

Getting Press Attention for Your Community's Concerns | The September program will focus on specific steps you can take | **P. 3**

The Farm Road | Justice has been denied for too long for African-American residents | **P. 4**

A Fable of Synthetic Turf | Only plastic strands recycleable | **P. 6**

MCCF Officer Elections | New officers elected September 17 | **P. 9**

Legislative Priorities | County State Delegation briefed | **P. 10**
2019 Legislation Proposed | **P. 11**

County Council Proposes Small Cell Towers for Residential

Zones | Third time! | **P. 14**

Councilmembers Propose Another ZTA to Relax Standards for Accessory Apartments | **P. 16**

County Monopolies in the Spotlight | The Taxpayers League on WSSC, MCPS, and DLC | **P. 17**

Senior Call Check Program | State Dept. of Aging pilot | **P. 18**

Volunteers Needed | MCCF's Awards Committee is looking for a few good folks | **P. 18**

Like our new Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter.

TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, September 17, 2018, 7:45 p.m. @ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. *(Meeting delayed one week due to Rosh Hashanah holiday.)*
Program: "Getting Press Attention for Your Community's Concerns"
AGENDA, P. 2 • PROGRAM, P. 3

Meeting Minutes

Executive Committee Summer Planning Meeting **JULY**
[Note: No minutes for June meeting.]

Membership Application

It's time to renew your membership in the MCCF. See the story on **page 3**.
Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

Federation Meeting 897

Monday, September 17, 2018

7:45 p.m.

Lobby Level Auditorium
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, Rockville

AGENDA

- 7:00 Social Time for Members
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:52 Announcements
- 7:54 Treasurer's Report
- 7:55 Officer Election/Vote
- 8:00 **Program: Getting Press for Your Community's Concerns** **P.3**
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 9:35 Old and New Business/
Farm Road Resolution
- 9:45 Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

All monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public. They are usually held on the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:45 p.m.

The September meeting will be held in the **Lobby Level Auditorium of the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.**

Walkers can enter by buzzing security at the door. You can park for free either in the lot at E. Jefferson and Monroe Streets or in the lowest level of the EOB. Drive onto the ramp in the front of the building (ignore "permit parking only" sign), turn left at the second, lower level; use the intercom at the gate to the parking garage and at the door to the elevators to inform security you're attending the MCCF Meeting. ■

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.**, is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public (agenda and details at left).

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except July and August. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. **Recipients are encouraged to forward the Civic Federation News to all association members, friends, and neighbors.** Permission is granted to reproduce any article, provided that proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County (Md.) Civic Federation."

Civic Federation News

civicednews AT montgomerycivic DOT org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 19

Getting Press Attention for Your Community's Concerns

By Jim Zepp, Outgoing President

It has always been challenging for communities to get press coverage for the issues affecting their neighborhoods. Obviously it is a question of whether it is something that others would consider newsworthy, when so many issues may be competing for the attention of reporters and their media outlets, TV, radio, print media, and online publications and a public that is overwhelmed by information.

However, the decline of traditional news organizations, the reduction in local newspapers and reporting, and the pressures to produce content without the time and resources to conduct in-depth investigations means that writing staffs have minimal time to explore a story and understand technical complexi-

ties and different sides of an issue. Because agencies and public officials usually have the last word, citizens are often at a disadvantage in being unable to respond to false claims or different versions of reality that are posed by their opposition.

At the September 17 meeting, panelists will be asked how community groups can more effectively present their issues for reporters on tight deadlines and a need for stories that appeal to their audiences. Formats for press release and other forms of communication can be improved for media coverage such as activities appropriate for photo or video documentation. Brian Karem, Executive Editor for *The Sentinel* newspapers, will be on this panel. Several other local investigative reporters have been invited. ■

It's Time to Renew in MCCF

The Federation's membership year began on July 1. If your association has not yet sent its renewal, please print the [Membership Form available online](#), fill in the form, and pass it to your treasurer so it can be mailed in with the dues check as soon as possible so that you retain voting privileges and remain on our list for important communications and announcements.

