

April 11 Program | FY 2017 Budgets and the Proposed 8.6% Real Estate Tax Increase | [MORE](#)

O BRT, Where Art Thou? | Jim Zepp recaps the little we've been able to find out about the County's Bus Rapid Transit plans | [MORE](#)

Nix the Neonics | Carole Barth instructs us on the dangers to bees from neonicotinoids | [MORE](#)

MCCF Awards Reception June 9 | Nominations for awards, next year's officers now being accepted | [MORE](#)

Multimodal Transportation Topics: Go Ride a Bike! | Peggy Dennis reports on the rewrite of the Bicycle Master Plan | [MORE](#)

Fracking and Clocking Your Way to Energy Savings | Louis Wilen's tutorial shows us how to adjust our furnaces due to the increased Btu content of natural gas | [MORE](#)

Sunshine and Open Government: The Maryland Public Information Act | Paula Bienenfeld gives the proper language to make a request through the MPIA | [MORE](#)

April 12th Community Meeting on County Planning Policy Changes | Proposed revisions to the transportation elements of the SSP will be discussed at a meeting on April 12th in Silver Spring | [MORE](#)

TO PRINT, USE [PRINT VERSION](#)

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, April 11, 2016, 7:45 p.m. @ the Bethesda Regional Services Center. "The Capital Budget and the Proposed 8.6% Increase in Real Estate Taxes"

[AGENDA](#) • [PROGRAM](#)

April's Community Hero

Terrill North Named April's Community Hero for MANUP Program for At-Risk Teens

[READ PROFILE](#)

Meeting Minutes

March Meeting #874 [SEE MINUTES](#)
Executive Committee Meeting [MARCH](#)

Membership Application

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APRIL 2016 • 2

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Federation Meeting 875

Monday, April 11, 2016

7:45 p.m. | Room A

Bethesda Regional Services Ctr.

4805 Edgemoor Lane

Bethesda, Maryland

AGENDA

7:45 Call to Order/Introductions

7:50 Approval of Agenda

7:51 Announcements

7:55 Approval of Minutes, March 14, 2016, meeting

7:56 Treasurer's Report

7:57 Community Hero: Terrill North

8:00 Program: FY2017 Budgets & Real Estate Tax Increase

9:25 Committee Reports

9:35 Old and New Business

9:45 Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

All monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public. They are held on the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:45 p.m., *usually* in the First Floor Auditorium of the County Council Office Building in Rockville, Md. This year, however, that venue is closed while undergoing extensive renovation.

Please note the change of venue for the April meeting only! We'll meet the same time as usual (7:45 p.m.), but it will be held in the **Room A of the Bethesda Regional Services Center at 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, Maryland.**

Meetings are usually adjourned at 10:15 p.m. at the latest. For detailed parking directions, visit the [meetings and events calendar](#) on the MCCF website. ■

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.**, is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public (agenda and details at left).

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except July and August. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. **Recipients are encouraged to forward the Civic Federation News to all association members, friends, and neighbors.** Permission is granted to reproduce any article, provided that proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County (Md.) Civic Federation."

Civic Federation News

civicednews@montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE [PAGE 22](#)

April 11 Program: FY 2017 Budgets and the Proposed 8.6% Real Estate Tax Increase

By Jerry Garson

Our annual budget meeting will discuss the County Executive's proposed 8.6% increase in real estate taxes on Montgomery County residents. There will also be a discussion on the proposed Capital Budget, including the proposal for the two-billion dollar Bus Rapid Transit system.

Our guest speakers will be **Jennifer Hughes**, Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and **Steve Farber**, the County Council Administrator.

The meeting will be held on Monday, April 11, 2016, at 7:45 p.m., at the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, in Room A. See the MCCF website for [parking directions](#).

Since housing prices haven't been increasing in the past few years,

property assessments by the County haven't risen in value either. The only way for the County to wring more money out of the properties we own is by raising the tax rate on real estate.

This is the biggest increase in real estate taxes in eight years. An 8.6% tax increase would surpass the maximum rate allowed under the county's charter, meaning it could require support from *all nine* members of the County Council for final approval.

