



CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation
Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

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746TH SESSION

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APRIL 14 DELEGATES MEETING COUNTY OMB TO PRESENT THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET

By Chuck Lapinski, Public Finance Chair

Joe Beach, Acting Director of the MC Office of Management and Budget, will present and explain the County Executives proposed FY04 Operating Budget at our next delegates meeting. He has been our guest in the past, and will provide a comprehensive summary and handouts. To balance this year's budget, the County Executive has proposed a number of new taxes and fees on top of those that were proposed and approved last year. This \$3.1 billion budget is 4.7% higher than FY03 and 10.5% over the Council's Spending Affordability Guidelines, compared to a general inflationary increase last year of less than 2% (1.8%). Additionally, the Maryland State Legislature is proposing a large number of new taxes and fees to help balance this year's and next year's proposed budgets, on top of those they approved last year. The agenda includes ample time for your questions and answers. (See related article summarizing preliminary analysis and commentary on both the county and the state budget.)

DOORE SPEAKS ABOUT MONOBEAM/MONORAIL



In a well attended March 11 Delegates Meeting, Stanley Doore discussed the advantages of elevated Monobeam rail and why it should be used in our County. He argued that it is less costly than heavy rail.

ELECTORAL REFORM - AN UPDATE

By Dale Tibbitts, Electoral Reform Chair

The Montgomery County Civic Federation has been actively advocating for campaign finance reform legislation in Annapolis this session.

MCCF testified in support of Senate bill SB-132 and House Bill HB-660 which would have closed the loophole that allows corporate entities that are wholly owned or controlled by a parent company to each give up to the maximum contribution limits.

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Electoral Reform – An Update (cont.)

The House Ways & Means Committee (W&M) voted favorably of the bill 14-6-1. The Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee (EHE) voted against it 7-3-1. In the last election, two Montgomery County companies apparently gave \$160,610 through multiple corporate entities that would have been limited to \$20,000 under this legislation.

MCCF testified in support of SB-259 and HB-666 which would have required campaigns to request the employer and occupation of donors giving more than \$250 in an election cycle. This law is similar to the federal disclosure law requiring donors of more than \$200 to provide employment information. The information allows the public to see if a particular business sector or the employees of a particular business are contributing in a manner that may exert undue influence on the electoral process. The Senate sponsor of the bill withdrew it and the House W&M Committee voted against it 17-4.

MCCF also testified against SB-214 and HB-869 which would have increased the aggregate contribution limit for an election cycle from \$10,000 to \$20,000 for an individual or business. An election cycle is a four-year period that starts the January after a gubernatorial general election. The Senate EHE Committee voted against raising the limit 10-1 and the House W&M Committee opposed it 14-7.

MCCF supported HB-663 which would have limited the amounts that could be transferred between campaign committee organized as a slate. Currently there is no limit and the legislation would have limited such transfers to \$7,500. The House W&M Committee voted against slate transfer limits 14-7.

The Electoral Reform Task Force also was charged with looking into the method of electing Circuit Court judges. In the September primary election, only registered Democrats and Republicans could vote for non-partisan judges. The top 6 in each party's primary advanced to the general election. MCCF sent testimony to the House Judiciary Committee on HB-466 in which we stated that the current system of electing non-partisan judges in partisan primaries is unfair to the nearly 90,000 voters in Montgomery County who are not registered as Republican or Democrat. The House and Senate Judiciary committees voted against non-partisan elections for judges and against gubernatorial appoint of judges with Senate confirmation and retention election for a term of 10 years.

With the legislative session winding down, the Task Force's attention is now directed towards other electoral

problems. The initial list of concerns was lengthy. In addition to those addressed by the proposed legislation above, task force members were concerned about the following questions:

Have the cost of campaigns become prohibitively expensive for candidates not endorsed by monied special interests to run? Are At-large county council races so expensive that they are effectively being bought? Should we have campaign expenditure limits? Should we do away with or reduce At-large council seats and have 9 or more smaller, single member districts to counter the influence of large, coordinated financial contributions? Or, should we change the method of voting for At-large seats to a cumulative or preferential voting system? Or, should we endorse a public financing system for state and local elections to eliminate the influence inherent in acceptance of campaign contributions?

Is there sufficient separation of power between the branches of government with coordinated campaigns and contributions for Executive, County Council and judges? Should the Montgomery County Council have an explicit conflict of interest law requiring councilmembers to recuse themselves from debate and voting on issues of financial interest to major campaign contributors such as Prince George's County has and Frederick County is considering? Is there a conflict of interest with attorneys contributing to judges and then appearing before them? Is there pressure for attorneys to contribute to judges' campaigns because they appear before them?

