



# CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

*Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation*

*Serving the Public Interest Since 1925*

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MAY 2004

## **May Program: Moderately Priced Dwelling Units**

By Jim Humphrey, Dist.1 V.P. & Housing Subcommittee member

The program for the May 10 Federation Meeting will be on the county's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program. The MPDU program began in 1974, to provide affordable sale and rental homes to households earning less than the county median income. Developers are currently required to provide a percentage of units as MPDUs in all housing developments over 35 units in size.

The May 10 program will feature three speakers. Council staffer Aron Tromka will explain the legislative history of the MPDU program and discuss the February 2004 report issued by a Council working group charged with making recommendations to strengthen the program. Elizabeth Davison, Director of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, will describe how the program is currently being administered. And Scott Minton, the head of the Housing Opportunities Commission, will talk about how the HOC's activities dovetail with the MPDU program to maintain an adequate stock of affordable housing. A question and answer session will follow.

The Council is planning to consider MPDU amendments later this year. Please join us May 10 for the background briefing on this important county housing program.

## **May's Community Hero: Ira Shesser**

By John A. Warnock, I. Dean Ahmad, and Charles Wolff

Many years ago, Ira Shesser headed the fight to defeat the Pan-American Health Organization's claim to be exempt from county zoning laws and their attempt to build their new facility in a residential area. This represented a major victory for an MCCF position of fairness in the application of zoning laws.

For over 20 years, Ira Shesser, past president of the Coquelin Run Citizen's Association (CRCA) has been a major force in promoting the preservation and enhancement of the trails, parks and green spaces in the county. Most recently, he has been instrumental in the preservation and development of the Georgetown Branch of the Capital Crescent Trail. Thanks to his work, the trail between Bethesda and Silver Spring has been transformed, in the last decade, from a mere abandoned right-of-way to a proper hiker-biker trail. As a result of Ira's efforts, the County first agreed to open the tunnel under Wisconsin Avenue, thus linking the fully developed Georgetown-to-Bethesda trail with the segment that goes from Bethesda to Chevy Chase. Following that, he played a key roll in getting approval to surface the new section of the trail, and then to restore the trestle over Rock Creek so as to open the way to and from Silver Spring. When the County agreed to that proposal, Ira led a campaign to assure that observation bays were included on the trestle so as to permit Trail users to admire the spectacular views provided out over Rock Creek. (It is a bit like a ride in a hot air balloon but without the moments of terror.) When it turned out that these bays would be possible only if civic organizations contributed the extra money for the construction, Ira insured their inclusion by personally guaranteeing to make up any difference between what his

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organization could raise in contributions out of his own pocket. This resulted in the provision of the bays at a significant cost to him personally, supplementing funds raised by GBCCC, the Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail and the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

As a result of his efforts, the Georgetown Branch Trail is now through to Silver Spring with informal connections to the Rock Creek Trail, one on each side of the trestle, extending the benefits of this resource to the east of Rock Creek Park, so that it is a recreational magnet for the entire County. It was designated as a "Cool Site" in 2003 by Washingtonian magazine and was the subject of a November 2003 report on CBS's "Sunday Morning." By literally "building bridges" between the two sides of our county, Ira serves as an example to all of us.

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## **Politics and Schools Mix Again - And We All Lose**

**By Mark R. Adelman, Chair, Education Committee**

We would probably like to believe that the education of our children is not a political football, but we know that politics all too frequently impacts how Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) does business. This is yet another example. In case you hadn't heard, the Board of Education (BoE) has been discussing turning over "un-needed" school sites to the County so these sites can be used to construct "workforce housing". The details are a bit muddy (aren't they always?!) and the sequence of events is complex (ditto), but here's an overly-simplified synopsis.

1. In October, 2003, our County Executive (Mr. Duncan) contacted our Superintendent of Schools (Dr. Weast) and requested that the BoE declare three undeveloped sites "owned" by MCPS as un-needed, thus allowing the transfer of these sites to the County for use in development of "affordable housing". The three sites in question (Brickyard Road, Kendale Road, and Edson Lane) are part of the real property list under the control of the MCPS. The housing that these sites would be used to develop is variously called "affordable housing" or "workforce housing" (to distinguish it from MPDUs) and is intended to increase the extremely limited number of housing units that can be "afforded" by such public servants as teachers; police, fire, and rescue workers, and other County employees whose salaries are so low that they have been

priced out of Montgomery County's expensive housing market.

