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Seeking Meeting Speakers? | If your civic association needs a speaker on a topic, avail yourselves of the expertise within the MCCF Executive Committee | **P. 16**

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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, October 8, 2018, 7:45 p.m. @ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. Topic: "The Proposed I-270 and I-495 Expansion Project"

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September Meeting Minutes

General Sept. 17 Meeting *Unavailable*
Executive Committee Meeting **P.15**

Get involved. MCCF needs a secretary or two co-secretaries to take minutes.

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

Federation Meeting 898

Monday, October 8, 2018

7:45 p.m.

Lobby Level Auditorium
Executive Office Building

101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland

AGENDA

- 7:00 Social Time for Members
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:56 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 Program: Proposed I-270 and I-495 Expansion Project **P.3**
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 9:35 Old and New Business
- 9:45 Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

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

The October 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.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 18

October's Program: The Proposed I-270 and I-495 Expansion Project

By Jerry Garson, Transportation Committee Chair

Last year Governor Hogan announced that the Maryland State Highway Administration would initiate a study of the possible widening the entire Capital Beltway (I-495) both in Montgomery County and Prince George's County. The study would also include widening I-270 by two lanes in each direction in Montgomery and Frederick Counties.

The Civic Federation will have its October 8, 2018, meeting to present additional information on these studies. Our guest speakers will be **Chris Conklin**, Deputy Director for Transportation Policy with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, and **Carol Rubin**, the Acting Deputy Planning Director of the Montgomery County Planning

Department, a part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a bi-County agency which owns a significant amount of land that could be used if the widening occurs.

MNCPPC strongly recommends three key changes to the *I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study Purpose and Need Statement* to align it with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):

- Delete references to "managed lanes," as this defines a solution rather than the problem or need;

- Include a more-thorough analysis and explanation of the problems that are to be addressed;

- Establish and include more robust, measurable objectives; and

- Emphasize equitable transportation solutions that address the

mobility of all users by providing a range of transportation options.

We hope that one of the questions that has been raised by some residents could be answered. The question is, should the study of the Beltway be broken into three segments? The first is the portion of the Beltway known as I-95, totally in Prince George's County. The second is the portion of the Beltway between the Western Spur of I-270 and the American Legion Bridge. The third portion is the section between Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355) and I-95, mostly in Montgomery County.

Each segment has totally different traffic patterns. Almost every weekday morning, the traffic heading westbound between New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard

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October Program, cont.

has a peak traffic volume between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. Is this because the exits at US 29/Colesville Road, MD 97/Georgia Avenue, and MD 185/Connecticut Avenue cannot receive the traffic that wants to exit at these locations? In the afternoon periods, the road in this segment nearly reaches the speed limit and carries significantly more traffic.

We hope that we can receive answers to why the State Department of Transportation is now limiting the study of I-270 to only the portion of I-270 from I-495 to I-370, including the east and west spurs. In the afternoon hours, most of the congestion occurs northbound after I-370 on the main line of I-270. The State is starting Future Study I-270 from I-370 north to I-70 beginning in 2019. ■

Montgomery Co. Public Schools' Emerging Strategic Plan

By Bailey Condrey, President

Society for decades has poked fun at nerds. Some might say that I was a nerd in high school, which may explain my affinity for hearing what they have to say even today. It's amazing what one can learn in a short period of time by listening to them, especially number-crunching accountants.

So Wednesday evening, 09-26-18, I attended the Mont. Co. Taxpayers League meeting on the subject of the MCPS 2017/2018 Strategic Plan. According to Andrew Kleine, "the plan has been developed internally by staff with no outside input, sparse use of data and numbers, but overwhelmingly complicated." Kleine is the past budget director for the City of Baltimore, where he held this position for a decade, helping to bring

the city through the Great Recession and near insolvency.

