

September 25, 2003

**Testimony on Greater Olney Master Plan Land Use Recommendations
Before the M-NCPPC Planning Board Public Hearing**

1. INTRODUCTION

Chairman Berlage and members of the Planning Board, good evening. I am Nancy Wendt. Tonight I am speaking on behalf of the Olney Square Citizens Association (OSCA) about property #17, the 32-acre parcel of County owned land on Bowie Mill Road.

2. BALANCING MULTIPLE INTERESTS

We recognize how challenging it is for the Planning Board to balance the many competing interests involved in developing a Master Plan Amendment. We appreciate the hard work of the Planning Board staff members who prepared the Public Hearing Draft of the Olney Master Plan. We see the results of their hard work in:

- ◆ Additions to Legacy Open Space to protect environmentally sensitive areas and watershed in Northern Olney
- ◆ Redirecting retail and commercial growth to the Town Center
- ◆ Addition of Kimble / Graefe properties to Olney Manor Park

We also applaud the expressed goal of increasing the stock of affordable housing. We believe this goal is best achieved in job rich locations within walking distance of transportation nodes that have adequate infrastructure capacity to handle the production volumes needed to make such development financially viable and effective in terms of the number of units added to the inventory of affordable housing. While the yield is significantly lower, we also support the inclusion of Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU's) in in-fill developments provided that the design of these units is fully compatible with the existing neighborhood.

OSCA's goal is to work with Park and Planning to determine the best use of this precious land. We seek a win-win solution for *all* stakeholders. We are sympathetic to the planning team's dilemma when their original idea to relocate Olney Elementary School to this site was eliminated at the end of June and they needed to come up with another recommendation in less than three weeks. However, this last minute change meant that none of us (not the Planning Team, not the community, not any other interested party) had enough time to consider alternatives or to adequately research the environmental constraints of this site. Preliminary observations about what the site can actually support and what it will cost to work around site constraints lead us to believe there are better alternatives than the recommendation in the current draft.

3. SUMMARY OF OSCA REQUESTS

Therefore OSCA wants three things.

A) OSCA wants specific wording changes to the Olney Master Plan to:

- ◆ Describe the environmental and utility corridor constraints associated with this site
- ◆ Document community preferences regarding land uses appropriate to this site
- ◆ Specify design guidelines to protect existing neighborhoods from possible negative impacts of development for whatever portion of the land proves suitable for housing.

Specific recommendations for each of these wording changes are contained in Appendix C.

B) OSCA wants an "interested parties list" established for this property (if Park and Planning has not already done so) and we want to be added to that list. We want to be notified when any development plans are submitted for this site and we want to participate in the design review working sessions related to those plans.

C) OSCA wants more time (either another hearing date or an extended cutoff date for submitting written testimony) to allow our consultant, Richard Kline to complete his environmental assessment and report back to us regarding what if any type of development this site can support and what measures are needed to protect the headwaters streams, natural spring, perennial wetlands, and floodplain that are contained within its boundaries.

4. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

In order to understand the sensitivity of this site, OSCA invited several environmental experts to walk the land with us, including Jim Fary (The Sierra Club), John Parrish (MD Native Plants Society) and Bob Tworkowski (a professional hydro-geologist). Each of them confirmed what Montgomery County and Park and Planning have previously said about this land that is the springhead, streams, wetlands, and riparian forest buffer that surrounds them need to be preserved in order to protect water quality, safeguard habitat, and provide a natural mechanism for absorbing and filtering storm water runoff from the increasingly impervious developed areas upstream.

These observations made us aware of how much more we need to know in order to provide informed input to Park and Planning. This awareness led us to engage Richard Kline to perform a baseline environmental assessment and evaluate what if any portion of this land is suitable for development. Mr. Kline will not be able to begin his assessment until after this hearing and he estimates it will take him several weeks to complete his evaluation and report.

In a letter to Chairman Berlage dated September 9, 2003 (see Appendix A) we requested additional time for the submission of written recommendations or another hearing date to allow Mr. Kline the time he needs to complete his work and submit it as part of our testimony. GOCA, The Sierra Club, and The Montgomery County Civic Federation endorsed our request.

