



CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

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Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

Peggy Dennis, Editor Phone: 301-983-9738 Email: hotyakker@aol.com

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Charles Pritchard (right) stands with the honorees at this year's MCCF annual reception for elected officials. From the left, honorees are Capt. Charles Weaver (CO, RAID), Det. J. H. Van Gelder, Brig. Gen. Warren I. Sumpter, Patrolman Michael I. Fedor, and Lt. Col. Charles H. Schulze. For more photos of the reception go to our website www.montgomerycivic.org.—All photos by I. Dean Ahmad

Annual Growth Policy: The 800-lb. Gorilla

—by Stan Schiff, 2nd Vice President

A little over a year ago the County Council charged the Planning Board with initiating a wholesale review of the Annual Growth Policy (AGP)—a vehicle by which the county seeks to link the pace of development with the availability of public infrastructure and "to balance growth with other public policy objectives."

Complaints and criticisms of the way in which the AGP has functioned abound. It hasn't prevented mounting traffic congestion nor overcrowding of schools, two of its principal objectives. Many have found its methodology baffling. It reminds some of us (including the writer) of Churchill's famous description of Russian

conduct: "It's a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an

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enigma."

Yet it is a subject of vital importance, especially now with the intense and widespread interest in traffic congestion and school overcrowding. The Council's directive to the Planning Board was most timely.

At our regular meeting on Monday, January 13, we will have as guest speaker one of the few people who really understands the system. Karl Moritz, research manager at Park and Planning, will brief us on the study now in progress, with respect to both the substance as well as the process. Park and Planning is putting together a number of focus groups to cover housing, jobs, transportation, schools and community impact. These groups will have been established by the time this newsletter appears. However, any of our members who are interested in the subject can communicate directly with Mr. Moritz [MNCPPC, 8787 Georgia Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910] Tel: 301-495-1312; e mail karlmoritz@mncppc.org.

We have arranged for this presentation in order to respond to the concern of many members about the way in which the application of AGP has impacted their neighborhoods. In addition, many of us who have worked on transportation policy view growth management as an essential element of such a policy. We consider this discussion an important preliminary to the transportation policy forum we are planning to hold early in 2003.

Whether you are an experienced and scarred vet of the growth wars or a fresh, unscarred eager-to-learn newcomer to the subject, we think you will find Karl Moritz's presentation enlightening and the ensuing discussion rewarding.

Delegate Meeting Minutes

Nov. 12, 2002

–by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

Meeting began 7:50 p.m., President Cary Lamari presiding.

Announcements: cards being passed for condolences for Jorge Ribas on the loss of his brother and for Lew and Alice Helm on her illness.

Agenda item added:

Introductions: Patty Murphy and Nancy Glasgow from Wheaton Revitalization Committee; Susan Stein, new representative for Stan Schiff's neighborhood association.; Linda Guest for River Hill HOA; David Polinski; Linda Bea, Strathmore Bell Pre Civic Assoc.

Cary Lamari: comments on election, implications for transportation agenda, meeting on Dec. 9th at Redland Road by the SHA on the Norbeck /Georgia Ave. grade-separated intersection which delegates should attend and lobby to support the Federation position. Proposed residential development at Fortune Park with meeting 9:30 a.m. on Monday, November 18th at MN-C/PPC

There is a correction to the minutes for the Executive Committee meeting, Page 3, first line. "Members have criticized the Planning Board's report" not the federation report.

The November Program is on Wheaton Revitalization; Patty Murphy and Nancy Glasgow. Wheaton Revitalization. Steering Committee formed with 35 members at behest of County Exec with citizens, members of business community, etc. Four subcommittees. Redevelopment Office: vision for revitalization. The community supports the redevelopment efforts. 4-6 months of focus groups to come up with ideas of visions for the future. 4 different scenarios, each endorsed by the community, but with different levels of public/private investment. Reality will probably be a synthesis of all four scenarios. Four primary elements of the program: (1) clean and safe neighborhoods (2) economic development: provide services to existing businesses and find new businesses to relocate to the enterprise zone (3) community interaction: working the WRSC and conducting special events (4) redevelopment projects. Timing is essential. Westfield Shopping Mall will be redeveloped into a two-story mall. Must have a fourth anchor department store, perhaps Macy's, New Giant on University Blvd. New housing units will be luxury and market rate, with developers putting money into redevelopment of existing subsidized units instead of providing new MPDUs. Good Counsel HS site will have large residential complex. There will be townhouses on the Wheaton Lumber site. There will be a new site for Wheaton Fire and Rescue. Additional goals: facilitate more public facilities and green spaces and provide pedestrian safety and improvements. Facilitate more public investment. Streetscape improvements. Q: Jerry Garson brought up problem of limited parking for restaurant clientele. Charles Wolff: need for different

times on parking meters. Also the traffic situation is difficult. Plans needed for intersection improvements.