In addition, if you have elected new officers, don't forget to update your contact information with the Planning Department so that you will receive updated information regarding nearby projects and updates. The Planning Department's updater tool can be found online at montgomeryplanning.org/tools/gis-and-mapping/interactive-maps/hoaca-tools. ■

The Farm Road—Justice Denied Too Long for African-American Residents

By Jim Zepp, Outgoing President

The Farm Road is a name that evokes images of a peaceful rural life, but has been a story of pain and loss for 11 poor African-American families and elderly homeowners who have had their land and homes taken from them through discriminatory government actions aiding a private developer. While a casual observer might think that this is an exhibit in the new Smithsonian African-American History Museum retelling an incident from 100 years ago, the Farm Road is a still unfolding issue that began only 12 years ago in the Sandy Spring area of Montgomery County, Md., which is a very wealthy and liberal suburb of Washington, D.C., and just a few miles away from the museum dedicated to documenting the injustices

inflicted on this country's minorities. By suddenly declaring Farm Road (the 100 year old, unpaved road that runs past their properties) as non-existent in 2006, the Maryland-National Capital Planning Commission (MNCPPC), the County planning agency (that has state agency status) and the Md. Dept. of Planning rendered the land worthless because the homeowners could no longer receive mail, utility and Internet services, or permits to build or improve their property.

During the years of tortured and conflicting explanations by various public officials for the nightmare that this historically Black community of freedmen and former slaves have been subjected to, some elderly residents have died and families have been torn apart by the uncer-

tainty and distress of their situation. Government obstructionism and discrimination across multiple agencies have persisted despite public and press attention to a matter that could be resolved by simply reversing the 2006 decision to remove Farm Road from the County tax map.

When an African-American Farm Road resident asked to have a street address assigned to her property, County planning officials denied her request. However, an adjacent homeowner, who is White, had no problem in obtaining a street address for his land. Senior agency staff were video-recorded stating that their procedures for processing such requests must be followed. In the same session, [these officials later admit that there are no written](#)

Farm Road, cont.

procedures for doing this.

This is only one example of the ongoing and confusing maze of contradictory and ever-expanding reasons used by an array of State and County officials to deny justice to the Farm Road residents. Sadly, their refusals to correct this injustice by Montgomery County and the State of Maryland are merely continuing a **longstanding tradition of American governmental actions that deny or delay responding to the rights of citizens, particularly the poor and minorities**, in order to benefit wealthy and powerful interests. As the *Associated Press* articles note, one explanation for the institutional resistance may be based on the fear that any admissions will bring attention to other abuses of power and illegal or improper actions by public

officials.

The Farm Road residents have had few resources to press their case to have the government acknowledge that a road which has been used for over 100 years and appears on U.S. Geological Survey maps, other government maps, and many deeds and other legal documents does indeed exist. They need financial assistance for legal representation and technical documentation of the rights and reality vigorously denied by the government. For more information on the Farm Road case and to help the residents regain their rights and property, please go to savesandyspring.org.

THE APPEARANCE OF EVIL: THE STORY OF THE FARM ROAD COMMUNITY

At its July 22, 2018, the Executive Committee adopted the fol-

lowing resolution to support seeking compensation for the affected minority property owners. Because the residents are poor and uneducated for dealing with bureaucratic obstructionism, they have needed help to document and pursue their case with two state agencies and the County government.

Be it resolved that the MCCF believes that the Farm Road Community members and their advocates should receive financial reparations in recognition of the injustice due to the denial of the full use of their property by African-American residents along the Farm Road resulting from government actions.

This resolution will voted on at the September regular meeting.

Precedents for doing so at the

MORE

A Fable of Synthetic Turf

By Bailey Condrey, Incoming President

The story begins roughly a decade ago, when a group of people were hearing a draft report by the Montgomery County Parks Department on the future direction that Parks would take for synthetic turf (ST). At the time, the assembled were told that ST would provide all kinds of benefits that grass fields simply could not deliver. Of roughly six different benefits touted by Parks at the time, 10 years later, the only one that has come close to being proven is that ST fields can withstand more hours of repetitive play than grass, but even this claim has caveats. The big "but," however, is that Parks and Montgomery County Public Schools have yet to build a state-of-the-art grass athletic field

from which real-world comparisons can be made to ST. This matters because the cost of ST is exorbitant compared to great grass.

