

Olney Town Center

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee
Tuesday, September 28, 2010 – 7:30 p.m.
Olney Community Room, Olney, Maryland

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

Others present: Matt Zaborsky, GOCA; Lydia Rappolt, Camelback homeowner; Mark Hill, Camelback homeowner; Maura Welsh, Camelback homeowner; Brad Branch, homeowner; Renee Montgomery, Safeway; Robert Messor, Safeway; Jeffrey Satfield, representing Safeway; Khalid Afzal, MNCPPC staff

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

Chair Bob Beard called the regular meeting of the OTCAC to order at 7:30 pm. The agenda was accepted with minor changes. The minutes of the July 27, 2010 meeting were approved.

Member/Public Comments

Matt Zaborsky announced that there would be a debate on October 8th for the County Council candidates in District 2 and District 4. The debate would be held in the Buffington Community Room starting at 7:00pm.

Matt Zaborsky announced a State and County candidate meet and greet meeting on Tuesday, October 12th from 6:30pm to 7:30pm before the regular GOCA October meeting.

Paula Kahla announced that the Olney Chamber of Commerce was hosting the Community Night on October 6th at the Longwood Recreation Center. The event starts at 5:00pm.

Paula Kahla announced that the Olney Chamber of Commerce was hosting a meet the new District 4 Police Commander at the Olney substation on Tuesday, October 12th starting at 5:30pm.

Buehler Road Proposed “Cut Through” Discussion

Bob Beard led a discussion of the Montgomery County Park and Planning Commission transportation staff recommendation to “cut through” a section of Buehler Road between Spartan Road and Prince Philip Drive. Currently Buehler Road is not a through road between Spartan Road and Prince Philip Drive. Highlights of this discussion are as follows:

- Safeway will be paying \$154,000 “mitigation fee” as part of their site plan approval to address traffic mitigation under the County’s Project Area Mobility Review (PAMR) process.
- A Policy Planning Mitigation Review process is initiated by MNCPPC when traffic issues exist during a site plan review. MNCPPC transportation planning staff recommended the \$154,000 be used for completion of Buehler Road as identified in the 2005 Olney Master Plan.
- It was clarified that the \$154,000 may not be directly tied to Buehler Road or even other areas within Olney. The funds would go into the DOT PAMR fund for potential general use within the County.
- OTCAC members expressed concern that the \$154,000 may not be used within Olney. Thus, it was recommended that OTCAC should attend the Planning Board hearing and provide testimony recommending the funds be used within the Olney Town Center.
- Question was raised by several OTCAC members if a crosswalk between Safeway and Giant falls under the Safeway Site Plan review or part of the County’s PAMR allocation? It was Safeway’s position that a crosswalk on a County street was not part of their site plan review process.
- Residents of Camelback Village raised the following issues if Buehler Road was cut through between Spartan Road and Prince Philip Drive:
 - Motorists will use Buehler Road as a cut through between Georgia Ave and Route 108 to avoid the light at Georgia Ave and Spartan Road. This will significantly increase the volume of traffic on Buehler Road, King William and Prince Philip Drive in the future.
 - St. Peter’s parishioners use the Sandy Spring Bank parking lot during Saturday/Sunday and walk to the church across the portion of Buehler Road that is not open to traffic. This would be a safety issue if Buehler Road is cut through in the future.
 - What does the \$154,000 mitigation fee actually pay for? Is it for a complete project or just a portion?
- Matt Zaborsky from GOCA raised the question if the County would install a traffic light at Spartan Road and Buehler Road for safety reasons to handle the additional traffic on Buehler Road? It was stated that Montgomery County DOT would need to conduct a traffic study to determine if a traffic light was necessary at Spartan Road.
- OTCAC members also raised the question if the \$154,000 is not adequate to complete the road construction would the County provide the additional funds necessary given current budgetary issues?

Safeway Site Plan Review Update

Jim Smith led a discussion regarding meetings with Safeway and OTCAC's recommendations regarding the Safeway proposed site plan for the store redevelopment. Below are highlights and some items recommended for further follow-up with Safeway.

- Seven of the nine recommendations previously presented to Safeway have been addressed by Safeway in their updated site plan.
- Two issues that still need to be addressed are as follows:
 - What is included in the Public Use Space (PUS) in the Safeway site plan
 - Crosswalk on Spartan Road between Safeway and Giant entrances
- With respect to the Public Use Space Safeway introduced some enhancements to the front of the proposed new store that will widen the front sidewalk to a maximum of 20 feet. This would increase the amount of Public Use Space across the front of the store and provide a connection between the two corner area Public Use Spaces.
- Khalid Afzal noted that the Planning Board has likely already accepted front areas of other stores as Public Use Space.
- OTCAC members raised the concern that the middle front area of the new store is not PUS unless there is seating or other items for the public to use that area. Safeway responded that the new store will permit use of certain areas along the front of the store for community activities such as Girl Scout Cookie sales.
- Jim Smith made a motion that OTCAC approve part of the additional space in front of the store as PUS. The motion was approved by a vote of 7 in favor and 3 opposed.
- With respect to the Public Use Space in the rear of the proposed store Safeway presented a new concept plan with 50% more walkable space. The new plan would preserve more of the existing trees and open up the center of the PUS with a larger grass area. Members of Camelback Village expressed approval of the new PUS plan for the rear of the proposed store.
- Jim Smith made a motion that OTCAC approve the Safeway enhanced plan for the PUS area behind the proposed store. The motion was approved by a vote of 10 in favor and 0 opposed.
- With respect to the crosswalk across Spartan Road between Safeway and Giant it was recommended that OTCAC make a recommendation to the Planning Board that Montgomery County DOT consider installing the crosswalk on Spartan Road. It was also recommended that Safeway provide the sidewalk cuts that would connect with the crosswalk as part of their site plan approval.
- Safeway noted that Spartan Road grade at the proposed crosswalk location is 5+% slope sideways which is not ADA complaint. ADA permits a maximum of only 2.5% slope sideways. Thus, Montgomery County DOT will need to make road changes to accommodate ADA requirements for a crosswalk.
- Safeway requested that OTCAC submit their recommendations to the Planning Board as soon as possible so they may be able to get on the Planning Board schedule in late October or early November.