A: Traffic-calming improvements are being considered. It's hard with three highways all coming together there. Most projects are within walking distance of the Metro station. Lucille: why not mixed use with apartments above the retail shops? Lofts over businesses are being considered. Stan Schiff: how many additional housing units are considered? There are about 740 new residential units at market rate. Townhouses will probably start at about \$300,000. Stan comments that those most dependent on Metro will not be able to afford the housing close to the transport. Pritchard: did School Board or County Council make any attempt to buy Good Counsel HS? No. Developers may retain some part of the school facility such as auditorium and classroom spaces and still put in needed units. Good Council is the only land that requires rezoning. Max: plenty of parking in Wheaton Plaza and public parking structure. Positive comment on public cherrette attended last weekend. Question about liquor laws and restaurants. Wheaton has strong base of ethnic restaurants. Space for more restaurants is limited and expensive. Marion Fryer: community involvement will insure that all these questions are addressed in the future. Park & Planning is responsive and good to work with. Dale Tibbitts: Wheaton is benefiting from errors made in Silver Spring. Wilhelm: need for traffic improvements at local intersections. Schiff: public safety and police dept. Overall there was a concern about infrastructure limitations and a clear vision for Wheaton's direction.

Old Business:

Dale Tibbitts on electoral process reform. Phil Andrews will draft a bill on campaign finance reform to be co-sponsored with Marilyn Praisner and put forward by Adrian Mandel of the County Delegation. Dale Tibbitts: Task Force coming together slowly, possible first meeting on Friday evening concerning scope of our efforts. Some of the topics are: other types of voting systems? Number of at large seats? How to accomplish our goals and recommendations? Past attempts to allow counties to enact stricter requirements than those permitted by state law have failed. Frederick County is trying to enact legislation to restrict developers from donating to campaign coffers if they have projects coming up during the coming cycle. Meeting this Friday, 7:30, Room 105, Red Brick Court House.

Sarah Gilligan on Emergency Bill 33-02: enables developers to voluntarily put MPDUs on small plots and get MPDU density bonus. PHED may meet next week, Nov 21st. Group from Layhill will meet with Silverman tomorrow. Everything about this legislation is being too fast. Would have Countywide implications. Sarah and Dick Kauffunger believe we should have a task force to discuss the entire issue in greater depth. Rezoning would not be required. Lee Shipment brought up problem of waivers and buy-outs and need for MPDUs in Bethesda where low-income housing is badly needed. Kauffunger explained how this bill undermines Euclidean zones and all our Master Plans. Staff report was available for PHED meeting in September, but not yet available to those meeting next week. Motion: Civic Fed to support establishing a Task Force to study the issues related to Bill 33-02. Seconded. 21 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstention.

Charles Pritchard: Silver Spring problem with satellite police station. We should be prepared to try and back up police in their attempt to get a better satellite station. Helicopter Unit issue: sniper problem caused Weast to scream for helicopter support, which we didn't have, and State helicopter pilots didn't know the area. For ten days two volunteers covered all schools, flew evidence, provided valuable support. We will present a plaque to honor Chief Moose and the Police Department and the two officers who helped with helicopter support during the crisis. Charles requests we do a commendation to the National Guard Unit who assisted in the sniper crisis. Charles will give them a picture. Motion: Civic Fed to present plaque and picture to the National Guard Unit at the Holiday Reception. Pat Cummings suggested an add-on to the plaque to explain the presentation to be affixed to the picture. Vote: in favor 16; opposed 4; Abs 1.

Motion to extend time to discuss place for satellite location.

New Business

Fifa: membership drive: Associations that haven't paid by next month will be dropped.

Holiday reception: please pay, the sooner the better. Cary pointed out that the reception would be at a new venue, an Italian restaurant in Wheaton.

Luella Mast left Treasurer's report.

Lapinski: Public Finance: info on Committee for Montgomery reception.

Education Committee: motion made by Mark Adelman: re Post-Facto Authorization of Civic Fed Expenditure for plaque to be presented at holiday reception. In favor: 11, 2 opposed, 1 abstained.

Motion adjourned at 9:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Zierdt

ExComm Meeting Minutes Dec. 19, 2002

—by *Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary*

Meeting began at 7:50 p.m., President Cari Lamari presiding. He reported that the MCCF's Annual Reception for Elected Officials was successful.