Should the campaign disclosure report schedule be changed to increase political transparency? Is there any way to get timely contribution and expenditure disclosure from "independent" issue campaign organizations? Are candidates being denied fair media access and coverage? Should candidates have free county cable media access?

The Task Force will not make recommendations on all the concerns raised, but we hope to raise the awareness of MCCF members, elected officials and interested parties about all the potential and perceived problems with our electoral process. (DATibbitts@aol.com, 301-219-6475)

HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE LATELY?

If you haven't, please take the time to access it at:

www.montgomerycivic.org

You will be able to read this and past newsletters, find Civic Fed reports, by-laws, announcements, etc.

Delegate Meeting Minutes March 10, 2003

–by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

MCCF president Cary Lamari calls meeting to order at 7:51 pm.

Agenda.

Dean Ahmad: “Cut and Cover” for the Purple Line. Susan Petrocci: A new zoning text amendment. Peggy Dennis: New ZTA and 03-01; Jerry Casale: sidewalks. Mark Weinman: White Flint Metro Development Plan; Agenda is approved.

Minutes for the February Delegates meeting. Adopted as written in the March newsletter.

Community Hero Award. Cary Lamari presents award to Jim Humphrey (founder of the Rally for Montgomery) and Sarah Gilligan (Maplewood Citizens Association) for their exemplary civic work.

Report of the Electoral Reform Subcommittee. Dale Tibbitts, on behalf of MCCF, testified in Annapolis regarding various bills. None of the bills has been reported out of committee yet. Other states’ efforts have been studied by the subcommittee.

Program. G. Stanley Doore of the Maryland-Virginia Monobeam-Monorail Initiative. Monorail has been around for 100 years. Discusses various monorail plans in this country; Seattle, Las Vegas, Orlando-Tampa. Stan shows a 7-minute video (Monobeam) that the Initiative (and OTG) produced. Cars have capacity of about 100 people, but many cars can run. Stan, and the film, describe a network of monobeam tracks that would service the MD-DC-VA area, as far south as Fredricksburg, as far north as Frederick, and as far east as Baltimore. Q/A. Q: If one car becomes disabled, how can other cars get around it? A: The car can be towed. Q: Cost? A: Bus is the cheapest. Monobeam is about fifth the cost of Metro. Q: Icing, ice storms? A: Metro was out of full service for about a week after our recent storm. The monobeam is protected from the weather; the drive wheels are protected, as is the power supply. Q: Why the outer routing? A: Demand is more from Silver Spring to north of Grosvenor, not Bethesda. Q: Why is there resistance to this technology? A: It’s not invented here. Q: Where was the group involved in the Transportation Policy Review... A: We were not invited. Q: Is there anything we (citizens) can do to encourage public officials to take a look at this? A: Write Governor Ehrlich. Q: The pylons. What happens if they break? How are they protected? A: Pylons are constructed to withstand earthquakes. Q: Any problem

getting federal subsidy? A: No. Q: What is the normal height that the system runs. A: Normally, 16 to 17 feet, so that cars and trucks can go underneath. (Also, maglev is very expensive.)

Pat Cummings moves that the ExComm take up this issue at its next meeting with the thought of offering a resolution at the next delegate’s meeting. Seconded. Stan Schiff: the other side should be given a chance to present their view. This issue is too complicated. Q: Who is the “other side?” Dan: TPR explicitly excluded this (new) technology, as opposed to transportation policy.

Officers reports.

Treasurer’s Report. Luella Mast. Reports are on table. Predicts by end of fiscal year MCCF will go into its reserves by about \$1600. Treasurer’s report is accepted.

Environment. Charles Pritchard. Matthew Henson trail: to pave a trail or not is a big issue.

New Business. 9:28 pm.

Susan Petrocci: Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. February 6, new ZTA would be applied to this master plan. “To establish MPDUs... affects large lots, RE-1, RE-2.” Currently, no council sponsor exists yet (but one is not always needed, if requested by the planning board). The increased development permitted by this ZTA would stress schools and transportation. Sarah Gilligan comes to the front. Attended affordable housing conference this morning. Developers and affordable housing advocates seem to say “Scrap the zoning.” Dick Kaufunger moves that the MCCF set up an ad-hoc committee on affordable housing, and its relation to other policy issues. Dick Strombotne makes a friendly amendment which is withdrawn after discussion. Motion is then seconded. Passes, 31-1-0.