The following relates to one of the other benefits touted at the time: ST can be recycled. The recycling pitch became part of the mantra used for selling ST to parents, athletic directors, and administrators. Experts in the plastics recycling industry pointed out in 2008 that this would be difficult to accomplish for the following reasons:

■ The industrial plastic carpets are made from several types of plastic.

■ Each individual plastic must be separated from the whole in order to improve each type's value.

■ Crumb rubber (CR), cork-onut, and zeolite infills all represent contamination that must be removed prior to processing. This step increases the cost to recycle anything,

■ *The only plastic in an ST carpet that recyclers deemed valuable were the plastic strands of grass, and these had to be sheared from the backing, increasing the cost of recovery for just the blades.*

Profit margins in the plastics

MORE

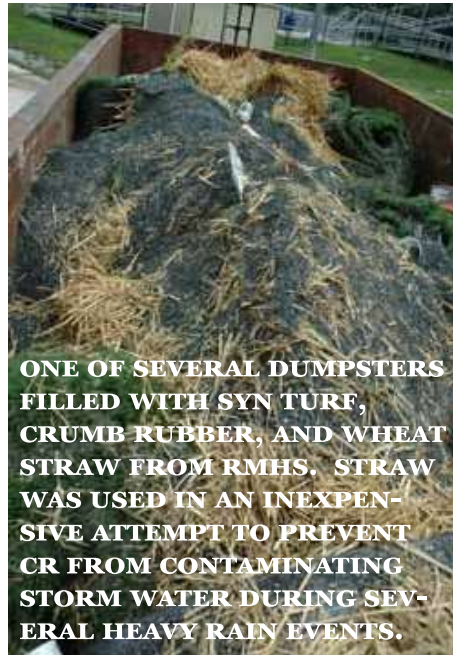
Farm Road, cont.

Federal level include the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which compensated Japanese-American civilians interred during World War II, many of whom were forced to abandon personal property, homes, businesses, and farms with little notice. The Claims Resolution Act was signed into law by President Obama to create a \$.5 billion fund to compensate Native Americans and Black farmers that had lost property and water rights by government actions. ■

Synthetic Turf Fable, cont.

recycling industry are pennies per pound and none of the experts contacted in 2008 about their interest in recycling ST wanted anything to do with this material. The presenter from Parks was provided this information when he made his recycling pitch. The Parks employee—also a Field Turf contractor—rebuffed the information and replied, “Just because you can’t recycle it today doesn’t mean it won’t be recycled at the end of its life.”

Which brings us to the present and the recent environmental scam surrounding the removal of the ST field at Richard Montgomery High School. A number of local citizens got wind of the removal underway at the school and decided to document how the company Sprinturf and MCPS managed the process. En-



ONE OF SEVERAL DUMPSTERS FILLED WITH SYN TURF, CRUMB RUBBER, AND WHEAT STRAW FROM RMHS. STRAW WAS USED IN AN INEXPENSIVE ATTEMPT TO PREVENT CR FROM CONTAMINATING STORM WATER DURING SEVERAL HEAVY RAIN EVENTS.

vironmental stewardship was not a top priority, despite claims made by MCPS.

A company named TurfCycle had offered to ensure that the plastic rug was recycled using “the most environmentally beneficiary solution in the world.” This chain-of-custody letter was a public relations gambit offered by a company unlicensed to operate in Maryland, with no permanent business address, but that didn’t stop MCPS from spending tax dollars to award TurfCycle the contract to “recycle” the turf.

In a letter dated July 30, 2018, MCPS Chief Financial Officer Andrew Zuckerman made a number of claims that simply are not supported by facts on the ground. He stated, “In this case, the entire field system, which includes the carpet and infill material, is being reused by a recreational facility in the White Marsh area and others outside of Maryland.”

But the ST from RMHS was full

MORE

Synthetic Turf Fable, cont.

of crumb rubber when it left the school and not all of the rolls on the tractor trailer were actually left at the paint ball course within hundreds of yards of the Bird River in White Marsh on Pulaski Highway. The remainder was destined for the landfill in Brunswick, Va.