Subcommittee Reports (Led by Bob Beard, Chair)

Outreach — Paula Kahla reminded everyone that OTCAC will be participating in the Olney Community Night on October 6th. OTCAC will be sharing a table with Project Change.

It was recommended that OTCAC obtain community feedback about Buehler Road and pedestrian flags at various cross walk locations along Route 97 and Route 108 during the Community Night event.

Design Guidelines — Nancy DeLalio stated that an updated draft of the design guidelines would be distributed to OTCAC members for review later this week.

Redevelopment — Jim Smith led a discussion of the following items:

- OTCAC needs to implement an “Issue Tracker” template when working with developers on future site plan reviews
- This template would permit OTCAC to track each issue which would be shared with the developer

Property Owners — Joe Buffington announced that another meeting of property owners is scheduled for November 8th starting at 10:00am in the Buffington Building Community Room. One question that will be discussed is if property owners are looking at future development within the Olney Town Center.

Freeman Re-development Update

Chris Garland of Freeman Properties provided a brief update on the Fair Hill Shops and Old Madison’s building re-development progress as follows:

- Discussions in progress with Hair Cuttery, an ice cream store and another restaurant for the lower corner of the Fair Hill Shops. Panera Bread discussions are still in progress.
- Green Turtle is now targeting opening in late 2010 or early 2011. Harris Teeter is still scheduled to open by mid-year 2011.
- Hypnotic Hair Salon will be moving into the 2nd floor of the Old Madison’s building in 2011 once they finalize interior construction.

Website has been updated for the Fair Hill Shops (www.fairhillshops.com) to make sure the community question/feedback part of the website is working correctly.

Website — Helene Rosenheim reported on the following items:

- Updates and fixes to several areas of the OTCAC Website are in progress.
- Helene will follow-up to get clarification on some of the development updates that will be added to the website
- Minutes from prior OTCAC meetings need to be added to the website.

Pedestrian Safety — Helene Rosenheim indicated that there were no updates on activities in progress at this time. It was noted that OTCAC should consider recommending to SHA and Montgomery County DOT that “Red Flags” be used at certain crosswalk locations in the Olney Town Center.

CIP — Eileen Cahill reported that the sub-committee is still trying to talk with Mike Knapp to ensure the three major OTCAC priorities are in the 2011 to 2016 CIP project budget adopted by the County Council recently. Updates should be reported by the next OTCAC meeting.

OTCAC Rules Documentation and Discussions —

- Jim Smith indicated they are still working on finalizing the updated rules document for OTCAC to consider and adopt at a future meeting
- Eileen Cahill raised a question regarding OTCAC's recommendations to the Montgomery County Planning Board. Would the OTCAC recommendations include the minority position on different items?
- Jim Smith read a paragraph from the By-Laws which indicated if there is a 2/3 majority vote to approve the OTCAC recommendations to the Planning Board only the majority recommendations will be submitted to the Planning Board.

Nominations – Helene Rosenheim discussed the following items:

- Waiting on a response from Joseph Egan at the Olney library seeking his interest in being the Montgomery County representative on the OTCAC.
- This would fill the open Government position on the OTCAC.
- It was noted that this is an ideal time to have a representative from the Library on the OTCAC to help with future activities relating to a Civic Center

Executive Report — Bob Beard discussed the following ideas and recommendations:

- KLNB could not come to tonight's meeting to discuss the developer process for identifying potential retail shops for centers like Fair Hill Shops.
- It was recommended that Khalid Afzal do a primer on planning again to ensure everyone is current on County planning regulations and activities. This would be done during the November meeting if KLNB cannot come to the November meeting.

New Business

The following items were raised and discussed under new business:

- Joe Buffington raised the idea that OTCAC should consider the following items for future site plan reviews. These should be raised with MNCPPC.
 1. Is sidewalk space considered part of Public Use Space (PUS)?
 2. Is Storm Water Management (SWM) areas considered part of PUS?
 3. Should crosswalks be considered a part of site plan reviews?
- Khalid Afzal commended the OTCAC for their efforts on the first major site plan review. It was noted that precedents set in other County planning activities does not need to direct OTCAC recommendations for enhancements in Olney Town Center. It was also noted the OTCAC testimony before the Planning Board could highlight recommendations for future County direction when reviewing town center site plans.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM

Recorded by Jim Haddow