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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, February 11, 2019, 7:45 p.m. @ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. "Pedestrian Safety/Vision Zero"

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February's Community Hero

It's Corinne Hart of Woodside Park Civic Assn.

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December Meeting Minutes

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Executive Committee Meeting **P. 21**

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

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now

SEE FORM

Federation Meeting #901

Monday, February 11, 2019

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
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:55 Approval of Minutes **P.19**
- 7:56 Treasurer's Report
- 7:57 Community Hero:
Corinne Hart **P.5**
- 8:00 Program: *Pedestrian Safety/Vision Zero: Reaching These Important Goals* **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 February 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 East 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 22

February Program: What's 'Vision Zero' and What's Being Done to Get There?

By Karen Cordry, Second Vice President

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 such deaths and injuries to zero. When Montgomery County formally approved the program in early 2016, it became the first suburban jurisdiction to adopt this approach. In two prior issues of the *Civic Federation News* (in **October** and **November** 2018), I reported on what the program was and how it was being monitored by the County's Pedestrian, Bike, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (PBTSAC).

The program has several fundamental principles:

1. Traffic-related deaths and

severe injuries are preventable and unacceptable. The term "accidents" is a misnomer because it implies we can't figure out how to prevent crashes.

2. Life takes precedence over mobility. While we can usually accommodate both, if a choice must be made, we choose life.

3. Speed is a huge factor in determining what happens if cars and people collide.

4. Safe behaviors can be improved through education and enforcement; government has to work at all levels to ensure maximum effectiveness of its efforts.

5. Perhaps most critically: *human error is inevitable, so we need to design around the fact that people don't behave perfectly.* Pedestrians and drivers alike are ever

more distracted and in a hurry. Our road safety efforts must take that into account and use designs that make it easy to interact for all users to interact safely.

There are many such "engineering" projects being considered and more on the way. The situation in Montgomery County—particularly on and near the major traffic corridors on Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and Connecticut Avenue—are complicated by the fact that these are State roads, so changes made there must involve the cooperation and funding of not only the County, but the State as well. Some of the changes being considered involve matters such as getting State authorization for the County to control (and lower) speed limits on those

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February Program, cont.

roads in the more densely populated areas and implementing "road diets" by which small decreases in lane width create additional space within the existing right-of-way boundaries to provide for separated bike lanes and/or broader buffers between the road and adjoining sidewalks. An added benefit is that the narrower lanes tend to encourage cars to drive a bit more slowly, which helps with the basic goal of keeping speeds down so that there is more time for all parties to react and avoid a crash. Better lighting and better maintenance to keep road markings freshly painted are also key elements.

Governmental efforts to address these issues are being supported and spurred by community activists. This month's program will feature



speakers from the Montgomery County Park and Planning Department, which is putting together Master Plans for this area (including the most recent plan for the Veirs Mill corridor that has just been circulated) that include consideration of specific areas and intersections where the Vision Zero principles are being proposed for inclusion. We

also expect to have speakers from the County and State Transportation departments who will be responsible for designing and implementing these proposals. And, finally, our Community Hero, Corinne Hart (see p.5), from the Woodside Park Civic Association, will join us to talk about what her community in particular is doing with respect to the issues they have identified in their neighborhood along Dale Drive between Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road.

This is clearly an issue whose time has come and one in which every civic association in the county has a stake. This is a very timely topic, as both the County and State delegations plan to look at funding for these issues as they are brought to the fore. We urge all of you to attend and to encourage others in your associations that are interested in these issues to join us as well. ■

Corinne Hart of Woodside Park Civic Association is MCCF's February 'Community Hero'

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

Corinne Hart, the President of the Woodside Park Civic Association in Silver Spring, is this month's Montgomery County Civic Federation Community Hero.

Hart is also Co-Chair of the Dale Drive Safety Coalition, an advocacy group formed by residents working to ensure the safety of all pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists using Dale Drive. They have urged the Montgomery County Government to implement effective interventions to increase safety on the road in order to reduce the frequent crashes that put drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists at risk. There were 15 car crashes on Dale Drive in 2017 and one pedestrian has been killed.

The Coalition has made important progress, including the down

classification of all of Dale Drive to a minor arterial road, increased enforcement on the road, installation of a range of traffic-calming interventions, and funding to launch a pedestrian safety facility planning study. However, there is still much to be done. They are strongly advocating that Montgomery County fully fund the design and construction of long-term pedestrian safety interventions, lower the posted speed limit to 25 mph, more regularly deploy speed cameras, and implement additional traffic calming techniques, such as narrowing the driving lanes.