Kleine has been hired by MCPS Superintendent Dr. Jack Smith to work with Smith's chief of staff—Dr. Henry Johnson—and senior administrative staff to work out the serious issues that Smith feels the draft plan must overcome. For instance, the Strategic Plan has been online within the MCPS website for some time, but only 24 people have left comments, the last one offered nine months ago. Has promotion been sufficient?

The consultant Kleine has stressed with the MCPS team that they must take outside input from a variety of groups, including parents, teachers, and principals. His analysis to date has resulted in the compilation of a 44-page presentation

MORE

MCPS Strategic Plan, cont.

deck full of recommendations and insights on how to simplify and better focus the plan. It's not enough to constantly throw money at an organization and expect to create better outcomes if performance metrics, milestones, and data analysis are not more widely utilized. Kleine suggested that "online and personal discussions about balancing the budget should be employed."

The current MCPS Strategic Plan (labeled 2017–2018 but still in process) [can be found online here](#).

The MCPS Strategic Plan Review, a presentation to the BOE Strategic Planning Cmte. by Dr. Andrew Kleine, 09-17-18, can be [found online here](#).

The MCTL sent the following recommendations to the Montgomery County Board of Education following Kleine's presentation:

The Taxpayers League met with Andrew Kleine on 09-26-18 to discuss the presentation you received on September 17. We strongly support Mr. Kleine's approach and recommendations.

Those in attendance at the meeting were members of the taxpaying community, very few of whom were directly connected with MCPS, the unions, or the PTAs, and none of whom had heard of the strategic plan. Bailey Condrey, President of the Civic Federation, was also in attendance, as well as many seeking elective office in State District 15. The consensus was that a strong continuing commitment by the Superintendent to integrating results-oriented strategic planning with the budget process is vital to success. We had a lively discussion and came up with three major ideas to help implement the recommended

process improvements:

1. School Community Engagement. *Aligning School Improvement Plans with the larger strategic planning process can be best done by presenting the one-page outcomes and indicator summary to as many schools as possible over the next year and getting parent and teacher ideas for strategies and measures to include in the 18 strategic plans that will be developed, including any unique school level strategies. Bottom line: parent, teacher, and principal buy-in and input, along with that of other key stakeholders, will create a much more informed and lasting process.*

2. Data Analyses. *Turn the Curve Analysis is a fancy name for root cause analysis, and is very resource-intensive. These analyses must be done for each of the 18*

MORE

MCPS Strategic Plan, cont.

strategic plans to design strategies and measures that work, and to incorporate the program analyses for performance and priority. Each of the plans will need leadership and effort." Schools will want to do this, too, for their unique needs and may require technical assistance. The first year template will require a one-time surge in analytical resources to complete the plan before the next school year. Extending Mr. Kleine's contract, who is already familiar with the system, or contracting with a major firm for this support could provide needed independence and expertise on gap-closing solutions to lend credibility to the plan, which is just as important as tools.

3. Budget Integration. *The Taxpayers League believes that*

it is the strategic plan that should drive the budget process and not vice versa. The annual budget presentation needs to include a strategic orientation, showing the base and incremental costs of each major strategy and performance improvements it will buy. This is particularly important for programs/strategies for closing—or narrowing—the achievement gap. And, equally important, overhead costs must be built into programs and strategies so that the true cost of these is open and transparent for comparison to alternatives. While it will take a while to convince state supervisors that outcomes are more important than inputs, program analysis should be used to weed out programs that don't work and link programs to strategies.

The Montgomery County Taxpayers League stands behind you as

you implement this new and challenging management oversight of our public school system.

—Joan Fidler, President, and Gordie Brenne, Vice President

The MCCF provides this information to better inform the citizens and communities that constitute our membership of this vital undertaking to meaningfully improve public school children's education in Mont. Co., in ways that focus on children and can be proved by simply searching for the data. World and workforce dynamics require that young people publically educated in Mont. Co. get the tools to function effectively regardless of career path chosen. Seeking outside input from the citizens of one of the most highly educated regions of the United States is one of Kleine's strongest suggestions. MCPS should

MORE

MCPS Strategic Plan, cont.

make performance measures readily available to taxpayers to reveal how successful the emerging plan has become and where more work needs to be done.