The majority of Montgomery County citizens tend to be environmentally conscious of risks to the environment. Synthetic turf poses a large, ongoing, human and environmental health risk. The inescapable message from the RMHS ST field replacement is that environmental stewardship had nothing to do with this project. Once MCPS signed the Chain of Custody letter, it was out of sight and out of mind. As thousands of these fields nationwide and several within the MCPS ST program

reach replacement age, they will not be recycled.

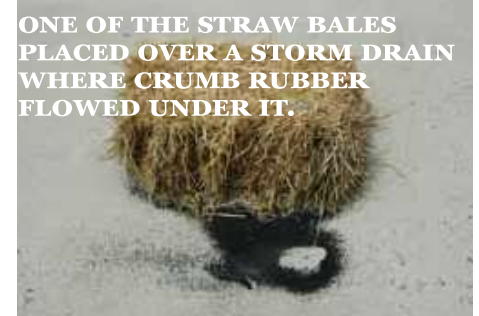
Recyclers have already placed greater restrictions on the plastics that are relatively easy to recycle. Synthetic turf carpeting full of infill is a recycler’s nightmare and will not even get delivered to a material handler’s lot. It’s a money loser. So a reality check means that anyone selling ST with the promise of recycling is a liar, and this industry selling point can no longer be used as a reason for choosing it for children’s playing surfaces.

Does it matter to parents of MCPS children that they enable a system whereby microplastics pollution becomes entrenched for the foreseeable future in the most populous county in Maryland, which drains to the Chesapeake Bay? This pollution damages the health of watersheds and enters the food chain.

Perhaps contaminants from these fields already have made their way into the chicken tenders so popular with little people.

This recent article from *Scientific American* reveals the crux of the issue about plastics: **More Recycling Won’t Solve Plastic Pollution** (Scientific American Blog Network).

Now that we’re all more familiar with the issue, what are we going to do about adults’ addiction to synthetic turf? ■



ONE OF THE STRAW BALES PLACED OVER A STORM DRAIN WHERE CRUMB RUBBER FLOWED UNDER IT.

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT?

*Need to share
a community concern?*

*Want to know how to do
something for your own
civic association?*

*Would like to meet
your fellow civic activists?*

Come early to the September 17 meeting. From 7:00 to 7:45 p.m., members of the MCCF Executive Committee will be available to talk in the EOB Auditorium. Light refreshments will keep you from going hungry. Be social, be a part of the civic movement, and be there.

MCCF Officer Elections Scheduled for September Meeting

Election of MCCF Officers for the 2018-2019 membership year will take place during the September 17 General Meeting. The following delegates have been recommended by the Nominations Committee:

■ **President:** *Bailey Condrey* (Parkwood Residents Association)

■ **First Vice-President:** *Alan Bowser* (Park Hills Civic Association)

■ **Second Vice-President:** *Karen Cordry* (Kensington Heights Citizens Association)

■ **Treasurer:** *Jerry Garson* (Regency Estates Citizens Association)

■ **Secretary:** *Open/Nominations Welcome.*

We are seeking nominations for Secretary or Co-Secretary. If you have an interest in this position, please let us know via email (*info AT montgomerycivic DOT org*). Additional nominations for all positions may be made at the meeting from the floor.

MCCF Officers serve one-year terms. The President is limited to two terms by the by-laws. (The complete MCCF by-laws that specify the duties of each officer are [available on the MCCF website](#). Terms start normally from end of the June meeting to the end of the June meeting the following year. ■



MCCF ExCom Holds Legislative Priorities Briefing

By Jim Zepp, Outgoing President

The MCCF Executive Committee invited the 32 members of the County State Delegation to discuss their own legislative priorities for the 2019 Session and to hear proposals new bills by the MCCF (see list beginning on next page). Seven current members and one likely future member accepted our invitation to meet on Aug. 21:

- Del. Al Carr, Dist. 18
- Del. Bonnie Cullison, Dist. 19
- Del. Jim Gilchrist, Dist. 17
- Del. Ben Kramer, Dist. 19
- State Sen. Susan Lee, Dist. 16
- Del. Maricé Morales, Dist. 19
- Del. Lily Qi, Dist. 15
- Del. Jeff Waldstreicher, Dist. 18

By taking time from their busy summer schedules to listen to constituents on important matters,

these legislators deserve our appreciation.

