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TO PRINT, USE **PRINT VERSION**

## of note

### Next MCCF Meeting

November 11, 2019, 7:45 p.m. @ Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville. "Pedestrian Safety Solutions in Montgomery County"

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### Meeting Minutes

October 14 Meeting #906 **P. 24**

October 24 Executive Committee Meeting *See Next Newsletter*

### Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

**Like our Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter.**

## Federation Meeting #907

Monday, November 11, 2019

7:45 p.m.

**Cafeteria, Richard Montgomery High School**  
250 Richard Montgomery Drive  
Rockville Maryland 20852

### AGENDA

- 7:00 Social Time for Members
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:57 Approval of Minutes **P.24**
- 7:58 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 Program: Pedestrian Safety Solutions **P.3**
- 9:15 Discuss/Vote Resolutions
- 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–June, at 7:45 p.m.

**Note change of venue!** The November meeting will be held in the **Cafeteria of Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville, Maryland.**

We suggest you park in the bus bays or visitor parking, both off Fleet Street, rather than the main lot. ■



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 27**

## MCCF's November Program: Pedestrian Safety Solutions in Montgomery County

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

With an increasing number of serious pedestrian accidents and fatalities in recent years, pedestrian safety has become a major issue in Montgomery County and is the focus of the Civic Federation's November program.

Our featured speakers will be **Eli Glazier**, manager of the Montgomery County Planning Department's Pedestrian Master Plan, and **Kristy Daphnis**, Chair of the County's Pedestrian, Bicycling, and Traffic Safety Committee.

The alarming increase in pedestrian accidents has grabbed the attention of County, State, and municipal elected officials and transportation experts, as well as locally based groups such as the Action Committee for Transit, the Mont-

gomery County Council of PTAs (MCCPTA), and many civic and homeowner associations.

Through the first half of 2019, 272 pedestrians and bicyclists had been struck by vehicles on roads in Montgomery County, about 1.5 per day, according to County data. Pedestrian- and bicyclist-involved crashes increased by about 14% from the same six months in 2018, when 238 crashes occurred.

Six pedestrians have been killed after being struck by cars through the end of June 2019. About 40% of the crashes so far in 2019 have occurred on County roads, while roughly 30% happened on State roads. Another 20% occurred in areas such as driveways, parking lots, or alleys, and the remaining 10% of crashes were on municipal or other

roads.

With a view to seriously addressing these issues, Montgomery County has developed a countywide Pedestrian Safety Initiative and a Vision Zero plan to get to zero traffic fatalities and injuries by 2030. The programs support targeting improvements in high incidence areas, improving pedestrian networks and connectivity, emphasizing pedestrians and bicycles in planning, constructing corridor and intersection improvements and traffic calming, upgrading pedestrian signals, enhancing street lighting, and modifying behaviors through enhanced enforcement and education.

The Montgomery County Planning Department is developing a Pedestrian Master Plan to improve

MORE

## November's Program, cont.

pedestrian conditions countywide. The plan will complement the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan and plans for other modes of transportation through strategies for making streets safer and more accessible. According to the Pedestrian Master Plan website, the plan will be comprehensive. In addition to prioritizing needed infrastructure, it will recommend new and amended policies and operational practices, design standards and programming.

With support from pedestrian planning experts, a study of world-class pedestrian plans from around the nation and the world is currently being undertaken to identify plan components and best practices to emulate and refine. The Pedestrian Master Plan will also draw on data about existing sidewalks and pedes-

trian crossings now being collected by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

The project team will prioritize countywide pedestrian infrastructure using, among other factors, a pedestrian level of comfort analysis, similar to the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress developed for the Bicycle Master Plan. While the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress was solely an infrastructure assessment, the pedestrian level of comfort analysis will also assess other factors that influence the pedestrian experience like land use and urban design. This prioritization will provide guidance to the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation in directing resources to improve pedestrian infrastructure.

The Plan will pay particular emphasis to those pedestrians

with vision and/or mobility issues, including recommending design treatments and policies that exceed basic Americans with Disabilities Act compliance.

"Pedestrian" is defined for Plan purposes as any person who travels by foot or a wheeled conveyance that is not a bicycle, including scooters, wheelchairs, and other mobility devices. "Walking" is defined as "the act of being a pedestrian."

At the November meeting, MCCF will consider a Resolution (see p. 5) affirming its support for the County's efforts to improve pedestrian safety and its willingness to work with community-based organizations to advocate for and educate about pedestrian safety issues.

For more information, visit the [Pedestrian Master Plan](#) or the County's [Pedestrian, Bicycling and Traffic Safety Committee](#) websites. ■

## Resolution of the Montgomery County Civic Federation on Pedestrian Safety

*Whereas*, the Montgomery County Civic Federation believes that Montgomery County's residents and visitors are entitled to the highest possible guarantees for safety and security as pedestrians in their neighborhoods and on the County's roads and State highways; and

*Whereas*, the Montgomery County Civic Federation recognizes the concern of many families regarding the safety of their children traveling to and from Montgomery County schools; and

*Whereas*, the Mont. County Civic Federation notes that the Mont. County Government has developed a Pedestrian Safety Initiative and Vision Zero policy with the goal of reducing pedestrian accidents; and

*Whereas*, the Montgomery County Civic Federation views with

concern the increasing number of pedestrian fatalities on Montgomery County roads and State highways in recent years despite that commitment to the Vision Zero policy; and