The MCCF also extends its hand to MCPS to help organize any Strategic Plan meetings it may want to schedule with stakeholders to hear feedback on the plan. We also extend our best wishes to the MCPS family, parents, teachers, principals, students, counselors, and administrators that the existing SP delivers results for its clients and proves to the taxpayers that their money is well-spent.

MCPS receives the following large amounts of money annually from the citizens of the County and State:

- A 2.6 billion operational budget,
- A \$1.8 billion Capital budget, and

■ Roughly \$400 million from the county council to pay interest on the debt, and for nurses, police and other school programs.

Because of the Maintenance of Effort law, MCPS automatically rakes in more money each year. What troubles accountants when this amount of money changes hands every year lies in presenting the proof that it is working. A recent article in *The Washington Post* reveals that grade inflation may be a reality and ongoing reports convey persistent serious challenges. The status quo is not working and giving MCPS more money is not the answer. The current Strategic Plan may prove to be the challenge to which numerous stakeholders rise to provide verifiable, improved outcomes for publicly educated children, but MCPS has to open the door and allow it to happen. ■

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 October 8 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 here.

Synthetic Turf's Fables—An Ongoing Tale at Montgomery County Public Schools

By Bailey Condrey, President

WJLA's Nathan Baca recently joined Dr. Kathy Michels and activist Diana Conway, both members of the Safe Healthy Playing Fields Coalition, at Walter Johnson High School to look at the aging synthetic turf athletic field.

This particular synturf surface was documented to have failed safety tests more than two years ago. The field has been patched in numerous places because the original defective Duraspine grass blades broke or came loose prematurely. The patch jobs reveal how long synturf blades should be and how short they have become on the original portions of the field. The shorter blades can't hold the tire-crumbs in place, so the field's heavy use and the incessant rain that has fallen have washed

the tire-crumbs into waves that undulate across the field. The meandering tire crumb creates some areas with inadequate softness, while other areas have too much infill and are too soft.

These conditions defeat the central virtue claimed by synturf advocates: a weather-proof, predictable, even playing surface for 8–12 years. As the plastic rug wears down, the frequency of grooming and maintenance has to go up, or else the field quickly becomes unsafe. That costs more money, which defeats another synturf claim: cheaper. But MCPS claims that the field remains safe, so no problem.

This video shows these undulating waves of mostly loose infill mixed with broken grass fibers. The undulating waves are similar to the ones

that the ocean leaves on a beach. A properly functioning synturf field should not have these rain-generated waves. Plastic grass blades of the proper length should hold the infill in place even in the rain. Torrential rains pose issues for synturf as well. The light crumb rubber is lifted and swept into storm drains surrounding the field. The same result will occur with alternative infills like PBI (plant-based infill), the crunchy zeolite (a version of kitty litter), or the plastic beads used on some pitches.

The video also shows infill- and grass blade-clogged drains. Synturf suppliers say this isn't supposed to happen. However, the WJHS field has been in failure for 27 months, which translates to millions of individual micro-plastic tire crumb bits

Syn Turf at MCPS, cont.

and grass blade slivers released into the watershed. The drains also are blocked by broken synturf chunks, chunks of concrete field underlay, and plastic water bottles. The video also depicts SHPFC members lifting handfuls of plastic fibers from within the field drains. Several shoe boxes would be required to hold the waves of defective grass blades, just in the area shown in the video.

Remember: The entire WJHS field has been in failure for more than two years. Where has all of the other material gone? According to MCPS' Andrew Zuckerman, it's contained within the subterranean traps built beneath the synturf. We have asked Board of Education members if they can show us these schematic diagrams so that we can find and examine the traps, but we have yet to

see either one.