Jerry (.) Maryknolls (?) Citizens Association. Policy on sidewalks. Residents always rejected sidewalks when canvassed by the County. However, this time the County has indicated the County doesn’t need to canvass the neighbors. Association was granted a hearing, but to no avail. Jerry wants the MCCF to support a standard sidewalk policy. Dean Ahmad moves that the MCCF send a letter to the County Council requesting that they codify into law those procedures that have been previously observed with regard to sidewalk installation. Five seconds. Dick moves an amendment to remove “observed” language. Dean doesn’t want the MCCF to offer a blank check. Topic will be brought before the executive committee.

Election of Nomination Committee. 10:03 pm. Dick moves nomination of those listed in the March newsletter: Jorge Ribas, Lee Shipman, Lois Sherman, Dean Gibson,

Charles Wolf, Peggy Dennis, and Dean Ahmad. Roger Mitchell moves an amendment that Dean Ahmad be the chair of the nominating committee. Seconded. Amendment passes 19-2-9. Nominating committee is then approved.

List service. Dean Ahmad moves that the MCCF support this project according to the rules listed in the newsletter and MCCF's website. Passes unanimously by voice vote.

10:15 pm. Wayne Goldstein moves that the MCCF opposed house bill 341 and senate bill 203. Seconded. Passes unanimously by voice vote.

10:17 pm. *White Flint Metro Development.* Marvin Weinman. Waiver under the Annual Growth Policy; no traffic study will be done, particularly Rockville Pike. Council hearing tomorrow on this topic.

“Cut and Cover.” Dean Ahmad. Underground Inner Purple Line, light rail from Silver Spring to Bethesda. Dean moves that the MCCF oppose “cut and cover” for this project. Five seconds are: Randolph Civic, West Montgomery, East Bethesda, Greater BCC Coalition, and EOL. Cary rules the motion as out-of-order. Dean appeals to the assembled body. Cary feels the MCCF should not be parochial, but rather regional. The MCCF should not take positions on local issues. However, the issue could be brought before the ExCom, etc, rather than take it up now. Motion to suspend the rules fails 15-14. Motion to overrule passes 15-14. Dean's motion is now on the floor. Discussion ensues. Some feel Dean's motion is consistent with MCCF's previous positions. Others feel this project is so important, it doesn't matter how it is constructed (“Cut and Cover” or not). Motion passes 18-10-3.

10:40 meeting is adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Zierdt

ExComm Meeting Minutes March 20, 2003

—by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:45 pm [minutes taken by Cary Lamari until Richard Zierdt's arrival].

Treasurer's Report. Luella Mast provided a written report. Peggy Dennis suggested that we not have notification cards for the ExComm meeting. Fifa Northrop may email them.

Transportation, Part. April 23rd 7:30 PM is the date for the Transportation Part 2 Program. Mike Subin has been

invited to attend to give opening remarks. Topic will include a multitude of policy suggestions to bring cohesion to Montgomery County transportation. Bob Abrams suggests we invite reporters to the program. Dick Kauffinger suggests Nancy Floreen be invited as chair to the transportation committee for the council.

Yahoo List service for MCCF. Contact Richard Zierdt.

ExComm meeting date discussion. It was suggested that the Executive Committee meeting be moved to the following Thursday from the delegates meeting. Discussion. Peggy: there is not enough lead time. Dick Strombotne moves that the ExComm meeting date be changed to the Thursday immediately following the delegates meeting. Seconded by Luella Mast. Discussion. Mark Adelman is opposed to the proposal. Dick feels that by moving the meeting up it gives more time to prepare the newsletter. Motion fails, 2-8. Mark makes motion to move date for the newsletter deadline from Saturday to Sunday evening. Bob Abrams seconds. Motion passes unanimously, 10-0.

[Richard Zierdt begins taking minutes at 8:12 PM]

Wayne Goldstein testifies against bill 303 (additional auto registration fees). Doug Duncan was not happy about it. MVA was against it because of bookkeeping burdens.

Presidents Report. Cary Lamari. Cary reports that Bill Skinner alerts the MCCF that the funding for the Inspector General may be removed, and recommends that the MCCF oppose. Some voice concern that the IG has not been very responsive. The County Council appoints the IG. Bob Abrams moves that the MCCF ExCom approve the retention of the independent office. Seconded. Passes with one nay. Cary reports that some delegates feel our process is too “parliamentarian.” Others feel that more order is in order. New president of the Prince Georges Civic Federation, Joe Brice, has made contact with Cary, and they have written a joint letter regarding election policy.

Nomination Committee Chair. Is there an appearance of conflict if Dean Ahmad chairs the nominating committee that will nominate people who might favor his website services. Dean is a contractor, not an employee. Some feel the amounts under consideration are inconsequential. Others feel it is a conflict of interest.