"It's a very large increase," admitted Nancy Floreen, the County Council President who will lead the council's budget deliberations over the next several weeks. *"The real issue is our calculation of what our residents can afford."*

The proposed budget:

■ Funds Montgomery County Public Schools above the required

"Maintenance of Effort" level and provides a 6.2% increase in funding from FY16;

■ Funds Montgomery College above the required Maintenance of Effort level for the fifth year in a row, bringing the combined increase in County Government support to the College since 2013 to nearly 37%; and

■ Increases tax-supported funding for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission by 2.4%.

See the [Operating Budget here](#), and the [FY17 Capital Budget and FY17-22 Capital Improvements Program here](#). To make your views known to the Council, sign up to speak at the Council's public hearings on the Budget April 5, 6, and 7 (day or evening), by calling 240.777.7803, or [sign up online](#) or [email the Council](#). ■

Terrill North Named April's Community Hero for MANUP Program for At-Risk Teens

By Alan Bowser, 2nd Vice President

A native of Houston, Texas, Terrill North first moved to the area in 1993 after receiving a scholarship to Howard University. He settled in Silver Spring in 2004 following law school, later moving to Takoma Park. He was one of seven Howard alumni who founded the community-serving organization MANUP, which works with teenage males at-risk of joining gangs. The intent of the organization was to develop the next generation of successful leaders by teaching the importance of education, social responsibility, self-empowerment, and economic awareness.

Making a New United People, or MANUP, is a nonprofit youth development organization based in Takoma Park, serving nearly 500 youth

each year in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. MANUP runs weekly programs at locations across the region, including the Takoma Park Community Center and A. Mario Loiederman Middle School.

The grassroots organization provides workforce development and youth entrepreneurship programs in partnership with Identity, Inc., and Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research, or CHEER. Additionally, MANUP works in a coalition with the Montgomery County Collaboration Council, Silver Spring YWCA, and Our Voices Matter on teaching self-advocacy to local



TERRILL NORTH

youth.

Based on principles of restorative justice, the heart of MANUP's program is small group mentoring leveraging a mix of ex-offenders and young professionals. The program is led by two former congressional staffers, Brandon Johns and Terrill North, who wanted to move beyond public policy in helping at-risk youth.

MANUP quickly became a coded program due to demand from families and, in 2014, began working with elementary school youth through Lunch & Learn, a summer math and reading enrichment

program due to demand from families and, in 2014, began working with elementary school youth through Lunch & Learn, a summer math and reading enrichment

Community Hero, cont.

program developed in partnership with Washington Adventist University. In 2015, MANUP became a lead partner with the Community Foundation of the National Capital Region's work with 8,000 identified, disassociated black youth in Montgomery County and My Brother's Keeper Initiative.

"I got involved after a young man was killed riding the bus on his way home from school," said North, who is board chair of MANUP. "It was hard to advocate for millions in education dollars for some other community when we have real problems to address right across the street.

"I'm really excited about MANUP's future in the county," he added. "There is growing consensus and collaboration here around helping all children succeed." ■

O BRT, Where Art Thou?

By Jim Zepp

Despite the planning process already established by the County Council for three BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) corridors to study the relative transit needs and alternatives, County Executive Ike Leggett peremptorily declared on Tuesday, March 2nd, the following arrangements for limited stop, long-distance bus service on the three remaining roadways for which BRT is being actively studied:

ROCKVILLE PIKE (MD 355)

■ A rush-hour-only County Ride On Plus (an enhanced express service similar to the WMATA Metro-Extra K9 bus on New Hampshire Avenue) between the Lakeforest Transit Center and the NIH Medical Center Metrorail Station in less than

two years;

■ A rush-hour-only Ride On express service between Clarksburg and the Shady Grove Metro Station by Spring 2017; and

■ Commit \$10 million (\$5 million in County funds and \$5 million in State funds) to continue studying a Locally Preferred Alternative for BRT service.

COLESVILLE ROAD (US 29)

■ Commit \$6.5 million to plan and design a high-quality BRT route with the intent of having service in less than four years. The route will have several configurations along the length of US 29—using the highway shoulders on the northern portions, relying on "managed" lanes in the southern sections, and operating in

MORE

O BRT, Where ..., cont.

mixed traffic in limited areas. The exact sections for these different treatments are to be determined.