With no regulations governing how these fields are managed by the state, the county, MCPS, or their contractors, this has become a total environmental crapshoot. If MCPS doesn't have the money to fix or replace significant point sources of aquatic pollution under its supervision, why are they planning on installing more of these fields? Short of proving the existence of the underground traps and their ability to protect local watersheds, why are we repeating these ridiculous mistakes?

CONFRONTING THE REALITY OF THIS PRODUCT

Which brings us to the children, and the raw deal they continually receive from the adults placing these pitches in their lives. MCPS has an achievement gap they are working to close. These fields rob Peter and

Paul by placing demands on budgets that should not be surrendering funds to pay for new synturf fields, and the growing number of replacements coming due. This looming cost is not part of the discussion. Where are the plans for the great grass field pilot that would cost roughly 25 percent of the newest synturf field being constructed? Mike Ozanian at *Forbes Magazine* can tell you about this.

But back to the children, the same children who should be allowed to play on grass to avoid the incredibly hot and rising temperatures that synturf forces them to endure. Great grass fields rarely get hotter than 90°F, while synturf locally can soar as high as 160°F. When the next spring, summer, or fall, climate change-generated heat wave arrives, these fields will begin

MORE

Syn Turf at MCPS, cont.

melting as they have in California and other states that have been baked by heat waves.

With grass, children are allowed to breathe the natural mix of healthy air that lies above a grass field. They're exposed to soil and chlorophyll. In the noxious cloud generated by synturf, they get to inhale a mixture that any chemistry student knows gets vented into an exhaust fan at arm's length from their nose.

These fields result in children and everything that lives in the watershed being exposed to the unmonitored, undisclosed distribution of lead, mercury, zinc, 11 known carcinogens, flame-retardants, phthalates, endocrine disruptors, polycyclic-aromatic hydrocarbons, volatile organic compounds, semi-VOCs, and carbon nanotubes (an asbestos-twin). You

can also throw into the mix numerous known irritants of lung, eye, and skin; suspected carcinogens; and undisclosed chemicals, since tire manufacturers don't have to divulge tire recipes. Finally, throw in flame retardants and the biocides and fungicides used to treat things that grass and soil would naturally decompose: blood, vomit, snot, spit, sweat, urine, feces, hair, candy and drinks.

All this, field by field, day after day, child by child, year after year, with temperatures exceeding 160°F. But wait, MCPS says its going to use Zeolite as the infill for the new and replacement synturf fields in the MCPS program. **Clinoptilolite Zeolite** has a Material Safety Data Sheet here. It's mined volcanic rock that creates dust and contains silica. SILICA—what's not to love?

Recent news stories on synturf can be found in the following links:

■ **9-17-18:** D.C.-region ABC affiliate WJLA and reporter Nathan Baca with Kathy Michels and Diana Conway (mentioned at beginning) at Walter Johnson High School synturf, Bethesda.

■ **9-14-18:** French public field removes tire infill and replaces it with EPDM due to health concerns. Cost: €700,000 or \$820,000 in 2018 dollars.

■ **9-12-18:** *The Telegraph* on failure of recycling for used synturfs and "major new fears."

"[A Dutch] television documentary having revealed that there is no viable plan to recycle the huge numbers of surfaces the English Football Association is investing in heavily."

"The Zembla investigation 'The Turf Mountain' centered upon two Dutch companies, TUF and Vink, [which] removed 3G pitches which

MORE

Syn Turf at MCPS, cont.

were found to have no long-term recycling plan and were stockpiling pitches in conditions dangerous to workers and the environment. Local authorities conceded they were fearful of shutting down the companies in question in case the cost of disposing safely of the stockpiles of obsolete pitches fell to them.”

“Currently, it costs between £15,000 and £20,000 [\$20k to \$26k in U.S. dollars] to roll up and remove a 3G pitch, including the cost of transporting it.”

■ 9-12-18: “**The Artificial Grass Mountain**,” Netherlands Zembla report with English subtitles.