Discussion on MCCF's position of the Inner Purple Line. Was the motion about “Cut-and-Cover” that passed at the last delegates meeting considered improperly? Stan Schiff: yes, people should be given notice and a chance to consider. The motion was not an emergency. Dean: yes, it was. Dick Strombotne: some emergencies are not, and sometimes meetings are packed with supporters. Bob: We

should not be making engineering decisions. Richard: Participate! Stan: the MCCF should look at this further. Stan moves that the MCCF transportation committee review the MCCF's position on "Cut-and-Cover" and notify the ExComm of its findings. Passes unanimously on voice vote.

Community Hero for April. Jorge nominates 87-year-old Dr. Adele McQueen of Silver Spring. The Washington Post wrote a story about her as a high achieving person who has spent all her life aiding children and the disabled. Passes unanimously.

Program. Chuck Lapinski: Joe Beach, acting directory of OMB, will speak on operating budget issues in April. Mark Adelman: Valery Ervin, John Hoven, and Abby Schneider, for education program in May. June: Awards meeting. No July or August delegates meetings. Electoral reform for September.

County Council Bill 20-02, authorizing a lease for the Yeshiva School, passes 7-2, with Andrews and Perez against. State bill SB 388 Charter Schools, is being looked into.

Land use. Cary Lamari. ZTA 03-01 provides for a housing buffer. Cary met with council member Tom Perez and Lou Divideo, who is Mike Subin's aide. Currently, there is a big push for affordable housing. Affordable Housing committee is meeting March 25 at Sarah Giligan's home.

Dick Strombotne. Task force on taxation on retirees. Bill SB 183. Dick distributes information sheet.

9:25 pm. Sidewalks. Jerry Casale, Maryknoll Citizens Association. There is no written policy on sidewalks. Jerry recommends a standard. MCA is being forced to accept new sidewalks. MCA is concerned about homeowner liability. Dean: funding issues between intra- and inter-neighborhoods. Dick Strombotne: the MCCF supports a public process in sidewalk policy. Dick Kauffunger makes a friendly amendment: The MCCF requests the County Council to establish policies and procedures on sidewalks. Seconded. Passes unanimously on voice vote.

9:41 pm. Membership Committee. Fifa Northrop. Luella Mast. Why should GBCCC be a member? Dean: It's an umbrella organization, and a MCCF member since 1989. Dean recommends that membership rules in the by-laws be followed. Fifa recommends that a "dormant" database of associations be created of those organizations that haven't paid in three years, separated from those that have.

10:05 pm. Public finance committee. Chuck Lapinski: State may raise taxes, and not reduce expenditures. WSSC budget may be being held down purposely, relying on

contractors without the experience of WSSC's current staff. Marilyn Praisner has raised questions about Duncan's proposed Go Montgomery transportation plan.

10:10 pm. *Update on Electoral process reform committee.* Dale Tibbitts. No bills that the MCCF supported passed, however, the bills that the MCCF opposed did not pass either.

Committee for Montgomery. Dick Kauffunger expressed MCCF's displeasure of CFM support for Go Montgomery (MC 303-03). There was no CFM delegate vote on this issue.

Meeting adjourned 10:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Zierdt

TRANSPORTATION POLICY FORUM

By Stanley Schiff, Second Vice-President

On April 23 the Civic Federation will hold a Transportation Policy Forum. This marks the culmination of a three part series on transportation and related subjects. The two preceding discussions were concerned with Annual Growth Policy and the prospects for transportation funding.

At the Forum, as the title indicates, the emphasis will be on policies, rather than physical projects. We will not be discussing the ICC or the Purple Line in any of its versions. Although the agenda has not been finally determined, it will probably cover all or most of the following topics:

- Growth, growth management and regional organization;
- Montgomery County's Main Street (the one with four names and a number);
- Investment Target and the Financial Gap;
- Intersection Improvements;
- TDMs (transportation demand management);
- Buses; and,
- Transportation for the Elderly and Disabled

Why a Policy forum? A crucial and seriously under reported conclusion reached by the County's Transportation Policy Task Force was that, in spite of investments of \$8-9 billion in two radically different scenarios (one primarily roads oriented, the other heavily tilted toward transit and land use), 25 and 50 years from now, congestion would be worse than it is now. In brief, we can't build our way out of congestion. It does not mean we don't have to construct new or expanded road and

transit facilities. It does mean construction alone, absent other measures, won't provide a magic cure.

Moreover, the outlook for sufficient funding to accommodate ambitious construction programs seems to get grimmer by the day. This makes three things imperative: the identification of priorities; the consideration of policy measures which will address the demand side of the transportation equation; and recognition of the value of intersection improvements in easing the flow of traffic.

