



**GREATER OLNEY CIVIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
2025-04-8 Representatives Meeting
Minutes
APPROVED:**

The 2025-04-08 Representatives Meeting of the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) was conducted in-person in the mOak Ballroom, Sandy Spring Fire Dept, Sandy Spring, MD and online via Zoom Web Teleconference. President Irina Norrell called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm EST.

A quorum was present.. Those attending virtually are denoted by a V:

Officers

- Irina Norell, President (Norbeck Meadows)
- Curtis Chappell, First Vice President (Olney Square)
- Tina Crau - V
- Matt Quinn, Second Vice President (Cherrywood)
- Kristen Quinn (Norbeck Meadows) - V
- Helene Rosenheim, Recording Secretary (Highlands of Olney)

Members

- Mindy Badin, (Olney Mill), Transp Comm Chair - V
- Bill Becker (Past President)
- Maria Bender - V
- Stacy Cummings, Tanterra
- Alden English (SEROCA)
- Barbara Falcigno (Olney Oaks, SF)
- Paul Jarosinski (Cherrywood)-V ?
- Joe Krempasky (Brookeville Knolls)
- Diana Littlefield (Olney Acres)
- Mike Payne (Olney Oaks SF) ?
- Matt Post (Individual)ursery) ?
- Marlene Saulsbury, Forest Crossing

- Ann Strain, (Cherrywood)

Guests

- Lindsey Bucci, Tanterra
- Jennifer Burrows, Tanterra
- Lourdes Colbert, Tanterra
- Kathryn Collins, Brookeville Knolls
- Paulette Craddock, Tanterra
- Kim Davis, Tanterra
- Becky Donohue, Winter Growth
- Ann Marie Gogniat, Olney Mill
- Rita Grotzky, Olney Mill
- Robert Hall, Tanterra
- Aaron Kraut, Chief of Staff, Dawn Luedtke, Montgomery County Council, District 7
- Richard Leotta
- Alexandra Margorin, Tanterra
- Sharlene Monroe, Tanterra
- Jeremy, Michelle, Joey, Katie & Jeremy Perera, BSA Troop 457
- Ricardo Ruano, Tanterra
- Darlene Saulsbury, Olney Mill
- Doran Shalvi, Tanterra
- Mirka Fernandez Valdes, Tanterra

24 people on Zoom

Approval of the April 8, 2025 Agenda - Agenda was approved with no additions or changes.

Approval of March 11, 2025 Minutes - The minutes of the March meeting were approved with no additions and 1 correction - adding Maria Bender to the list of Representatives attending the meeting..

Presentation of two 2024 GOCA Awards

Helene Rosenheim presented 2 of this year's GOCA's Awards to awardees who were not able to attend the Greater Olney Community Awards Ceremony. One was a Contribution to Community Award that went to Rich Leotta for his work to get passage of new drunk driving legislation and then to close some loopholes in that legislation as a way to honor his son, Noah Leotta, a young Montgomery County police officer who was struck and killed by a drunk driver while working a drunk driving task force in December of 2015.

The second went to this year's recipient of the Youth Contribution to Community Award, Andy Perera He was recognized for the work he did on his Eagle Scout project to educate and assist

the community with properly disposing of damaged or worn American flags, culminating in a special flag disposal ceremony.

Proposed Rehabilitation Facility Near Greenwood Elementary

- Irina N. gave a recap of the issue relating to the proposed drug rehabilitation center, Freedom Center near Greenwood Elementary, including reading a statement from State Senator Craig Zucker in which he noted that
 - By law legislators are not permitted to intercede for or against a company's license, but
 - He had arranged for \$200,000 for Greenwood Elementary School to ensure that they have the necessary security upgrade and modifications to address the school's safety needs and privacy considerations for those inside the facility, and
 - Items pertaining to the center's permitting continue to fall within the County's jurisdiction..

Aaron Kraut, Chief of Staff for Councilmember Dawn Leudtke, Dist. 7, noted he was there to give the County Council perspective on this proposal and what they can do, noting:

- A private entity purchased 2 abutting properties in order to convert each to a rehabilitation center for 8 patients.
- Taking each property separately, the proposal for each unit complies with current County regulations relating to group homes for up to 8 residents, and so have been approved by the Dept. of Permitting Services.
- The Council is continuing to look at the zoning ordinance covering this proposal, but, to date, they do not see any way under current regulations to deny approval of this application.
- Passage of a ZTA that might prevent this particular proposal is difficult because it appears it would not be in compliance with Federal housing discrimination legislation.

