election. .

Transportation Report – Dave Eskenazi noted that in talking to associations directly impacted by the Inter-County Connector, he found that many of them shared concerns about how the State Highway Administration (SHA) has made decisions on sound walls. It is not clear what criteria was used. With respect to berms, he noted that SHA has a lot of dirt they need to find a place for, so they plan to raise the elevation of the road in a number of place to use some of the dirt. Odessa Philip is suppose to be getting engineering studies to him. There is a question of whether raising the elevation affects how the sound carries. They also may not be able to build berms in some areas designated for them because of wetlands, etc. It is also not clear if they are cutting all the trees in alignment, or if there are trees that could be saved. He is trying to get all of the affected CA/HOA's to communicate with each other and with GOCA, and to work with SHA tracking changes in the design plans. He is trying to set up a group to interact with the SHA. Sharon suggested it may be time to invite SHA to attend a GOCA meeting again.

Dave also noted the article in the Gazette regarding special funding for design work for Brookeville Bypass. The article noted that there was \$51 million for 3 road projects including the Brookeville Bypass and the Georgia Avenue Busway. He plans to look into these. Joe Buffington is recirculating the letter regarding the entrance to the Olney Shopping Center for concurrence by the affected parties and it should be going out soon. Dave attended the forum on the 28/198 connector. While the current plan is focused primarily on the Burtonsville area, but the west end does impact the Olney area. So he has asked that someone from GOCA and from The Preserve be added to the mailing list for meeting minutes.

Roy Peck noted that it appears that the only lights on the ICC will be at the interchanges; and the 28/1/98 connector will have an "ICC" light if the banks of the ICC cannot be sold. He noted, too, that the mitigation for sound on the ICC is based on the sound heard by someone standing in a yard within a line of sight to the road. The criteria for providing sound barriers is if two people cannot heard each other in normal conversation standing in that yard. Roy also raised some concern about water run-off from the ICC and the impact on stormwater management ponds in their development. The run-off should go into entrapment ponds to control the flow into the stream and to avoid raising the temperature of the water so it does not impact the ability for existing life to survive. Brenda Egeland suggested forming an ICC Action Committee that would address all of these kinds of issues and then report back to GOCA with action items. The discussion tends to get to a level of detail that isn't really needed at a full meeting. Paul Jarosinski noted that SHA didn't really have an answer for how they would handle the extra traffic on Georgia Ave from Phase A of the ICC. He suggested that the 97/28 intersection improvement will still be needed.

President's Report – Sharon Dooley noted that the December edition Olney Loop is airing now. Also, people can get DVD's of the show from Montgomery Access if you aren't able to see the program when it is aired or if you want a particular segment. She also noted that the speakers of the next few upcoming GOCA meetings includes: in January, County Executive Ike Leggett; in February Councilmember Marc Elrich to discuss his proposed Bus Rapid Transit legislation; and in March, Roland Stanley on the Smart Growth Policies. She also received an alert that a number of nursing home having bad outbreaks of a virulent virus, with many needing to be quarantined, and many visitors prior to the quarantine coming down with the virus.

Sharon noted that she had been contacted by the District 4 police requesting information on GOCA's member associations so they can send them emails for special alerts. She asked delegates to go back to their associations to see if they want to be part of this police alert system. It was suggested that information about the request be sent with the next agenda telling the associations how to subscribe to the system. She also noted that she and Lisa Stancik attended a Montgomery Access Award program. While the Olney Loop did not win a prize, it was interesting to see the other types of programming being done. And, she attended a meeting on MARC train, and the Committee for Montgomery Legislative Breakfast. She also received a letter from Councilmember Knapp in response to their letter regarding ambulance fee in which he indicates that the discussion of these fees has been tabled..

OLD BUSINESS

2009 GOCA Officers Nominating Committee Report – Ron Berger noted that at the January meeting the Nominating Committee will be presenting the slate of the 2009 GOCA Officers. The slate will be closed after that meeting until the election at the end of the February meeting. He noted that not all of the officers were interested in continuing in their offices. He encouraged those there to consider becoming more involved or letting him know of any people who might be interested in or would be good as an officer. He added that at least one vice president and one secretary positions will be open.

2008 GOCA Awards Nominations – Ron Berger also noted that in January we will also be putting together a slate of nominees for a variety of GOCA awards for work or contributions made during 2008. The categories are citizen of the year, contribution to community, Olney Heritage, and GOCA worker of the year. GOCA is looking for people deserving of these awards, but can not be aware of all those in the community who should be recognized. So, he encouraged people to submit nominations. Once the ballot is put together, it will be sent to delegates of associations in good standing in 2008 with the balloting being tabulated at the February meeting. The awards will be present at the GOCA Award Ceremony on Sunday, March 2, 2009 at Longwood Recreation Center.

NEW BUSINESS - NONE

Following some announcements, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Donodeo

Kathleen Donodeo, Recording Secretary

People in attendance:

Jackie & Danny Benn (Fair Hill Farm), Ron Berger (Norbeck Meadows), Bradley Branch (Olney Mill), Joe Buffington (Olney Chamber), Steve Cohen (Oak Grove), Nancy DeLalio (Norbeck Hills/OTCAC), Sharon Dooley (James Creek), Kathleen Donodeo (Hallowell), Brenda Egeland (Norbeck Grove), Dave Eskenazi (Norbeck Meadows), Veronica Everett (Victoria Springs), Cpl J.C. Fennell (MN-CPPC-Park Police), Arnie Gordon (Norbeck Meadows), Beth & Fran Graybill (Homeland Village), Jim Haddow (Hallowell), Terri Hogan (Gazette), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Paula Kahla (OTCAC), State Del. Anne Kaiser (District 14), Carolyn Knight (Olney Oaks), Walter Lee (Environ/OTCAC), Hank Lieberman (Community Security), Tom McNamara (Greater Colesville Citizens Assn), Roy Peck (Norbeck Meadows), Helene Rosenheim (Highlands/MCRSC/OTCAC), Jim Smith (OTCAC/Oatland), Mike Sullivan (Christie Estates), Ed Weisel (Norbeck Meadows), Lori Wilen (Cherrywood), Jim Wilson (Goodyear Tire – Olney Town Shopping Ctr), and Matt Zaborsky (Norbeck Meadows).