2. In late February of this year Dr. Weast sent a set of recommendations to the BoE regarding Mr. Duncan's request and the sites in question. Without going into details, I summarize Dr. Weast's memorandum (I have a copy and you can obtain one from the MCPS Office of Community Affairs) as saying that none of the sites is needed at this time and that it is unlikely that any would be needed in the foreseeable future. He proposed either using the sites to acquire (by swap) some land that might be more useful in the future or transferring them to the County (for affordable housing) in return for funding of MCPS projects that are currently low on the County Executive's priority list.

3. On March 3 the BoE held a public hearing, most of which was devoted to testimony regarding the three un-needed sites. There was/is considerable controversy as to how this hearing came about. Dr. Weast and the BoE contend that the hearing was part of the normal process by which community input is gathered on such matters. Many citizens contend that there was an effort to "hide" the site negotiations from the public and that the hearing came about only because some citizens became aware of what was going on "behind closed doors" and demanded that "the public" be heard. The hearing was heavily attended and Dr. Weast and BoE members listened to several hours of testimony by irate parents and others who oppose the transfer of the sites. The points they made can be summarized as:

- a. Our schools are badly overcrowded; we need more schools; and land is too valuable to ever justify giving up MCPS property for any use other than schools.
- b. MCPS ability to predict what will be needed is highly questionable, whether one is projecting short-term or long-term.
- c. MCPS is in the education business, not the housing business.
- d. People are tired of back-door politics; Dr. Weast and members of the Board are employed by citizens of Montgomery County and should be forthcoming with the public about all such matters.

You get the idea.

4. In late March, Dr. Weast sent to the Board a modified set of recommendations. The Board accepted these, with some modifications. Again, the details are fairly complex but the bottom line is that MCPS did not reject Mr. Duncan's request, but proposed a number of studies and

negotiations directed at (a) fully exploring if/how the sites might be used for school needs and (b) carefully working with the Executive (and the County Council) to determine if/how transfer of one or more of the sites could be used to leverage more funds for needed MCPS projects. Again, some of this material is available from MCPS, but full details of the BoE deliberations were not available when I last checked.

If you are not already exhausted with reading this report, let me make some observations, each of which is, admittedly, my opinion:

A. I find it outrageous that Mr. Duncan proposed this "use" of MCPS properties and equally outrageous that the Superintendent and the Board did not - after due deliberation - reject it. The position that Dr. Weast has taken is a very politic one. There is in his memoranda a worrisome hint of concern that, if the Board does not co-operate with the Executive, the Executive might find it difficult to meet MCPS needs: a very politic line of thought.

B. It is lamentable, but understandable, that many citizens do not trust Dr. Weast, the BoE, or Mr. Duncan, to be open and honest about such matters.

C. Given the abysmal record of the Duncan administration (as well as the County Council and the Planning Board) with respect to MPDUs, it is almost laughable that there is an ongoing dialogue about transferring MCPS land to the County in the hope that it will be used to provide much-needed affordable housing.

D. If we as a County feel that our public employees (including teachers) need help in finding affordable housing within the County, we should discuss mechanisms OTHER than divesting MCPS of land to provide such housing help. What about direct housing subsidies such as those routinely given to corporate executives, members of the Armed Services, etc.? Or what about raising the salaries of County workers so they can afford to live in the County? I could elaborate on these ideas and perhaps you can come up with others, many of which might be better.

E. Unfortunately, I doubt that we have heard the last of the idea of using MCPS property for affordable housing. The MCF Education Committee will be bringing a resolution regarding this issue to a vote at the May Federation meeting. In the interim, I urge you to contact

Dr. Weast, Members of the Board of Education, and other elected officials, to let them know your opinion in this matter. And if - as I fear - we are unable to slay this particular dragon, I submit that the only logical next step to take is to insist that any land so transferred be used to build affordable housing and ONLY affordable housing: in short that each and every housing unit constructed on such land be sold/rented ONLY to County employees who are judged to be in need of our support so that they can live within the boundaries of the County they serve.

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## **Property Tax Relief of \$21.6 million Before County Council**

**By Phil Andrews, District 3 Councilman**

Montgomery County homeowners are being clobbered by skyrocketing property assessments and by last year's 60% hike in the state property tax rate. In 2002, home assessments increased by an average of 47%, and in 2003, by 55%. This year's assessments could be even higher. One-third of county homes are assessed each year.