Jay Keller, from Population Connection (PC), gives an overview of his organization (formally Zero Population Growth). Stan Schiff: What would PC offer the MCCF at a delegates meeting. Jay: Population education. Stan: We are aware of population and its effects, immigration, etc. There are population distribution problems. Charles Pritchard: Religious concerns? Catholics, etc. Jay: each generation will have fewer children. Q: How is population control working in China?. Jay: China is not a model. Jay does have a "stump" presentation that could be presented to the Federation. Jay will write a newsletter article.

Treasurer's Report. Cary distributes detailed reports from treasurer Luella Mast.

Stan Schiff. TPR Workshop update. Discussion of revenue for the February meeting. Invite people from the Virginia debate (Policy Forum). Revenues: County Council staff recommends that the new Council should have a discussion on revenue. This could be part of the April delegates program. AGP program for January.

Cary: We completed our work on the Maryland Smart Growth Collaborative. Dan raised air quality, and housing-to-jobs ratios issues, and public input. Regional planning. Land preservation. Dick Kauffunger moves that the ExComm recommend to the MCCF delegates that the MCCF support the Smart Growth

Collaborative recommendations. Seconded. Passes 8-2-1. Cary asks that MCCF invite the facilitator of the Collaborative to the MCCF January meeting. There is no objection.

Tom DeGraba. Bill 38-02 MPDU bill. Allow developers to build additional housing above current zoning limits. Trumps every sector and master plan in the County. Tom moves that MCCF oppose this bill (introduced by Councilmember Steve Silverman). Bill would permit increased density in areas not otherwise zoned for this. Dick Kauffunger moves that the MCCF oppose bill 38-02. Seconded. Passes unanimously.

Electronic voting for MCCF ExComm members. Cary. How do ExComm members feel about this idea? Tom: did not get his emails until later. Dean: concerns about email traffic. Mark Adelman: email education may help ("reply all" etc). Richard: email is an effective way to act on issues, bills, etc, in a timely manner. Stan suggests a committee look at this issue. Dean, Richard, George, Jorge Ribas volunteered and/or appointed to serve on this committee.

Electoral process and judges committee. Dale Tibbits (not present). Report forthcoming. Will not deal with electronic voting machines.

Cary: Hearing on Bill 303-3 Go Montgomery finance bill. Arthur Homes was "interesting" at the public hearing. Cary presented excellent testimony on behalf of MCCF's transportation positions, with facts, figures, and tables. Reports are that the MCCF came across as more knowledgeable than County representatives who promoted the bill.

Community Hero Award for January: Lois Sherman.

Programs. January: Annual Growth Policy. February: Transportation Revenues. March: Mono beam. April: Education.

Dick Strombotne moves the MCCF show its appreciation to Fifia Northrup for all her efforts in organizing the Annual Reception. Seconded. Passes unanimously.

Mark Adelman will look into school finances.

Legislation. A bill to return parts of Matthew Henson State Park to possible transportation use (a road) was introduced by Senator Jenny Forehand. It would remove its park designation Dick Kauffunger moves to

recommend to the MCCF delegates that the MCCF oppose the removal of park designation of Matthew Henson State Park. Seconded. Dean feels the ExComm should forward this to the delegation without a recommendation. Dick Strombotne says that there will be an opportunity for the public to testify on this. Dick Kauffunger: No, it won't: the notice is too short. Dick Kauffunger modifies his motion to include that the ExComm testify against this bill. Amendment passes 8-1. Motion then passes 8-1.

Cary moves that the ExComm approve Cary's testimony on bills 303-03 and 308-03. Passes, 7-1-1.

Meeting adjourns at 10:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Zierdt

Report on the Maryland Smart Growth Policy Collaborative

—by Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chairman

As reported in the October Newsletter, MCCF has been participating in a Smart Growth Policy Collaborative during the September - December period. The Collaborative was initiated to provide the State's new governor and administration recommended policies for addressing smart growth issues. The Collaborative consisted of 45 people from throughout the State representing select departments of the State government, various county governments, local planning agencies, environmental groups, developer/property interests, and special interest groups.

The group finished its work on December 17 by developing a five-page document. The document contains policy recommendations for the State and counties. The recommendations mirror many of the topics that interest MCCF, including a plan for growth with a 20 year horizon which:

- incorporates (1) density targets above 3.5 units/acre where appropriate, (2) need for *infrastructure and greenspace*, and (3)

sufficient *job/housing balance*, consistent with *public participation*.