■ 9-7-18: *The Washington Post* reported that **15 synturf athletic fields in Washington, D.C., were closed** because they were too hard.

■ 9-7-18: *Forbes’ Mike Ozanian*

cites a Tireless D.C. document, “**D.C. Safe Healthy Playing Fields Statement on Closure of Nine Synthetic Turf Fields.**”

■ 9-7-18: WJLA on **more D.C. fields closing** with MoCo’s Amanda Farber.

■ 9-6-18: **Thirty-seven students were hospitalized** during band practice because of hot synthetic turf at Monarch Stadium in Moundsville, West Virginia. The air temperature was 81°F; parents measured the actual synthetic turf surface temperature with an infrared thermometer at 160°F. Students from the marching bands at John Marshall High School and Moundsville and Sherrard Middle Schools were affected.

Although 37 children were hospitalized for heat-related illnesses, the news report mentions that other students having trouble were seen by a school nurse and other EMTs but

not hospitalized. So it is unknown how many students in total were affected. Three hospitals, 10 EMS agencies, and 16 ambulances were required.

We should keep eye out for anything more on the story as I know Jordan McNair died two weeks after he collapsed at University of Maryland, which uses synturf athletic fields.

This is **the statement from Marshall County Schools** in W.Va., which was found at the bottom of **this online news story**.

“I got on the field and it was so hot, but I wasn’t really concerned about myself because some of my friends were going down on the field,” said Rebekah Clark, a band member. “We tried to get to the Band Director, but she collapsed.”

A school representative said the students “need to get acclimated.” ■

Vision Zero—The County’s Ambitious Plan to Eliminate Traffic Deaths (Part 1)

By Karen Cordry, Second Vice President, MCCF, and Kristy Daphnis, Chair, PBTSAC

Vision Zero is an ambitious program for addressing the causes of deaths and serious injuries to pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers, with the ultimate goal of reducing them to zero. The program began in Sweden in 1997 and came to the United States in 2000. A number of cities have adopted it since then; when **Montgomery County formally approved the program** in early 2016, it became the first suburban jurisdiction to adopt this approach.

Progress on this program is monitored by the County’s Pedestrian, Bike, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC), which meets bimonthly. Its most recent meeting was held in the Wheaton area

on September 27, in view of a recent spate of pedestrian fatalities in that area in just a few weeks’ time that interrupted the apparent progress that was being made to that point. The meeting was meant to address the concerns of local citizens about those crashes, to give reports on what the County, State, and Federal governments are doing, and to receive feedback from the audience on those proposed actions.

The Vision Zero program has several fundamental principles:

1. Traffic-related deaths and severe injuries are preventable and unacceptable. It is for that reason that we don’t use the term “accidents,” because that implies that we can’t figure out how to prevent crashes.

2. Life takes precedence over mobility. While it’s often a false

choice between the two—since there are many ways to make the roads safer that don’t impede traffic—if a choice must be made, we come down on the side of life.

3. Human error is inevitable, so we plan and design around the fact that people won’t behave perfectly.

4. People are vulnerable and speed is a critical factor in determining the result of a conflict between a human and a car. At 20 mph, there is only about an 18% chance of a death or serious injury; at 40 mph, that chance rises to 77%.

5. Safe behaviors can be improved through education and enforcement.

6. Policies and practices at all levels of government need to be aligned in order to ensure maximum

Vision Zero, cont.

effectiveness.

Captain Didone of the Montgomery County police reported on overall statistics and the most recent accidents. He noted that there were normally about 34 traffic-related deaths a year, with about 11–12 of those being pedestrians, a ratio that is a bit higher than the national average. This year, we have had 19 fatal crashes, of which 11 have been pedestrians—with nine occurring over the summer—and those are numbers that are definitely going in the wrong direction.