Because of the [deadlines for submitting new bills are in early October and November](#), it is important to know what our state representatives may be considering for new legislation and to raise our ideas for possible adoption.

In 2016, the Executive Committee had a similar meeting with members of the County State Delegation. This resulted in legislation creating Inspector Generals for MNCPPC and WSSC.

Because the meeting was with state legislators, the proposals must involve concerns that can be addressed through state-level laws, regulations, or programs, must address issues that are related to past MCCF positions or activities or pro-

moted government accountability or transparency.

The five legislative proposals for the attendees' consideration begin on the next page; the Executive Committee member who presented the idea for new legislation is noted.

Overall, the general reaction was positive by the legislators. Except for one, all stayed for the entire evening's program and were engaged in the discussions. None of the proposals drew a reaction of being unacceptable.

The Executive Committee will try to keep the lines of communication open to the County State Delegation to provide support to any initiatives that are consistent with MCCF's positions, concerns for our membership, and positive impact on Montgomery County residents and communities.

2019 Session Legislative Proposals for County State Delegation

**TO INSURE THE FINANCIAL
AND OPERATIONAL INTEGRITY
OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS BY THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE
EDUCATION INSPECTOR
GENERAL**

Presenter: Jerry Garson

Proposed Legislation: Spending for public schools are the largest expenditure for most local governments. However, their status as a state agency exempts from them from effective local oversight, while state government lacks any capacity beyond conducting occasional and very brief reviews relative to the scope and scale of the funds, operations, and personnel involved. The state-mandated Maintenance of Effort (MOE) assures continued escalation of education funding while providing no assurance of performance or linkage to needs. This sets up a perfect situation for corruption and inefficiency within a large bureaucracy that has little direct accountability or meaningful oversight outside of itself.

The frequent revelations of failures to follow academic rules grading and graduation of students, procurement scandals, and personnel abuses are indicators for the need to establish an effective oversight structure for public school systems. As is done with some federal program evaluations and auditing standards, resources for review are allocated by amounts at risk.

**JUSTICE FOR HISTORIC
AFRICAN-AMERICAN FARM
ROAD COMMUNITY BY
GRANTING REPARATIONS FOR
LOSS OF PROPERTY USE AND
VALUE DUE TO GOVERNMENT
ACTIONS**

Presenter: Jim Zepp

Proposed Legislation: Starting in 2006, 11 poor African-American elderly and families living in the Sandy Spring area—due to actions by MNCPPC and the Maryland Department of Planning (both state agencies)—rendered this community homeless and prevented the full use of their properties. This loss has imposed direct and indirect costs to the residents and their supporters that have helped to document and pursue their case for redress.

This proposal would seek fair compensation for the impacts of government actions since 2006. Because of the egregious manner in which this incident occurred and continues, it goes beyond a taking of private property.

MORE

**ENSURING SCHOOL CHILDREN
SAFETY BY ESTABLISHING A
PENALTY FOR MANDATORY RE-
PORTERS WHO FAIL TO REPORT
SEXUAL ABUSE INCIDENTS
AND LIFTING THE STATUTE OF
LIMITATIONS FOR REPORTING
CHILD SEXUAL ASSAULTS**

Presenter: Bailey Condrey

Proposed Legislation: This would correct the situation in which Maryland and Wyoming are the only two states where no legal penalty exists for failing to comply with mandatory reporting of complaints of sexual abuse occurring in their facilities or to children under their care; and lifting the statute of limitations to allow instances of abuse to be reported after children reach the age of 18.

The purpose is to ensure that complaints are properly investigated for their credibility and offenders are prevented from further criminal and harmful activities by being allowed to abuse children in other schools, districts, or parishes, rendering background checks pointless.

