

Olney Town Center

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee
Tuesday, June 23, 2009 – 7:30 p.m.
Olney Community Room, Olney, Maryland

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee (OTCAC) members in attendance: Bob Beard, Eileen Cahill, Mark Feinroth, Paula Kahla, Walter Lee, Helene Rosenheim, Nancy DeLalio, Chris Garland and Joe Buffington.

Others present: Staff -Jim Haddow, Pam Saul - Rona Kramer representative, Harry Berman resident, Joan Church resident.

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

Helene Rosenheim called the regular meeting of the OTCAC to order at 7:35 pm in Jim Smith's absence. The agenda was accepted with changes to the agenda; Mike Knapp will join the meeting at 8pm. The May 2009 minutes were approved, Bob Beard to review the outreach section.

Member / Public comments, none.

OLD BUSINESS

Review of Design guidelines:

Suggestion was made to change the date on the bottom of the Design Guidelines to read "Revised June 2009"

Signage topics:

1. Walter Lee suggested a Town Center Directory for visitors at public forum events including locations of public buildings, parking areas, and shopping centers to be located at bus stops, garages, public buildings and commons.
2. Chris Garland suggested a comprehensive way finding signage section be added to the signage standards section of the design guidelines.

Landscape Architecture section:

1. Discussion of current section revealed the reference to the "Virginia Association of turf growers"; is there a comparable organization for Maryland?
2. Joan Church asked if the landscape guidelines apply to upgrade of existing properties.
3. Walter Lee inquired about referring to the grade slope standards for planting per County standards.
4. Nancy DeLalio will check on the size, limb height and species with a Landscape Architecture colleague and will review quality standards of horticultural practices.
5. Projects over 10,000 sf are required to be LEED certified in Montgomery County.
6. Suggested to add a clause to the guidelines that they do not supersede any county adopted environmental requirements.

7. Nancy DeLalio discussed the Sustainable Sites group who recently gave a presentation at the National Building Museum. They are looking for projects to be test cases for their newly developed guidelines, grants are possible.

Mike Knapp Capital Improvement Projects Process and Annual Growth Policy Issues

Helen Rosenheim stated that Khalid mentioned a special district for the town center for parking etc.

Annual growth policy meeting was last night. Last time reviewed, traffic and intersections, passing or failing, were focused on. Areas with failing intersections push development to less dense areas that may not have alternative transportation available. Planning is going to propose ways to change this. Parts of Bethesda and Germantown are in moratorium due to lack of capacity in schools.

Having feedback from Olney is useful because everyone agrees with the Masterplan's future vision but cannot do it because of growth policy. By November 15, 16th, County Council has to pass something. Mike Knapp suggested having something in writing and be prepared to testify for the meeting on September 15th or 22nd when the Council is back in session. OTCAC and GOCA should attend since there is overlap with the two groups. Mike Knapp suggested having a few members come in to discuss with the council members prior to the meeting.

Capital Improvement Projects – October/November, Executive Branch recommendations, during the next couple of months the committee should develop items for consideration. Since it is a 6 year capital budget, it would be good to identify the projects for next 2 to 4 years and make sure they are within the county prevue. Identify State projects that could be funded. Having a Bond bill on state funding for projects can help along the county approvals.

Eileen Cahill asked what types of projects, if any, Mike Knapp prefers to advocate for, he indicated no real preference except what needs to be done to meet the objective of the community. Having GOCA and OTCAC on the same page will be helpful in having projects considered; it is also an election year.

Mike Knapp discussed a focus on pedestrian oriented communities that promote the live work proximity and inquired about what has to happen for Freeman to move forward on the redevelopment of the lower center. Chris Garland responded that traffic issue of failing intersection of rt. 97 and rt. 108 prevents development to plan potential. Changing to an urban classification for the town center instead of the current suburban would help. Create a Tax incentive (TIF) area to help the development. Merrifield Plaza a project by Evans and Avant is an example of this. Bill Caldwell, a consultant to the committee, currently works for them. Mike Knapp responded stating the infrastructure issue alternatives will be addressed this year. First we need to identify the “What” that is needed to move forward. It is important to discuss the changing of suburban to urban classification with the community. Once the town center is underway it will free up money to get other things done. Khalid will know the steps for having the classification of the town center changed to Urban. Mike Knapp Suggested that Freeman discuss with Khalid for the shopping center redevelopment then discuss with the OTCAC. For example, if traffic were not an issue, what could Freeman do in the current economic conditions? What would the community deal with to have Freeman move forward with the center's redevelopment?

There is a GOCA meeting July 14th, suggested that OTCAC consider discussing again in September. Bob Beard offered to invite GOCA to the July 28th OTCAC meeting. An interim suggested solution is ‘pathway’ to master plan vision. Provide a gentle introduction to GOCA regarding issues Freeman has with classification, road code, traffic mitigation, CIP and AGP.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Report – No report.

Design Guidelines Subcommittee – Nancy DeLalio reported that review of sections is underway.

Rules Subcommittee – No report.

Outreach Subcommittee – Bob Beard reported a focus on GOCA upcoming meetings. A public meeting in the future for transportation and density is needed. Suggested creating a subcommittee for transportation and traffic issues.

Website Subcommittee – Helene Rosenheim distributed revised feedback form and requested any comments on new form to be sent to her via email.

High Priority Pedestrian Crossings Subcommittee – Helene Rosenheim no report.

Redevelopment Subcommittee – Mark Feinroth indicated no activity since last meeting.

Committee for Montgomery – No report.

Nominations Subcommittee – Helene reported that Joe Fritsch was going to discuss nominations with members of the recreation board there were no interested parties. Helene will contact OBG, Longwood Recreation Center and the Library if no potential nominees then the committee will discuss opening the seat for general nominations.

Property Owners – Joe Buffington reported that he is going through the channels to gather information on the Safeway redevelopment news. Chris Garland indicated they may have County approval to redevelop as a grocery store, if so then they do not need to go through planning and therefore may not be required to go through the OTCAC. Joe Buffington plans to have a meeting with all property owners he needs to contact 5 more people, maybe August or September time frame.

CIP Subcommittee – Eileen Cahill reported the need to clarify what we put forward, requests to work with Jim Haddow and Bob Beard on the GOCA issues. Eileen will put together a list to email and rank priority of CIP proposed projects.

NEW BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Business:

Paula Kahla reported that the Police would like to come and discuss what they would like to see for safety, loitering prevention etc at some future date. Helene suggested the September or October meeting.

Announcements: No announcements.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM
Submitted by Nancy DeLalio