If you are interested in the county's transportation future, you won't want to miss this event. No instant cures. No magic bullets. No promises about ending gridlock. But some insights into possible supplementary or alternative measures that could contribute significantly to relieving some of the pressures on the transportation system at lower cost and in shorter time frames. They merit more attention than the little, if any, they have been given in public discussion of this challenging subject.

The forum will be held in the County Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, 3rd floor hearing room and will begin at 7:30 PM. County Council President

Mike Subin will deliver the opening remarks

Please come and join us at our

Next Delegates Meeting

Monday, April 14, 2003, 7:45 p.m.

First Floor Auditorium

County Council Office Building, Rockville, MD

Program:

PROPOSED COUNTY OPERATING BUDGET

Speaker: Joe Beach, Acting OMB Director

**PROPOSED FY04 COUNTY AND STATE
BUDGETS: COSTLY TO THE TAXPAYER**

–by Chuck Lapinski, Public Finance Chair

Actually, both budgets can only be described as taxpayer ugly, very costly in likely increased taxes and fees without much spending control. This is on top of the increases needed to balance the current year's budgets passed last spring. At least this year's county budget has a chance of not running in the red, but the State budget as passed by the State Legislature was in the red by over \$300 million a week before the legislature ended.

The latest figures suggest that this red ink is now over \$600 million and we are only ¾ of the way through the year. We knew that because of built-in excessive expenditures and revenue shortfalls that the FY04 budget was over \$1.2 billion in the red before it was even submitted. All those who piled on the expenditures at the state level thought we would have a significant economic recovery. Actually, the County Council thought the same, but at least they were marginally more realistic than the County Executive and certainly more realistic than the State Legislature. At both the County and State levels, they exceeded their Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG) that were established to guide budget preparation and approval. Both budgets were imprudent, but the state budget as passed, in my opinion approaches irresponsibility.

I didn't like the proposed way of balancing the FY04 State Budget (and the balancing of this year's budget) for three principle reasons:

1) I don't think any government budget should be balanced by depending on gambling of any kind. Over time it is not a dependable source of income, and historically has always incurred social costs that in some instances would cost nearly as great as the receipts, and tends to hit harder those who can least afford it. Yes, I agree that it was their free-will decision to gamble.

2) Not surprisingly, the balancing of the current and proposed FY04 State Budget is dependent on borrowing from the State's transportation Trust Fund. Yes, I know that we did this in the early 90s during the Schaefer administration, and paid the fund back with some interest. But, we also had a delayed and anemic state economy recovery compared with other similar state economies that didn't compromise their need for capital investment and cut expenditures. We also delayed making significant transportation improvements. You never really make up for what you delay; and,

3) We are reluctant to cut costs and expenditures, both proposed in a new budget, and once proposed even more so during legislative deliberations. It is too late for any slots revenue next year, and maybe the house will not pass it as the state senate has. I have no idea how they will balance finally balance the budget with about one week to go in this session. They identified less than \$300 million in expenditure reductions, leaving a gap of over \$700 million in a \$22.9 billion budget. Yes, taxes and fees are going up, specifically state property taxes and income taxes. But, sales and other taxes and fees will probably increase as well. Note, that I don't see additional expenditure cuts, and expect that we will be in the same situation again next year at this time.

At the County level, the Exec has proposed an additional \$.03 per \$100 dollars of assessed property values, which is on top of the largest assessment increases that this county has experienced. This will cost over \$214 million this year and at that much again for each of the next two tax years. This is real double whammy. Additionally, he has proposed increasing the registration fees on our cars, trucks and other vehicles, and increasing the County income tax rate. I haven't forgotten that they still owe us for the last 20% income tax increase that was supposed to be temporary in 1991. They gave us back 2%, so that we still have an 18% increase that has been compounded ever since. And the list goes on.

Both budgets have what is referred to as systemic deficits built in to them. This means that we experienced difficulties in balancing costs and expenditures with a realistic projection of revenue. We increased taxes and fees significantly last year, (as well as a lot of one time book keeping adjustments, or we robbed or borrowed from other accounts), and it didn't solve this year's built in deficits, and the proposed taxes and fees will not be anywhere enough to balance next years deficit or the year after.

Only by cutting the built in expenditure escalators and cutting actual expenditures do we have any chance of balancing this and future budgets. Only an economy experiencing Germany's runaway inflation rate of the 1920's could possibly balance the budgets for a year or two. And that inflation, or growth rate, bankrupted the German government. Again, the economy will do for us, what we refuse to do for ourselves. And, I've been known to be an optimist!