First-hand knowledge of speeding vehicles, frequent crashes and near-misses, poor road conditions, and the lack of sidewalks along Dale Drive led to Hart's activism about

pedestrian safety in her community. She often talks about an incident when she was crossing Dale Drive with a baby stroller and was nearly hit when a car swerved to avoid crashing into a vehicle which had stopped to allow her to cross the busy road. After she started her advocacy to ensure the safety of her family and her neighbors, she also met the daughter of a man who was hit and killed by a speeding car as he went on his Sunday morning walk on Dale Drive. These experiences—together with crashes that continue to occur, including ones where cars have crashed into the front lawns of homes—compel Hart to continue fighting until all of Dale Drive and other high-risk roads in the County are safe for all users. She wants to

MORE

Community Hero, cont.

see major changes on the road so that families with strollers do not have to walk into oncoming traffic because of the lack of sidewalks and school children are not at risk as they wait alongside Dale for their buses in the morning.

With her neighbors, she has met with a broad range of County elected officials and transportation staff to secure their commitment to a safer Dale Drive. After meetings in Spring 2018, Montgomery County officials committed to a comprehensive traffic study, pedestrian refuge islands in some of the crosswalks, new signage, repainting faded shoulders and crosswalks, painting advanced stop lines ahead of the crosswalks, repairing the shoulder, and other interventions recommended by the traffic study.



CORINNE HART

In June 2018, she and other members of the Dale Drive Safety Coalition sponsored a community walk along Dale Drive which attracted more than one hundred neighbors and elected officials who walked along the road, pointing out dangerous intersections and troubling road conditions for both pedestrians and drivers. Soon after the walk,

construction began on a series of pedestrian safety and traffic calming measures that have the enthusiastic support of the neighborhood.

In her role as President of the Woodside Park Civic Association, Corinne has focused on pedestrian and traffic safety issues throughout the neighborhood, advocating for improvements on Georgia Avenue and throughout Montgomery Hills, and providing a platform for residents to strengthen their advocacy on environmental, safety, and traffic issues throughout the neighborhood. She became WPCA president in May 2018.

Corinne lives on Dale Drive in the Woodside Park section of Silver Spring with her husband and daughter. Professionally, she is a senior adviser for women's issues at the U.S. Agency for International Development. ■

Live Streaming in the Maryland General Assembly to Begin Next Year

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

Promoting greater transparency and accountability in government has been a hallmark objective of the Montgomery County Civic Federation for many years. MCCCf believes that State and County residents should have full access to information and be able to participate in the workings of government at all levels.

That's why we are very encouraged and pleased by the recent news that the Maryland General Assembly will begin to live stream MGA floor sessions and other deliberations starting in 2020 in the House of Delegates and in 2021 in the State Senate. Legislation to accomplish this goal has been previously introduced in 2014, 2016, and 2017, but no action was taken. This year, bills

SSB0199 and HB0144 have been introduced and, with the support of the House Speaker and the Senate President, are likely to become law.

Speaker Michael Busch (D-Anne Arundel) announced in late January 2019 that the House of Delegates would begin live streaming floor sessions beginning in 2020. This decision was apparently made quickly following the introduction of bipartisan House legislation by Delegates David Moon (D-Montgomery) and Kathy Szeliga (R-Baltimore County). The legislation would require that floor sessions of the House be shown live online and made available afterward through archived video. The bipartisan bill was referred to the Rules and Executive Nominations Committees.

Identical legislation was intro-

duced in the Maryland State Senate by a group of senators, including Senator Will Smith, Jr. (D-Montgomery) and Senators Hough, Bailey, Carozza, Cassilly, Galion, Ready, Saling, Smith, Washington, West and Young. That bill was referred to the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee. Senate President Miller expressed support for livestreaming Senate floor sessions soon after.

The stated purpose of the bills is "requiring the General Assembly to make available to the public live and archived video streaming of each meeting of the Senate, the House, and certain standing committees, including any hearings held by certain standing committees." Currently, House and Senate committee

MORE

MGA Live Streaming, cont.

sessions are livestreamed, but floor sessions are not.