*Whereas*, the Mont. County Civic Federation believes that policies and projects for maximum pedestrian safety should be required and integral components of any County transportation and development project, as well as data-driven analysis to determine the effectiveness of various proposed measures ;

*Therefore*, be it resolved that the Mont. County Civic Federation:

Gives highest priority to the safety and security of our County's residents as pedestrians in their neighborhoods and on the roads and highways throughout the County and affirms the County's goal of achiev-

ing zero severe and fatal collisions by 2030;

Supports targeted improvements in high-incidence areas, improving pedestrian networks and connectivity, emphasizing pedestrians and bicycles in planning, constructing corridor and intersection improvements and traffic calming, upgrading pedestrian signals, enhancing street lighting, and modifying behaviors through enhanced enforcement and education including by completing the Bicycle and Pedestrian master plans and promptly implementing their recommendations; and

Will work with its member associations and in concert with other Montgomery County community-based organizations to promote pedestrian safety education and projects throughout the County. ■

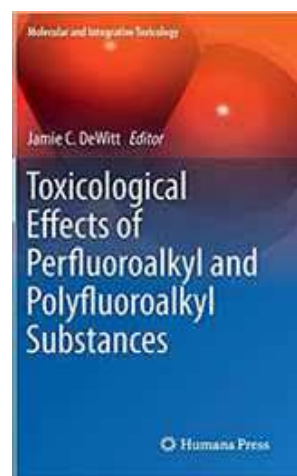
## Syn Turf Grass Blades Contain Forever Chemicals, Drinking Water Contamination Likely

*Introduction by Bailey Condrey, President, MCCF*

For roughly a decade, activists in Montgomery County and across the nation have been trying to get local and state politicians to scrutinize the plastic playing fields that have become the local, state, and national rage. Some installations of synthetic turf have opted for different infill in an attempt to appear to be environmentally friendly, but these infill choices have their own damaging side effects, especially to users. Surprisingly, more recent scientific evidence regarding syn-

thetic turf's harmful effects comes again, from the plastic grass blades. Earlier this year, we reported that synthetic turf off-gases methane and ethylene, potent greenhouse gases. Now, a well-respected laboratory has tested numerous samples of the carpet and backing from various sites and found they have elevated levels of per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances or PFASs.

Recent scientific analysis on the health and environmental effects of this molecule (shown at left) should be enough to pause synthetic turf installation in the county, the state, and nationwide, because this chemical family has cost billions of dol-



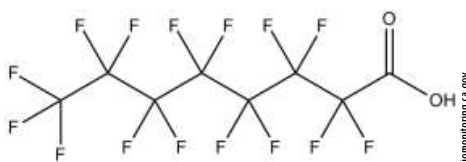
lars of environmental destruction already, but bold decisions take courage. Those who wish to learn more about these insidious compounds can obtain the tome shown at left.

These recent scientific findings prompted the president of the stalwart group of activists, Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc., to write the following to the

leaders of the city of Gaithersburg.

### LETTER FROM SAFE HEALTHY PLAYING FIELDS, INC.

Dear Gaithersburg City Council





## PFASs in Syn Turf, cont.

Members and Mayor Ashman,

Allow me to draw your attention to a highly toxic chemical found to be in synthetic turf: PFAS. New research shows PFAS are present in high levels in the plastic grass blades of synturf.

PFAS is short for perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances and includes PFOS, PFOA, and GenX—flame retardants, Teflon, water-repellents. They are known as “forever chemicals” because, once they enter ground water, they are very difficult and expensive to remediate. According to recent reporting by *The Intercept* and *The Boston Globe*, they are present at elevated levels in synturf plastic grass blades. The syn-turf carpet samples were obtained from multiple sources.

Last year, Montgomery County

Public Schools disposed of the used Richard Montgomery High School synturf plastics rolls and crumb rubber in much the same manner as the locality described in *The Boston Globe* article. Many tons of synturf with tons of crumb rubber was “given” to a paint ball course 400 yards from the Bird River in Baltimore County. Two years prior, the state and Baltimore County spent over \$4 million to clean and dredge this tidal estuary. What is the Gaithersburg plan for disposing of its used fields, and how closely do you monitor final disposition? The chain of custody letter obtained by MCPS for the RMHS waste field was simply a joke.

The City of Gaithersburg is implicated for its recent decision to continue adding to your inventory of synturf fields. While skipping tire infill might seem like progress, this research confirms we have no dis-

closure by sellers or manufacturers of what’s in their syn turf products—purchased at exorbitant taxpayer expense for children’s recreation. Not until The Ecology Center undertook its own testing were these findings revealed.

■ The national whistleblower group, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility [PEER], [filed this complaint with the Mass. Dept of Environmental Protection](#), for wetlands violations.

■ [PEER also issued this press release](#).

■ *The Intercept* [broke the story on elevated PFAS in the synturf plastic grass](#).