Despite the fact that we do not have the benefit of Mr. Kline's input, we are here tonight to share with you what we have learned about this land since August 12 when we were told it was no longer the future site of the Olney Elementary School. We trust that you will keep an open mind and give us the opportunity to complete the work we have just begun.

5. LAND DESCRIPTION

This approximately 32-acre property on the south side of Bowie Mill Road was recommended for a high school site in the 1980 Master Plan. The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) later determined that it was not needed for school purposes, surplussed it, and transferred it to the County. It is zoned R-200 as are the single family detached homes that have been built on all adjacent land.

Natural hydrological features of this site include a free flowing spring, three streams, perennial wetlands, and floodplain. These features are part of the sensitive wetlands and headwaters of the North Branch of Upper Rock Creek. A natural riparian forest that diagonally bisects the 32 acres surrounds all of these features except one of the three streams. Three utility corridors (PEPCO power lines, WSSC sewer lines, and Washington Gas Company's pipeline) bisect the land in different directions. Perhaps a diagram will help. (See Appendix B.)

In the Environmental Resources Inventory for the Upper Rock Creek Watershed Park and Planning describes the land this way.

"One particularly interesting wetland complex occurs along the power line corridor south of Morningwood Drive. A scrub-shrub wetland exists in the power line corridor, with alders and arrowwood growing over various sedges, rushes, jewelweed, and goldenrods. West of the power line is a young forested wetland dominated by red maple in the canopy with skunk cabbage growing underneath. An emergent wetland occurs in the northwest corner of the

intersection of the power line corridor with a gas line corridor, with dead pin oaks and live black willows growing amid a large area of sedges, grasses, and rushes, with considerable amounts of standing water. Adjacent to the southeast of the two utility corridors is a mature wooded wetland featuring pin oaks, red maples, sycamores and tulip poplars growing above spicebush, arrowwood, skunk cabbage and jewelweed.”

This document also notes “A number of shingle oaks occur in the wetland south of Bowie Mill Road and north of Darnell Drive adjacent to the power line.” Shingle oak is a Maryland Watchlist specie.

Another Park and Planning publication, the Olney and Vicinity Environmental Resources Inventory, uses the following descriptors: forested, scrub/shrub, wetlands, sensitive headwaters of the North Branch of Rock Creek watershed. Sensitive areas are defined by the 1992 State Planning Act as streams and their buffers; the 100-year floodplain; steep slopes; and habitats of rare, threatened, and endangered species.

Finally, the Montgomery County Countywide Stream Protection Strategy and the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan recently approved by this Planning Board, use similar language to describe this environmentally sensitive land.

6. WETLAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In the Olney and Vicinity Environmental Resources Inventory Park and Planning recommends the following strategies for managing sensitive wetland areas:

- ◆ “Identify and protect wetlands and other sensitive parts of watersheds.”
- ◆ “Maintain the natural character of drainage areas in the immediate vicinity of streams, rivers, and lakes.”
- ◆ “Minimize the impacts from construction and operation of public and private facilities located in stream valleys, buffers, and floodplains; first priority should be given to preserving natural areas (avoidance), second priority to mitigation, and third priority to replacement with functional equivalents.”
- ◆ “Develop programs to rehabilitate damaged streams and then to maintain them.”
- ◆ “Mandate “no net loss” of wetlands.”

We applaud each and every one of these strategies. We want them applied to this land with no exceptions.

7. COMMUNITY PREFERENCES AND REQUESTS

A survey of Olney Square residents showed a unanimous preference for transferring this land to Legacy Open Space or natural Parkland with no development other than low impact walking trails. We recognize such actions are usually associated with large, pristine forests or public watershed areas like Tridelphia Reservoir. However, neighborhood parks, especially those that provide fitness trails within walking distance of home have extremely high value to any community especially one that is experiencing traffic grid-lock.

If Mr. Kline finds that a portion of the land is suitable for housing, then the community wants the spring, streams, wetlands, and riparian forest around them preserved as Open Space or Parkland and the remaining land developed in a manner that is consistent with the existing R200 zoning and the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

This land is not in a Town Center. It is in an automobile dependent residential area that is currently under a moratorium because transportation infrastructure and school capacity has been exceeded. For this reason whatever portion of the land proves suitable for housing, we

strongly believe that the maximum number of dwelling units should not exceed the standard R200 zoning limit of 64 dwellings for 32 acres. This would yield a maximum of 56 market priced units and 8 MPDU's.