Delegate Moon said, "In an era when it's easier for voters to watch funny cat videos than to watch Maryland's legislature in action, I'm thrilled to see Speaker Busch bring the House of Delegates into the modern era. My constituents expect transparency in government, and literally hiding from public view sets the wrong tone."

MCCCf has also favorably noted that the Montgomery County House Delegation has begun livestreaming its weekly delegation meetings. Montgomery County House Delegation Chair Marc Korman (D-Montgomery) has taken the lead in making the deliberations of the Montgomery County delegation available to the public via Facebook

Live. You may [watch the House Delegation meetings online](#).

In a recent 2017 Fiscal Note, the MGA's Department of Legislative Services wrote, "Under Maryland's Open Meetings Act, with limited exceptions, a public body must (1) provide adequate notice of the time and location of meetings and (2) meet

in open session in a location that is reasonably accessible to attendees.

"A "public body" is any entity that (1) consists of at least two individuals and (2) is created by the Maryland Constitution; a State statute; a county or municipal charter; a memorandum of understanding or a master agreement to which a majority of the county boards of education and the Maryland State Department of Education are signatories; an ordinance; a rule, resolution, or bylaw; or an executive order of the Governor or of the chief executive authority of a political subdivision. Exclusions from the definition of "public body" include juries, the Governor's cabinet and executive council, judicial nominating commissions, and single-member entities, among others.

"All floor and standing commit-

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MGA Live Streaming, cont.

tee meetings in both the Senate and the House of Delegates are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Thus, they are open to the public and must be published in the General Assembly's meeting schedule. Live and archived video streaming is available for all standing committee meetings of the House of Delegates and the Senate. Standing committees do not currently stream video of voting sessions. In addition, while live and archived audio streaming is available for floor sessions of both chambers, neither chamber is equipped with video-streaming equipment. All live and archived video and audio are available on the General Assembly website. Downloading is not enabled."

The cost of livestreaming MGA floor sessions was estimated to be \$1,203,048 in FY18. ■

Straight Talk: We Have Exhausted Our Carbon Budget

By Bailey Condrey, President

It's tough when you learn something that you can't unlearn, and your mind refuses to let you forget it. So it was when I met the Swedish teenager Greta Thunberg roughly six weeks ago on the **independent news program, Democracy Now**. I grew up on the coast of Virginia, so I started worrying about climate change 20 years ago when I realized that significant sea level rise would inundate the beautiful paradise I had come to love throughout my life. Meeting Greta two decades into my growing knowledge of the challenge that climate change presents for humanity has strengthened my resolve and reason for sharing this information. This article contains links with deep background information to provide the reader with a deep sense

of what concerns Greta and millions of people around the world.

If you examine the **Keeling Curve**, you will see that CO₂ emissions into Earth's atmosphere have been in one direction for decades. It's the wrong direction and mankind is primarily the cause. It's now close to 413 parts-per-million and constantly rising. It was 410 ppm just a few short months ago. **This is really bad news.**

Twelve years ago, the organization **350.org** was born by activist and writer Bill McKibben and students at Middlebury College. The organization was named after **research** that noted atmospheric scientist James Hansen had written that made the case that for mankind and life on Earth to continue to flourish, atmo-

MORE

Climate Change, cont.

spheric CO₂ had to remain in the neighborhood of 350 ppm. One of 350.org's biggest fights initially was to block the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. This massive fossil fuel project would have magnified the carbon footprint of the Tar Sands by giving it an outlet to world markets from refineries along the Gulf Coast of the United States. Millions of activists worldwide and 350.org helped to block the project, but fossil fuel interests relentlessly pursue its final construction. Montgomery County also has a **local 350 chapter** with important goals.

Killing one massive pipeline project, however, has barely placed a dent in rising atmospheric carbon levels and this carbon is killing the planet's Albedo. A blog named the **Arctic News Blogspot**

contains a wealth of information on this planetary physical relationship. The Albedo Effect is essentially the ability of the Earth to maintain its temperature by reflecting solar radiation back to space. The planet's ice-covered poles and glacier-covered highlands have done this quite effectively for thousands of years, but, as the Earth warms, life-giving ice faces global alarming retreat.