As a result, most homeowners are facing annual increases of 10% (the maximum increase from one year to the next) in their county property tax bill for the next five to seven years. Unless the County Council reduces the property tax rate, many homeowners could see their property taxes DOUBLE in the next seven years. This would especially harm senior homeowners on fixed incomes.

The County Council, in order to balance the budget, has voted to override the Charter limit on property tax increases in each of the past two years. Now, the Council needs to provide tax relief to homeowners by reducing the property tax rate.

That's why I introduced a resolution on April 20 to reduce the County property tax rate in FY 05 by 2 cents (approximately 2%), and replace those revenues by raising the energy tax. A homeowner with a home assessed at \$300,000 (about the County average) would save \$60 on their property tax bill while paying only \$19 more in energy tax.

Homeowners will benefit when energy tax revenues replace property tax revenues because the residential sector pays more than 60% of property tax revenues, but less than 30%

of energy tax revenues. Unlike the property tax, the energy tax applies to all organizations, including the federal government.

Another advantage of the energy tax over the property tax is that people can often reduce their energy bill through conservation. Since there are limits to how much people can conserve energy, Montgomery County supplements the Maryland Energy Assistance Program with local funds to assist low-income residents with their energy bills.

On April 22, the executive committee of the Federation voted overwhelmingly to recommend that the membership support the resolution to reduce the property tax rate by 2 cents (about 2%) in FY 05 and offset the revenues by increasing the energy tax.

A public hearing on the resolution will be held on Tuesday, May 11 at 7:30 p.m. at the Council building. It is critical that council members hear your views on this important issue. Testimony and/or attendance at the public hearing is needed. Call 240-777-7931 to sign up to testify. It is important that many individuals and local civic organizations weigh in. The Council will vote on the resolution within a few days of the public hearing. Time is short.

If you would like more information about this proposal, please contact my confidential aide, Bobbie Walton, at 240-777-7983.

## County Land Use Planner Passes Away By Jim Humphrey, Dist. 1 Vice President

It is with sadness that we report the death of A. Malcolm Shaneman, 51, a land use planner with the Maryland-National Capital/Park and Planning Commission for more than 31 years. He succumbed to a heart attack on April 14 at his home in Silver Spring. Malcolm grew up in Bethesda, where he graduated from Walter Johnson High School in 1971. He then went on to study at Montgomery College and American University, while beginning his career at M-NC/PPC in 1973. At the time of his death, Malcolm was head of the Subdivision Review Division.

Those in the civic community who had the opportunity to work with Malcolm were impressed by his warmth, kindness and readiness to share his time and knowledge. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Barbara A. Preller, his life companion, and to all of his colleagues at M-NC/PPC at this difficult time. He will be sorely missed.

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## Housing Subcommittee to Study Proposed Legislation on MPDU Program

The Housing Subcommittee of the Civic Federation's Planning & Land Use Committee will be studying legislation being developed by Council Member Nancy Floreen concerning the MPDU Program. Delegates who wish to participate should call Subcommittee Co-Chair, Sarah Gilligan at 301-564-4373 for date, time and place of the meeting.

### MCCF JUNE MEETING

DATE: MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2004

PLACE: the magnificent 3RD Floor Council Hearing Room, COB

TIME: 7:15 - 7:45 p.m. DESSERT RECEPTION  
7:45 - 9:45 p.m. PROGRAM & AWARDS PRESENTATION

PROGRAM: Mr. Martin O'Malley, Mayor of Baltimore, invited speaker  
BRIEFING - CITY OF BALTIMORE CITISTAT PROGRAM.

Is this program a model for efficient management of local government, or is it overly time-consuming? We will learn how the program has evolved over several years and what it has accomplished.

AWARDS: The program will be followed by the presentation of the annual Civic Federation Awards:  
The STAR CUP, THE GAZETTE AWARD, and the SENTINEL AWARD.

BUSINESS: ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2004-2005



## Nominees for Elected Offices, 2004-2005

The Nominating Committee is pleased to offer the following slate of candidates for our elected offices for the coming year:

President:	Dan Wilhelm
First Vice President:	Wayne Goldstein
Treasurer:	Luella Mast
Recording secretary:	Richard Zierdt
Corresponding secretary:	Lyle Schofield
District 1 VP	Jim Humphrey
District 2 VP	
District 3 VP	Tom DeGraba,
District 4 VP	Arnie Gordon
District 5VP	Dale Tibbitts
2nd Vice President	Mark Adelman
2nd Vice President	Rosie Poole
2nd Vice President	John Warnock
2nd Vice President	

Additional nominations may be taken from the floor at the Federation meeting in May.