**PROTECTING TREES AND
ENSURING EFFECTIVE
DEVELOPMENT REVIEW**

Presenter: Carole Barth

Proposed Legislation: Development review is based on plans and information submitted by applicants. Applicants can evade requirements by submitting falsified plans. There are many examples of applicants cheating the system in this way. There are even cases where a party has fraudulently obtained a building permit for land they don't own, thus effectively having government complicit in land theft. Shockingly, there is no penalty for falsifying many plan submissions, and no recourse for landowners or communities victimized by such deceptions.

Legislation is needed to add the words "under penalty of perjury" to the Forest Conservation Plan Application and to other required submittals (such as Natural Resource Inventories). This would require amending state law Natural Resources Article 5-1601-1613. Secondly, we need a local bill to re-

MORE

Legislative Proposals, cont.**STATEWIDE G-MAX LIMIT FOR
PROTECTING USERS OF SYN-
THETIC TURF ATHLETIC FIELDS***Presenter: Bailey Condrey*

quire the same certification on preliminary plans and other required submittals.

This is a reasonable requirement, one that already exists on the Sediment Control Permit Application: "I declare and affirm, under penalty of perjury, that, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief, all matters and facts in this application are correct."

Proposed Legislation: The dominant school district in the state, Montgomery County Public Schools, only tests its synthetic turf athletic fields once a year for G-MAX hardness and it allows this score to reach 200. How many other school districts in the state follow this practice? Athletic field management experts have stated a G-MAX of 200 can prove fatal and induce serious injuries. With the continuing proliferation of these fields across Maryland, it seems prudent that the state legislature ensure that children are protected from these fields growing overly hard.

Therefore, the state should require that all school districts installing and maintaining synthetic turf sustain G-MAX levels on these fields below a score of 175. The NFL requires G-MAX scores of 160 on the League's ST fields.

Seventeen stadiums out of 31 in the League use synthetic turf. Quarterly reporting of ST field G-MAX scores should be sent to the school jurisdiction's compliance officer and fields out of compliance should be closed until safe for use and warning signs posted until the work is completed. ■

County Council Proposes Small Cell Towers for Residential Zones Once Again

By Harriet Quinn, Chair, Planning and Land Use Committee

On July 24, County Council President Riemer introduced, for the third time, a new Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to relax standards for establishing small cell towers in residential zones. The public hearing is scheduled for September 25 at 7:30 p.m. Residents may [sign up to testify here](#).

ZTA 18-11, "Telecommunications Towers—Limited Use," would eliminate the public hearings now required for 14 residential zones and would reduce the required setback from a residential dwelling from 60 feet to 30 feet. The ZTA would also provide for equipment boxes in the right-of-way of 20 cubic feet, large enough for a person to stand in. These poles could be located every



few hundred feet on every pole in our residential neighborhoods.

Furthermore, the County currently has no provisions for post-installation inspection. As a result, quite a number of poles in the County are not in the location cited on the application and are much closer to homes than are currently permitted by law. A provision should be instituted to mandate post installation inspection and certification so that the poles are in the correct place and operating safely. This reform should occur before any additional legislation is adopted.

In addition to having discussed and decided standards for this issue during the seven-year-long Zoning Rewrite process finalized in 2014, industry advocates have lobbied our

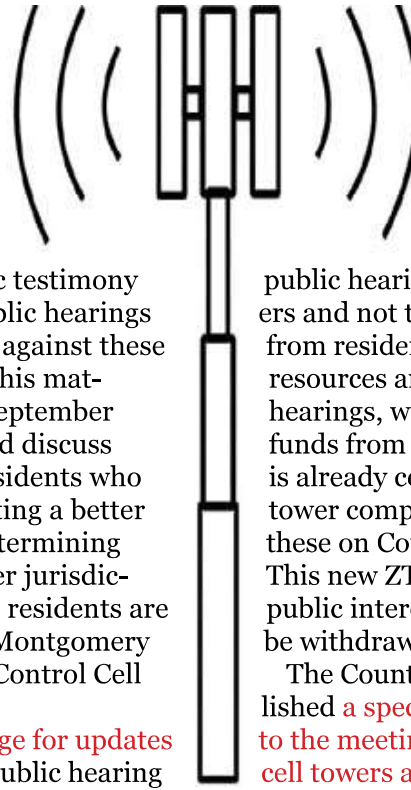
Cell Towers, cont.