- Revitalizes property (e.g. in older areas) and preserves land (e.g. parks and green space in urban and suburban areas).
- Insures that city, county, state and federal growth policies are coordinated with the plans of other affect jurisdictions (i.e. a form of regionalism)
- Recognizes that public transit availability and use is critical.
- Encourages transit-oriented development.
- Recognizes the interrelationship between land-use, transportation, and air/water pollution.
- Protects water quality.
- Pursues expanding and upgrading major wastewater treatment plants.
- Maintains funding for land protection such as Legacy Open Space.
- Conserves agricultural and forest industries (including land preservation).
- Encourages more meaningful community/citizen involvement in developing decisions by providing a system for developers to voluntarily consult with affected communities and citizens about specific projects.

The Collaborative operated by consensus, which means concurrence or the absent of overt dissent. **The MCCF Executive Board is recommending that the delegates support this document.** As with any document that has widespread acceptance, there are issues that we strongly support, some that we are neutral on and some that we may not like but which we do not strongly oppose. MCCF worked hard to ensure that our views were included in this document. I personally believe that although some may not like the exact wording, there are no recommendations in the document that a majority of our delegates would oppose. I feel that most of the recommendations are those that a majority of the delegates support and urge you to support the document.

The full document is on MCCF's web site, www.montgomerycivic.org, for you to read.

The MCCF is seeking members for its AUDIT COMMITTEE. If you wish to serve, contact Cary Lamari at 301-924-2746 or at carylamari@yahoo.com.

An Extraordinary State Budget Request

–by Chuck Lapinski, Chairman
Public Finance & Utilities Committee

As you have read many times in this column, the State budget is experiencing some really serious problems. (The County budget problems I projected should show up before this goes to print, and will be discussed next time.) This year's State budget, just 5 months old, is already more than \$600 million over budget. That's almost 2 times what I projected last April before the budget was passed and signed. And next year's budget, if kept at the same rate as the current year's, is projected to be at least \$1.2 billion in the red. Even if the economy improves, the State's Fiscal Affairs projections for future years don't get much better. For the last 8 years, the State budget increased some 60%, but your personal income did not! Most individual and family incomes in the state increased less than 30% over the same period of time.

So once again, as I stated in earlier years, the economy will do for us what our Governor and our Legislature would not do: require us to discipline and control our expenditures to revenues. Montgomery County will be affected, and clearly we will be "shorted" more than most. Everyone still believes that we are so rich that we can afford everything. It's clear from the on-going State Budget and Revenue Commission meetings that its members are really looking out only for themselves. Too bad, because they have an opportunity to help set things straight, and it is being squandered. Our State and County fiscal problems cannot be solved by constantly increasing taxes and fees as we did during the last few years. It would take an increase of about 20% in the income tax rate to produce a solution that might be good for only a year or two, even if we experience a significant upturn in the economy. A 20% increase means that the average county household's income tax would increase about \$1,100: from about \$5,200 to approximately \$6,300. From past experience with economic downturns, because of its budget and tax structure and regulatory burdens, the State and the County have tended to lag the region and the nation in how quickly and how well our budgetary situation recovers.

Even if we wanted to increase taxes and fees, this couldn't be done until the legislature returns to session in January. The increases would therefore have

only a minimal effect on the current fiscal year's tax revenues. To be sure, the State budget (and consequently the State's contributions to County revenues) will be cut this year, and further cuts are likely for the next fiscal year. We have seen the same cuts during past periods of economic weakness, 1991-1994 for example. The current cuts will be mandated both by the balanced-budget provisions of our State constitution and by prudence, which we have not shown in the last 8 years.

The question for you is, what should our priorities be, and how should the revenues be allocated among and within these priorities? I have my own ideas, but I want to hear from you about what you would like done. You can get all the State budget documents from the legislative website. Go to <http://mlis.state.md.us/> and follow the contents screen for "budget documents," the 90-Day Report, the Spending Affordability Briefings, and the Commission on Maryland Fiscal Structures proceedings. Get your ideas to me by phone at 301-384-0392 or by email at clapinsk@mclean.mcri.com. I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks.

2002 Annual Holiday Reception

–by Fifa Northrop and Charles G. Pritchard

This year's annual holiday reception, held on December 8 at Antonia's restaurant in Wheaton, was a resounding success. Despite the bad weather we had a turn out of about 120 persons including a number of our elected officials. Legislators and Federation members mingled. Some lobbying took place. Differences of opinion were exchanged. Newly elected or reelected legislators were congratulated. Finally, dinner was served. Although the turnout was greater than



expected, putting some pressure on the restaurant staff to keep the food coming, the food was more than adequate. We thank all of you who came out to join us for this event.