With respect to protecting the character of existing neighborhoods, we understand that design issues are usually addressed during the development proposal review process. However, we are deeply concerned that the scenario Mr. Afzal described at the August 12 GOCA meeting ("78 dwelling units with about 12 MPDU's") significantly understates what an enterprising developer would be anxious to propose.

In order to understand the developer point of view, we shared the draft recommendation with several builders. They all saw the current wording as an invitation to propose alternative building types and multiple bonus densities. Their scenarios involved multi-family structures in excess of three stories with upwards of 250 dwelling units on 10 to 12 acres. Their designs included large surface parking areas to accommodate an average of 2 cars per household. This would dangerously raise the imperviousness of an environmentally fragile site that receives increased runoff from two recent developments – one with 300+ homes and one with 500+ homes. The combined impact of increased runoff from increased imperviousness can already be seen in the expanding floodplain and bank erosion along the main streambed.

Since zoning requirements are often rendered mute once the affordable housing exception with its alternative building types is used to permit development in a moratorium area, we feel strongly that general design guidelines need to be spelled out in the Master Plan to protect existing neighborhoods from the possible negative effects of incompatible building types. We have suggested specific wording for such guidelines in Appendix C.

8. CURRENT RECOMMENDATION

"If the property is not needed for educational purposes, it should be used for affordable housing."

Based on preliminary assessment of the 32 acres, we believe implementation of this recommendation would not be a win for the county, the greater Olney community, the MPDU program, affordable housing families, the immediate neighborhood, the developer, or the environment. Let me explain why.

As I mentioned earlier, knowledgeable environmentalists from the Sierra Club and the MD Native Plants Society have walked the 32 acres at different times. So has a professional hydrogeologist. Their observations are remarkably consistent.

"We do not believe that this site can support much development given its topographic and hydrologic features."

"The stream runs through an area that was not farmed and was left forested. This created a buffer in the area. For preservation purposes this buffer appears minimal and it would be advantageous if this buffer was increased to a minimal lateral distance of 100-150 from the stream."

"The sediments that it flows through act as a large sand filter and appear to actually improve the water quality as the water flows through it."

"The buffer area appears to be subject to large surface water runoff from time to time. This is evidenced by the disturbed soils in the buffered area as well as the line of debris in the area. This indicates that the area can be subject to a strong storm surge, which

could be mitigated with additional buffer as well as better storm water management from the up-gradient source.”

Remediation of environmental impacts is always possible, but in the case of this site the evidence suggests it will be expensive to build and maintain. Bottom line, the economics of the site will likely push developers to seek denser clusters of taller alternative building types to get the yields they believe they need to make a reasonable profit. When we tested this with a couple of developers, Khalid Afzal’s estimate of 78 dwelling units with about 12 MPDU’s grew to over 250 condominiums in a four story structure. Such structures would create significant issues for other stakeholders. To understand how this plays out, it is useful to name the different stakeholder groups and review their interests.

9. MONTGOMERY COUNTY

The county needs to sell this land, cover the infrastructure costs associated with developing it as fully as possible, and protect existing neighborhoods from possible negative impacts. The County Council also has a vested interest in demonstrating that their actions contribute to ending gridlock and school overcrowding, not making these problems worse. The recent AGP update provides additional insights here.

We agree with the Planning Board’s conclusion that:

“Traffic congestion has reached unacceptable levels in most areas of the county. The county’s major roads, including I-270, I-495, U.S. 29 and many arterials [for example, Bowie Mill Road] experience traffic that far exceeds the roads’ carrying capacity, compromising the quality of life of every county resident and the business climate for every county employer. School buildings throughout the county are overcrowded because the buildings do not accommodate actual class sizes. In many school service areas, the overcrowding is severe. The existing formulas for Policy Area Review simply do not reflect reality, and the Planning Board believes they should be abandoned.”

