



Civic Federation News

November 2013

Serving the Public Interest since 1925

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Montgomery County Civic
Federation

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November Program: PHED Changes to New Zoning Code

by Jim Humphrey, Planning & Land Use Chair

The program for the November 11 Civic Federation meeting will be on changes that the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee is recommending be made to the Planning Board's draft of the new zoning code. The speaker for the program will be Councilmember Marc Elrich, who serves on the PHED Committee.

The zoning code rewrite has been the topic of two previous MCCF programs, held in June 2012 and June 2013. The first program was an update by Planning Staff on their progress on the project. The second program was a Council staff explanation of the District Map Amendment process whereby the new zones will be applied to properties throughout the county.

Changes in several sections of the new zoning code are being supported by a majority of the three-member PHED Committee. Among these are greater restrictions on standards for allowing Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and On-Site Farm Stands as uses in the single-family detached home zones. The PHED has also recommended a tougher process by which floating zones allowing non-residential uses could be approved for existing residential properties.

Councilmember Elrich will address the impact the PHED changes might have on protection of neighborhoods. He

will also speak to the possible negative impacts of using a single rezoning action to convert all commercial properties in the county to mixed commercial and residential use, especially the effect on the county's ability to plan and provide adequate supporting infrastructure and public facilities.

We will also ask Mr. Elrich to share his opinion on whether the new zoning code should be uncoupled from the District Map Amendment, with the Council separately considering application of new zones only after adopting a revised code. There will be a question and answer session following the presentation and, as always, the public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Although the Council held a public hearing on the draft new zoning code in June of this year, a second hearing has been scheduled for the evenings of November 12 and 14 in order to receive public testimony on the various changes recommended by the PHED Committee. The committee also plans to hold work sessions on December 2 and 9, to consider the testimony received, after which they will report out a final recommended version for the full Council to consider.

November's Community Hero: Lyda Astrove

Paula Bienenfeld, First Vice President

This month we are celebrating Lyda Astrove as our Community Hero. Lyda has been a tireless worker and supporter of public education in the county, specifically for Special Needs children in our community.

Lyda is a special education attorney and advocate. For over 15 years, she has helped families across Montgomery County obtain appropriate educational services for their children with disabilities. She is on the Board of Directors of the Montgomery County chapter, Autism Society of America, and Co-Chair of the Montgomery County Workgroup on the Future for People with Severe Developmental Disabilities, including Autism. Her other awards include Local Autism Hero, Cure Autism Now & Autism Speaks; and Outstanding Parent, MCCPTA Special Needs Committee. She received her B.A. from Vanderbilt University, in Nashville, Tennessee, and her J.D. from Stetson University College of Law in St. Petersburg, Florida.

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I have known Lyda through her involvement with the Parents' Coalition of Montgomery County, Maryland, where she posts on school and special needs issues.

She first became involved in these issues when her youngest son was three years old. He is now 22 and she hasn't stopped her tremendous involvement.

When her son was young, MCPS would not give him the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) services he was required to receive by law. She says she remembers driving by Julius West Middle School during its renovation, and noticing the construction crew carefully placing tiny blue tiles onto the entrance signage. She remembers thinking, someone at MCPS cared enough to pick out these blue tiles, and carefully put them on this outdoor sign. But nobody cares enough to give speech therapy to my non-verbal child.

That was the start of her involvement in civic issues. Along the way Lyda successfully worked on legislation to create paid internship jobs in the county government for kids with disabilities. This change to the law required passing a needed charter amendment - Question A - to allow the county to move forward on this initiative. The amendment passed and the county now takes pride in this successful program.

Lyda was also appointed by the County Executive as a member of the Autism and Severe Disabilities Task Force, which produced a comprehensive analysis of needed services for this population.

Most recently Lyda has been working with parents and children who were victims of MCPS' Rock Terrace School alleged financial embezzlement. At the school, staff allegedly created W-2 forms and bank accounts that parents and guardians allegedly were unaware existed, and allegedly used them to funnel money to school staff without the knowledge of the parents/guardians or their special needs children. Thanks to Lyda's dogged activism and persistence, the States' Attorney is now investigating this matter.

Lyda's motto, if you are lucky enough to be one of her email recipients, is 'Ad astra per aspera,' meaning, 'Through hardships to the stars.' No one I know better exemplifies this than Lyda, who has definitely reached the stars. Congratulations, Lyda!

Resolution Proposed Concerning Wine and Beer Licenses for Restaurants

By Dan Wilhelm, Legislation Chair

Montgomery County has the smallest percentage of resident millennials, ages 20 to 34, of any jurisdiction in the metro area. Millennials account for 19% of the County population, which is less than the national average of 20.7%. Prince George's County has 23.0% and Arlington County has the highest percentage with 35.2%. Millennials prefer to walk and use public transit rather than private cars and within Montgomery County they represent almost 31% of the people who live within a half-mile of metro stations. Millennials are also looking for convenience and increased opportunities for social interaction.