While the BRT vehicles will travel within the existing right-of-way, land will still be needed for the BRT stations, which in some planning documents have been described as much as 150' in length and 15' in width. Also, this is intended to eventually be a bicounty route extending into Howard County.

VIERS MILL ROAD

■ Continue the current BRT study process for a Locally Preferred Alternative to be identified by FY2017. The State has already spent nearly six years engaged in this study.

■ Commit \$1.8 million for WMATA to provide MetroExtra service which is already planned for this corridor.

Although (1) not considered one of the County's BRT Corridors because it has been planned for nearly 20 years, (2) will be operated by the State Department of Transportation, and (3) is already funded through the final design stage, the County Executive supports seeking Federal funding for the construction of the CCT (Corridor Cities Transitway).

The County Executive also wants to spend \$1.25 million more on marketing the BRT to the public and creating a brand image for the service.

Since these decisions were announced with no opportunity for input by the Corridor Advisory Committees (that have already been meeting for over a year on the issues involved with the possible alternatives and impacts of implementing BRT on these roadways), there are some concerns over what the implications may be for traffic and the surrounding

communities because little detail has been provided beyond the certainty of the intended implementation schedule. While these proposals should be less disruptive and expensive than the original BRT concepts, the lack of substantive information currently provided to the public limits any assessment to very tentative comments at this point.

In fact, the *County-Wide Transitway Functional Master Plan* recommended a gradual approach to any BRT implementation and recognizes a wider range of transit options as being BRT than many BRT advocates will admit to:

This Plan does not envision that full-time dedicated bus lanes will be implemented as a first step in most locations.

Since a large part of the initial

MORE

O BRT, Where ..., cont.

ridership for BRT service will come from existing transit users whose numbers do not warrant a high level of treatment at this time, it is likely

that there will be an incremental introduction of priority treatments and features that, with actual operating and ridership experience, ultimately lead to the maximum level of treatment appropriate for the

specific corridor in question.

—Excerpted from Page 15

Consequently, a more moderate approach to any BRT implementa-

MORE

Table 2 Transit Service Typology

Service	Market	Examples	Speed	Frequency	Span	Stop Spacing
Commuter rail	commuters	MARC Brunswick Line	very high	Low	peak period	very high
Metrorail	all trips	Red Line	high	High	all day	high
Light rail	all trips	Purple Line	moderate	High	all day	moderate
BRT—Activity Center Corridor	all trips	Corridor Cities Transitway	moderate	High	all day	moderate
BRT—Express Corridor	commuters	US 29	high	moderate	peak period	high
BRT—Commuter Corridor	all trips	K9 MetroExtra route	moderate	moderate	peak period	moderate
Local bus	all trips	Metrobus, Ride On	low	Low	varies	low

O BRT, Where ..., cont.

tion would be more consistent with the Master Plan and may be more appropriate for the expected demand even with projected future development given the current economic conditions and the regional declining trends in transit ridership.

It is encouraging the County Executive seems to have recognized the reality that very little funding is available for new megatransit projects while the D.C. Region's existing transit infrastructure (MetroRail and the various state, metropolitan, and local bus services) are struggling to maintain their facilities and equipment. Furthermore the region's transit ridership has been steadily declining since 2009, which has resulted in serious financial deficits that are projected to only increase further in the coming years.

In its transportation report released earlier this year, MCCF recommended a more adaptive approach to planning for future transportation needs as both population dynamics and emerging technologies mean that there will be less certainty for transportation services demands and a broader range of alternatives for addressing these concerns.

This is somewhat reflected in the County Executive's proposals, but his proposals are still largely rooted in a long-term commitment to 19th Century solutions for a rapidly evolving 21st Century environment. As U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx said last year after riding in a Google self-driving car, "For too long, our national dialogue about transportation has been focused on recreating the past. Instead, we need to focus on the trends that are shaping our future." ■

Nix the Neonics

By Carole A. Barth

There's lots of press these days on bees and pesticides. If you follow any environmental feeds, listservs, or blogs, you've probably seen the term "neonicotinoids." You may even know that legislation has been proposed at the state and passed at the local level to restrict the use of these pesticides. But what are they really, and why should you care?