elected officials hard for the same erosion of standards in two other ZTAs: ZTA 18-02 and ZTA 16-05. Like ZTA 16-05, the current proposed ZTA 18-11 was introduced in the middle of summer, while most civic organizations are in recess and without any discussion with stakeholders. The entire County Council had just unanimously decided on May 14 to not make any changes to the residential zones and to wait to see how the ZTA 18-02 adopted changes in the commercial zones worked before taking up residential zones. Now Councilmembers and the County Executive want to change the rules again before waiting to see what effect their most recent relaxation of standards has had on service.

At the September 12, 2016,

meeting of the MCCF, the membership adopted a resolution to oppose elimination of these public hearings as well as the setback reduction in residential zones. Public testimony at three previous public hearings was overwhelmingly against these ZTAs. We will take this matter up again at our September 17, 2018, meeting and discuss ongoing efforts of residents who have worked on crafting a better ZTA as a result of determining best practices of other jurisdictions. Many of these residents are participating in the Montgomery County Coalition to Control Cell Towers, MC4T.org.

Check [our webpage for updates](#) as we approach the public hearing



date on September 25. We encourage residents to write to the Council (county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov) to urge them not to discontinue

public hearings for these towers and not to reduce the setback from residences. If additional resources are needed to conduct hearings, we recommend using funds from the fees the County is already collecting from the cell tower companies that are placing these on County-owned property. This new ZTA is clearly not in the public interest and we ask that it be withdrawn.

The County Executive has established [a special webpage with links to the meetings and maps where cell towers are proposed](#). ■

Councilmembers Propose Another ZTA to Relax Standards for Accessory Apartments

By Harriet Quinn, Chair, Planning and Land Use Committee

The County Council has once again proposed relaxing the standards for accessory apartment approval. This was an issue that was thoroughly discussed and debated during the seven-year-long Zoning Rewrite and decided in 2014. The proposed [Zoning Text Amendment \(ZTA\) 18-07](#), "Accessory Residential Uses—Accessory Apartments," is the third ZTA in four years on accessory apartments and, like other ZTAs, was proposed just before the Council recess, in the middle of summer on July 17 and after the primary election, without any consultation with public stakeholders.

The proposed ZTA would eliminate public hearings and change

all accessory apartments applications to a "limited use" for administrative approval in all residential zones and would make detached accessory apartments a limited use in seven residential zones.

The Council claims that, by eliminating conditional use hearings, reducing standards for parking and the distance between apartments, they are providing more affordable housing for tenants. But data show that these new apartments are being used for short-term rentals (less than 30 days) such as Airbnb for travelers rather than long-term tenants. The Council has no data to show that their actions have actually increased available affordable units for long-term tenants and have made no effort to track this.

The public hearing on this ZTA has been scheduled during the middle of the day on September 11 at 1:30 p.m. on the Council's first day back after six weeks recess and is already closed because it is limited to five speakers.

One of the objectives of the seven-years-long comprehensive Zoning Rewrite was to reduce the number of ZTAs by the County Council. But the current Council has introduced 77 ZTAs during the last four years and enacted 70 percent of them. Many of them revisit issues that were previously decided after public participation in the zoning rewrite and subsequent ZTAs. There has been no reduction in the number of ZTAs since the comprehensive Zoning Rewrite. ■

County Monopolies in the Spotlight

By Gordie Brenne, Vice President of the Mont. County Taxpayers League

Just a quick update on the how we are trying to shape public policies governing the three largest monopolies in the state: Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, Mont. Co. Public Schools for poor kids, and the Department of Liquor Control.

WSSC

Richard Boltuck and I filed a complaint in July arguing WSSC was noncompliant with the PSCs 2017 order to implement nondiscriminatory rates. In July, the Commission approved a new inclining block rate structure for implementation in July 2019. The new inclining block rate structure differs from the unique 16-tier rate structure it will replace because the older structure charged

all consumption at the rate in high-est tier of consumption, while the new structure charges consumption in each tier by the stated rate for that tier. Both rate structures charge larger users more than smaller residential customers, who are subsidized by larger water users.