Scientists recently reported that **ocean warming has accelerated**. In 2016, great swaths of the **Great Barrier Reef had bleached**. This single event cannot be viewed alone as the economic and environmental consequences have worldwide implications. The manmade dynamics that have led to the bleaching of the GBR also affect **reefs throughout the world**. Many fish species (25 percent) spend part of their lives within the boundaries of reefs. The vast

majority of the oxygen that terrestrial life breathes originates in the oceans. They grow increasingly hot and acidic.

Stuart Scott of **Scientists Warning** has placed the young Greta Thunberg in a group of people he describes as a "Six Sigma Person – an individual that is six standard deviations from normal in her/his knowledge of something." Scientists Warning held a **press conference** at the Council of Parties 24th meeting in Katowice, Poland, in December where world "leaders" gathered to discuss what humanity is going to collectively do to reduce the impacts of climate change. Stuart Scott and Victoria Hurth interviewed Greta and her father Svante.

We all need to become Six Sigma Persons quickly and I don't encourage this for my benefit. There is a

MORE

Climate Change, cont.

15-year-old Swedish teenager that has encouraged school children globally to boycott school on Fridays and instead conduct sit-ins at government buildings to get politicians to recognize the dire situation that climate change has become and enact policies immediately that will make a difference. This child shouldn't

have to feel as though she's doing it alone and the older adults that are mostly responsible for this situation shouldn't let her. Her highly successful parents made drastic changes to their professional careers to help their daughter achieve climate justice in her family's life. The Swedish Parliament, facing unrelenting embarrassment from this small woman, asked her to conduct her

sit-ins across the bridge from the main Parliament building, because they feel she is a "security threat."

Her poster reads "Skolstrejk for Klimatet" – School Strike for Climate. Does she look like a security threat to you? I see a savior in a rain coat. ■



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 February 11 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.

More Traffic on the Beltway During the Federal Government Shutdown Than Before

By Jerry Garson, Chair, MCCF Transportation Subcommittee

We examined two main traffic hours at two locations on the Beltway (I-495) when HOV regulations are in effect. The source of the information is the State Highway Administration.

On I-495 there is a traffic counter located 50 feet east of the Persimmon Tree Road overpass between River Road and the American Legion Bridge. We compared eastbound traffic between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. on 15 weekdays ending January 25, 2019, with the last 15 days of November and 15 days in December ending December 21, 2018.

On 11 of the 15 days in January 2019, there was more traffic heading eastbound towards River Road between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.



than in November or December. On 10 of those January days, there was also more traffic heading eastbound towards River Road between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and, on five days, there was more traffic heading towards the American Legion Bridge between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The traffic volume eastbound for January was up an average of 570 vehicles per day compared with November and December 2018 for the two-hour period.

Another traffic counter is located 0.82 miles west of MD 650, between New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard. We compared westbound traffic there between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. during

those same two time periods in 2018 and in January 2019.

On 11 of the 15 days in January 2019, there was more traffic heading westbound between 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. and, on nine of the 15 days in January, there was more traffic heading westbound between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m.

We continued to see peak traffic in the morning on 11 of the 15 days between 5:00 a.m. and 6:00 a.m. in January 2019.

On a 24-hour basis, however, traffic volumes were down four to five percent for the 15 days of January 2019 compared with the last 15 weekdays of November and December.

The traffic volume westbound remained basically unchanged for the two periods, up by an average of 18 vehicles per day. ■

Jim Zepp Invited to Serve on National Academy of Sciences Advisory Committee

In recognition of his involvement with transit issues, MCCF Immediate Past President Jim Zepp has been invited to be a member of the National Academy of Sciences Advisory Committee on Automated Transit Systems. This group explores the potential application of automated technologies to improve the operations of public transit services.

With the precipitous decline in transit ridership nationally since 2012, the transit industry is desperately in need of any improvements that would make its services more convenient, responsive, or affordable to possible users.

Transit's appeal is limited to providing fixed-route, fixed-schedule services using large vehicles that require high density populations to achieve any efficiency. Buses with

capacities of 60 to 100 passengers carry an average of 8.9 passengers, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. Private vehicles have an average of 1.7 passengers. Transit operating budgets are generally 70 to 80 percent labor costs. This results in increasing expenses, while the pressure is to keep fares the same or low. Also, service frequency and quality must be maintained or improved to attract riders. For example, WMATA's budget for the next 10 years is expected to have its expenses grow by six percent per year, but its revenues will only increase by one percent annually, which assures future shortfalls that either mean service cutbacks and/or fare increases and need for more subsidies.