Dinner was followed by the formal reception with Cary Lamari, the Federation President, acting as master of ceremonies. He began

by calling for a moment of silence for the victims of the sniper crisis. Cary then greeted the legislators by name and noted that the reception was being held in Wheaton to highlight the Wheaton revitalization program now under way.

Next, President Lamari introduced Michael Subin, President of the Montgomery County Council, who opened with praise for the discipline and courage shown by County teachers, school administrators and bus operators in remaining at their posts throughout the crisis despite their vulnerability to the snipers. Next, he soberly warned his audience that the immediate future of the County's ongoing social services looks bleak because of the continuing financial crisis in the state and county budgets.



Lamari returned to the podium and lauded Montgomery County Police Chief Charles A. Moose and his Department for their leading role in the Joint Sniper-Homicide Task Force. He presented a Federation plaque commending their outstanding performance to Council President Subin for transmittal to Chief Moose. Next, certificates of commendation were presented to Patrol Officer Michael I. Fedor and Detective Jay H. VanGilder of the Montgomery County Police Department. Both men are also part-time Maryland Army National Guard helicopter pilots, and both volunteered during the sniper crisis above and beyond their normal departmental duties to fly with the National Guard helicopter patrols that covered Montgomery County.



The highlight of the evening was to honor our special guests, Brigadier General Warren Sumpter, Commanding General of the Maryland Army National Guard, Lt. Colonel Charles H. Schulze, commander of the Aviation Support Facility, and Captain Weaver, commander of the Reconnaissance and Interdiction Detachment. Although the media hardly mentioned the role of the National Guard during those troubled times, both of these units were working on our behalf during the sniper crisis day and night. General Sumpter was presented with a reproduction of a famous military painting depicting the counterattack of the Maryland 5th Regiment, Continental Army, on the forces of British General Lord Charles Cornwallis at the Battle of Guilford Court in North Carolina in March 1781. Commendatory plaques were given to Lt. Colonel Schulze and Captain Weaver. The National Guard officers seemed really happy to be there and to receive our testimonies of gratitude and appreciation for their excellent work. General Sumpter was especially delighted to have the reproduction, which he knew well and had even tried unsuccessfully to obtain for the 5th Regiment

Armory Museum in Baltimore. The picture will now be housed in that museum.

He noted that the 5th Regiment, Maryland Line, was the ancestor not only of the Maryland Army National Guard, but of the US Army itself.



General Sumpter closed his acceptance speech by emphasizing the close relationship of the National Guard with the general public reminding us that the soldiers of the National Guard are actually our friends and neighbors. In addition to fighting in every war, Guard units provide civil support in natural disasters and law enforcement emergencies such as the sniper crisis. The general's speech was well received and ended the formal ceremonies of the reception.

Special thanks for a wonderful and memorable reception must be paid to Fifa Northrup, the reception's organizer, Wanda Lamari and Luella Mast. But much of the success of the reception was due to the hard work of our President, Cary Lamari, who did not simply



delegate tasks but performed an enormous job in carrying them out himself. We have always been lucky in

the Civic Federation to have dedicated, intelligent, and enthusiastic presidents endowed with great hearts and the energy to make great contributions. Thanks for a superb job!

documents; and coordinated the scheduling of testimony at all the appropriate transportation hearings and forums. Without this type of persistence and dedication, the anti-ICC movement would not have been as effective as it was. It is a testament to the movement that past and current members of MICC were appointed to every county task force affecting transportation. Without dedication and persistence, we have no community heroes.

Community Hero: Lois Sherman

—by Chuck Lapinski
Public Finance & Utilities Chairman

It is very appropriate that Lois Sherman has been named our Community Hero for January, 2003. Beginning in 1989, Lois was one of the founding members of the Montgomery Inter-County Connector Coalition (MICC) which, like Lois, dedicated its existence to opposing the ICC because of its adverse impacts on their neighborhoods and communities, and minimal impact in solving our transportation needs at great costs. Prior to becoming an independent organization in the late 1990s, MICC was a division of the Coalition On Sensible Transportation (COST Inc.), and she held a board seat on COST.

Though new to civic activism, from the beginning, Lois was a quick learner. Her activism started as a result of the unresponsiveness of her elected representatives to the issues and concerns of her neighborhood and community concerning the ICC. She was the "glue" and encourager among the many members and technical specialists in the anti-ICC community who relied upon her to coordinate by: keeping notices and schedules current; alerting everyone to legislative notices, changes and hearing times and dates; establishing the newsletter which exposed the chicanery of elected officials, and posted the results of research and analysis of the various versions of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement; made sure that all the elected officials and key individuals of other county organizations had the most current findings and conclusions available that showed the serious flaws of the process and the draft

Membership Renewals

—by Fifa Northrup, *Membership Chairman*

This is the last newsletter being sent to member associations that are delinquent in paying their annual dues. The November newsletter included a list of delinquent organizations. Some organizations have responded already, and we thank you. It will be really appreciated if delegates from delinquent organizations will call both your presidents and treasurers and remind them to send in their renewal checks immediately. Let them know what a bargain the dues are and what a small portion of their budget is required to maintain membership in the Montgomery County Civic Federation. I can't think of any other group representing so many citizens countywide or doing such an outstanding job. We look forward to seeing all our member associations in the new directory.