While they are still investigating the recent spate of accidents (and a definitive analysis typically takes several months or more), in many cases, it is clear that pedestrian error is involved. Pedestrians may not always understand all of the fine

points about when they do or don't have the right-of-way and, many times, it is hard for them to be seen when they are wearing dark clothes at night or are walking outside of a crosswalk. Of course, drivers are also often at fault, particularly when they are distracted, either by other traffic, by trying to make turns, or by using cellular devices. As he noted, many of us have forgotten (or forget to apply) the lessons we learned in Drivers' Ed about driving defensively.

The recent actions in the Wheaton-Glenmont area took place in an area with several major arterials with a high volume of drivers operating at relatively high speeds and with large numbers of pedestrians using and crossing those roads. All of those are factors that create a recipe for crashes, injuries and deaths. Captain Didone also discussed a va-

riety of education and enforcement activities that they have undertaken over the last several years, which have had some success but certainly have not yet eliminated high-risk behaviors by all the parties involved.

The discussion by some of the PBTSAC members turned to the question of "engineering" solutions, i.e., how can we take Point 3 into account ("human error is inevitable") and design our roadways and surrounding infrastructure so that we can make it more difficult, if not impossible, for people to behave unsafely. Another aspect of those solutions was what engineering measures could be used to make pedestrians more visible and more noticeable to drivers so that they will not come into conflict.

Another speaker was John Wetmore of Perils for Pedestrians.

MORE

Vision Zero, cont.

He provided a slide show that illustrated a number of areas where the current design not only does not affirmatively protect pedestrians, but, in fact, creates added hazards. For instance, at some intersections, a desire to increase traffic flow has meant that pedestrians are discouraged from walking across certain streets. The result is an intersection with crosswalks on three sides of an intersection but not the fourth side, so that pedestrians know they are to walk around three sides of the block, rather than simply crossing directly, which, of course, works very well... Not! He also noted areas where sidewalks were directly adjacent to the streets with no buffer and many other areas, even in major pedestrian traffic areas, where there are no sidewalks at all at crucial spots.

(The area right around the Wheaton metro is a prime example of those problems.)

A question was raised as to whether there were places where these kind of issues could be reported so they would come to the County's attention and be put into line for repair or planning for improvements. One such place is on the [Vision Zero website](#) noted above, where there are places to submit service requests for a burned out light pole, a cracked sidewalk, and any other repair problem, as well as a separate location to report safety concerns like those listed above. The County is also working to develop some additional interactive reporting sites to make it easier to make these problems known.

In Part 2 of this report, next month, we'll discuss some of the many overlapping activities the

County, State, and Federal governments have been working on to make those "engineering improvements. These can include narrowing traffic lanes—which both automatically slows vehicle traffic and allows for the creation of bike lanes or better designed pedestrian paths—and installing lights that can be activated by pedestrians as they prepare to cross a road at night so as to alert drivers that they are crossing. This can be particularly important on multilane roads where a pedestrian may not be visible to the car in lane 2 as he/she is crossing in front of the truck in lane 1. Vehicles can be designed to be more pedestrian-friendly and the County and State are well into the planning stages of road redesign projects in several areas, including White Flint, Wheaton-Glenmont, Grosvenor, Silver Spring, and Randolph/Veirs Mill. ■

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Teleconference on September 27

By Bailey Condrey, President

Present: Carole Ann Barth, Jacquie Bokow, Bailey Condrey, Jerry Garson, Jim Zepp.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: Bailey Condrey called for and accepted a motion to approve the agenda, which passed unanimously.

Treasurers Report: Jerry Garson stated that he had received more dues checks, totaling \$1,170. Expenditures included \$214 for website expenses, \$473 for meetings, and \$203 for the awards celebration, leaving a balance of \$12,078.

OCTOBER PROGRAM

Jerry Garson is in charge of the

program on I-495/I-270 expansion projects. He's trying to get two speakers. One is an expert on BRT; another is a planning director for the County.

I-270 is funded at \$110 million to date. They're still in the phase of accepting ideas, presenting the options that are on the table.