■ *The Boston Globe* [also covered it](#): “For two years, an abandoned pile of artificial turf had decomposed on a bluff here, a few feet above wetlands that are part of the suburb’s drink-

MORE

## PFASs in Syn Turf, cont.

ing water supply. Nearby, ripped bags with the infill of the turf, tiny pellets of shredded tires, littered the embankment. Public health advocates have long raised alarms about artificial turf pellets, which simulate the give of natural grass but have been shown to contain benzene, cadmium, and other known carcinogens. Now, for the first time, a new series of tests has found that the blades, and their plastic backing, may also contain toxic chemicals. The test results showed that the turf contained elevated levels of per- and polyfluoroalkyl chemicals known as PFAS, which have been linked to **kidney cancer, low infant birth weights, and a range of diseases**. The findings have raised concerns about the safety of *millions* of square feet of artificial turf installed

in recent years on public fields and playgrounds across the country.”

■ [The Ecology Center has directed several analyses of PFAS-laden consumer products](#) including synturf



David L. Ryan/Boston Globe

and carpets.

■ [WUSA9 reported on it locally](#).

Our Maryland coalition has worked at the state and county level for many years to fight synturf. I hope you agree this new research is another powerful reason to support our advocacy and push for high quality grass fields: safer, softer, cooler, cheaper, and widely preferred.

Synturf and tire-based playgrounds deliver unregulated, staggering levels of toxicity, heat, injury, cost, disposal, and liability exposure. A bad bargain.

Best,

Diana E. Conway  
President  
Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc.

*SHPF Inc. is a registered non-profit 501-c-3. ■*



## Are You Getting a Seat at the Table? Council Structure Doesn't Represent Population

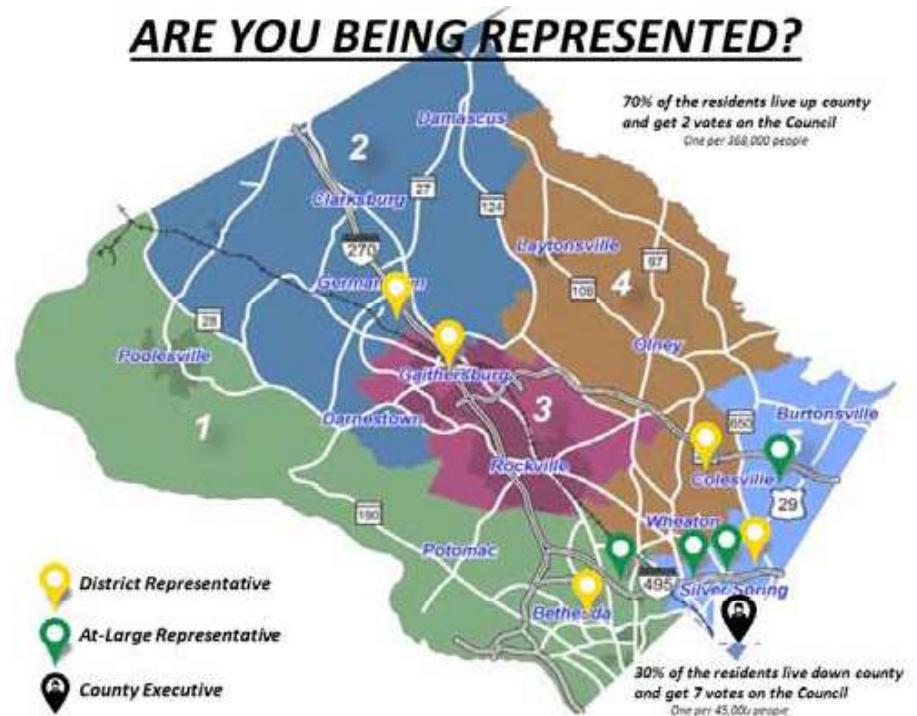
By Kimblynn Persaud, *Nine Districts for MoCo*

The current County Council structure of five districts and four at-large members no longer serves the largest County in Maryland, with more than 1.1 million people. It is time to restructure the Council so all residents—regardless of where they live—have a representative on the County Council.

Our reality in Montgomery County is that many people no longer have a seat at the proverbial table. The table has become smaller, exclusive, and by invitation only. We have lost our voice and our ability to hold our elected officials accountable.

Nine Districts for MoCo is a nonpartisan, grassroots effort

[MORE](#)



## Seat at the Table, cont.

promoting a ballot referendum to eliminate all at-large seats and create nine districts. Increasing the number of Council districts to nine and abolishing the at-large seats would allow for a more effective democratic process by guaranteeing smaller and more cohesive districts, where our Council members will have fewer people to represent. This change would give voters a more responsive representation, an avenue for our voices to be heard, and more power to hold our elected officials accountable.

Today, seven of nine Council members live south and east of North Bethesda. The result is that county legislative decisions are made by representatives from a small area called the “downcounty crescent.” Residents outside the

“downcounty crescent” are under-represented. Having nine districts would provide residents living up-county with realistic and fair representation. All residents should benefit from smaller districts with a Council representative who actually lives in the area and who personally understands the concerns and issues that impact the district.

Eliminating at-large seats would remove a structure put in place in 1968 that is woefully inadequate for today’s growing county. Out of the 50 most populous counties in the United States, Montgomery County is one of only nine counties with at-large legislators and one of only two counties where those at-large representatives control at least 44% of the vote. Restructuring to nine districts will help to eliminate the discriminatory effects of bloc voting and provide county residents a fair

and equitable voice not dominated by Silver Spring and Takoma Park.