Attracting millennials and other young adults to Montgomery County is vital for the long-term health of our neighborhoods. The Nighttime Economy Task Force was formed to identify changes needed to address the social needs of these young adults. The December program will be about the recommendations of the Task Force. The October 24 MCCF Corner article in the *Sentinel* newspaper (See MCCF website) summarizes the Task Force's recommendations. One of their recommendations is to increase the hours that bars may operate.

On a slightly different front, many of us older people have been complaining for decades about the lack of nice restaurants that are close by to where we live. The nicer restaurants are clustered in Bethesda and Silver Spring. The question is: "why are there so few nice restaurants in other parts of the county?" I have heard that one reason is the inability to obtain wine and beer licenses, which are often considered as essential for upscale restaurants. Addressing the limitations of our wine and beer licensing laws will benefit not only the older adults but also the younger adults, since they also like to eat out.

As identified below, the County's Class B beer, wine and liquor licensing laws limit the number of such licenses and also restrict where the restaurants can be located. The Executive Committee discussed this briefly and agreed that MCCF should support a change in the law. As such, the following motion is put forward for your consideration:

"MCCF supports a change in State Law that limits the number of wine and beer licenses that may be issued in the County. MCCF also

supports removing restrictions on the location of the restaurants holding those licenses”.

According to the current law relative to Class B beer, wine and liquor licensing, a licensee may have one license without restriction on location and any number of licenses where the restaurant is part of a hotel and may obtain up to nine others that are location restricted. For businesses that want a single restaurant, the current law is not unacceptable. However, if a business wants to have multiple locations (for instance, Clyde’s), the law limits their flexibility. For a county of one million people, it is desirable for the public that the same restaurant brand be allowed to serve beer and wine at multiple locations. Other than the first license, the following lists the other licenses that are available:

- Any number of licenses for premises operated as a public hotel, with a minimum restaurant seating capacity of 100 people
- Location licenses
 - One enterprise zone license for a restaurant in either of the two enterprise zones
 - One Rockville license for a restaurant in Rockville Town Center
 - One Germantown license for a restaurant in the Germantown Town Center District
 - One Gaithersburg license for a restaurant in the city of Gaithersburg
 - One Montgomery Village license for a restaurant in Town Sector zoned area called Montgomery Village.
 - One East County license for a restaurant in East County (defined as Howard County line on the north, the Prince George's County line on the east, the Capital Beltway on the south, and a line 3,000 feet west of the center of US29 on the west).
 - Two incentive licenses at the locations identified above.
 - One license for businesses that have been the holder of two licenses for at least 5 years that are not restricted by location (Based upon the above, seems like this would apply only to hotels.)

President’s Column: In Praise of Vintage Suburbs

By Carole Ann Barth, President

Vintage is all the rage: vinyl records are selling again as are vintage-inspired clothes, home decor, furnishings, and design. At the same time, the historic preservation movement is beginning to address postwar buildings ranging from Usonian-inspired modern homes to the commercial exuberance of Doo Wop and Googie. (As the Doo Wop Preservation League website proclaims, “It’s Cool! It’s Hip! It’s Retro! It’s Wildwood!”)

So let me predict the next big style craze: *vintage suburbs*. I’m talking about the inner ring suburbs, begun in the thirties but primarily filled out in the mid-twentieth century. To my mind, these neighborhoods combine some of the best features of urban and suburban living, while avoiding the excesses of either extreme.

A short distance from urban centers, vintage suburbs offer a variety of commuting options, unlike the sprawling, car-dependant suburbs that came later. Small lot sizes and proximity to neighborhood shopping, parks, and schools promote neighbor to neighbor interaction, enhance walkability and provide urban convenience. At the same time, however, mature trees and green space provide a peaceful ambiance, kids have yards to play in, and there’s space for gardens, decks, and Florida rooms. One has both urban bustle and quiet retreat.

Many of these communities were developed a few houses at a time, leading to a diversity of housing styles and sizes. This stylistic diversity created an eclectic visual character, which contrasts starkly with the monotony of both the tract-mansion developments and the cookie-cutter mixed use developments which are prevalent today. For example, the only place I’ve ever seen houses with round screened-in front porches is Woodmoor.

The variety of available housing also means that students, growing families, and empty-nesters can all be accommodated in the same neighborhood. It is hard to convey how much cultural richness this age diversity provides. I treasure the friendships I’ve made across the age spectrum in my neighborhood; I have learned from young and old alike. It’s been a special joy to watch children grow as they participate in community life; from their first steps “helping” with a cleanup or tree planting to their adult pursuit of careers that enhance others’ lives.

In fact, some of these developments were actually designed to include housing stock for a range of economic levels, and others were specifically designed to be affordable for first-time home-buyers. Indeed, some of these communities are still among the most affordable in the County.

This affordability also enhances diversity, enabling older residents to “age in place” while providing many immigrants their first chance to buy a home. This housing resource will become all the more important as the current rush to build tract mansions, luxury condos, and expensive town homes further skews the housing market away from affordability.