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## From the President

By Cary Lamari

Representation of the people, by the people and for the people. I seem to be writing a lot about this basic tenet of democracy lately. But I wonder if we truly appreciate just what it means.

I was recently given a book by Jane Jacobs titled The Death and Life of Great American Cities. Jacobs asks the question: how big should a district be to function effectively? Her answer is: big enough to fight city hall, yet not so big that street neighborhoods cannot draw city attention. She states that if a district is too large, special interest groups or institutional concerns overcome the interests of the general population. And if a district is too small, it can become parochial in its outlook and ultimately work against itself. She speaks in detail of different size districts across this nation and she concludes that a district of approximately 100,000 people is optimal for the fair and comprehensive operation of government.

Jacobs' finding is consistent with the charter amendment petition initiated by the Civic Federation: to achieve community-based representation by changing the composition of the County Council to 9 single member councilmanic districts.

Until 1990, the county council was composed of seven councilmanic districts with each councilman elected by the county at large. In the late 1980s, the Civic Federation undertook to change this with a petition to make all seven council members elected by and responsive to the voters of the individual districts. The present configuration was a compromise resulting in five districts accountable to district voters and four elected by all voters and presumably balancing the parochial interests of the districts with broad, countywide needs.

But the fact is, it has become so costly to run a successful countywide campaign that few can afford to run for the at-large seats without substantial financial backing. It is also a fact that this campaign financing comes not so much from the common citizenry, but primarily from Montgomery County's "big money" special interest group - the construction, development, real estate and business consortium. One need only visit [www.neighborspac.org](http://www.neighborspac.org) - the website of "Neighbors for a Better Montgomery" - to see the nexus between campaign contributions in the 2002 elections and the direction our county is now headed. We feel strongly that the present system has come to represent the desires (short term and profit-oriented) of big business rather than the needs and long term health and welfare of the general citizenry.

The intent of the charter amendment petition initiated by the Civic Federation is to continue in the direction we were headed in 1986 and take our county government once more towards a more democratic, community-based system of representation. We believe that nine single member districts, each with a population base of about 100,000, will present greater opportunities for citizen participation. Because each district will be smaller, a broader base of candidates may choose to run for office. Citizens will be more

likely to attend town meetings and hearings and more comfortable bringing problems to their "local" spokesperson. Councilmen will be more motivated to work toward solving the problems of their constituents because they will be accountable directly to those constituents at election time. Our government must be fiscally, ethically and legally accountable to the citizens and must work on their behalf. The only way this will happen is if there is a better balance between special interests and community interests.

I am pleased to announce that our Volunteer Fire Chiefs have unanimously endorsed our charter amendment petition. I have also been told that the Green Party, Libertarian and Republican Parties support us. I am still working with the Democratic Party and I am hopeful that they will come to recognize that this initiative is not a "political" issue but a means to achieve better governance. If you have not already taken copies of our petition to your local associations and started collecting signatures, now is the time to do it. You may download copies and instructions from the Civic Fed's website or, call:

Dale Tibbitts	301-587-9358
Charles Wolff	301-585-9744
Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738

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## PROPOSED BYLAWS AMENDMENTS

By Dan Wilhelm, First Vice President

Changes to Article II (Membership) are presented to the members for discussion at the May meeting and vote at the June meeting. We have attempted to address a number of issues concerned with administering the membership:

1. Clarify that the size of a local association is defined by the number of homes within their geographic boundaries, not by the number of paid members.
2. Allow a group to select a lower number of delegates than that allowed and pay for that number. For example: if a local association has 500 households,

they can have up to three delegates. They could choose to have 2 or 3 delegates and pay the associated dues rate of \$45 or \$65 respectively, before the email discount.

3. Clarify that a regional organization is one that represents part of the county, rather than the greater Washington region.
4. It is understood that Regional or County-Wide organizations would include environmental groups like Sierra Club, and Audubon. At present, Audubon is an associate member since the application didn't include this membership category. Apparently years ago they were considered a county-wide group and could vote. This revised understanding would allow them, once again, to vote.
5. Split out "government agencies, business, or similar groups from Associate and create a new membership category called "Associate Group". "Associate" is an individual, while "Associate Group" applies to groups. This definition will cover political groups, like the Green Democrats, who are currently paid associates. The Committee felt that having political groups as members would be advantageous to MCCF since these groups apparently have a limited understanding of how we view issues. Having them attend our meetings and receiving our newsletter will improve their understanding of our objectives.