Now is the time to make nine districts a reality. After the 2020 census, Council District boundaries will be redrawn and will take effect in 2022, in time for the County Council elections. Those boundaries will remain in place until after the 2030 census. Please support the resolution below to endorse this citizens referendum to change the structure of the County Council for the 21st. Century.

### RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT NINE DISTRICTS FOR MOCO BALLOT REFERENDUM

Nine Districts for MoCo is a ballot referendum to restructure the Montgomery County Council from its current structure of five

[MORE](#)

## Nine Districts, cont.

district representatives and four at-large seats to nine separate districts, eliminating all at-large seats. Creating nine smaller, compact districts that represent communities of similar type and geography will ensure that all residents and their neighborhoods will have fair and equal representation in the County's legislative body, the Montgomery County Council. I am proposing the following resolution for MCCF consideration and adoption:

*Whereas*, the current County Council structure has been in place since 1968, when the population was 523,000, and it's now more than 1.1 million, a 110% increase; and

*Whereas*, out of the 50 most populous counties in the United States, Montgomery County is one

of only nine counties with at-large legislators; and

*Whereas*, each of the five Council districts has grown to include at least 200,000 residents, more than our Maryland State Legislative Districts, which include about 120,000 residents; and

*Whereas*, increasing the number of Council districts to nine and eliminating the at-large seats will guarantee smaller districts, more responsive representation, and an avenue for our voices to be heard;

*Therefore, be it resolved*, that the Montgomery County Civic Federation supports the citizen-initiated measure proposed by Nine Districts for MoCo to place a referendum on the ballot to increase the number of Council districts to nine and eliminate at-large seats. ■

## 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 November 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.

## Help Protect and Increase Our Tree Canopy

*By Anne Vorce and Jean Cavanaugh, Seven Oaks Evanswood Citizens Association*

The Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board, District 5 Councilmember Tom Hucker (represented by staff), and the Montgomery County Tree Montgomery program held a meeting October 21 on how to restore tree canopy along the Purple Line corridor. In most of this urbanized area, the tree canopy is already considered too low for a healthy environment and watershed. The panel—which included representatives from Montgomery County Departments of Transportation and Environmental Protection, Montgomery Parks, Montgomery Planning, and nonprofit Conservation Montgomery—described tree planting and care programs for which

anyone in the county can apply.

### FREE/REDUCED PRICE TREES

If you want more trees in your yard, contact Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection's **Tree Montgomery program**. Prepare now to plant in spring 2021; they only plant in fall and spring. TreeMontgomery.org also has links to other state and local tree planting and coupon programs, as well as a tree care guide. You can get on the waitlist now by calling 311. DEP promised they are taking steps to winnow the wait list but, in the meantime, they are prioritizing the deforested Purple Line corridor.

The Montgomery County Planning Department has a free tree program called **Shades of Green** focused on planting trees in urban areas.

The Planning Department also offers a **downloadable \$40 coupon** that can be used to buy and plant shade trees with a retail value of \$75 at participating nurseries.

You can request more trees for the public right-of-way from **Montgomery County Department of Transportation**. You must comply with rules about the planting space, but MCDOT will send an arborist to evaluate. If you are interested, call 311 or use **MCDOT's online form**.

### STUMP REMOVAL

Montgomery County DOT's budget for tree stump removal and grinding isn't sufficient to keep up with the number of trees removed from public rights of way. There is a four year backlog for removal of street (ROW) tree stumps. Often, new trees cannot be planted until

## Our Tree Canopy, cont.

stumps are removed. Residents can advocate to allocate more money for tree stump removal to the County Executive and Council through the annual budget process.

### TREE CANOPY ALONG THE PURPLE LINE

Purple Line Transit Partners (PLTP) representatives did not attend the meeting, although they were invited by Councilmember Hucker's office. PLTP has specific contractual obligations for all landscaping within the limits of disturbance (LOD) of Purple Line construction. According to one audience member, a change order to the contract must be written to alter plans, including for trees. PLTP has renderings, but not technical drawings, of [Purple Line route landscaping on its website](#). Contact

[outreach@purplelinemd.com](mailto:outreach@purplelinemd.com) for more information.

### TREES IN PARKS

Montgomery Parks has a very active tree planting program. They have embarked on their first [tree inventory, which you can see online](#), which will help them better manage their trees. [Parks has its own tree farm in Gaithersburg](#), and the focus is on planting predominantly native trees for diversity. Although parks lost many ash trees recently due to the emerald ash borer, a more typical year would see removal of 500–1,000 trees countywide, paired with a rigorous replanting program.

### LOCAL OAKS DYING

Several attendees asked why mature oaks and other trees were succumbing to a pest and dying. The arborists present did not have a

definitive answer, but suspect certain pests are attracted to a chemical trees emit in very wet seasons like we had last spring and early summer. Everyone is concerned about the situation. The arborists recommended consulting the [Maryland Extension Service](#) as the research evolves on the issue.

### TREE CARE

Tree care is essential to keeping your trees healthy and thriving. Local nonprofit Conservation Montgomery offers a "[Home Tree Care 101](#)" class to local neighborhoods. The class features an arborist, small group participation, and on-site inspection of some trees for \$25 per person. Conservation Montgomery plans to apply for a grant from DEP to reduce class costs. [Apply for the class through the online form](#) (class minimum of 15 participants). ■

## Another ZTA to Allow Small Cell Towers in Residential Zones Introduced

By Harriet Quinn

For the fifth time in five years, and after [spending seven years re-writing the entire Zoning Ordinance between 2008–2014](#), Councilmembers have proposed yet another Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) to permit small cell telecommunications facilities in residential areas—adjacent to residences—without a hearing.

