

MINUTES

Olney Town Center Advisory Committee
Monday, September 18, 2006
Sandy Spring Bank, Olney Inn Room

Members in attendance – Jim Smith, Sunita Bhatia, Dorothy Kane, Paula Kahla, Nancy DeLalio, Joe Fritsch, Helene Rosenheim, John Lyons, Tom Gallagher, Walter Lee. Visitors included Mary Jane Heinbuch, the Olney Library; John Austin, Candidate for LD 14; and Robert Boras, Carl M. Freeman Associates.

Call to Order – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Smith at 7:34 pm. John Lyons offered to serve as Recording Secretary and prepare minutes for the September meeting. Chairman Smith asked that Committee members review the agenda and the minutes from the August meeting. The Committee approved both items, with three additions to the agenda: (1) an officer report on a meeting with representatives of the Saul Center; (2) a subcommittee report on a logo for the OTCAC; and (3) a new business discussion on a crosswalk issue.

Officer Reports

Chairman Smith reported that Khalid Afzal of MNCPPC and Barbara Falcigno of GOCA and the Olney Coalition met with John Kalisch (sp?), Director of the Retail Division at Saul Centers to discuss possible redevelopment of the Olney Shopping Center at the southwest corner of the intersection of Rt. 108 and Rt. 97 in Olney. Mr. Kalisch indicated that, standing alone, the site is too small to redevelop. However, when informed that Karen Rollins may offering her parcels along N. High Street near the Olney Shopping Center, Mr. Kalisch indicated that he would be interested in the redevelopment possibilities that a combination of the Rollins parcels and the Olney Shopping Center might permit.

Subcommittee Reports

Nominations – Vice Chairman Bhatia reported that the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board will meet tomorrow, Sept. 19, and hopes to select the Board's nominee to the OTCAC. The OTCAC would be able to act on the nominee at its October meeting.

Website – Helene Rosenheim reported that the Yahoo e-mail had been set up, that a draft Home Page message had been circulated, and that links to a variety of other resources and websites will be added.

Logo – Paula Kahla reported that the subcommittee would be organizing a competition for the creation of a logo. She and Helene Rosenheim will meet to push the project forward.

Unfinished Business

Proposed Hillcrest Avenue ("Kirk Farm") Development – Chairman Smith summarized the draft letter he had circulated to Committee members. A discussion ensued concerning the installation of a "low fence" to minimize litter and other debris from migrating through the parking lot and into the stream valley buffer area behind the project. The Committee agreed conceptually that some sort of barrier would be useful and appropriate and supported Dorothy Kane's proposed revision to the letter to incorporate that concept. Similarly, the Committee supported Nancy DeLalio's comments concerning the design of the sidewalk along Hillcrest Avenue.

New Business

The Freeman Properties – Tom Gallagher introduced Robert Boras, Sr. Vice President, Carl M. Freeman Associates ("CMFA"), who proceeded to provide an overview of the planning process that CMFA would likely undertake in connection with future redevelopment of the Olney Village Center, the Olney Town Center and the other properties CMFA owns in the northeast quadrant of the Town Center. Mr. Boras described a recent week-long charette that CMFA commissioned in connection with the redevelopment of its recently acquired Coolfont Resort in Berkeley Springs, West Virginia. With respect to redevelopment of the Olney Town Center, Mr. Boras states that they are beginning with studies by Miche Booz of Brookeville concerning historical, architectural and vernacular elements found in and around Olney; by the Brown Craig Turner firm of Baltimore concerning "place making"; by Wells & Associates concerning traffic and traffic flows; by Goodchuck Little & Weber concerning engineering issues; and by CMFA's Retail group concerning leases and financial pro formas. According to Mr. Boras, the purpose of the studies is to analyze and conceptualize what is possible. CMFA is looking to put together their thinking from these various studies by the end of the first quarter of 2007. At that point, CMFA would then bring its thinking to the public. CMFA would put together a conceptual site plan for discussion that would indicate the mix of uses and traffic patterns that could result from redevelopment of all the CMFA properties in the northeast quadrant of the Town Center, and then proceed with a charette of some sort. Conceptually, CMFA is currently trying to sort through all the issues arising from Traditional Neighborhood Design (mixed use). Mr. Boras encouraged the OTCAC to pass along any input the Committee has for the studies as soon as possible but in any event by the end of the year.

Work Plan Priorities – Tom Gallagher suggested that the OTCAC should defer work on the historical and vernacular research items of the plan and wait for the output of Miche Booz's research. He suggested that in the immediate future the Committee should focus on parking, pedestrian access and safety, and traffic/mobility issues. Nancy DeLalio suggested the Committee needs to develop a program of needs and a "hierarchy of proximity" among them by surveying what Olney-area residents want. Paula Kahla suggested that Committee members bring their "concepts" to the September meeting.

Crosswalk – The Committee briefly discussed the need for lengthening the amount of time pedestrians have to cross intersections in the Town Center, especially to cross Rt. 108 at Spartan Road. The elderly in particular struggle to cross many of the intersections in the time now allotted.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.