6. The membership application form has been revised to reflect these changes, to use the bylaws categories and to contain key information from the bylaws. (See our web site.)

*Text to be removed is struck through. Text to be added is underlined. On the Web site, both text to be removed and text to be added are shown in red.*

### ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

1. *Categories.* There are ~~two~~ three basic categories of membership: Association, ~~and Individual.~~, and Associate Group.
2. *Association Member*

## A. Local Association

(1) Definition. Membership in the Federation shall be open to any organized Montgomery County civic, community, homeowner association or municipality which supports the Federation's objective and whose primary purpose is to further the public interest. An association organized for or devoted to only a single local issue shall not be eligible. The boundaries of the residential community represented by each local association must be specified in its bylaws and registered with the **Planning Board. Neighborhood Local associations must represent neighborhoods of** at least thirty households to be eligible.

**(2) Representation. The number of delegates representing delegate representatives for a member association shall be determined by the number of households within the geographic boundaries of the association. Associations shall be entitled to two delegates for up to the first three hundred households, one additional delegate for between 301 and 600 households, and one additional delegate for any association with over six hundred households. The president of the association shall be the first representative named unless the president elects to appoint another association member to serve in the president's place.**

(3) Duties and Privileges. Delegates shall have a duty to participate fully in the deliberations and activities of the Federation, may vote on any issue before it, and may hold any Federation office or position. Member delegates shall serve until the association names a replacement or their eligibility ceases.

## B. Umbrella Association

(1) Definition. An umbrella association is any **group composed of two or more neighborhood local** associations as defined above. Membership shall be open to any umbrella

association that has as its primary purpose to further the public interest. An association organized for or devoted to only a single local issue shall not be eligible. The boundaries of the umbrella association must be registered with the Planning Board.

**(2) Representation. The number of delegates representing delegate representatives for an umbrella association shall be determined by the number of households within the geographic boundaries of the umbrella association whose membership consists of local associations. Umbrella associations shall be entitled to two delegates for the first five hundred households, one additional delegate for the next five **hundred households and one additional delegate** for all households over one thousand. The president of the association shall be the first representative named unless the president elects to appoint another association member to serve in the president's place.**

(3) Duties and Privileges. Delegates shall have a duty to participate fully in the deliberations and activities of the Federation, may vote on any issue before it, and may hold any Federation office or position. Member delegates shall serve until the association names a replacement or their eligibility ceases.

## C. Regional ~~and~~ or County-Wide Organization

**(1) Definition. A regional organization (defined as one with an intra-county membership) or county-wide organization is any civic or community organization other than local or umbrella which supports the Federation's objective and whose primary purpose is to further the public interest. Regional and countrywide associations organizations must have at least 50 paid memberships to be eligible.**

(2) Representation. The number of delegate representatives for a regional or countywide organization shall be two.

(3) Duties and Privileges. Delegates shall have a duty to participate fully in the deliberations and activities of the Federation, may vote on any issue before it, and may hold any Federation office or position. Member delegates shall serve until the association names a replacement or their eligibility ceases.

D. Acceptance. The name of an applicant association ~~organization~~, shall be published in the newsletter. The organization shall be admitted upon an affirmative vote at a regular delegates meeting. In the event ~~where that~~ two organizations ~~claim to represent any one specific community area the same neighborhood~~, the Federation reserves the right to determine ~~the which~~ organization ~~that~~ shall ~~represent in the Federation any one specific community that neighborhood~~. A change in status of any organization must be presented in writing to the Federation.

### 3. Individual Member

#### A. Associate

(1) Definition. ~~Any individual, government agency, business, or similar group~~ may participate in Federation activities by becoming an Associate.

An associate may attend Federation functions, participate in discussions at meetings, serve on appointed committees, and will receive the Newsletter. ~~They~~ He may not make motions or ~~vote. If appointed to chair a committee, they he~~ shall not thereby be a voting members of the Executive Committee, and in no case shall the number of committee chairs held by Associates exceed 25% of all committees.

#### B. Past President

(1) Definition. All past presidents of the Federation who are legal residents of the County shall be classified as a past president member. They may be ~~a~~ delegates from ~~an~~ associations but need not be.