On October 1, Councilmember Riemer introduced [ZTA 19-07, Telecommunications Towers, Limited Use](#). The ZTA, co-sponsored by Councilmembers Rice and Alborno, would change the zoning to allow these small cell towers on telephone and light poles in all residential zones as a limited use. If within 60 feet of a dwelling, the application would technically be a conditional use



with hearing, but the process and standards would be substantially modified from the process for other conditional uses. The ZTA would also enable batching multiple applications across neighborhoods as one application.

Currently, the small cell towers are allowed in the mixed use, commercial, and industrial zones.

The public hearing is scheduled for November 19 at 7:30 p.m. You may [sign up online for the hearing here](#). As with the previous ZTAs, MCCF is opposed to placement without a public hearing. MCCF will continue to monitor this ZTA as well as the various petitions for judicial review of the relevant FCC orders.

The previous ZTAs are:

- [ZTA 14-04, Antennas on Accessory Structures](#), adopted in part;
- [ZTA 16-05, Telecommunications Towers, Limited Use](#), introduced;
- [ZTA 18-02, Telecommunications Towers, Limited Use](#), adopted in part; and
- [ZTA 18-11, Telecommunications Towers, Limited Use](#), introduced. ■



## Statement of the MCCF on the FY2021 Operating Budget

*[The following statement was made before the Montgomery County Executive's FY2021 Operating Budget Forum—held at the Silver Spring Civic Building on October 30, 2019—on behalf of MCCF by Tim Willard, Chair of MCCF's Environment Committee.]*

Good evening, County Executive Elrich and neighbors.

My name is Tim Willard and I'm proud to be speaking on behalf of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, one of the oldest organizations in our County, representing hundreds of Montgomery County's civic and homeowner associations from all over the County.

Our member civic associations and homeowner associations regularly articulate their concerns about the state of our County, bringing

attention to important public safety, public finance, education, transportation, and environmental issues. We appreciate this opportunity to share some of their concerns.

**Transportation and pedestrian safety** issues have been a major focus of our attention. We have followed with interest the Governor's plan to expand the Beltway and I-270, and to include express toll-lanes. It is

our position that the County—and the State—need to proceed carefully with this plan so as to not adversely impact existing neighborhoods, businesses, and public lands.

We believe that there should be more attention to transit in these plans. Our organization has long advocated for **free RIDE-ON service** throughout the County, to

MORE



TIM WILLARD  
TESTIFIES

## Budget Statement, cont.

expand the public's access to transit in a more cost-effective approach than the expensive bus rapid transit projects. We hope that County would consider this budget-friendly solution to our transportation challenges. We also urge the County to **increase its funding for road maintenance** in those areas of the County where the need is greatest.

With regard to pedestrian safety, we view with concern the increasing number of pedestrian fatalities throughout the County and call on the County Executive and County Council to **increase funding for traffic calming measures, increase police enforcement of speeding, and expand the program of resident education about pedestrian safety issues.** We also urge the County to demand

that the State Highway Administration take immediate steps to improve pedestrian safety along the State roads in the County.

With regard to the environment, members of the Montgomery County Civic Federation are concerned about the loss of tree canopy throughout the County, particularly as a consequence of new infrastructure projects and new and replacement housing development. We urge the County to **increase its tree planting programs, with a focus on those areas where the tree canopy is the thinnest.** A related issue is the **removal of tree stumps** in the County right-of-way, so that new trees can be planted. We urge an increase in the budget for this activity.

Our members have also advocated for solutions to these environmental issues. We would like to see

Montgomery County:

**■ Expand solar power systems on County buildings and properties to reduce our carbon footprint,**

**■ Expand the number of electric vehicles in the County's fleet,**

**■ Institute a moratorium on artificial turf fields in County parks, and**

**■ Expand programs to address the rapidly growing threat of non-native invasive plants.**

The Montgomery County Civic Federation stands ready to help your office, your Executive Departments, and the County Council to increase citizen understanding about these important issues and to help implement innovative and cost-effective solutions.

Thank 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 at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

## Proposed Resolution for MCPS Inspector General

MCCF has been supportive of establishing OIG oversight for County agencies as well as independent and bi-County agencies such as The Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and WSSC. The remaining agency without any oversight by an Inspector General is the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). The MCCF Executive Committee recently drafted the following resolution that will be voted on at the November 11 meeting.

### MCCF PROPOSED RESOLUTION ON AN MCPS IG

*Whereas*, historically the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. (MCCF), has supported the creation of Inspectors General for public agencies as appropriate; and



*Whereas*, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is a quasi-state agency not under the jurisdiction of the Montgomery County Inspector General or any other Office of Inspector General;

*Therefore, be it resolved*, that the MCCF supports the establishment and sufficient staffing and funding of an independent Inspector General (IG) specifically for the oversight of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). ■

## Montgomery County Civic Federation Seeks Members to Chair Committees

*By Bailey Condrey, President*

Before listing the committees for which the Federation seeks volunteers to chair the work, it's important to understand the structure of how the committees function. So the MCCF Bylaws have been used to outline the work.