Members of the Advisory Com-

mittee include Dr. Alain Kornhauser, Transportation Engineering Professor at Princeton University, considered the developer of the first GPS-based navigation software package and the editor of *Smart Driving Cars* (an online newsletter covering the development of self-driving vehicle technologies), and Dr. Stanley Young, Transportation and Urban Scientist at the National Renewable Energy Lab and developer of a Bluetooth-based traffic counting system that costs 1/30,000th of previous traffic counting methods. Other members are academics and industry representatives.

Mr. Zepp's involvement with the Advanced Transit Association (ATRA) for the last five years led to his appointment to the Advisory Committee. ■

Pennsylvania State Univ. CSSR Recommends G-Max Levels of 100 for All Athletic Fields

By Bailey Condrey, President

Penn State's well-respected Center for Sports Surface Research—the folks that the National Football League consults to help keep professional football players safe—has recommended that the entire surface of athletic fields measure less than a G-Max level of 100. G-Max is a level of hardness.

The NFL uses a different tool than the one used by contractors to measure the hardness of Montgomery County Public Schools' athletic fields. The MCPS G-Max measurement tool, an ASTM F-355, should be returning a hardness measure near 160 for all fields, to correspond to the safety limit set by the NFL, which they obtain with a Clegg Drop tool. However, MCPS takes risks with the safety of its synthetic turf and they

use the upper limit set by the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission. Remember, the CPSC is the organization that ruled that syn turf is not a children's product, even though the vast majority of those using syn turf are children. Syn turf not being regulated as a children's product creates wide latitude and non-existent regulation.

"The 200 G-Max level set by the CPSC is intended only to protect field owners from civil liability should horrible injury occur," according to the CSSR at Penn State.

A guide detailing testing and managing surface hardness can be found [on the CSSR website](#). Penn State has also provided [a brief primer on understanding G-Max](#).

MCPS has a stated policy of maintaining syn turf fields at a G-Max level

of 200, which means that student athletes are using playing surfaces that can cause severe injury or even death. What hardness level does MCPS use for grass playing fields?

Professional athletic group experts and Penn State researchers continue to state that syn turf fields should be softer and groomed regularly to ensure it. The NFL had been using a hardness measure near 160 and now this will be reduced by roughly 33 percent. For the sake of player safety, fields will be softer.

Maybe student athletes in Montgomery County should talk to representatives of the [National Football League's Player Association](#) to see how to get better safety standards. Where do the myriad private schools throughout the county with syn turf

G-Max, cont.

fields stand on this issue?

Many schools in the county only test syn turf fields once a year and this flies in the face of the **advice given by Tom Serensits**, manager of CSSR at Penn State. Some of that advice: “Lots of inspection required for syn turf (performed before *every* game for NFL). G-Max under 100, sufficient infill depth consistent across field, remediate field depressions at 165 for all high-use areas, remediate seams more than 3 mm in length at each 5-yard line plus all seams for inlay/inset logos, plus surface wrinkles....”

Needless to say, MCPS has a tiny fraction of the resources available to the NFL, but with all of the prevailing wisdom out there, maintaining a G-Max level of 200 on athletic playing fields is hardly prudent. ■

Volunteers Needed for MCCF Awards Event

The Civic Federation’s Annual Awards event will be held in May or June. More details on the event will follow in future newsletters.

We need volunteers to help coordinate the event as well as volunteers to serve on the Awards Selection Committee (Wayne Goldstein and Sentinel Awards and 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 work should be of short duration and may be done largely by phone.

If you can help with the Event or Selection Cmte. or have a award nomination, contact Bailey Condrey, president AT montgomerycivic.org. We cannot do this without you! ■

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.

Safety: Many Buses Have Built-In Blind Spots That Make Driving Them Dangerous

By Brian Sherlock

A lot of people want to make Vision Zero a reality, ending preventable deaths on our streets. An often overlooked barrier to making that happen is blind spots on our buses that leave people using the street at risk because drivers can’t see them. The good news is that fixing the problem is both easy and inexpensive.

Essentially, all transit buses in

the United States are built as cheaply as possible, with mirrors and pillars that create blind spots that are over a foot wide. That’s too large for even the best-trained driver to reliably overcome, meaning people who share the street with buses are at risk. Since 2000, well over 500 people in the U.S. have died because of this problem.