There is history here as well. In my neighborhood, Northwood Four Corners, we have the 1939 World’s Fair House, as well as homes built by the first member-run housing cooperative in the state of Maryland. In 1951 a group of mainly Jewish federal workers founded Northwood Park Housing, Inc., and bought 10 acres of land. The cooperative designed and built 44 homes, four of which continue to be occupied by their original owners.

However, I think what I like best about the vintage suburbs are their human scale. They are cozy without being crowded. You are not dwarfed either by huge estate homes or high rises. Instead, they have more of a “village” feel.

Since these communities possess many of the attributes planners are ostensibly striving to promote (diversity, walkability, sense of place) you would think the County would be working to preserve them and help them thrive into the future. However, nothing could be farther from the truth.

Instead, they are being treated as obstacles to get around; mere speed bumps in the way of the current fad for ultra-high density development and sprawl-enabling long-distance transit schemes. To my mind, this is every bit as short-sighted as was the “urban renewal” movement and the paving over of many urban neighborhoods for freeways.

Thus, I predict that in the future, those vintage suburbs that survive obliteration will be “discovered” as the new cool place to live. But why wait? You too can be in the vanguard of the next wave: go vintage!

Education Issues Update

By Paula Bienenfeld, Education Chair

Parents’ Coalition MCPS App Now Available

Parents’ Coalition of Montgomery County, MD (PC) has a new app for information from MCPS. The app provides instant access to school system news, student grades, lunch accounts, school and staff directories, school calendars, and high school athletic game scores from your Android phone or tablet. To access the app, go to the PC blog and click on the right-hand corner button. Link: <http://parentscoalitionmc.blogspot.com/>

Second Annual Budgetpalooza! Coming

The MCPS FY15 proposed Budget will be released in December 2013. Once again the Civic Fed is teaming up with the Taxpayers League and the Parents’ Coalition of Montgomery County, Maryland to hold our **Budgetpalooza!**, when we will go through the proposed budget chapter by chapter. If you would like to volunteer to take a chapter, please contact me at Paula_Bienenfeld@yahoo.com. For more on the MCPS Budget process, go to: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/submission-guide/>

Update on Rock Terrace School

The State’s Attorney is conducting an investigation into the alleged financial mismanagement and alleged embezzlement of student funds at Rock Terrace.

To date we know that staff allegedly:

1. Opened credit union accounts for students without their parents’/guardians’ permission.
2. Failed to give students/parents/guardians copies of credit union account statements.
3. Failed to give students/parents/guardians copies of W-2 forms.
4. Removed sums of money from student accounts without parent/guardian permission.
5. Held joint accounts with students without their parents’/guardians’ permission.
6. Transferred money between student accounts without the knowledge of the students involved, or their parents/guardians.
7. Used the above money taken from the students for unknown purposes.
8. Destroyed student bank records
9. Destroyed student W-2 forms.
10. Failed to hire a forensic auditor to ascertain how much money is owed each student.

Rolling Terrace Elementary School Mold Issues

Dangerous levels of mold have been found at Rock Terrace ES, with children getting sick. The source of the mold is so far unknown. The school PTA sent a letter to the County Council's Education (ED) Committee (members Valerie Ervin, Phil Andrews, Craig Rice) documenting their concerns and proposed solutions. According to that letter,

"Many parents are reporting an array of symptoms that are unusual for their children and can be linked to mold exposure. These range from severe, debilitating asthma attacks (requiring emergency room visits) to headaches, hives, itchy and red eyes and scratchy throats and coughs. We know that some of these complaints have been reported to the school's nurse, however many families are simply taking their children to their personal physicians. There have been numerous requests by the PTA to conduct a survey of all families to better understand the extent of impacts, but no action has been taken. Many parents believe that the chemicals being used to clean moldy surfaces may be causing additional health problems."

The PTA recommended that the school request that parents notify the school nurse of illnesses that could be related to mold. This would provide more information regarding total health impacts and also recommended that MCPS work with an epidemiologist to develop a survey design and implement a statistically valid survey to better understand mold impacts on the school population (children and all staff).

The PTA noted the lack of data, and that the root cause or source has not been identified. An indoor air quality survey on September 18th showed that one classroom had nearly three times the level of Cladosporium spores compared to outdoor concentrations. Air quality tests are not being done regularly so there is no way to track the cause. They recommend a much larger scale inspection and abatement of the mold, possibly moving the children to another site if needed, and also recommended conducting more frequent air quality testing.

The PTA also noted that there are many children and parents at Rolling Terrace whose first language is not English and as a result are unaware of the mold issue and its extent. They recommended that MCPS develop a standardized approach to notify all parents, not just those with allergic and sick reactions, and that MCPS provide a weekly update posted on the homepage of the school website and on the front door of the school.

Finally, the PTA noted that the HVAC Renovation Action Plan for the school is insufficient, given the mold emergency.