We agree with the Planning Board’s recommendation:

“The Board finds that the best long-term strategy is to (1) slow the rate of development approvals while continuing to support the County’s economic well-being and (2) increase the financial resources available to construct needed facilities. The Planning Board therefore recommends that the County (1) biennially establish a *preliminary plan approval rate* [a 1% cap is currently under consideration] that balances economic needs with infrastructure delivery and (2) increase the rates of development impact tax for transportation and establish a development impact tax for schools.”

Further, Chairman Berlage notes in his August 7, 2003 letter to Mr. Subin and Mr. Duncan that:

“When housing developments contain a threshold number of affordable units, both the affordable and market rate units are currently exempt from the transportation impact tax.”

According to Planning Board estimates, the cost of transportation improvements per housing unit is \$26,000. The cost to build school buildings (is)... about \$10,300 per housing unit. That means new units cost the county approximately \$36,300 each. Proposed impact taxes under the new AGP range from a low of \$500 to a maximum of \$14,000 per unit. The county loses between \$22,300 and \$35,800 per housing unit that is built.

When the county sells the 32 acres on Bowie Mill Road, the fewer units the developer builds, the smaller the tax shortfall the county and the taxpayers will need to make up. Furthermore,

the increased market appeal of single-family detached homes in this area may produce a better price for the land to begin with.

The fewer units the developer builds, the lower the impact on roads and schools and the more consistent the land use will be with the character of existing neighborhood. Clearly the merits of a slower growth option for this land should be considered.

10. COMMUNITY INTERESTS

As you know from the 923 responses to the Park and Planning survey done to provide community input to the Olney Master Plan Amendment, Olney's community wide issues include:

The top 3 reasons people purchase homes in Olney are

"Quality of schools"

"New housing"

"Peace and quiet"

The top 3 issues facing the community are

"Traffic congestion"

"Speeding"

"Over-development"

The top 3 environmental issues for the area are

"Over-development"

"Too much traffic"

"Loss of open space"

More than 73% of the respondents said that they drive to work alone. This is an automobile dependent community.

Since the overwhelming majority of households have more than one member in the workforce, this translates to 2 cars per household that commute on roadways that are already failing.

The top three reasons that respondents do not use public transportation are:

"Not available in the neighborhood"

"Doesn't go where I need to go"

"Takes too long"

11. NEIGHBORHOOD INTERESTS

Neighborhood associations along Bowie Mill Road are interested in protecting the things that led them to buy homes here in the first place (quality schools, new housing, peace and quiet.) They want solutions to school overcrowding now. They are disturbed that class sizes exceed recent research about the best environment for learning, children are warehoused in mobile units, and teachers work in closets.

They want solutions to traffic congestion now. They strongly endorse GOCA's recommendation to downgrade Bowie Mill Road from an arterial road to a primary residential road from R 108 to the boundary of the Olney Master Plan Area to enhance pedestrian safety and protect the quality of life of the homes on the original section of Bowie Mill Road. The roadbed here is narrow and the homes were built very close to the median line, as was the custom when these homes were built.

Neighborhood associations share the Planning Board's conclusion that we need to slow the pace of growth and balance infrastructure capacity with the demands of new development. They want the character of their neighborhood and their community preserved. They want trees

and open spaces on their block not just across town. They want adequate and responsive emergency services (fire, rescue, EMS, police.)

12. DEVELOPER INTERESTS

The developers we spoke with are concerned about the shrinking supply of land available for development within Montgomery County. They want access to land and they want permits. They want to do what they do best, which is, develop. They want exceptions to zoning constraints that they see as inhibitors to the profit margins they seek on each project.

13. AFFORDABLE HOUSING FAMILIES' INTERESTS

They want a decent place to live and raise their children that includes good schools, reasonable transportation options, and responsive public services. They want this in an area with housing they can afford. Their issues are no different than any other families' issues.

14. ENVIRONMENT INTERESTS

The air we breathe, the water we drink, the natural habitat that supports native plants and animals need to be protected for us and for future generations to thrive. Patterns of land use and development that respect these interests ensure the quality of life that is essential to sustaining a vibrant economy.

15. A WIN-WIN ALTERNATIVE

We agree with Park and Planning that the current R-200 zoning should be retained and strictly adhered to ensure that any new development on this site is compatible with the design of existing neighborhoods.

