



Greater Olney Civic Association
Minutes
2023-3-14 Representatives Meeting

The 2023-3-14 Representatives Meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) was held in person at Cadence at Olney and online via Zoom, and called to order at 7:34 PM EST by President Helene Rosenheim, with Recording Secretary John Seng present. A quorum was present.

Those attending:

GOCA Officers: President Helene Rosenheim (Highlands of Olney), Executive Vice President Irina Norell (Norbeck Meadows), 1st Vice President Curtis Chappell (Olney Square), 2nd Vice President Matt Quinn (Cherrywood), Treasurer Jeff Duce (Norbeck Grove), Corresponding Secretary Jamie Goad (Norbeck Meadows), Recording Secretary John Seng (Brooke Manor Estates)

Representatives: Mindy Badin (Olney Mill, GOCA Transportation Committee), Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood), Juris Mohseni (Village of James Creek), Laura Sherman (Briarwood) and Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres), Maria Bender (Brookeville Knolls)

Guests: Aaron Kraut, (Chief of Staff, Montgomery County Councilmember Dawn Luedtke); Judy Hruz (*Greater Olney News*)

Approval of Agenda for March 14, 2023

No opposition received to agenda. Agenda approved by Helene Rosenheim.

Approval of Minutes from February 14, 2023

The minutes were approved, with the following changes: Move Carol Sullivan's name from Representatives to the list of Other Attendees. Delete "Acres" from Laura Sherman's listing.

Minutes approved as amended. Recording Secretary to correct and resubmit.

Announcements

- Helene Rosenheim announced that Olney Days takes place on the last weekend in April. Also, the Olney Days organizer, the Olney Civic Fund, is recruiting additional volunteers. Interested parties should visit www.OlneyCivicFund.org.

Guest Visitor – Captain David Smith, Montgomery County Police Department

- Captain Smith serves as Commander in the Montgomery County Police Department, District 4, based in Wheaton. Worked in Wheaton as patrol supervisor, with 20 years on the job.
- Captain Smith presented his District 4 Goals for 2023:
 1. Identify problems. Education, awareness, engineering - root causes. Utilize enforcement when necessary. Rely upon resources of the County government.
 2. Conduct community outreach and engagement. Bridge gaps and build trust. Solve concerns and problems. Conduct a lot of community with officers engaging. Wants to connect with public outside service calls. MCPD are organizing public events which are promoted on NextDoor social media.
 3. Address police officer wellness, in all areas. Physical, mental. Working on staffing issues.
 4. Recruitment. Sworn and professional staff. There are a number of opportunities. Public communications specialties.
- He spoke to a great sense of community and purpose based on strong relationships.
- He provided a snapshot of crime statistics:
 - Jan 22 - Mar 22 period, we're actually doing better. Theft and property crime down. Motor vehicle thefts down. Assaults are up, but just by one event.
 - Crime concerns regionally - auto theft, theft from auto. Big problem right now. Kia and Honda motor vehicles are targets. Software deficiencies will get updates.
 - Regional increases in carjackings. Downtown Wheaton. Gun violence is a concern. Ghost guns are up. New technologies can print them. Some legislation will address the problem.
 - Fentanyl overdose issue. ODs are actually down, But, youth numbers are up. Police department has a COPE (Community Opioid Prevention Education) trailer, which is a good resource. <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/howdol/community-opioid-prevention-education.html>
 - He had posted on NextDoor about an attempted kidnapping in Olney. Still an open and active investigation. Looking at video feeds.
 - This past weekend - Wheaton Mall, MCPD arrested a suspect who boarded a Metro train, exited and went to Wheaton Mall. He fired a shot that penetrated the glass of a car, and shot a woman. She is receiving treatment. Officers immediately responded. Major crimes unit took suspect into custody. Suspect taken to central processing unit, and facing multiple charges. A video camera is now deployed at Wheaton mall. Continued police presence. However, Captain Smith believes it's an isolated incident.
 - Our community is safe. according to crime analysts.
- The Board and other participants engaged in Q&A with Capt. Smith related to road safety, driver stops, recruitment and social workers, initiation of crisis intervention team, MCPS SROs and a new Olney MCPD satellite station.
- Capt. Smith will encourage shifts that have extra staffing for roadway enforcement. Traffic officers with specific responsibility for enforcement. However, staffing challenges play a role.