Article IX of MCCF bylaws on the website outlines the duties of standing committees and provides this general description:

*Committee members must be members of the Federation. It shall be the general duty of each Standing Committee to monitor, evaluate, and report on the status and activity of matters within its assigned purview. In situations in which an issue impacts more than one Standing Committee, the Executive Committee shall assign and coordi-*

*nate committee tasks. Committee reports and recommendations shall be submitted to the Executive Committee for approval and any further action.*

The executive committee meets once each month either in person or by teleconference. These meetings last roughly two hours and occur in the evening on the third Thursday of each month, unless scheduled to another date.

The Federation seeks chairpersons for the following committees, with an outline of their oversight:

**Education.** This committee focuses on the programming, financing, and operation of schools and colleges within Montgomery County.

**Legislation.** This committee focuses on proposed local, state, and

federal legislation. Legislation affecting the assigned area of a Standing Committee shall be handled by that committee.

**Public Finance.** This committee focuses on the County's taxing, fees, spending, and borrowing policies and programs.

**Public Safety.** This committee focuses on police, fire and rescue, the judiciary, corrections, and emergency preparedness.

**Utilities.** This committee focuses on various utility services, including electricity, gas, water and sewer, and telecommunications.

Please contact President Bailey Condrey or First Vice President Alan Bowser to express your interest in becoming more engaged with the Civic Federation by becoming a committee chairperson. ■

## Climate Change Will Cost Maryland More Than We Think, Mont. County is No Exception

By Bailey Condrey, President

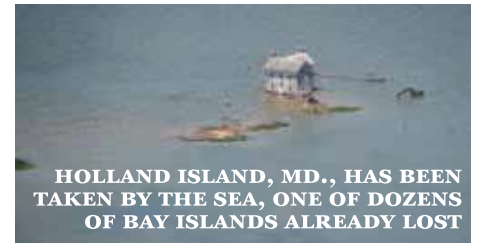
What affects the southern coastal counties of Maryland will ultimately affect us here in Montgomery. The repeated “Biblical” flooding of Ellicott City certainly undermines the stability of residents living in the small town, but it ultimately requires greater resources from the finite pie of resources that Maryland has to deal with natural disasters. The unfolding, slow-motion disaster happening along Maryland’s coast—the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay are repeatedly soaking low-lying areas with salt water—will place a huge strain on Maryland’s resources, just as the state is trying to come to terms with its massive public education goals. There is only one pot of money and it’s not large enough.

A new study highlighted by *The*

*New York Times* reveals that **economists have been underestimating the real economic costs** that climate change has already begun to level on this nation and the world. The real costs create failed states.

Two weeks ago I attended a film series hosted by **One Montgomery Green** that featured the documentary *High Tide in Dorchester*. The **film series link provides a lot of information** on the series.

One of many tidal counties in Maryland, Dorchester has begun to feel the economically devastating preamble of sea level rise (SLR). Lunar-driven high tides and storm-driven high tides have begun to inundate low-lying areas along the Atlantic and Chesapeake Bay coasts. Scientists point out that SLR in coastal Maryland and Virginia is



also tied to subsidence, the land is sinking, and thermal expansion. As the oceans warm they expand, creating greater volume. Many of the citizens of Dorchester refer to the issue as “erosion,” which they like to claim has taken many of Maryland’s island communities in the Bay, but the “erosion” would not be happening without the greatest driver of erosion, sea level rise.

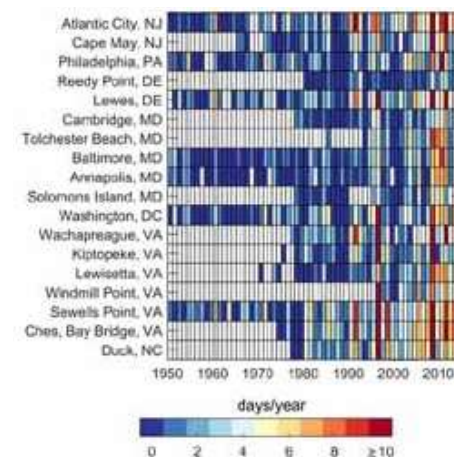
Three days after viewing the film, flooding occurred in Annapo-

MORE

## Climate Change Cost, cont.

lis and Old Town, Alexandria, and most assuredly Dorchester, and other counties, by a phenomenon rarely seen, but described by the Capital Weather Gang. The winds generated by Tropical Storm Melissa, hundreds of miles from the Chesapeake Bay, were pushing water south in the Potomac River and Bay, at the same time that the full Harvest Moon was pushing the high tide north. The water piled up in the tidal reaches of the Bay and flooded many coastal areas.

So the questions for state and regional policymakers multiply but, in the near-term, a number come to mind. What percentage of residents in tidal Maryland counties has wells and septic systems? How many of them have been compromised by recurrent tidal flooding? This is a real



property value killer. What have state legislators proposed for dealing with the relocation of thousands of people for whom this will become an issue? How will the state and Montgomery County manage the dislocation of these residents, where will they go and how will Maryland pay for it?

A 2018 report from the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration** showed that in 15 years, the incidence of high-tide flooding in the Mid-Atlantic doubled from an average of three days per year in 2000 to six in 2015 (see chart at left).