**Education Panel Discussion
Scheduled for May Delegates Meeting**

—by Mark R. Adelman, Education Chair

Mark your calendar! At the May 12 Delegates Meeting, the MCCF Education Committee is sponsoring what we believe will be an informative and timely panel discussion. Entitled "**Three Sectors of the MCPS Student Body: Differing needs, competing for limited resources?**", the program is designed to engage all of us in a discussion of the extent to which it makes sense to think of the needs of different "groups" of students as being in "competition". We have arranged for three panelists to give brief comments on different "sectors" of the MCPS student body and then discuss questions/comments we raise, as well as ones they may present to one another. Our three guests will be:

1. Valerie Ervin (Montgomery County Education Forum) - commenting on the needs of students at the lower end of the achievement gap;

2. John Hoven (Gifted and Talented Association of Montgomery County) - commenting on GT needs;
3. Abby Schneider (Project EXCEL, Walter Johnson HS) - commenting on the needs of the "forgotten middle" or average students.

I will provide a more detailed introduction to this panel discussion in the May newsletter, but we wanted to give you advance notice of this upcoming event. And there are two other items the Education Committee will like to call to your attention and about which we would value your feedback:

a. As you may know, MCPS is in the process of gathering public comment on "Strategic Planning (that) Focuses on Pursuit of Excellence". The following URL provides a gateway to the relevant documents: <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/about/strategicplan/index.cfm>. We urge you to take a bit of time to access this site and let us know of any thoughts/concerns you might have after reading the materials. Note also that there is a "public comment form" available via the site.

b. I mentioned in a previous article my involvement in the steering committee of an expanded "Study Circles" project sponsored by the Montgomery County Business Round Table for Education and MCPS. After numerous meetings and very detailed discussions, this group has decided to focus on "helping schools and communities collaboratively confront the question of how race and ethnicity affect student achievement and parent involvement". The study circles "movement" is based on the belief that such complex issues/problems cannot be solved by simple fixes but that one element of any process leading to solutions is open dialogue - in small groups - amongst all elements of the community, leading to a set of mutually agreed-upon desired actions that the resulting consensus identifies. Several schools in Montgomery County are already in the process of establishing study circles around this "theme". If you would like more information, and/or would like to become involved, please feel free to contact me: adelman3@erols.com.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Isn't it interesting and ironic that in government the Politics of Hypocrisy never seem to go away, they just seem to get repackaged and recycled. It's like the ICC and a bad penny—it always seems to come back. Remember when Mr. Duncan first ran for County Executive in 1994? He ran on a platform of reducing and streamlining government. Mr. Duncan in his first budget stated that "he would hold the line on tax burdens, cut costs and restore our priority to basic services"... all this in a time

of economic boom. Mr. Duncan had eight years of plenty and broad citizen support. The mid to late 1990s was every politician's dream; you didn't have to be a good administrator, all you had to do is throw money around and somehow the problems either went away or were forgotten.

When Mr. Duncan came into office the County budget was approximately \$1.5 billion. In the past eight years under Mr. Duncan, the budget has grown to approximately \$3.2 billion. I ask you to look around your neighborhood. Were your leaves picked up? Were your streets plowed in a timely manner? I know my street was plowed only one time all winter. And as you were witnessing increased congestion on our county roads, Mr. Duncan spent only 69.7% of the council's approved transportation budget during the last 5 years.

You would think a good administrator would have prepared for such circumstances. Have you driven down Randolph Road or Shady Grove Road? These roads were supposedly resurfaced not that long ago but they are just crumbling and they will need to be resurfaced again. In fact, when Mr. Scott Reilly Duncan administrator spoke to us a few months ago, he stated that the County Highway Maintenance Department had a backlog of 1600 lane miles. This was before the most recent winter storm.

Now during an economic downturn, Mr. Duncan and his Council are considering increasing taxes and creating additional taxes to fund bold transportation initiatives and affordable housing. These are noble initiatives but unfortunately the implications haven't been clearly thought out. For example, the County is proposing to create affordable housing by opening up all the master plans and changing the Zoning Ordinance

standards to increase the amount of development in our residential areas. At the same time, the County wants to increase property taxes, which will have a chilling effect on the affordability of housing. Further, the affordable housing initiative has a loophole where developers may buyout of their affordable housing commitment with a small fee, yet still be rewarded with the bonus density. This will result on increased burdens on congested roads, overcrowded schools and diminishing basic services while we continue in an economic downturn.