(2) Duties and Privileges. Past Presidents shall have all the rights and privileges of delegates and shall have the right to vote in meetings of the Executive Committee. They need not pay dues.

#### C. Honorary

(1) Definition. Honorary members are individuals who have rendered especially valuable service to the County and who have been elected to honorary status by a three-fourths Affirmative Vote at a monthly meeting. The motion to elect shall specify the term such status shall continue.

(2) Duties and Privileges. Honorary members may participate in deliberations of the Federation and may serve on committees but shall have no vote and may not hold office. They need not pay dues.

### 4. Associate Group.

(1) Any government agency, business, or organization which supports the Federation's objective may participate in Federation activities by becoming an Associate Group.

(2) Duties and Privileges. An associate group may designate a representative to attend Federation functions, participate in discussions at meetings, serve on appointed committees, and receive the Newsletter. The representative may not make motions or vote

5. Membership Year. The membership year shall be July 1 through June 30.

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### **Federation Meeting Minutes, April 12, 2004** by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

MCCF President Cary Lamari calls the meeting to order at 7:50 pm.

Agenda is accepted as amended.

Announcements. County Preservation Conference is this Saturday.



Minutes of March Federation Meeting are approved.

Community Hero Award. Cary Lamari presents the award to Ms. Nancy Wendt (Olney Coalition) for her commitment to civic activism, the environment, and other areas.

Bylaws Committee. Dan Wilhelm. Presents the committee's re-organized bylaws that add clarity without substantive changes. Bylaw changes are amended unanimously.

Program. Federation Transportation Presentation. Dan Wilhelm presides. Dan begins with a list of problems. TPR (Transportation Policy Review) modeling shows that money will not solve the problem. Go Montgomery: Target ~\$10B by 2015. MCCF: \$7.8B, with no time frame. Any federal money?

LAR (Local Area Review) has been removed. ICC depends a lot on GARVEE Bonds, which basically borrow on future funding. A bus study has been conducted, after about a 25-year hiatus. Recommendations include increased bus frequency, greater coverage, and longer running hours. Feeder-bus routes are suggested to create a county-wide network of buses. Improved signal operation would help, but may require a computer upgrade. Build 27 grade-separated interchanges. Comments, Q&A follow.

Q: We need to build alternatives, bus or new roads. Stop expanding existing structures, such as extending the Red Line. Q: There are no express tracks on Metro subway. There should be three or more tracks. If one car fails, the whole track fails. Q: We are almost at capacity on the Red Line already. Q: There needs to be a moratorium on growth. Q: Increased gas taxes could help reduce fuel usage. Q: Telecommuting? Q: Growth in surrounding areas is out of our control. Jobs in Prince Georges or in Washington would reduce cross-county traffic.

Q: What about all the planned commercial growth? A: Cary: MCCF has always advocated growth consistent with master plans. Q: April 22: Council will have a discussion on LATR. Weekend traffic must be considered as well. Jerry Garson makes a motion that the MCCF support traffic studies that take 6 am to 8 pm and weekend traffic into consideration. Seconded. Jim offers a friendly amendment that the LATR chart for number of signalized intersections be studied. and consider a minimum of five signalized intersections in each direction from the subject site. Motion passes 23-0-1. Q: What about Viers Mill and Randolph Road proposed grade-separated intersection? A: That was included on one of the charts. Q: We should

include MCCF positions on existing master plans under consideration?

Old Business.

Electronic voting machines. Dean Ahmad. A State bill has been introduced that would require a paper receipt be given to each voter, showing who the voter voted for. Sheila Hixson has proposed that only a study be authorized. Dean wants proof that his vote was counted.

Treasurer's Report. Luella Mast distributes her report. MCCF got one new organization member and two associates.

Election Reform Committee: Dale Tibbitts. We have over 1000 signatures so far; we need at least 10,000, but almost always need 12-13K to be secure. Bill to close the multiple corporation loop hole passed the House but Senate committee has not voted on it, so it will die in committee.

Public Safety Committee: Pat Cummings. Committee held their first meeting at Committee chair Fernando Bren's home. There are ten sub-committees including police, fire, corrections, court, juvenile delinquency, homeland security, public health, volunteerism, coalition building. Next meeting is Sunday, May 2 at Fernando's home.

Housing Committee: Jim Humphrey. Looking at new Urban Institute.

Awards Committee: Charles Pritchard. Planning meeting is forthcoming.