Given sea level rise projections, high-tide flooding could occur every other day by the end of the century, the NOAA report said. But, unfortunately, if you study climate change, you understand that these projections are wrong. They are based on models that fail to account for the feedback loops that amplify sea level rise, one of the points that the Swedish climate change activist Greta Thunberg has voiced repeatedly.

When I read the story in *The New York Times* about economists

MORE



**Climate Change Cost, cont.**

giving bad projections for the economic harm that climate change already delivers to mankind, I then read the comments. One in particular grabbed my attention by Ah-BrightWings, from Cleveland, Ohio.

*"This article's focus on speed confirms a talk I heard years ago, when Elizabeth Kolbert, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for 'Notes from a Catastrophe,' spoke. Her opening salvo was this: 'Frankly, I marvel well I am invited to a school. I liken myself to the skunk at the garden party. I have no good news to share; indeed, my findings speak to an oncoming, unmitigated catastrophe.'"*

*"No one sitting in that room could have left with anything other than a crystal clear grasp of the crisis we face. But it was her clos-*

*ing point that brought the room to a shocked and eerie silence.*

*"She'd been working with a group in Alaska studying a village that has survived centuries because it was encircled by a ring of ice that protected it from the pounding ocean. Original projections had been that the ice ring would melt in 2050. Her phone pinged as she finished speaking. She gasped, plugged her phone in, and projected on the screen an image of a house falling into the water. That melt was happening as she spoke.*

*"The most salient point she made was that between receiving the galleys for her book and making the final corrections, every projected climate change benchmark she'd been tracking—most for 2025, 2050, 2075—had already happened. I left that talk in a fugue state and it's a rare day that I don't*

*recall points she made. You don't even have to be paying attention to realize that this species is in the fight for its life."*

So you see, the state of Maryland is going to have to relocate the residents of our coastal counties much sooner than anyone has anticipated, and wealthy counties such as Montgomery will be asked to shoulder a larger share of the burden. Now you have a better idea of why I write monthly on the subject of climate change and attempt to place focus on what many youth already know. It's time for all of us to leave our comfort zones and confront what looms before us. It's not such a painful process to deprive oneself of something that you want to make room for other people's essential needs. Educating the unknowing becomes the critical first step. ■

**Civic Federation Celebrates 30th Anniversary of the Committee for Montgomery (CfM)**

*By Alan Bowser, First Vice President*

The Montgomery County Civic Federation was a founding member of the Committee for Montgomery in 1989. Now in its 30th year, the Civic Federation is a strong supporter of the Committee for Montgomery (CfM), which is celebrating a major anniversary and still working hard to advocate for the County's concerns to the Maryland State Government.

Committee for Montgomery is a coalition of leaders representing a broad cross-section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, and community-based organizations. Its mission is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the State. Through its membership, CfM represents more than 350,000 Montgom-

ery County voters.

While its membership is diverse and reflects a broad spectrum of political views, CfM members unite in support of its priorities, which include: education, health, economic development, fiscal responsibility, and transportation. CfM shapes its state legislative and budget priorities based on its goal of preserving and strengthening Montgomery County as a place to live, work, and learn.

CfM's Board of Directors is comprised of a diverse group of individuals from many organizations across Montgomery County. Among the organizations represented, along with the Civic Federation, are the Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce, Montgomery College, the Asian American Political Alliance, Community Bridges,

Cornerstone Montgomery, the Universities of Shady Grove, Housing Unlimited, the MCPS Retirees Association, UFCW Local 1994 MC-GEO, Montgomery County Public Schools, Interfaith Works, Adventist Health Care, the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce, Chesapeake Public Strategies, and the Laborer's International Union of North America.

While continuing its attention to key transportation and economic development issues in the County, CfM has recently focused in-depth attention the issues and recommendations of the so-called Kirwan Commission and "The Blueprint for Maryland's Future," a broad encompassing bill about public education in Maryland.

## CfM, cont.

Montgomery County faces unique challenges that require a different approach to funding formulas and programming at our schools. The County includes a much larger student population of English Language Learners (here the rate of

increase is among the highest in the state) and Free and Reduced Meals (FARM)-eligible (59K), and Special Needs students than most people that most people realize. We have seen an increase in enrollment and a widening achievement gap along with it. The circumstances deserve an approach that focuses on students

and their needs rather than on outdated formulas and narratives that serve to perpetuate inequities rather than correcting them. Representatives of the Civic Federation have participated in many of the meetings about the Kirwan Commission's work and have travelled to Annapolis to support CfM's Advocacy Day.

CfM's best known program is its annual Legislative Breakfast held at the Bethesda Marriott in December of every year before the Maryland General Assembly convenes in January. This year the date of the Legislative Breakfast is December 13, 2019, and the topics is "Nothing to be Scared of: Finding the Funding for The Blueprint for Maryland's Future."

For more information about the Committee for Montgomery and the annual Legislative Breakfast, visit the CfM website. ■



Alan Bonner

## Minutes of October 14, 2019, MCCF General Meeting #906 in Rockville

*By Karen Cordry, MCCF Secretary*

The General Meeting convened at the Montgomery County Executive Office Building.

**Call to Order:** President Bailey Condrey called the meeting to order at 7:50 p.m. and attendees provided introductions.

**Adoption of Meeting Agenda:** It was moved and seconded that the agenda as printed in the newsletter be adopted. The agenda was unanimously approved.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ A transportation town hall was held on Oct. 21 Montgomery College, Germantown campus, at which

numerous county officials appeared to discuss the I-270/355 issues, the Corridor Cities Transitway, and other related issues.