We are considering a follow-up complaint arguing that the new rate structure is still discriminatory against larger households, government and commercial users. In addition, the Council's T&E committee will consider in October another large rate increase.

MCPS

A study of its strategic planning process is nearing completion, including how to close the achieve-

MORE

CIVIC FED TONIGHT!

SEEKING POSSIBLE SPEAKERS FOR YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETINGS?

Members of the MCCF Executive Committee have extensive experience in issues such as transportation, land use and zoning, schools, parks, environmental concerns, taxes, and public spending. Plus, they have a community-oriented perspective on these matters. If you would like an executive committee member to speak at a meeting, contact the MCCF President at [president AT montgomerycivic DOT org](mailto:president@montgomerycivic.org). Include topics/possible dates.

County Monopolies, cont.

ment gap. The draft report will be presented to the Strategic Planning committee of the Board on September 17 (televised at 10:00 a.m.) and is expected to call for more targeted strategies, with definitive timetables and budget linkages, and better information for parents and teachers to successfully implement strategies.

DLC

The last county level liquor control unit in the nation remains in business, in spite of reported fraud, conflicts of interest between it's enforcement arm and sales and distribution activities, and a declining contribution to county revenues which dropped to \$10M last year. The DLC Director will answer questions at the Taxpayers League's Oct. 17 meeting; the public is invited. ■



Maryland Begins Senior Call Check Pilot Program

Some seniors who live alone may benefit from this program. Please spread the word. The Maryland Department of Aging is piloting a program to call seniors once a day to check in on them. Signing up for the program is through the [Department of Aging website](http://www.marylandaging.org), or call 1.800.243.3425 to register.

The website registration is in English. However, calls to seniors can be made in other languages. ■

Volunteers Needed for MCCF Awards Committee

MCCF is seeking volunteers to serve on the Annual Awards Selection Committee [The Wayne Goldstein Award, The Sentinel Award, and The Star Cup]. The work of the Awards Selection Committee includes accepting nominations for award recipients, evaluating those nominations, and making final recommendations on the awardees. The Awards will be given in June, currently planned for the regular June meeting.

The work of the Committee should be of short duration and may be done largely by phone. If you can help with the Awards Selection Committee or have an award nomination, contact us at [info AT montgomerycivic DOT org](mailto:info@montgomerycivic.org). We cannot do this without your help! ■

Minutes of the MCCF Annual ExCom Planning Meeting

By Carole Ann Barth

The Executive Committee's 2018 planning meeting was held July 22nd at the home of Jerry Garson. Jim Zepp, Bailey Condrey, Jerry Garson, Harriet Quinn, Carole Ann Barth, and Jacquie Bokow were in attendance.

Since the election of officers did not take place at the June meeting as planned, and the slate of nominees was incomplete, the ExCom decided to send a letter to the membership soliciting nominations. The nomination committee agreed to meet in time to publicize a slate in the September newsletter. (See page 9.)

Monthly program topics for the 2018–2019 year were agreed upon. However, the topics and schedule are (as always) subject to change to accommodate breaking issues and/

or based upon availability of speakers.

Next was planning of annual events. The group agreed to invite current members of the Montgomery County delegation to discuss MCCF legislative priorities for the 2019 session at a special event to be held in August. The annual awards event will take place at the June meeting, and light refreshments will be provided.

It was agreed that MCCF would open a Constant Contact account for communicating with the membership and collecting dues. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org

info AT montgomerycivic.org

Twitter Feed @mccivicfed

[MCCF Facebook Page](#)

cfm

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except July and August by the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. Recipients are encouraged to forward the *Civic Federation News* to all association members, friends, and neighbors. Permission is granted to reproduce any article, provided that proper credit is given to the "Civic Federation News of the Montgomery County (Md.) Civic Federation."

Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month. Send to CFN at civicfednews@montgomerycivic.org.

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

VIEW PAST ISSUES ONLINE [HERE](#)