The ED Committee held a hearing on October 24th to discuss the mold issues at the school. The staff packet is here, and includes the PTA letter to the ED Committee. http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/council/pdf/agenda/cm/2013/131024/20131024_ED2.pdf.

Town Hall Meetings with Superintendent Starr

There are two opportunities for the community to meet with Dr. Starr in November. MCPS is holding a series of Student Town Hall Meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for November 25, 2013, and will be held at A. Mario Loiederman Middle School. Another opportunity for an open forum with the Superintendent will be the Town Hall meeting held at the end of the Community Day at Montgomery Blair High School, on Thursday, November 21st, 7:30 – 9 pm. To watch earlier Town Hall meetings, go here:

<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/superintendent/community-days/>.

State of the Schools

The Superintendent will be presenting the 2013 State of the Schools discussion again this year at Strathmore Hall on November 11th. Attendance is free. For more information and to RSVP, go to <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/superintendent/stateoftheschools/>.

School Food Forum

The Civic Federation is pleased to be a sponsor of an important forum promoting healthier food for young people in Montgomery County's public schools. The "SCHOOL FOOD FORUM: Creating a Vision of Fresh, Real Food in Montgomery County Public Schools" will be held Saturday, November 2, 9:30am - 2pm at Lutheran Church of St. Andrew, 15300 New Hampshire Ave in Silver Spring, MD 20905. Keynote speaker is nationally known school food reformer Tony Geraci, former Food Director at Baltimore City Schools, current Director of Nutrition Services at Shelby County Schools in Memphis, and subject of the documentary film "Cafeteria Man." Additional speakers include Marla Caplon, Director of MCPS Food and Nutrition Services, Lisa Lefferts of Center for Science in the Public Interest, Kathy Lawrence of School Food FOCUS, and members of the Montgomery County Council. . We anticipate an attendance of 250-300, including parents, school administrators, teachers, and elected leaders from Montgomery County and the state of Maryland.

Tickets for the event are \$25, \$15 for students, and scholarships are available for the financially challenged. But this includes a delicious, nutritious, locally-sourced lunch hosted by Real Food For Kids - Montgomery and Montgomery Victory Gardens. For more info and registration go to www.realfoodforkidsmontgomery.org/forum.htm or call 301-202-4812.

Help Save Ten Mile Creek

By Diane Cameron, Stormwater Partners

(MCCF is affiliated with Stormwater Partners)

The Planning Board has made its recommendation for the Ten Mile Creek Limited Master Plan Amendment. We strongly oppose the Planning Board's recommendation. It allows far too much development, won't protect our region's emergency drinking water supply, and threatens our last, best creek. If you are not already aware of this issue, learn more at the website: www.savetenmilecreek.com

The County Council will hold a public hearing on the Ten Mile Creek plan on December 3rd, at 7:30 pm. You can sign up to testify starting this Thursday, October 31. Call 240-777-7803 to sign up and get particulars on testimony. We urge residents from across the county to weigh in on this important environmental issue. If you cannot testify in person, write a letter to the Council: county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov

Help is Needed to Reduce Homelessness in Montgomery County

Montgomery County is now a part of the national "100,000 Homes Campaign", a movement of over 200 communities working to find permanent homes for chronic and medically vulnerable homeless Americans. Our local campaign will prioritize those most in need of permanent housing -- those who are literally at risk of dying if they don't get shelter -- and identify permanent supportive housing and services. The 2013 Point-in-Time Count of Homeless Persons in the Metropolitan Washington Region, known as the PIT report, found on one given day that 1,007 individuals experienced homelessness in Montgomery County, and 222 of these individuals were chronically homeless. This is unacceptable in one of the most affluent counties in the nation, and this is why the 100,000 Homes Campaign is so critical.

Montgomery County 100,000 Homes Campaign Registry Week is **November 3–8, 2013**. We need 300 volunteers, most of whom will conduct surveys of homeless

individuals. Surveys will be conducted early in the morning with teams of volunteers. It will be completely safe and offers an important opportunity to learn about the challenges facing our county's neediest residents. There are also other vital roles necessary to support the efforts of the survey volunteers such as preparing survey materials, assisting at volunteer headquarters, or serving on a campaign subcommittee. Food and drinks will be provided to volunteers at the training session and during volunteer shifts.

For more information and to register, visit the Campaign's website at <http://www.mcch.net/endhomelessness/homescampaign.html>. If you have any questions, please contact Montgomery County 100,000 Homes Campaign at 100khomesmc@gmail.com.

If you would like to support the campaign by donating or becoming a sponsor, please contact 100,000 Homes Campaign Manager Herb Smith at hsmith@mcch.net or 301-917-6648.

Conservation Montgomery's 2013 Annual Meeting

By Alan Bowser, 2nd Vice President

In 2010, the Civic Federation agreed to "partner" with the newly formed group, Conservation Montgomery. Because of our partnership, we extend the following invitation.

On Friday, November 8, 2013, from 6pm to 9pm, join Conservation Montgomery for its Annual Meeting and celebration of its 3rd anniversary. The Annual Meeting and party will take place at the Battery Park Club House, 7908 Glenwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20814.