- He concluded by sharing that the police deeply appreciate affirmations for their service and kind words. “Compliments and feedback are really effective ways to support officers. Let officials know. But, also hold us accountable.”
- Capt. Smith communicated that the STEP Act introduced by Montgomery County Councilmembers Will Jawando and Kristin Mink is “very bad legislation.”

Draft Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan

Helene Rosenheim provided an overview of the 200+ page Pedestrian Master Plan, sharing that it’s “really well done.” Funding may be an issue. A hearing will be held by the Planning Board on March 23.

After discussion during the meeting as to how and whether GOCA should submit a letter generally supporting the pedestrian plan, it was decided that GOCA was going to send a draft resolution via email and vote via email.

Reports

Treasurer’s Report

Jeff Duce, Treasurer, reported that he’s still in the midst of collecting HOA dues. All dues are due in 17 days. HOA members must pay dues in order to have voting rights. The GOCA banner space is being rented.

Transportation Committee Report

John Seng shared that HB 0820, originally introduced by Senator Ben Kramer in the Montgomery County Delegation of the Maryland General Assembly, calling for four speed cameras on MD 200 Intercounty Connector (ICC) had been 100 percent downgraded by a House Transportation Committee to only requiring the Maryland Transit Authority (MDTA) to install eight speed indicator message signs, four in each direction of the highway. Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich supported the original bill, while the Montgomery County Council did not oppose the bill, and requested further information. There was no public oral or written opposition to the original bill.

Mindy Badin provided an overview of the Safe Roads Act introduced by Montgomery County Council President Evan Glass (and co-sponsored by District 7 Councilmember Dawn Luedtke). The bill would call for 1) adding a leading pedestrian interval (LPI) for pedestrians at intersections in downtown and city center areas 2) prohibiting right turns on red in certain intersections in downtown areas, 3) in school zones, an investigation following instances of a pedestrian or bicyclist being hit at traffic intersections, and 4) and asking the County Executive to develop a comprehensive plan for automated traffic enforcement.

Mindy also provided an overview of the STEP Act, sponsored by Councilmember Will Jawando and co-sponsored by Councilmember Kristin Mink. If enacted, the Act would place new limits on Montgomery County Police Department roadway enforcement, including for Maryland state laws in traffic stops, eg broken or missing headlight or tail-light, excessive window tinting and expired tags.

Aaron Kraut shared that Councilmember Dawn Luedtke opposes the STEP Act because it would conflict with Maryland State law. "It's not appropriate to tell County police not to enforce underlying (State) law." Also, sometimes, traffic stops result in discoveries of probable cause and are important to public safety.

John Seng commented that GOCA should establish a position on both bills and communicate the positions.

Olney Chamber of Commerce

No report.

Old Business

2022 GOCA Awards Ceremony

Irina Norell and Curtis Chapell reported that 150 people attended the GOCA Awards Ceremony on Sunday, March 12, at Our Lady of Good Counsel High School, including most District 14 State representatives, Dawn Luedtke of Montgomery County District 7 and other community leaders. Helene Rosenheim presented the special President's Award posthumously to Connie Brown. Olney Civic Fund presented \$24,000 in grants to worthy recipient organizations. GOCA appreciates Good Counsel's hospitality for use of their space and their set up for the "wonderful event." GOCA believes it's important to thank people in community. GOCA appreciates Barbara Falcigno for her management and work on the event.

New Business

None

Adjournment

With no further business, Helene Rosenheim moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 9pm EST. Unanimously approved.

John Seng, Recording Secretary