When policymakers invest in safe streets and pedestrian crossings, as well as dedicated lanes for transit and bikes, everyone benefits. Safety efforts like well-engineered Vision Zero and safe street programs are no-brainers.

I work in the transit industry, where those of us who support effective Vision Zero campaigns talk about the path to safety being the classic checklist of the “three E’s:”



it starts with engineering, which is followed by education, and only last comes enforcement.

In the case of these blind spots, policymakers have failed at the highest level: engineering. If we want to end fatalities, safe street engineering must not end at the curb.

On modern buses used in New York and D.C., for example, the typical pillar and mirror, which are as

MORE



Bus Blind Spots, cont.

wide as a legal pad at arm's length, are directly in line with pedestrians in left turns. Over a dozen pedestrians can disappear behind a blind spot so large:

To compensate for the hazard, bus operators are taught to “bob and weave” or “rock and roll” in their seat. This means swaying nearly 20 inches, attempting to see around the widest pillar and mirror. Imagine doing that several times in every turn. Tragically, a moving operator and moving pedestrian can still remain unable to see each other. Additionally, poor cab design (like the huge steering wheel) confines all but tall operators, in some cases leaving them unable to lean more than a few inches.

Also, while safe bus mirrors are



used in a few systems, most North American designs widen the blind spot and directly block the driver's view of people walking in the street.

WE CAN FIX THIS PROBLEM, AND FOR CHEAP

Larry Hanley, the president of the largest transit union in North America, has said these safety and engineering failures transform buses into “mobile manslaughter machines.”

One solution is to simply mount mirrors lower so that drivers can still see people walking in the street while also being able to monitor surrounding traffic. King County Metro in Seattle has already adopted the ATU-recommended design, a move that has saved numerous lives.

Similarly, structural changes are easy and inexpensive. In the case of the bus above, the engineer who designed it told the ATU that eliminating the blind spot between the windshield and side glass would cost less than \$300: the fiberglass would just need trimming and the window seals would need to be out of critical sight lines. The result? A smaller blind spot than in your car!

Change is not convenient, but in this case it is not difficult. Designs from 60 years ago were significantly safer, lacking these blind spots.

MORE

Bus Blind Spots, cont.

CHANGING BUSES MEANS CHANGING LAWS AND CULTURE

Unfortunately, North American manufacturers have chosen, at least for the moment, to stick with the status quo, a decision that saves pennies for themselves and transit procurement departments but costs lives.

Currently, neither the bus designers nor agency decision makers are being held legally responsible. Instead, that burden falls on drivers facing charges including manslaughter, while having no say in continuing purchases of unsafe vehicles, when excellent designs, as seen here, are ignored.

In D.C., ATU Local 689 and ATU International have presented detailed findings about these local hazards and these lowcost solutions to WMATA and DDOT, both of

which plan to procure more buses in the near future. Neither agency has committed to blind spot elimination in their procurement process.

As the truth of this unacceptable hazard and bloodshed it leads to become more broadly known, liability will eventually drive change. Public pressure from informed transit advocates can make repeating these mistakes uncomfortable for those selecting future fleets.

It is our hope that as riders, advocates, and workers awaken to the benefits of Vision Zero, they will demand that Mayor Bowser and the WMATA Board make these simple fixes. The welcome attention being paid to rail safety needs to also go toward Metrobus and DC Circulator service to help all of us move closer to zero fatalities on our streets and in our transit system.

The safety of bus riders, op-



erators and people using the street should not rely on driver gymnastics or luck, and it need not continue to.

[Brian Sherlock has worked as a bus driver in Seattle, a union safety chair and consultant, a member of federal transit safety advisory boards, and as an executive board officer. He now works in D.C. as a Safety Specialist for the Amalgamated Transit Union International and lives in Silver Spring. This 11/5/15 article was reprinted with permission from the Greater Greater Washington blog post, ggwash.org.] ■

Minutes of the December 10, 2018, MCCF General Meeting #900 in Rockville, Md.

By Bailey Condrey, President

The General Meeting convened at the Montgomery County Executive Office Building in Rockville, Md.

Call to Order: Bailey Condrey, President, called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda:

Bailey Condrey called for and received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda.

Minutes of the November 12 Meeting:

It was noted by Jeff Griffith of the Parkwood Residents Association that the minutes should be amended to reflect the accurate wording of the I-495 Beltway Expansion Resolution passed by the

MCCF. The minutes were changed from “opposing 495 construction” to “regarding Beltway construction.”