This year, the meeting will be enhanced with a program, Countywide Park Trails - A New Vision, presented by Chuck Kines, Parks Planner Coordinator (PPSD) on the Countywide Park Trails Amendment. The current amendment draft is being prepared for Montgomery County Planning Board review this autumn or by winter.

Since 1998, the first version of the trails plan has guided park trail planning, but it isn't realistic since none of the proposed alignments for more than 100 miles of trails had been ground-truthed. Nor did they benefit from modern environmental assessment tools. Wisely, the Parks Stewardship division convened a multi-stakeholder Trails Working Group (TWG) and since 2011, the group has been meeting monthly to develop a plan to better address the needs of parks users who rely on trails.

The goal is for the Trail Plan amendment to be ready for adoption by the Planning Commission in the coming year. This exciting development heralds a new era for all park trail users. Other members of Parks trail staff will be on hand to answer questions.

Wine, beer, soft drinks and light refreshments will be served at a networking session before Mr. Kines speaks. Please plan to attend. To RSVP for the Annual Meeting, visit the Conservation Montgomery website at www.conservationmontgomery.org And, while there, vote for your favorite Montgomery County park!

Montgomery County's Planning Board Attempts to Rewrite History

By Steve Kanstoroom, 2013 Wayne Goldstein Award Winner

A kinship community of descendants of Freedmen continues to suffer staggering financial and emotional hardship due to the Planning Board's refusal to recognize the existence of Farm Road, the sole means of ingress and egress to their ancestral lands.

Farm Road is located adjacent to the Sandy Spring Slave Museum and has served this peaceful, taxpaying community for more than a century. Quakers purchased the farm, known as Dellabrooke, in the early 1800's, freed the slaves, and deeded numerous portions of it to them. Property owner Robert Awkard, now 90, was raised on the property since he was two years old. "My granddaddy used to take me in his horse and buggy from our home to the farm and out to Goldmine Road, or we could turn left and go out to Brooke Road," Awkard said.

In the mid-1990's, high-end homes were planned to cover the remaining 202 acre farm. Somewhere in the development process, unbeknownst to the Farm Road community, their street addresses were deleted and Farm Road was wiped off the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's map. Even a quarter-mile of the road that didn't traverse the development was erased. Next, Farm Road was wiped off the State's Property Tax map. In 2006, 72-year-old William Rounds listed the Farm Road property he grew up on for sale, received a contract for \$439,000, and then learned he could not sell his property because M-NCPPC no longer recognized his access. High ranking M-NCPPC officials publically stated their agency doesn't maintain any records detailing their staffs' actions regarding address issuance or deletions. When asked in a federal court hearing about the rules for such activities, the agency's interim Director, Rose Krasnow, stated under oath,

"There are no rules" and "They're not written, but I would argue that they're not just in my head."

Likewise, in a special Maryland legislative hearing held on June 26, 2013, the Maryland Department of Planning's Secretary, Richard Hall, testified that his agency doesn't have any records regarding why Farm Road was deleted from his agency's Tax Map.

Without the Planning Board's recognition of Farm Road, the properties are not saleable to anyone other than neighboring developers with public road access recognized by M-NCPPC. Consequently, because of

M-NCPPC's erasures, the properties are not marketable or eligible for building permits. On July 18, 2013, after several months of media scrutiny, the Planning Board issued street addresses for the properties, and it seemed that the struggle was over.

Property owners like Rounds were led to believe that being granted addresses would permit him to move forward and market his property, however, that was not the case. County law exempts the Farm Road properties from M-NCPPC's subdivision process. However, just days ago planning officials wrote to a real estate agent representing Rounds and a neighboring property owner, Laurana McCants, that the Montgomery County Planning Board and the M-NCPPC "...specifically did not recognize the existence of Farm Road..." when the agency proposed issuing addresses. Instead, the Board is relying on the revocable permission of neighbors to cross private property – an unworkable solution that falls apart if any neighbor changes their mind, dies or sells. "Park and Panning issued addresses as a tactic to get the heat off and it worked until we understood it's smoke and mirrors," said Rounds.

Farm Road currently appears as "Historic Farm Road" on the County's maps used by fire and rescue and the Montgomery County Public School's Department of Transportation. It also appears on numerous US Geological Survey maps, County Atlases, State Tax Maps, surveys dating back to 1895 and M-NCPPC's address book. Nevertheless, the Planning Board's legal staff prevailed upon the Maryland Department of Planning to delete Farm Road from its records after they were corrected in 2006, and again after it issued addresses to the Farm Road property owners in July of this year.