Why weren't these initiatives implemented during a time of abundant money during the mid to late 1990s? Elected officials seemed more concerned with increasing county and school employee salaries, especially prior to elections. We are now facing potential reduction in library services, the closing of fire stations, reduction to mental health services and increased spending for Homeland Security. We are not seeing significant improvements to areas of the county where neighborhoods are stressed by the lack of basic services, these areas of high density and in desperate need of recreation facilities, ESOL Education, Police services and equity in its educational spending. And not to be forgotten is the upward spiraling enrollment projections—enrollments higher than those experienced during the peak of the baby boom era.

In eight years Mr. Duncan has increased the county budget from \$1.5 billion to over \$3.2 billion and now he wishes to further increase and create new taxes. I wonder if he will ever really “hold the line on tax burdens cut costs and restore our priority to basic services”. What do your think?



ARE WE MISUSING EMAIL SERVICES?

Many of us are becoming increasingly concerned that we are not observing proper email etiquette when addressing the group. Sometimes, trivial things that should be restricted to a few people are broadcasted to the entire executive board. Occasionally, we use inflammatory language that is not conducive to effective and polite public discourse.

Email is a rapid mass communication system, but it can be abused very easily. Sometimes it is not what you say, but how you say it. Please think carefully what you are trying to accomplish before you hit the “send” button. Just as spoken words, an email message once sent can not be retrieved.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE ELECTED

–by I. Dean Ahmad, Nominating Committee Chair

As required by our Bylaws, a Nominating Committee was elected at the March delegates' assembly to select a slate of officers for the coming year. Article VI, Section 4 of the Bylaws states:

“4. *Nominating Committee.* A committee of at least five but not more than seven delegates shall be elected at the Regular March Meeting. The committee shall nominate one person for each of the elected positions. No incumbent officer shall be eligible for election to the Nominating Committee, nor may the Nominating Committee nominate one of its members for any position. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be presented at the May Meeting and published in the May Newsletter.”

If you would like to serve as an officer in the coming year or wish to recommend someone to the committee, please contact any of the committee members listed below:

NAME	HOME	OFFICE	E-MAIL
Dean Ahmad	301-951-0539	301-951-0539	dahmad@speakeasy.net
Lee Shipman	301-229-2005		plannerlee@earthlink.net
Dean Gibson	301-562-0758		
Charles Wolff	301-585-9744	301-286-8185	wolff99@starpower.net
Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738		hotyakker@aol.com
Lois Sherman	301-384-8071		micclois@aol.com
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Mark Your Calendars

Please mark your calendars with the dates of the Civic Federation General Delegates meetings for the remainder of the 2002-2003 season. All meetings will be held in the COB Auditorium, beginning at 7:45 p.m.

Monday, April 14, 2003
Monday, May 12, 2003
Monday, June 9, 2003

Emergency Resolutions

—By Stan Schiff, Second Vice President

At the March membership meeting, an emergency resolution was put forward to oppose a proposal by state transportation officials to use an alternative to tunneling under a section of the Inner Purple Line. Referred to as "cut and cover," the advantage cited for this alternative technique was that it would be considerably less expensive than the conventional tunneling.

After discussion as to the appropriateness of the Civic Fed dealing with what some argued was a "local issue," the meeting agreed it was within its province. A majority of delegates present then voted to oppose the cut and cover

method for any segment of the Inner Purple Line between Silver Spring and Bethesda.

This decision gave rise to serious concern at a subsequent meeting of the Executive Committee on two somewhat related grounds. One was that few delegates had any knowledge of the technology and the advantages that proponents maintained it offered. Secondly, there were reservations about the use of the "emergency" procedure for bringing an issue to a vote when the membership had not previously been given notice that it would be raised and were not given the opportunity of hearing from knowledgeable sources who represented the other side.

Further discussion by the Executive committee culminated in a decision to refer the "cut and cover" issue to the Transportation committee for further review with a request that it report to the next delegates' meeting. Although no decision was made regarding the procedural matter of "emergency resolutions," this seems likely to get further attention by the Executive committee. The concern is that the provision can lend itself to abuse.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

—by Fifa Northrop

A reminder to the present members of the MCCF who have paid the dues for 2002-03, but inadvertently skipped

2001-02, to check with their treasurer and ask them to make sure that the previous dues were also paid. The Civic federation By-laws state that

“An Association dropped for non-payment of dues may rejoin the Federation only upon payment of one year’s back dues”

Also, I have called several presidents of member civic associations to remind them that this year’s dues to the MCCF were not received as of February. Sometimes the communication between the CA presidents and their treasurers are not frequent, thus leading to delays. I also want to call to the attention of organizations that are receiving the MCCF monthly newsletter that they also ought to check with their treasurer to confirm that the annual dues for next year have been sent. Dues for the coming year are due every June, not January.