Economic Development Document: Cary Lamari. ExComm opposes the document. Cary, on behalf of the ExComm, moves that the MCCF support the ExComm's position in opposition to the Executive's Economic Development Plan. Seconded. Passes.

Historic Preservation Properties: Wayne Goldstein. Bethesda Theatre (opened in 1938) \$3.3M will have been spent by the developer. Art Deco Society of Washington has asked that the building be taken off the historic registry. Dean: will abstain - the developer was permitted to exceed building height limit in order to keep the theatre. Wayne moves that the MCCF write a letter to the Maryland Historic Trust with copies sent to Art Deco Society of Washington and the Keeper of the National Registry opposing the de-listing of the property from the National Registry of Historic Places. Seconded. Motion passes with

two abstentions. Wayne then introduces a second issue: the Marlow Property in Fairland (barn and several out buildings). State Highway Administration wants the property de-listed as a historical property. Now that the out buildings have been demolished (by the State!), it is no longer represents an historic, early 20th century farm. Maryland Historical Trust approved the demolition. Motion to send letter to State Highway Administration, Federal Highway administration, and Keeper of the National Registry of Historical Places opposing the de-listing. Seconded. Passes unanimously.

Excess School Sites: Nancy Wendt. There is already a long list of properties slated to be surplus. River Falls has been declared excess. Olney High School site. Moves that the MCCF support suspension of the disposition process until open Master Plans are completed. Five Seconds. Motion passes unanimously.

Meeting is adjourned, 10:08 pm.

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## **ExComm Meeting Minutes, March 18, 2004**

by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

MCCF president Cary Larmari calls meeting to order at 7:46 PM.

Cary announces Richard Zierdt's wedding on May 12. Richard invites anyone who hasn't received an invitation. Agenda is adopted as amended.

Minutes of March 18, 2004. Jim Humphrey's name was misspelled. Minutes as amended are approved.

Treasurer's Report. Luella Mast. Distributes her reports. MCCF made a increase in reserves of about \$500 last year. Anticipates about \$1000 this year.

Election Reform Committee Petition Drive. Cary Lamari. Talks with another gas station to collect signatures. Collect signatures at community events. Metro stations are useful. Republican Party supports the petition.

Councilmember Phil Andrews. Seeks MCCF support of his bill that will reduce the County property tax rate by 2%, and raise the energy tax. He states that the increase in energy tax would be less than the deduction in property tax. In other words, there would overall tax relief for

homeowners. There is already low-income energy relief. Mr. Andrews believes the current Council will not reduce overall revenue. The difference will be made up because the energy tax increase applies to all businesses, non-profits, religious institutions and government facilities in the County. Charles Wolff moves that the Executive Committee provide such support. Seconded. Passes 9-0-2. Mr. Andrews: There is a public hearing on May 11.

Presidents Report. Dan Wilhelm and Cary met with Burnt Mills Hills CA, and collected about 40 signatures for MCCF petition. Charles Wolff asks for funding to mail 135 petitions to the Libertarian Party. Amount is well within budgeted amount (\$250).

Programs: May Program will be on MPDU program, Jim Humphrey organizing. June Program will be Baltimore Mayor Martin O'Malley, and the "CitiStat" program with Wayne Goldstein organizing. Refreshments at 7:15 pm, with the meeting beginning at 7:45 pm, the usual start time, and annual awards to follow program.

MPDUs: Councilmember Nancy Floreen's bill. Cary Lamari. Ms. Floreen's proposal phases out MPDU buyouts with some exceptions. She would like to meet with the housing committee.

Community Hero for May. Cary Lamari asks for a recommendation. Wayne Goldstein recommends Joe Proella. Dean Ahmad recommends Ira Shesser for substantially contributing to the cost for a pedestrian and bicycle trestle in Bethesda. Seconded. Some feel his financial contribution should not be seen as "buying" this award. Some feel his donation is only one of many of his contributions. Motion passes 4-2-5.

Awards Committee. Lyle Schofield. Committee needs another meeting and asks for suggestions. Bob Abrams recommends Jim Brodski for the Gazette Award. Luella Mast suggests the Volunteer Fire and Rescue Organization. Charles Wolff and Dan Wilhelm will join the committee.

Bylaws Committee. Dan Wilhelm. Dan had sent the proposed bylaw changes to ExComm members previously. Minor changes are proposed and accepted. ExComm endorses the changes to the Federation meeting. Passes

unanimously 11-0-0.