WUSA TV reported in May 2013 that Attorney General Doug Gansler "shut down" an investigation into Farm Road for "partisan or other reasons not related to the credibility of the material" and "an investigator resigned in protest." M-NCPPC has blocked the community's legal efforts on technical grounds, claiming their complaints

cannot be heard by Maryland courts. M-NCPPC has also refused to comply with the community's Public Information Act request for documents made on June 28, 2013. On July 22, 2013 County Executive Ike Leggett issued a statement pledging to help the Farm Road community move forward "in the next few weeks," but thus far the community has not heard from his office. The community asked the Governor's Office for help but received an email stating this was a local matter. "I don't know how this can be a local matter when the Governor's Cabinet member refuses to put Farm Road back on the State Tax map at the direction of Park and Planning's lawyers," said Judy Penny. Penny has been attempting to help her 87 year-old aunt and her neighbors resolve the matter.

An appeal on behalf of the Farm Road Community was filed with Maryland's highest Court on October 24, 2013. When asked about next steps, Rounds said, "For starters, I want to hear why Gansler shut down the investigation, who he's protecting, and why. I've been wondering about that."

Steve Kanstoroom learned of the Farm Road situation in 2006 while serving on Montgomery County's Department of Permitting Services Advisory Committee, reporting to the County Council and County Executive. He has been the Farm Road community's pro-bono subject matter expert since that time and founded www.SaveSandySpring.org in an effort to help the Farm Road community.

News you can Use

To Report a Street Light Out By Jerry Garson, Treasurer

Are you exasperated by a street light which has been out for days/weeks/months? Getting it repaired starts with a report to the appropriate entity.

To report a street light out on a metal pole, call 311 or go to http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Traffic/streetlight_maint.html where you can report a streetlight malfunction using the county map or the County Service Request Form.

To report an outage on a wooden pole, go to Pepco's website: <http://www.pepco.com>. Under Alerts and Outage Information, click on "Streetlight Problem". You will see a map of Montgomery County. Enlarge the map about 7-9 times, then you should be able to see all local poles with green dots. Click on the green dot that corresponds to the pole with the outage and follow the prompts. Bing Maps does not always accurately populate the streetlight address field, so please review

the streetlight address field and update as necessary. If you have followed all the prompts and made the necessary certifications, Pepco should send you an email within a few minutes and change the color on the dot from green to red. Pepco will then send you an e-mail when the street light is fixed.

Who to Call in Parks Department

Mary Bradford, Director of Parks, shared these two additional numbers for your (growing) list!*

301-949-3010 Park Police - 24 hours a day

301-670-8080 Parks Service Center – problems or repairs in parks. Callers will get a repair ticket # they can track the repair by.

The Who, What, Where of Voting in Montgomery County

By Jim Zepp

As a result of statewide and county redistricting measures during the last two years, the state legislative and County Council districts have changed for some Montgomery County voters. While the majority of residents are unaffected, there are several easy ways to confirm what precinct you will be voting in.

BY PHONE: There is a 24 hour voter information phone line that can be accessed at: 240-777-VOTE or the County Board of Elections office which is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM, 240-777-8500. Other contact numbers and methods for voter information can be found at:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/Contacts/Contacts_new.html#

BY INTERNET: Residents can determine for which state and local district officials they will be voting for by checking the maps at:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/Information/Maps.html

However, since many of the streets used as election district boundaries are unlabeled on these maps, it may be difficult to ascertain where some districts change. Consequently, the State Board of Elections provides an alternative that identifies the specific election districts associated with a home address. Go to: <https://voterservices.elections.state.md.us/PollingPlacesSearch>, enter your house number, street name, and five digit Zip Code. It will display your polling place, voter districts, and County Board of Elections information.

Finally, if you are curious as to which areas were affected by the redistricting, this information can be found at:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Elections/Information/redistricting.html

Hearing on Bethesda Purple Line Station

The Planning Board has approved the Staff Draft for the Bethesda Purple Line Station Plan. A public hearing on the Draft Plan will be held on November 7, beginning at 6:00 p.m. in the Planning Board auditorium at 8787 Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring.

To get copies of the Plan, Appendix, and relevant powerpoint presentations, visit the Plan's website: www.montgomeryplanning.org/bethesdapurpleline

Information Resources on Bicycling By Peggy Dennis, Transportation Committee member

Following up on October's program on the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and all things promoting bicycling as a vital and viable transportation alternative, here are some additional sources for information.

DOT's Bikeways Website:
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/index.html#> Click on "Bikeways" for a drop down list of useful information.

311 Info on Bikes:
<http://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Search.aspx?SearchKey=bike>

DOT's information on road resurfacing, leaf & snow removal, street sweeping, curbs/gutters & sidewalks, tree maintenance, etc.
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-highway/index.html>

Montgomery County Bike Map:
<http://gis3.montgomerycountymd.gov/bikewaymap/>

Countywide Bikeway Functional Master Plan:
http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/transportation/bikeways/A_A/contents.shtm

E-mail: patricia.shepherd@montgomerycountymd.gov to join the Life in the Bike Lane email list.

Hackathon #hackMontgomery Paula Bienenfeld, First Vice President

The 2014 Hackathon is still in the planning stages and likely will be held in January 2014, to kick off the New Year. We are searching for a place to hold the

Hackathon, a place with wifi that can accommodate 25 people, near metro and public transit, and where we can serve food. If you have a suggestion for a suitable venue, please let me know by email:

Paula_Bienenfeld@yahoo.com. And please follow #hackMontgomery on twitter for updates and more information.