Based on our preliminary assessment that less than half of the 32 acres will support development of any kind, we developed a slower development scenario and compared it with the alternative building type scenario favored by some developers to better understand how tradeoffs across interest groups might shape the development of this site.

Let's assume that we have 16 acres to work with. Let's further assume 6 of these acres will be used for vehicular surfaces (roads, driveways, etc.) That leaves 10 acres that are developable.

Option A would use an alternative building type that requires 3,000 to 3,500 square feet per dwelling unit with the "half open space" requirement met by the riparian forested area and associated buffers. That leaves 1,500 square feet per unit to be carved out of the developable 10 acres and works out to about 250 dwelling units.

Option B, the other end of the continuum, would be designed around single-family detached homes at 2 dwellings per acre or 20 dwelling units on the 10 acres. Since this is under the threshold that requires MPDU's, all units could be sold at full market value and they would all contribute impact taxes to fund road and school improvements.

Now let's see how these two alternatives stack up against the needs of each stakeholder group.

COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE SCENARIOS

INTERESTS SERVED	ALTERNATIVE BUILDING TYPES SCENARIO	SLOWER GROWTH LOW DENSITY SCENARIO
COUNTY		
Sell the land	Yes	Yes – county may even be able to get a better price because this is a more profitable approach for the developer
Maximize impact tax collected to minimize deficit and fund required road and school improvements	No. Cost per unit \$36,300 Tax per unit \$0 Loss on 250 units \$9 million+ (Cost estimates from pg 6 of 8/6/03 cover letter to AGP)	Yes Cost per unit \$36,300 Tax per unit \$12,500 Loss on 20 units \$476,000
Support goals of affordable housing program	Limited. Puts affordable housing away from jobs in an auto dependent area where families least able to support 2 cars will have no choice	Yes. Use proceeds from sale of land & increased impact tax collections to promote affordable housing at traffic nodes & in job rich areas
End Grid Lock	No. 2 cars X 250 = 500 cars added to gridlocked area	No – but does less harm. 2 cars X 20 = 40 cars added to gridlocked area
OLNEY COMMUNITY and NEIGHBORHOOD		
Minimizes negative impact on school overcrowding	No. Average 2 children per household = 500 new students	Yes. Average 2 students per household = 40 new students
Minimizes new demands for Emergency Services	No. 250 households average 4 residents per household = 1000 more people to serve	Yes. 20 households average 4 residents per household = 80 more people to serve
Minimize loss of open space and prevent further overdevelopment	No. Even the best designs will urbanize the area. Required large surface parking areas increase imperviousness and significantly erode open space.	Yes. Not as good as transfer to Open Space or Parkland, but visually more space and environmentally lower impact than dense clusters with large parking areas.
Preserve & enhance sense of community	No. Design is totally incompatible with existing neighborhoods.	Yes. Design is consistent with existing neighborhoods.
Peace & quiet	No. Dense growth increases congestion and reduces peace and quiet.	Yes. Slower development and less dense design do more to preserve peace and quiet.
DEVELOPER		
Make a profit	Maybe But requires high production volumes of multi-family units	Yes Under the threshold so developer can build to suit

	<p>that exceed current height restrictions & are incompatible with the existing neighborhoods.</p> <p>Large surface parking areas are expensive and increase imperviousness. This in turn requires expensive corrective storm water management facilities.</p> <p>New storm water designs are not visually appealing and often don't work. This may reduce the marketability of units & may erode profits.</p>	<p>market demand and sell at market rates which are the most profitable.</p> <p>Protecting existing forest, streams & wetlands as Legacy Open Space or Parkland adds to the visual appeal and thus enhances the developer's profit potential.</p> <p>Fewer dwelling units with more open land enhances the area's ability to absorb and filter storm runoff and protect the headwaters of the North Branch of Rock Creek.</p>
AFFORDABLE HOUSING FAMILIES		
A decent place to live & an affordable commute to work.	<p>Yes & No</p> <p>Forces families into an auto dependent area away from jobs & virtually requires them to become 2 car households further stretching their limited financial resources</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Refocuses affordable housing initiatives to appropriate sites in job rich areas near transportation nodes.</p>
ENVIRONMENT		
Preserve existing natural resources and work to improve air quality, water quality and natural habitat for native plants & animals.	<p>No</p> <p>More cars and significantly increased impervious area harms the environment.</p> <p>Some of the newer storm water management designs are as yet unproven. There are environmental experts & developers who believe they don't work.</p> <p>Storm water ponds increase the temperature of streams. The ecosystem of the North Branch of Upper Rock Creek is especially sensitive to temperature increases.</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Fewer cars and lower impervious area reduces environmental damage.</p> <p>Extending the buffer around the wetlands, spring and streams is economically feasible with this development option.</p> <p>This is consistent with the Countywide Stream Protection Strategy for this area and the environmental goals of protecting the sensitive headwaters of the North Branch of Upper Rock Creek.</p>