Local residents who spoke later in the meeting noted several concerns with the proposal and have 2 goals - preventing this specific proposal next to an elementary school and also eliminating loopholes in the current regulations relating to group homes .

- The current regulations on group homes place a lot more restrictions and requirements on facilities for 16 people than for 8, which would impact the ability for this application to be approved..
- While there are separate houses on these 2 properties, the applicant is proposing to build a connection between the 2 buildings which raises questions about whether these should still be considered 2 facilities, each for 8 residents rather than 1 facility for 16 residents, simply because it is on 2 different lots. Aaron was not aware of the physical connection and will have staff look at how that might impact their applications.
- Patients at the proposed facilities can come and go as they please and often may only stay for a few days which does not seem consistent with the definition of a group home resident in the regulations
- There are serious concerns about the safety of the students at the elementary school adjacent to the property and the freedom of movement of the residents
- They are hoping for support from GOCA in both opposing this proposal and getting the regulation amended to close the loophole in the regulations that resulted in this proposal being approved, such as not permitting this kind of use within a half mile of a school or having 1,000 ft between group homes.
- They did not feel adding these restriction for units with 8 residents since they are the same as the restrictions placed on homes with more residents.
- The State code for group homes talks about the facility being non-profit, But the applicant is a for profit entity. .

The officers agreed to discuss this situation and decide what action they believe GOCA should take.

Community Spotlight

Winter Growth presented by Becky Donohue,

Irina noted that we are continuing to invite speakers as a part of our efforts to put a spotlight on the organizations and group that support the Olney community. This month we invited Becky Donohue, Community Outreach Coordinator of Winter Growth, a medical adult day care program.

- Winter Growth is 46 year old medical adult day care facility in Olney across Spartan Rd from the Medstar Montgomery Medical Center
- Their mission is to provide a sense of place and of purposefulness, in spite of cognitive decline.
- The services they provide includes being a medical adult day care center, assisted living, respite care, and caregiver support.
- She hopes to change the perception that aging is a negative thing, but this it is a positive thing, a blessing with deficiencies later in life for which there are various forms of support.
- Individuals do not orders from a doctor to receive their services
- Medicare does not pay for their services, but there are other forms of financial support.

Treasurer Report

Tina Craun reported:

- 2025 membership dues were due by March 31, 2025.
- Displayed a list of the 19 associations that have paid their dues and completed the membership form and 4 individual members.
- There are several associations that either have completed the form but not paid or paid and not completed the form, noting that she would follow up with all of them.

President's Report

Irina Norell reported:

- In response to an email from Del. Pam Queen, we have reached out to the Commission on Common Ownership Communities (CCOC) to learn more about their function. As a next step to helping our members learn more about this agency, our officers met virtually with staff of the Commission. There is training they provide to board members of homeowner associations (HOAs) and GOCA wants to facilitate that training for our member associations by coordinating a training session here in Olney.
- At that meeting, we outlined a plan for bringing that training to Olney by first having representatives from the Commission attend a future meeting to provide information about their function and the kind of training they will be giving.
- Representatives of the CCOC will be presenters at the May or June meeting, and we anticipate hosting a 3-4 hour training session in July, probably on a Saturday.

Committee/Officers Reports

Environmental Affairs Committee

Irina Norell reported for Jen Rusiecki, Chair

- A written update will be posted to the GOCA website along with the minutes.

Public Policy & Community Affairs Committee

Irina Norell reported that provided an update on the MidCounty Citizen Advisory Board:(MCCAB), which she recently became a member of as a representative of the Olney area.

- She would like to increase GOCA's involvement with other entities, including County agencies and the County Council, so she plans to give updates on the MCCAB
- To show the kinds of information that they can share with our group she reviewed the agenda from their last meeting.
- That agenda included presentations on the More Housing, N.O.W. by a County Council member, the County's Residential Energy Program, and the Charter Review Commission.

Announcements

- Matt Quinn wanted everyone to be aware of 2 upcoming County legislative action - a 3 ½ % property tax increase and a system benefit provided in State legislation of \$50,000 that we could be responsible for.
- Curtis noted that Olney Days is Friday, May 2nd - Sunday, May 4th And Barbara Falcigno .
- Next GOCA meeting is Tuesday, April 8, 2025.

Adjournment

Adjourned: 8:57 pm EST

Submitted by Recording Secretary Helene Rosenheim