Minutes of the October 14 Meeting By Sue Schumacher, Co-Recording Secretary

Call to Order: President Carole Ann Barth called the meeting to order at 7:45. Introductions followed.

Agenda: The Planning and Land Use Committee asked that the resolution on MCCF Position on White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan that appears on page 4 of the newsletter be dropped from the agenda because the Council had asked the Planning Board to undertake more work on this matter. It was moved, seconded and passed to approve the agenda as amended.

Announcements: November 12th and 14th the County Council will hear comments on the zoning re-write. Marc Elrich will speak on the zoning re-write on November 4 at the Cashell Elementary School in Olney. This event is sponsored by 3 civic groups.

Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 9 meeting as they appeared in the Newsletter. The minutes were approved.

Treasurers Report: Jerry Garson reported that the Civic Fed's finances were in good shape.

Program: This month's program was on the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and the Trails Master Plan. David Anspacher, a Senior Planner with Parks and Planning Commission's Transportation Division, began the program addressing Bikeways Planning. He explained that bikeways are either off-road, bike lanes, assigned shared roadways and cycle tracks. In discussing the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, he said that there are also local area master plans showing bikeways. Currently the county has 1,000 miles of bike paths either in existence or planned. Next Carol Silldorff, representing Bike Maryland spoke. She said that her organization runs two safety programs. One is for adult commuter education, and the other one called Bike Friendly Maryland. She stressed that the law state-wide is that when passing a bicyclist, an automobile driver must be three feet to the left of the bicyclist. The next speaker was Casey Anderson, a Planning Commissioner. He spoke about the Capital Improvement Project to connect Rock Creek Trail to the Silver Spring Metro. He encouraged bicycle enthusiasts to get developers to put

in bike trails if such trails are in the Master Plan. There followed a question and answer concerning master plans and area plans. Next, Aruna Miller of the county's Department of Transportation explained how that the bikeways part of DOT overlaps with Park and Planning. She explained that bikes are not allowed on roadways with speed limits over 50mph and that bikes are allowed on sidewalks throughout the county. [editor's note: bikes are not permitted on sidewalks in the City of Gaithersburg] Ms. Miller enumerated things that affect bicycling such as resurfacing roadways, which she said is a great opportunity to put in bikeways.

Resolutions:

Resolutions Concerning Bicycle Safety as they appear on pages 2 and 3 of the October newsletter. It was moved and seconded. During discussion a friendly amendment was offered and accepted by Peggy Dennis, the co-author of the resolution. The friendly amendment was inserted in Part 3 that now readsbut not limited to affected schools **and that no right-of-way will be taken.** The vote was yes 10, no 3, zero abstentions. The resolution was approved.

Committee Reports:

Planning and Land Use: Eileen Finnegan urged those present to send in comments on the zoning rewrite to Nancy Floreen, County Council Chair of the PHED Committee.

Parks and Recreation: Carol Ann Barth announced that she has been appointed to the Forest Conservation Advisory Board.

Education: Paula Bienenfeld said that there will be hearings concerning the Rock Terrace School. She also said that the Hack-a-Thon has been postponed because of difficulty finding a suitable venue.

Legislation: Dan Wilhelm reported that the State delegates will be taking up legislation in January.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:43pm.

Minutes of the October 17 Executive Committee Meeting

By Co-Recording Secretary, Sandy Vogelgesang

The Executive Committee (ExComm) met at the home of Sandy Vogelgesang in Bethesda.

Call to Order. President Carole Ann Barth called the meeting to order at 7:55 PM. Present for the meeting: Carole Ann Barth, Paula Bienenfeld, Alan Bowser, Peggy

Dennis, Jerry Garson, Jim Humphrey, Harriet Quinn, Sue Schumacher, Virginia Sheard, Sandy Vogelgesang, Dan Wilhelm, and Jim Zepp.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda. Carole Ann called for and received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda.

Approval of Minutes for September 2013 ExComm Meeting. Carole Ann called for and received unanimous approval of the minutes as published in the October 2013 newsletter.

Treasurer's Report. Jerry Garson, Treasurer, provided a written update of Federation finances. He reported a current bank balance of \$15,059.67. Alan Bowser and Paula Bienenfeld agreed to provide research on options for alternative venues for monthly MCCF meetings. Dan Wilhelm agreed to provide update on membership.

Announcements. President Carole Ann Barth called for announcements.

- Sandy Vogelgesang reported on annual meeting, held on October 16, of the "Keep Montgomery County Beautiful" campaign, including recognition given for photography, landscaping and cleanup undertaken by local civic associations, schools and others.
- Alan Bowser reported that the Board of Conservation Montgomery will hold a meeting on the County Trail Plan, at Battery Park in Bethesda, November 8. He also noted the World of Montgomery Festival to be held in Wheaton on October 20.