Letter to the Editor

Stupid Growth and Its Supporters

I was dismayed when the Executive Committee voted at its last meeting to recommend that the delegates support the position of the Smart Growth Collaboration. In the past the Federation has always showed a justified skepticism over the slogan of "smart growth" and repeatedly—and wisely—declined to rubber stamp it. In various brainstorming sessions, numerous alternative expressions from no growth to slow growth to sensible growth (my favorite) have been proposed, with good reason.

Smart growth is a euphemism for growth managed by the government. And growth managed by the government, as every experience from Mussolini to

Stalin to Saddam Hussein's Baath socialism has shown, is stupid growth, not smart at all. In our capitalist democracy, with developer-funded campaigns, it means the fox has a prime seat on the committee managing the hen-house security.

I know that the Federation members who urged us to get involved in the "Smart Growth Collaboration" despite its pro-developer bias and undisguised origins in the Glendenning administration had good intentions; namely to try to exert a beneficial influence on the consortium. The resulting document which we are now being asked to approve as (God help us!) "a first step" only proves the old saw that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions.

From the preface (where we are asked to explicitly endorse not only the general principle of government-managed growth but even the specifically disastrous "existing smart-growth policies") to the chilling proposal to use taxpayer money to fund pro-development propaganda ("The state should work with the building, real estate, and the development/financing communities to offer workshops, course, or other information on specific smart-growth issues...") the draft proposal is a list of horrors with which we should be ashamed to associate ourselves. Even the wording is embarrassing, like the call for government to "provide" (rather than "provide for") housing. Did the Collaboration really intend to call for the socialization of the housing market, or is this merely a reflection of the fact that this document is not yet ripe for approval?

I do not intend to belittle or ignore such positive elements as our representatives have inserted into this horrid document. I only mean to note that they do not redeem the unredeemable. I strongly urge the delegates to defeat this proposal at our next meeting. **Rather than endorse the inappropriately named "smart growth", we should be advocating a system in which county and state set policies that encourage sensible growth by penalizing those who degrade the environment or the quality of life in their development efforts,** making developers and end-users pay for the costs they impose on the infrastructure rather than encouraging a system that will provide even further tax funded subsidies and special zoning exemptions for the particular beneficiaries of further growth.

*–I. Dean Ahmad, Ph.D.
Immediate Past President*

Editorial

A Note of Thanks and a Suggestion

Just a brief note to publicly thank those wonderful people who are helping get the Newsletter out each month. Dean Ahmad is wonderfully patient with me as I struggle to get all the submissions attached and sent to him correctly so he can format them. And Charles Pritchard is doing a champion job of the tedious and burdensome production end: folding, fastening, labeling and stamping each Newsletter. Thanks, guys! I couldn't do it without you!

At the last ExComm meeting, I brought up a proposal. As our calendar and by-laws currently stand, the production of the Newsletter falls towards the end of the month. Five out of the ten months when we put out the Newsletter have holidays during the same period. This makes getting the Newsletter out on time doubly burdensome. I am proposing that we reconfigure our meeting dates and subsequently the Newsletter deadlines to insure that they rarely, if ever, conflict with holidays. Please let me know what you think, how this might impact on your association's meetings or your ability to participate in the MCCF. Our Delegates Meetings are always on the second Monday of the month, unless it's a holiday. Would a day other than Monday be better or more difficult for you? Please give me your reactions to this proposal by email: hotyakker@aol.com or by telephone: 301-983-9738.

–Peggy Dennis, Editor

Mark Your Calendars

Please mark your calendars with the dates of the General Delegates meetings for the remainder of the spring. All meetings will be held in the COB Auditorium, beginning at 7:45 p.m.

Monday, Jan 13, 2003

Monday, Feb 10, 2003

Monday, Mar 10, 2003

Monday, Apr 14, 2003

Monday, May 12, 2003

Monday, June 9, 2003

From the President

Happy New Year to all! The Federation is again trying to set the record straight in what seems to be an endless battle of misinformation and rhetoric being promulgated by our County Executive to promote the “Go Montgomery” plan. Citizens of Montgomery County want to have improved transportation infrastructure now, in the short term, not wait for another ten to twenty years before traffic relief occurs.