In summary, we believe win-win options between these two extremes for the 32-acre parcel on Bowie Mill Road. To support and encourage these options we want the Draft re-worded to:

- ◆ Reflect environmental protection requirements
- ◆ Document community preferences

- ◆ Stipulate design guidelines for future development.

We want to be notified whenever a specific site plan is proposed for developing this land. We want to participate in the design and review sessions that will shape a solution that satisfies all stakeholders' interests. We want the time to complete the environmental assessment work we have begun and to have our consultant's recommendations included with our testimony.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input to the process.

Respectfully,
Nancy Wendt
On behalf of the Olney Square Citizens Association

APPENDIX A – COPY OF LETTER REQUESTING MORE TIME

Nancy Wendt
Olney Coalition
P O Box 1629
Olney, MD 20830

September 9, 2003

Mr. Derick Berlage
Chairman, M-NCPPC
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Berlage,

I am writing to request that the public hearing for the Olney Master Plan scheduled for September 18 be rescheduled or a second public hearing be scheduled after October 30, 2003. As explained below, there has been a sudden and drastic change in the Plan in recent weeks that the community simply needs more time to assess. In addition, the current hearing date conflicts with back-to-school night for Olney elementary school parents who otherwise would attend the hearing and testify.

The Olney Master Plan process, in particular the community based planning aspects of the process, proceeded in a more or less normal manner until June of 2003. Up to that point, the 32- acre parcel of land on Bowie Mill (referred to in the plan as item # 17) was described in the staff draft of the Plan as Board of Education land to be used as the future site of the Olney Elementary School.

Somewhere between the end of June and July 24 when the Olney Master Plan public hearing draft was completed, this changed to County-owned land to be used “for a housing development with a significant portion as affordable housing.” This is a radically different recommendation with significant implications for the environment, local flood plain, and therefore the community as a whole.

Area residents found out about this last minute change on August 12 when the Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) called a special meeting to discuss the draft Plan. Normally GOCA does not meet in August because everyone is away on vacation. Many missed this special meeting for that very reason.

Stephen Smet, President of GOCA, shared the following information with those who attended the August 12 meeting and subsequently with the press. (A copy of the Gazette August 20, 2003 article Bowie Mill Fate Concerns Residents is attached for your convenience.)

“Smet said most of those involved in the master plan process always thought of the property as a school site.”

“Apparently, MCPS exceded the property, but it was not recorded, he said. They transferred the property to the county, but it never seemed to hit the land records. It’s just one of those things that seemed to fall through the cracks. “

“Even Kahlid Afzal [planner for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission] worked under the assumption that it was a school site.

“Smet said that although the site is currently zoned R-200, he is not sure it would be suitable for development because of a pipeline and a streambed.”

A coalition of residents from several neighborhood civic associations has been working around the clock since August 12 to understand what if any development the land can support and how alternative land uses fit with other County initiatives and policies. We simply need more time to complete this work.

In the five short weeks since we learned of the proposed change in land use, we have begun working with John Parrish (MD Native Plants Society), Jim Fary (Sierra Club) and other local environmentalists with expertise in geology and hydrology. They are visiting the site and helping us understand just how environmentally sensitive this land is.

Based on your comment to the press on August 6 (a copy of the article [Planning Board Approves Upper Rock Creek Plan](#) is attached for your convenience.)

“The Upper Rock Creek Coalition has been very focused on density,” he said. “The Planning Board is focused on the environment.”

