

Olney Town Center

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee
Tuesday, March 23, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.
Olney Community Room, Olney, Maryland

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) members in attendance: Helene Rosenheim Vice-Chair, Nancy DeLalio, Bob Beard, Eileen Cahill, Paula Kahla, Walter Lee, Joe Buffington, Jim Haddow, Chris Garland, Noreen Friedman

Others present: Matt Zaborski, GOCA; Cynthia Miezis, James Creek homeowner

Call to Order/Acceptance of Agenda/Approval of Minutes/Announcements

Vice-Chair Helene Rosenheim called the regular meeting of the OTCAC to order at 7:30 pm. The agenda was accepted with minor changes. The minutes of the January 26, 2010 meeting were modified than approved.

Member/Public Comments

Cynthia Miezis, a homeowner from James Creek, requested that the OTCAC look into getting another movie theater, more “nice” restaurants, craft store, fabric shop and potentially a book store in the re-developed Olney Town Center. The homeowner also indicated that there is no teen center for teen activities in the Olney Town Center. It was highlighted that crossing the road between the Freeman lower shopping center and the shopping area with CVS was a major safety problem which hopefully could be addressed in the future.

Chris Garland of Freeman responded that the current movie theater was too small and not attractive based on feedback from several vendors Freeman talked with about operating the theater. Freeman also looked at operating the current theater itself but found it would not be financial viable. With respect to future businesses in the re-developed “Fair Hill” shopping center, Freeman indicated it was in discussions with businesses of various types including nice restaurants.

Members of the OTCAC noted that there is a Pedestrian Safety sub-committee that looking for homeowners to participate with OTCAC members to address issues.

Guests: GOCA Updates

Matt Zaborski, GOCA President and Bob Beard, OTCAC-GOCA Liaison raised several items that GOCA and OTCAC should jointly monitor in the future as follows:

- New Montgomery County Commercial/Residential (CR) zoning is being considered by the County Council for various areas within the County
- White Flint was recently approved by the County Council under the CR zoning
- Under the CR zoning there will be a large number of high rise mixed use buildings
- New CR zoning could benefit Olney Town Center but it is not likely the County will change the Olney Master Plan
- It was recommended that GOCA and OTCAC push the Georgia Ave. bus way to get public transportation in Olney to support a potential CR zoning change. Maybe Olney could be a test location.
- It was noted that several members of GOCA and OTCAC recently met with Council Member Mike Knapp to discuss three items that we wanted added to the CIP budget that was being updated for 2011 to 2016
- Feedback from Mike Knapp indicated there was a place holder in the CIP for the Georgia Ave bus way and he was working on including funds for feasibility studies for the Multi-function county/community services center and the town commons/green space area within the Olney Town Center
- Question was raised about how the CR zoning would address pedestrian safety in the White Flint area as well as the Olney Town Center
- It was recommended that OTCAC participate in White Flint community meetings in the future to see how development could benefit Olney Town Center
- Bob Beard indicated he had discussions with the White Flint community associations and could potentially attend future meetings on behalf of OTCAC and GOCA

Design Guidelines Discussions

Nancy DeLalio led a discussion of the Signage and Screening sections of the OTCAC Design Guidelines. There were several recommended enhancements to the draft guidelines. It was also recommended that OTCAC check to see if there are any special ADA requirements for signs that need to be added to the Design Guidelines. Nancy indicated she would follow-up with the County on ADA requirements. After making the various updates Nancy will distribute the revised Design Guidelines to the OTCAC for the May meeting.

Freeman Re-development Update

Chris Garland of Freeman provided a brief update on the Fair Hill Shops re-development progress as follows:

- Final demolition permits were issued today and demolition of the area where Harris Teeter would be located would begin soon
- Other end of the shopping area where Green Turtle will be located would start by mid-2010

- Freeman is still in discussions with different businesses to locate in Fair Hill Shops. More activity is likely to occur as construction gets closer to completion
- Discussions are currently in progress with Chipotle and Five Guys to locate on the first floor of the old Madison's building at Georgia Ave. and Route 108
- Freeman is still looking for tenants for the 2nd floor and basement areas of the building
- Current parking is adequate to handle the potential new businesses in the existing building
- New website has been set up for the Fair Hill Shops (www.fairhillshops.com)

Subcommittee Reports

Outreach—Bob Beard indicated he has tried several times to meet with various youth groups to get their input on activities they would like included in any future multi-function Count and Community Center in the Olney Town Center. Bob indicated he would keep trying to meet over the summer.

Bob reported that during the recent GOCA meeting he alerted the Police to the pending construction that would be happening in the near future. It was requested that the Police provide some extra patrols while construction was in progress.

It was recommended that OTCAC reach out to property owners to discuss the OTCAC proposed Design Guidelines of the Olney Town Center. Joe Buffington agreed to help facilitate this effort. Bob and Joe would develop a plan for a meeting of property owners.

Bob also recommended that OTCAC investigate a potential booth at the Farmer's Market during 2010. Bob would follow-up with Janet to see if this would be feasible.

Redevelopment Subcommittee — Joe Buffington reported there was no report from the subcommittee.

Property Owners Subcommittee—Joe Buffington reported that there was limited activity in this subcommittee recently.

Website Subcommittee—Helene Rosenheim reported that minor updates were made to the website. A page has been added for "Development Updates" so that things can be posted as construction progresses throughout the Olney Town Center. The two new members of the OTCAC were also added to the website.

Pedestrian Safety Subcommittee—Helene Rosenheim reported that she emailed Jeff Dunckel again about the new pedestrian median on Spartan Road to learn how that improvement was initiated by the county.

CIP—Eileen Cahill reported the joint GOCA/OTCAC team has met with several Council Members and has scheduled several future meetings to discuss the three priorities for the updated 2011 to 2016 CIP budget.

Executive Report—The committee rules call for new officer terms to begin in May. OTCAC members discussed their respective interest in either the Chair, Vice-Chair or Recording Secretary positions. Bob Beard, Helene Rosenheim and Jim Haddow expressed interest in these positions.

Helene Rosenheim also indicated that she is inquiring about a potential new County Government individual being on the OTCAC to replace her position. She will follow-up with various individuals to see if they are interested and report back to the committee in May.

Helene reported that she will assume the Project Change position in the future since she is on the Project Change board.

New Business

The following items were raised and discussed under new business:

- Potential Olney Police Satellite station closure under County proposed FY 2011 budget
- It was stressed that we need community support to keep the satellite station open
- It was noted that the community owns the trailer and the Chamber of Commerce provides funding on an annual basis to cover part of the operating expenses
- It was recommended that OTCAC either send a letter to the County Council or testify before the County Council in support of keeping the Olney Satellite station open.

Motion was approved by the committee to send a letter of support to the County Council

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM

Recorded by Jim Haddow