The Montgomery County Civic Federation is a unique source of information to citizens of this county. Its monthly newsletter includes many issues affecting our neighborhoods, from school policies to public transportation, from legislative news to land use.

Finally, I encourage all our present and prospective delegates to come to our monthly meetings, not only when your neighborhood has a pressing problem but also to help solve problems affecting other civic associations. In helping others you learn more about how our county works and how best to preserve quality of life in your neighborhood.

<p>COMMUNITY HERO-DR. ADELE MCQUEEN HELPING OTHERS IS HER LIFELONG VISION</p>
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We will be honoring Dr. Adele McQueen for her lifelong commitment to helping those in need. We have abstracted a news article by Washington Post reporter Susan Levine that appeared on February 13, 2003.

“Her mama made several things clear early on. First, that she had to get a college degree. Second, that she learn to be self-sufficient so she would never have to depend on a man.

Hardly radical directives these days, but back in the 1920s, in the midst of economic depression and a segregated America, they could have seemed daunting challenges for a poor black girl from Wichita. Not, however, for Adele B. McQueen. And with rare exception for the next 80 years, she did as her mother instructed.

One degree? McQueen earned three, including a PhD when she was 64. Stand on her own? During a lengthy career in education, which began with George Washington

Carver at what was then the Tuskegee Institute, diverted to Africa for seven years, and concluded with Howard University naming its preschool for her when she retired as director at 79, McQueen's mantra was 'Can't die years ago.'

"So what you need to do is get up and do it," she still preaches today at 87, having little interest in the more traditional retirement activities of her neighbors at Leisure World in Silver Spring.

She spends much of her time working with Housing Unlimited Inc., a housing organization she helped to start more than a decade ago for Montgomery County adults with psychiatric disabilities.

The National Visionary Leadership Project, a nonprofit organization founded by Camille Cosby, producer, educator and philanthropist, and veteran journalist Renee Poussaint, selected McQueen as one of its 30 'visionaries' for 2003.

If everyone was suddenly summing up her life, maybe they knew something she didn't about its end. Technically, it began in Pilot Point, Tex., but her mother moved from the tiny town north of Dallas with her two children when McQueen was 2. She left behind a jealous, controlling husband.

McQueen started college in Wichita, but her academic options were limited to a few fields such as home economics and nursing, and her job prospects in the city even fewer. She transferred to the historic Tuskegee Institute in Alabama for her junior year to major in education. She was especially interested in early childhood education.

She graduated in 1938 with a bachelor's degree and taught one year at a boarding school a few miles from Selma, Ala., a place so country that the man who would become her husband, a teacher, would say that 'down here, you have to take a stick and push the sun up.'

The McQueens, Adele and Finley, then returned to Tuskegee as professors for the next two decades. She directed the institute's nursery school until the early 1960s.

Her penultimate chapter was her tenure at Howard, where she worked as an associate professor and directed the university preschool. She also assisted with programs for elderly adults in the District.

She wasn't really ready to retire her final time in 1994, but by then some students and colleagues regarded her child-rearing ways as old-fashioned. She looks back and says, 'I'm proud I stuck to what was right.'"

2002-2003 MCCF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Planning Board Launches New “Resident’s Guide” Series

The Montgomery County Planning Board has announced the publication of a new series of “Resident’s Guide” brochures.

These 11 brochures replace the outdated and out-of-print resource book, *Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Planning, Zoning, and Subdivision in Montgomery County, Maryland...but were afraid to ask.*

Free copies are available for downloading online at www.mc-mncppc.org. Alternatively, the entire set of printed brochures may be bought for \$2 at the M-NCPPC’s second floor information section, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring.

For more information, please contact Marion Joyce at 301-495-4600.

Think about it...

You have just read one of the most thorough, independent, and accurate newsletters in the County. For over 77 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 devoting your own time and energy, it is the best investment you can make for your community.

Download an application form today from our website: www.montgomery.org/membersh.pdf.

Delegates Meetings

Monday, April 14 – 7:45 p.m.

**First Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Bldg., Rockville**

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.6)
- 8:15 – Program: County Budget – Joe Beach/Chuck Lapinski
- 9:00 – Transportation Position: Inner Purple Line
- 9:15 – Electoral Reform Sub-Committee – Dale Tibbitts
- 9:20 – Affordable Housing Sub-Committee
- 9:30 – Old Business – Officers Reports
- 9:35 – New Business
- 9:45 - 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 Fawsett 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, April 24, 2003, 7:45 p.m.

Red Brick Courthouse

29 Courthouse Square, Rockville

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

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