■ On Oct. 17, the County held a program to discuss changes to improve the Building Code.

■ On Oct. 16, the Taxpayers League held a meeting with the new Inspector General.

■ Jon Foreman is convening a working group to put together a proposed resolution on the Climate Emergency for proposed adoption by the Civic Fed. Those interested should see him.

**Approval of September Minutes:** It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the September meeting, as published in the newslet-

ter, be approved. The minutes were unanimously approved.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jerry Garson reported on recent transactions and the account balance for the year. As of now, we have received \$805 in dues, which is about a third of what was expected for the entire year. Including payment for the awards dinner earlier in the summer, expenses totaled \$819.80, for a net total of (\$14.80). There is a bank balance of approximately \$10,400.

It was moved and seconded that the budget as published in the newsletter be approved and the motion passed unanimously. It was noted that we are taking affirmative steps to increase the collection of dues overall, including making it possible

## October Mtg. Minutes, cont.

to pay dues online.

### OCTOBER PROGRAM

The topic for October was the Planning Department's work on updating the County's Master Plan for overall development in the County. The speakers were Khalid Afzad and Caroline McCarthy. This planning effort has been designated as Thrive Montgomery 2050, indicating the extended time horizon for the planning process. This effort is meant to arrive at a comprehensive, "big picture" analysis of the County's needs and goals, rather than focusing on specific projects or localized zoning efforts which are done as part of the more localized plans.

*[See Mr. Afzad's PowerPoint presentation online here.]*

The presentation began with a

history of these planning efforts, going back to the first such plan in 1958. The original planning actually took in the entire D.C. Metropolitan area. The plan language in 1961 utilized a concept of "wedges and corridors," where the corridors would be major road and transit ways (such as I-270, I-95 and so forth) where business development was expected to cluster, while the wedges would be residential areas between the corridors. By 1964, the plan had been narrowed to be part of the work of the bi-county Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission for Montgomery and Prince George's Counties and, by the 1970s, the plan updates had been narrowed to only deal with Montgomery County.

Issues that have been included over time include a focus on ensuring affordable housing, the creation

of the Agricultural Reserve, and the need to ensure adequate public facilities prior to new development (which is now referred to as the Subdivision Staging Plan). There have been numerous piecemeal updates over the years, but the current effort is the first complete review and restatement in decades.

The current process is taking place at a time where there is not a great deal of open space left (outside the Agricultural Reserve), so there is a need to figure out how to accommodate additional growth through infill and replacement of existing buildings. By 2045, it is expected that there will be an additional 200,000 residents and that the overall county population will be highly diverse and as much as 75% nonwhite. The discussion focused on a number of specific areas in-

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## October Mtg. Minutes, cont.

cluding how much and what types of housing are needed, reasons why building isn't meeting the need, how to accommodate households with income well below the median, and a renewed focus on increasing transit use. Mr. Afzad also noted an example of how each of the various areas they are analyzing tends to interact with other areas, such as job growth interacting with affordability, creating pressure for workers to move further away from jobs, thereby increasing greenhouse gases.

The three priority factors the plan intends to focus on are "economic health, community equity, and environmental resilience." The Planning Department is doing community outreach across the county and expects to continue to do more to get further input. The timetable

is to have their visioning process largely done in October, to continue public input and analysis through December, to have a draft plan out in early 2020 that will be reviewed and revised through September 2020, with Planning Board review until March 2021 and County Council review thereafter, culminating in an approved plan by the target date of the fall of 2021.

The discussion and question period focused on several areas including the extent of the County's outreach efforts and how to improve them as well as specific concerns about issues such as whether retention of the Agricultural Reserve would conflict with the need for additional lower cost space for housing. Mr. Afzad noted that they were putting together a "meeting in a box" that would allow groups to have the necessary materials to present the

Master Plan and related issues to their own members and gather feedback for the county.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### *Planning and Land Use*

■ There will be a hearing on November 19 to discuss the most recent iteration of the proposal on cell tower placement and approval.

#### *Environmental*

■ Bailey Condrey noted that there had been new evidence about toxic substances being found in artificial turf and that the chemicals were long-lasting and could get into groundwater.

#### *Transportation*

■ It was noted that the Purple Line was moving forward but with still more delays.

MORE



## October Mtg. Minutes, cont.

■ On the other hand, the widening of I-270 from Democracy Boulevard to Falls Road on and from Falls Road to Montrose—a project that was not part of the Governor’s proposed toll lane additions—have been completed and are expected to provide substantial traffic relief in those areas.

### NEW BUSINESS

■ Kim Persaud noted that a petition is being circulated to support changing from a five-district/four-at large County Council to having all nine seats be elected by districts. (It was noted that Montgomery County is well over a million people, and that there are only a small number of counties nationwide that use at large seats.) It was agreed that a proposal for the Civic Fed to support that effort can be placed in the November

newsletter and voted on at the next meeting. (See [page 9](#) and the [resolution beginning on page 10](#).)

■ The November meeting will be held at Richard Montgomery High School. The December meeting will be at the Executive Office Building, but in the cafeteria.

**Adjournment:** Bailey called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:55 p.m. ■

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### Montgomery County Civic Federation

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