The County Executive attempted this past week to have the Montgomery County Delegation support “sprint” legislation, Bill MC303-03. This legislation would effectively double your automobile registration fee to finance the “Go Montgomery” scheme. The Federation strenuously opposes this tax which would, in effect, result in citizens of this County having to pay for transportation infrastructure **twice**. It allows the Executive to fund State transportation projects that may not be built for decades when the public has already paid State taxes for this purpose. It is the responsibility of the State to finance and build State highway infrastructure.

At the public hearing on Bill MC303-03, I was particularly stuck by a question asked by Chairman Kumar Barve to General Holmes, the director of “Go Montgomery.” Mr. Barve asked how we got into this mess? Mr. Holmes then responded, “We have a good planning department”. The fact is that we are in this transportation crisis because during his 8 years in office, Doug Duncan has requested the smallest percentage share for transportation CIP spending than any county executive going back to Executive Gleason. In fact, according to a memo from Glen Orlin, Deputy Staff Council Director to the T&E committee, dated February 26, 2002, Mr. Duncan only spent 69.7% of the funds approved in his transportation CIP budget during the period FY97-01. Yet Mr. Duncan, throughout his years in office, has been a great supporter of growth and a champion of new development across Montgomery County. No wonder the level of congestion in Montgomery County has reached crisis proportions and now rivals that of Los Angeles.

Bill MC303-03 should be opposed and defeated for a number of reasons. This bill would create a regressive tax, treating the poor and elderly, those most dependent on their automobiles and least able to afford more tax increases, exactly the same as the wealthy. I was

surprised to see the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce supporting this proposal as it places local businesses at a competitive disadvantage: they will be required to pay this higher registration fee on their commercial vehicles while their competitors in adjoining jurisdictions will not. I don’t have to remind our State Delegates that the “Go Montgomery” plan has never been endorsed by the County Council. It is no more an approved county policy than the Federation’s plan to get our County moving again. Our plan, however, is more affordable and realistic. Our plan costs in the neighborhood of \$5.5 billion whereas the “Go Montgomery” plan costs approximately \$11 billion, and the Council’s plan with the ICC included, as of last count is around \$7.5+ billion. A chart comparing all three plans will be posted on our website, www.montgomerycivic.org. I would like you, the citizens of Montgomery County, to ask yourself a question. As we go into this new year, isn’t it time for the rhetoric to stop? Shouldn’t our elected officials deal with our transportation crisis expeditiously and realistically? I hope so. Or will the congestion crisis be the predominant issue again in the next election cycle? I hope not.

–Cary Lamari

Think about it...

You have just read one of the most thorough and accurate newsletters in the County. For 75 years, elected officials, community leaders, citizens and journalists have relied on the Civic Federation News as an authoritative source of citizen’s concerns and expectations.

Whether it is environmental issues, traffic congestion, ethics in government, unmet social needs, schools or land use, the **Civic Federation News** provides you with timely and accurate information. Join the Civic Federation today. With the exception of giving your own time and energy, it is the best investment you can make for your community.

Download your application form from our website www.montgomery.org/application.