I am confident that you will support our efforts to do a full and careful analysis of the environmental constraints before making a land use recommendation to the County Council that could prove embarrassing.

We have engaged Richard Kline from Community Defense Services to perform an environmental assessment. Because of other pressing commitments, he cannot begin his work until after September 25. He estimates it will take several weeks after that to complete his analysis and report back to us.

Then we need time to inform area residents regarding his findings so that we can respond to Stephen Smet’s and Khalid Afzal’s request for a specific recommendation regarding what the community wants to see done with the site.

Finally we need a different public hearing date so that *all* area residents have an opportunity to present their testimony.

For these reasons I respectfully request that the public hearing be rescheduled or a second public hearing be held after October 31.

Sincerely,
Nancy Wendt

Copies to:

Mr. John Carter, Division Chief, Community Based Planning
Mr. Khalid Afzal, Team Lead Olney Master Plan
Mr. Stephen Smet, President GOCA
Mr. Michael Knapp, Council Representative, District 2

APPENDIX C – REQUESTED CHANGES TO OLNEY MASTER PLAN DRAFT 9/25/03

CURRENT WORDING	PROPOSED WORDING
<p>Land Use Plan, page 23, Following the paragraph titled “Design Guidelines for all RNC properties in the Southeast Quadrant”</p>	<p>Add a paragraph entitled “Design Guidelines for New Development in Mature Neighborhoods” with the following text.</p> <p>In order to protect existing neighborhoods from the possible negative impacts of new development, all in-fill development including MPDU’s and other affordable housing types must comply fully with environmental protection regulations and the standard zoning requirements without exception. Specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Building heights will not exceed the height of existing homes in surrounding neighborhoods. 2. Building types will be visually compatible with the design of existing homes in surrounding neighborhoods. 3. Environmentally sensitive areas will be protected and enhanced wherever possible to manage run off naturally to minimize the ongoing costs and compliance issues associated with functional equivalents. 4. Green buffers of at least 150 feet will be provided to screen existing development from new development. 5. New roads, surface parking areas, and illuminated public areas will be designed not to run along the property lines of an existing development.
<p>Land Use Plan, page 36, #17</p> <p>This approximately 32-acre property on the south side of Bowie Mill Road was recommended for a high school site in the 1980 Master Plan. The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) later determined that it was not needed for school purposes, surplussed it, and transferred it to the County. It is zone R-200 and contains a stream but no significant forest.</p> <p>The public ownership, its location on a major road, and the size of the property make it suitable for a housing development with a significant portion as affordable housing.</p>	<p>This approximately 32-acre property on the south side of Bowie Mill Road was recommended for a high school site in the 1980 Master Plan. The Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) later determined that it was not needed for school purposes, surplussed it, and transferred it to the County.</p> <p>The property may be suitable for Legacy Open Space, undeveloped Parkland with unpaved pedestrian trails, or some housing not to exceed 64 units consistent with R200 zoning.</p>

<p>Land Use Plan, page 36, #17</p> <p>Recommendation: If the property is not needed for educational purposes, it should be used for affordable housing.</p>	<p>If the property is not needed for educational purposes, portions of it may be suitable for Open Space, undeveloped Parkland with unpaved pedestrian trails, or standard R200 zone housing not to exceed 64 units.</p>
<p>Housing Plan, page 58, 3rd paragraph, 5th sentence, lines 10, 11</p> <p>The County-owned property on Bowie Mill Road is also suitable for affordable housing.</p>	<p>Delete</p>
<p>Housing Plan, page 59, Recommendation #4</p> <p>Use the 32-acre County-owned site on Bowie Mill Road for housing.</p>	<p>Delete</p>
<p>Implementation Plan, page 132, 2nd paragraph, 3rd sentence</p> <p>However, buildings containing Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDU's) or other affordable housing would be allowed flexibility in height restrictions to facilitate absorption of affordable housing in the Town Center.</p>	<p>Add the following sentence:</p> <p>In areas other than the Town Center, MPDU's and other affordable housing must comply with the standard limits of existing zoning without exceptions in order to protect existing neighborhoods from the potentially negative impacts of new development.</p>