Olney 32-Acre Proposal. Nancy Wendt. 32-acre former school lot slated for non-educational use. Master Plan is currently open and recommends it be used for 62 MPDUs. Executive wants to use it for affordable housing. ...

Workforce Housing, mixed income, mixed-use, residential and commercial use. Nancy feels the site should remain as a potential site for a school (MCPS has relinquished control of it), or as a park, or housing consistent with the Master Plan recommendations. Disposition Hearing on Wednesday, May 5th, 6 PM, at DHCA. Cary asks for a show of hands in support of Olney Coalition's objectives. Passes 9-0-2.

Housing Committee. Jim Humphrey. Dan Wilhelm moves that the MCCF write a letter recommending that the process be open. Seconded. Passes unanimously.

MCCF Policy on Paying ExComm members for services: Luella Mast - Why does the MCCF pay some members of the ExComm for their services while others are not. Luella moves that the MCCF adopt a policy that ExComm members not be paid, directly or indirectly, for any services rendered. Seconded. Charles Wolff moves an amendment that the policy not be implemented for 6 weeks. Not seconded. Some feel there is a conflict of interest, another feels we are hurting ourselves. Motion passes 7-2-2.

MCCF Directory: Luella Mast - June 14th meeting will cost about \$75. Shows the directory of the MCCPTA organization as an example of a good printed directory. Luella argues that an effort be made to produce one for the Federation, and that the treasurer include this project in the next budget. Dick Kauffunger so moves. Seconded. There was some discussion about what should be included in the directory. Dean mentions that there are secure methods to keep information secure on a website (password-protected sections of the website). Passes 7-2-1.

Transportation. Dorothy Camer speaks about car-pooling,

high-occupancy vehicles, and transportation brokering, which is an organized form of ride-sharing. Q: Insurance troubles? A: No, because these are commercial drivers. Q: is this a commercial operation for which Ms. Camer seeks MCCF endorsement? Cary suggests an article in our newsletter by third parties.

Dan Wilhem testified on LATR. Adjust the light cycles. Speed humps.

Education Committee: Mark Adelman. Committee has a few documents in preparation.

Cary Lamari: Malcom Shaneman, M-NC/PPC Director of Subdivision Review, died last week. Charles Wolff moves that the MCCF send a letter of condolence to his family. Seconded. Passes unanimously.

Newsletter assignments.

Meeting adjourned at 10:44 pm

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## What has your editor been doing?

She was up to her ass in alligators-and it wasn't in Rockville. Actually, they were crocodiles, and in Cuba. Before you get concerned, the trip was perfectly legal, a scientific research adventure organized by "Earthwatch" with Treasury permit and all. And I did not bring home any cigars or scars. The croc in the picture is alive, but bound up with red tape.



Special thanks go to Wayne Goldstein for serving as guest editor in my absence. And thanks also to my husband, Bob, for volunteering to do the formatting. It would be great if we had at least one other individual who could help with formatting on an occasional basis. Please call me if you would be willing to learn or perfect skills you already have in this area.

## **Federation Meeting**

Monday, May 10th, 7:45 p.m.

1st floor Auditorium

County Council Office Building, Rockville

### **AGENDA-Tentative**

7:45 Call to order, Cary Lamari presiding  
7:50 Announcements and introductions  
7:55 Adoption of agenda  
8:00 Approval of minutes  
8:05 Community Hero Award / Ira Shesser  
8:10 Program: Moderately Priced Dwelling  
Units  
9:00 Nomination of Elected officers  
9:05 Election reform sub-committee / Dale  
Tibbitts  
9:10 Housing sub-committee  
9:15 Old business, officers reports  
9:25 New business

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation** is a countywide nonprofit, educational, and advocacy organization. It was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Its monthly Delegates meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Monday of each month (except for holidays, July, August and December) at 7:45 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: Midnight Monday May 24. Prepare submission as a MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, attach it to e-mail, and send it to [mccfnnewsletter@comcast.net](mailto:mccfnnewsletter@comcast.net). Please do not try to format your text.

Please send all address corrections to Dan Wilhelm, 904 Cannon Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904, 301-384-2698, or [djwilhelm@erols.com](mailto:djwilhelm@erols.com).

### **NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

Thursday, May 20, 2004, 7:45 p.m.

**RED BRICK COURTHOUSE**

29 Courthouse Square, Rockville

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

### **MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION**

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