2002-2003 MCCF Officers and Committee Chairs

Office	Name	Home #	Office #	Fax #	e-mail
President:	Cary Lamari	301-924-2746	301-924-2558	<none>	carylamari@yahoo.com
Past-Pres.:	I. Dean Ahmad	301-951-0539	301-656-4714	301-656-4714	dahmad@speakeasy.net
1st Vice-Pres.:	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	703-384-2698	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Stanley D. Schiff	301-530-6455	same	<not available>	stanschiff@msn.com
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Pat Cummings	301-977-6004	301-840-0921	301-840-0967	<call first>
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Mark Adelman	301-942-6893	301-295-3208	301-942-4108	adelman3@erols.com
2nd Vice-Pres.:	Vacant				
Treasurer:	Luella Mast	301-384-4178	<not available>	<not available>	luella@sysnet.net
Rec. Secretary:	Richard Zierdt	301-881-0283	703-464-1617	<not available>	richard.zierdt@landmark.com
Correspond. Sec:	Fifa Northrup	301-984-9424	<not available>	301-984-0147	rcnorth@bellatlantic.net
Dist. 1 V.P.:	Diana Conway	301-983-6124	<not available>	<not available>	dconway@erols.com
Dist. 2 V.P.:	Dick Strombotne	240-621-9881	<not available>	240-621-9881	rlstrombotne@ieec.org
Dist. 3 V.P.:	Tom DeGraba	301-340-2570	<not available>	<not available>	<none>
Dist. 4 V.P.:	Bob Abrams	301-946-7291	<not available>	<not available>	robertabr@aol.com
Dist. 5 V.P.:	Jim Johnson	301-587-7233	<not available>	<not available>	JimJJohnson@compuserve.com
Historian:	Charles Wolff	301-585-9744	301-286-8185	<none>	wolff99@starpower.net
Newsletter Ed.:	Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738	same	<not available>	hotyakker@aol.com
Parliamentarian:	William Skinner	301-762-5483	301-762-3784	301-762-3786	wjswtg@aol.com
Public Relations:	Stuart Rochester	301-384-5515	<not available>	<not available>	<not available>
Education:	Mark Adelman	301-942-6893	301-295-3208	301-942-4108	adelman3@erols.com
Environment:	Charlie Pritchard	301-593-1781	same	<not available>	erc69434@aol.com
Legislation:	George Sauer	301-762-7260	same	<not available>	musicwilma@earthlink.net
Membership:	Fifa Northrup	301-984-9424	<not available>	301-984-0147	rcnorth@bellatlantic.net
Pl. & Land Use:	Tom DeGraba	301-340-2570	<not available>	<not available>	<none>
Pub. Fin. & Util.:	Chuck Lapinski	301-384-0392	703-506-4600	<not available>	clapinsk@mclean.mcri.com
Transportation:	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com

In Memoriam: A Mentor Remembered

—by Cary Lamari, President

I would like to close with a message to the family and friends of one of the Civic Federation's real heroes, long time role model and mentor to many of us, Frank Vrataric. Frank passed away the week after the Annual Holiday reception. His wife, Ann, told me he really had a good time seeing many of you that evening. Frank was a major driving force in this county on topics like ethics in government and the policies for appropriately liquidating public schools. He was an expert on many issues including the ICC and one of the first to recognize the need for local intersection improvements.



We will start the Federation meeting on January 13th giving the delegates an opportunity to celebrate and

remember Frank's life. Anyone who wishes may come to the front of the room to remember our friend.

Frank Vrataric embodied so many of the ideals of civic activism in general and of the Federation in particular.

May God bless you, my friend, as He has blessed us with the opportunity of learning from you.

An Addendum

—from Lois Sherman

I apologize for the delay in getting out information out regarding Frank Vrataric. Frank's wife, Ann has informed us that he did not want a memorial service or notice of his death in the papers. We offered to have a memorial service in the spring, but Ann said she had to honor Frank's request and reject that offer. Frank's family has requested that expressions of sympathy be made in the form of donations to:

The Home Care Hospice, Holy Cross Resource Institute, 1500 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910.

Sympathy cards can be sent to: Ann Vrataric, 2706 Sheraton Street, Silver Spring, MD 20906.

Delegates Meetings
Monday, Jan. 13–7:45 p.m.

**1st fl. Auditorium
County Co. Office Bldg., Rockville, MD**

AGENDA:

7:45 Call to order, Cary Lamari presiding
7:50 Announcements and Introductions
7:55 Adoption of Agenda
8:00 Approval of minutes (p. 2)
8:05 Community Hero (p. 9)
8:15 Remembrances of Frank Vrataric (p. 11)
8:30 Smart Growth Collaborative Recommendations (p. 5)
8:45 **Program: Montgomery County Growth Policy** (p. 1)
9:25 Old Business, officers reports
9:30 New Business
9:55 Adjournment

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation**, a nonprofit, educational, and advocacy countywide group, was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. The monthly Delegates Meeting is open to the public and it is held on the second Monday of each month (except for holidays, July, August and December) at 8:00 p.m. in the First Floor Auditorium, County Office Building, Rockville, MD.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly. It is mailed to Delegates; associate members; news media, and local, state, and federal officials. Permission is granted to reprint any article provided proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County Civic Federation." Deadline for submissions for the next issue: 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 25. Attach submission to e-mail to: Hotyakker@aol.com file in fully justified 11-point Times Roman font (preferably as a Word document.) Send editorial content to Peggy Dennis, 1111 Fawcett Road, Potomac, MD 20854.

Please send all address corrections to Steve Howie, P.O.Box 325, Clarksburg, MD 20871, 301-972-2736, stevehowie@aol.com.

Next Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, Jan. 23, 2003, 7:45 p.m.

Red Brick Courthouse

29 Courthouse Square, Rockville

(Note: there is parking lot in front of the courthouse.)

Montgomery County Civic Federation
Steve Howie, Database Manager
P.O. Box 325
Clarksburg, MD 20871

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