ISSUES

■ MCCF is investigating partnering with an existing local podcast once a month. Monthly would allow us to piggyback on the topic of the general meeting; podcast could be 15 minutes but may be longer.

■ ExCom members will try to submit a column to *The Sentinel* at least once a month. Jacquie Bokow said she is willing to interview someone on the Executive Commit-

tee about a topic, write up the column, and send it back to the originator for checking. Jim Humphries used to take *CFN* articles and trim them for *The Sentinel*; this could be tricky in terms of taking a position so columns and guests don't speak for the MCCF.

■ The Executive Committee discussed possible committee chairs and officers to fill existing vacancies.

■ Coalition for Pedestrian Safety/Dale Drive Coalition got the County to enact traffic calming measures pretty fast. Jennifer Chambers of Indian Springs had a pedestrian safety campaign in Silver Spring inside the Beltway which placed a lot of yard signs. MCCF will encourage the use of road signs to help

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 President Bailey Condrey at president@montgomerycivic.org. Include topics/possible dates.

Sept. ExCom Minutes, cont.

folks safely cross streets. Smart phones are the biggest safety issue confronting drivers and pedestrians right now; public education is needed.

■ Issues about ZTA 18-6 discussed; more time is needed to review the request.

NOVEMBER PROGRAM

■ Farming in nonagricultural areas is the topic.

■ No location for either November or December meetings at this time. We will check with libraries, but they may close at nine. Rockville or Kensington library are options; Cedar Lane Unitarian Church or a high school were also suggested. Jerry Garson will check upon his return.

■ Carole Barth mentioned that

Prince George's County has an urban agricultural plan, including how to encourage participation. Policy implications for county and Montgomery County Public Schools. Composting would be made easier if a green roof was nearby and more people would get to close the loop.

ONLINE DUES PAYMENT

Jacquie Bokow and Jerry Garson are working on setting up online renewals on the website.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education

■ Check with Department of Permitting Services to see if large underground separation tanks were sited under athletic fields; these are usually under parking lots. There are tanks under Montgomery Blair High School lots.

MORE

Sept. ExCom Minutes, cont.

Public Finances

■ Arlington County is facing major revenue shortfall; taxes will increase by the end of the year. The problem is widespread real estate vacancies; Montgomery County may be facing the same situation. Jim Zepp will forward the article; Alan Bowser will send information on the county and MCPS budgets.

Transportation

- Topic of October meeting.
- Loudoun County is discussing a bridge over the Potomac at Point-of-Rocks.
- High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes are too restrictive on I-270.
- Council still pushing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT).
- The Washington Metropolitan

Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is no longer publishing ridership statistics; one can deduce ridership is so bad they don't want to discuss it. The Metro system is at capacity and increasing ridership is aspirational.

■ Agencies are not discussing future scenarios regarding climate change; they are also not discussing autonomous vehicles impact on existing systems.



Environment

■ Forest Conservation Committee has been asked about tree canopy and environmental justice indicators; largest issues occur in places with the smallest amount of tree canopy. The County says tree cover is growing in spite of tree loss in lower county; data is needed.

Legislation

■ State legislature not operating until after election; speaker of house, Mike Boush, had major heart surgery. Senate has lost a number of chairmen.

■ New County Council and Executive take office 12-3-18. Many Bills and Zoning Amendments are being rushed through for approval.

NEW BUSINESS

- Farm Road reparations proposal

MORE

Sept. ExCom Minutes, cont.

was outlined in September newsletter. Jim Zepp is working on communication with County Delegates to General Assembly, state agencies and candidates as well as other social justice organizations.

DEADLINES/MEETING DATES

■ Deadline for newsletter articles is September 26. Since the Executive Committee meeting had been pushed back to September 27, the deadline also was pushed back, to noon on Sunday, September 30.

■ The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 18.

Adjourned. The teleconference call ended at about 9:30 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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

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