Programs. Carole Ann introduced discussion of future programs.

- **November:** Jim Humphrey is arranging the program on the Zoning Code Rewrite. Marc Elrich, County Council member, will be the featured speaker. The program and MCCF decision on a position will provide the basis for Federation testimony at the hearing on the Zoning Code Rewrite on November 12.
- **December:** Jim Zepp will try to arrange program based on the work of the Night-time Economy Task Force.

Community Hero. ExComm endorsed the recommendation made by Paula Bienenfeld to recognize Lyda Astrove, educational activist, for her work on the investigation at Rock Terrace Elementary School.

Issues for Discussion. Carole Ann led discussion of the following:

- **Night-time Economy Task Force.** Jim Zepp, Public Safety Chair, had addressed most issues related to this topic (such as transit needs and sale of alcohol at restaurants) during discussion of proposed Federation programs. The Task Force has made presentations to County Regional Citizens' Advisory Boards and will be sending its recommendations to the County Executive. The Federation will be identifying issues of priority interest to members at the Federation's meeting in December.
- **Safe Healthy Playing Fields Coalition.** Peggy Dennis suggested that MCCF join the coalition. ExComm agreed to consider the proposal after the coalition completes next steps in organization.
- **Purchase of projector and microphone.** Paula Bienenfeld suggested these purchases to facilitate presentations at monthly delegates' meetings. Paula and Jim Zepp agreed to research options and report back to ExComm.
- **Review of newsletter content.** Harriet Quinn noted concerns raised by some Federation members about opinions expressed in some newsletter articles. ExComm agreed that it would be helpful to have more time for Committee reports and discussion of planned articles for the newsletter. Further, all members are encouraged to share their opinions and submit articles to the newsletter.

Committee Reports.

- **Legislation.** Dan Wilhelm, Chair, and Peggy Dennis reported on some bills of continuing interest to the Federation (sale of alcohol in all restaurants of national chains in the County, deer management, etc.). Dan indicated that the Delegation will have a hearing on priorities in November. In December, the Delegation will have hearings on local bills. In January and February, ExComm will review bills of interest that have been introduced during the session that begins in January.
- **Public Safety:** Jim Zepp, Chair, noted issues raised in discussion of Night-time Economy. (See above.) Peggy Dennis raised issue of encouraging Pepco to allow for a shared-use trail under high-tension wires extending from the Pepco sub station on Westlake Drive to Piney Branch Road. Although Jerry Garson noted the concerns of some in his neighborhood about such a proposal, Carole Ann Barth noted the precedent for trails on Pepco right-of-ways.

- **Education:** Paula Bienenfeld, Chair, reported on plan to work with the County Taxpayers' League and the Parents' Coalition for review of the MCPS budget on February 5, 2014.
- **Planning and Land Use:** Jim Humphrey, Chair, said that most work is still focused on the Zoning Code Rewrite.
- **Parks and Recreation:** Carole Ann, Chair, noted work of Forest Conservation Advisory Committee.

Old Business

- **WSSC setbacks and streamlining development:** Virginia Sheard reported on latest work concerning repair of large-diameter WSSC pipes. Work is underway to create a GIS data base on pipes, especially those that are in most urgent need of repair, and on efforts to improve communication with concerned communities. The ad hoc committee is to hold its last meeting in December and report in March 2014. Virginia also reported on work underway to help shorten the development process and make it more predictable.

New Business

- **Newsletter:** Peggy reviewed articles to be submitted for November newsletter.
- **Next ExComm meetings:** Nov. 21 at the BCC Regional Services Center and Dec. 19 (location TBA)

Adjournment: Carole Ann called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 10:40 PM.

Federation Meeting

Session 850

Monday, November 11, 2013
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building.
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

7:45 Call to Order & Introductions
7:50 Approval of Agenda
7:51 Announcements
7:54 Approval of Minutes of October 14 meeting
7:55 Treasurer's Report
8:00 Program: Zoning Code Rewrite
9:15 Vote: Resolution on Local Bills concerning
Liquor
9:20 Committee Reports
9:45 Adjournment

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation** is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization. It was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly Federation meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Monday of each month September through June at 7:45 p.m. in the First Floor Auditorium, County Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD. Free parking in garage accessed from Monroe St. or from Jefferson St. heading east from I-270.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly, except in July and August. It is mailed or emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. Permission is granted to reprint any article provided proper credit is given to the "**Civic Federation News of the Montgomery County Civic Federation.**"

Submit contributions for the next issue by: **Sunday, November 24**. Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text document, **attach** it to an e-mail, and send to **mccfnewsletter@gmail.com**

Please send all **address corrections** to Dan Wilhelm, 904 Cannon Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904, 301-384-2698, or djwilhelm@verizon.net.

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21

7:45 P.M.

**WEST MONTGOMERY REGIONAL SERVICES
CENTER, 2ND FLOOR**

4805 EDGEMOOR LANE, BETHESDA



**Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Civic Federation**

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