Treasurer’s Report: Jerry Garson delivered the report and noted that the MCCF bank account was healthy and less than \$12,000.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

State Senator Craig Zucker, the chair of the Senate Delegation, and Delegate Marc Korman, the Chair of the House of Delegates Delegation, were the invited speakers for the meeting.

However, Delegate Alfred Carr stood in for Delegate Korman, due to a conflict. Del. Carr represents D-18 and is the Vice Chair of the Montgomery County House Delegation.

Sen. Zucker represents D-14.

They spoke on legislative priorities for the 2019 Maryland General Assembly Session.

They touched on a number of topics, including the following:

- The Kerwin Commission’s effect on funding formulas for Montgomery County Public Schools;

- Sports Betting;

- Redistricting;

- Rank Choice Voting;

- The Democratic Legislature’s interactions with the Republican Governor Larry Hogan; and

- Beltway Expansion.

They also addressed questions from members of the Civic Federation on community priorities.

MORE

December Minutes, etc.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning and Land Use

■ Harriet Quinn provided an update on ZTAs 18-02 and 18-11, dealing with cell tower infrastructure siting.

■ A number of developments occurred at the end of the county council calendar session that resulted in Hans Riemer tabling further discussion.

Transportation

■ A State Highway Administration meeting is to be held on Thursday, December 13, 2018, at 8:00 p.m., on infrastructure projects.

Public Finance

■ Former state senator Richard Madaleno is now the new Director of the County’s Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

■ Montgomery County faces a \$41

million budget deficit.

Adjournment: Bailey called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment of MCCF’s 900th meeting at 9:45 p.m. ■



STATE SENATOR CRAIG ZUCKER, LEFT, CHAIR OF THE SENATE DELEGATION, AND DELEGATE ALFRED C. CARR, JR., RIGHT, WHO REPRESENTS DISTRICT 18 AND IS THE VICE CHAIR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY HOUSE DELEGATION

Minutes of December 20, 2018, MCCF Executive Committee Meeting via Teleconference

By Harriet Quinn

Call to Order: Conference call meeting called to order at 7:50 p.m. Present: Bailey Condrey, Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Carole Barth, Jim Zepp, Jacquie Bokow, and Harriet Quinn.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: Bailey called for and received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda with no changes.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry discussed latest expenses.

PROGRAMS

■ *January:* Pedestrian Safety coordinated by Alan and Karen. Alan will confirm parking.

■ *February:* Carole and Bailey co-

ordinating on Environment, Sustainability.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Alan attended Committee for Montgomery Breakfast.

■ County Executive Elrich announced he will be proposing a savings plan for the 2018–2019 budget year.

■ Jim Zepp has been appointed to the National Academy of Sciences' Automated Transit Systems Advisory Committee.

■ Jerry attended P3 meeting on Governor's proposed Managed Lanes Project for I-270/I-495.

■ Board of Public Works approved contract for the engineering using Highway Trust Fund money.

■ Jerry and Carole testified at State Local Bills hearing in Rockville.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

■ Future programs for remainder of year.

■ Income Tax Offset Credit: Bailey will send letter to Executive Branch.

■ Podcast Schedule and Publishing.

■ Sentinel Columns.

■ Status of assignments/roles/committees.

■ Awards Committee.

■ Membership update, Constant Contact. Alan, Jerry, Jacquie working on online membership.

■ State Legislation Bills.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning and Land Use

■ Cell Towers.

■ Planning Board will take up amending the General Master Plan

MORE

ExCom Dec. Minutes, cont.

for the County this year.

■ Viers Mill Road Corridor Plan and MARC Communities Plans transmitted to Council for future public hearings.

Transportation

■ Governor's proposed toll lanes for I-270 and I-495 was a topic of many testimonies at the State Priorities Hearing.

Education

■ Funding decisions for Kirwan Commission priorities delayed another year.

OLD BUSINESS

■ Annual Awards Event: Alan is looking into it.

NEW BUSINESS

■ Alan drafting intro letters to CEX, Council, Delegation.

■ Newsletter deadline and articles: Deadline is Dec. 31.

■ Date and location of next two ExComm meetings:

|January 24, 2019, 8110 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment: Bailey called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:52 p.m. ■

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