Neonicotinoids (neonics for short) are synthetic versions of nicotine-based pesticides. I am old enough to remember elderly gardeners who used actual nicotine pesticides, particularly for aphids on roses. I remember this because these gardeners stressed to me how poisonous it was. As a child, I thought it odd that something so

MORE

Nix the Neonics, cont.

dangerous had pretty pictures of roses on the container.

“Nicotine, derived from the tobacco plant, has been used as a pesticide since at least the 15th century. Its use in the United States began expanding in the 1940s and ’50s. By the 1990s, nicotine use dropped as new insecticides were registered (and continue to be registered) for the same crop/pest combinations.”¹ The last registered nicotine pesticide was designated a Restricted Use Pesticide due to very high acute inhalation, oral, dermal, and eye toxicity to humans. (A dose of only 40–60 milligrams can be lethal to adults.)

Initially, the synthetic nicotine pesticides were thought to be much safer, because they were less toxic

to humans, wildlife, and birds than the pesticides made from tobacco. Moreover, these new pesticides were selectively more toxic to insects than mammals, which seemed like a good thing at the time.

To understand how this backfired, you need to learn a little more about how these pesticides work. Neonics target the central nervous system of insects, hijacking a neural signal to cause paralysis and then death. In general, insects have more of the targeted nerve receptors than mammals, which is why neonics are less toxic for us. Bees, however, have more of these receptors than other insects, making them more vulnerable than the pest species. (In addition, bees



possess fewer genes for detoxification than many insect pest species.)

Neonics are also *systemic* pesticides, meaning—once they are absorbed—their toxicity is carried to every part of the plant. Again, this was a selling point because it meant a much smaller amount of pesticide was needed to cover all parts of the plant. So, for example, instead of having to spray a plant multiple times, one could simply treat the seeds. Unfortunately, the systemic nature of neonics also means that the pesticide is present in nectar and pollen, where the bees come in contact with the stuff.

This is bad news for bees, because many are already suffering

MORE

¹Reregistration Eligibility Decision for Nicotine, EPA, March 2008

Nix the Neonics, cont.

from disease, parasites, and habitat loss. It is also bad news for us, because our food supply is dependent on bees and other pollinators. Increasingly, impacts to bees are being documented by research around the world. In January, EPA released preliminary studies that found declines in the number of bees and the honey they produced when imidacloprid (a common neonic) was at the “low level” of 25 parts per billion (ppb) in the nectar and pollen foraged by bees.

For these reasons, three neonic pesticides have already been banned by the European Union. In Maryland, legislation has again been introduced in the General Assembly to eliminate homeowner use of these pesticides. Farmers, certified pesticide applicators, veterinarians,

and people working under their supervision would still be allowed to use neonics. SB 198, called the Pollinator Protection Act of 2016, was amended and passed the Senate 32–14. The companion bill in the house, HB 0211, is scheduled for a hearing on March 30, 2016. MCCF supported these bills.

In Montgomery County, Bill 52-14, Pesticides—Notice Requirements—Cosmetic Pesticide Use Restrictions, was passed by the County Council in October 2016. Although not signed by the County Executive, the law became effective on January 19, 2016. This law prohibits the use of neonics on land owned by the County except to protect human health, to control invasive species, to maintain golf courses, and to maintain medians or rights of way. *It does not apply to County-owned land which is maintained by Park*

and Planning.

So what can you do to reduce the threat posed by neonics? First, you can stop buying or using neonic pesticides. If in doubt, look at the list of active ingredients. Any of the following ingredients mean the product contains neonics:

- Acetamiprid
- Clothianidin
- Dinotefuran
- Imidacloprid
- Nitenpyram
- Thiocloprid
- Thiamethoxam

Secondly, you can provide habitat for pollinators by limiting the use of pesticides in your yard, providing nesting sites, and planting a pollinator-friendly garden. A suggested plant list is available from the [Xerces Society](#). You can also find information at the [National Pollinator Garden Network](#)'s website. ■

Last Call to Nominate 2016 Award Recipients

The 2016 Awards Committee—President Paula Bienenfeld, Immediate Past President Carole Ann Barth, and Past President Peggy Dennis—is still accepting nominations for recipients of the three awards to be presented at our upcoming Awards Event on June 9th (details at right).

Here are the descriptions of the awards and the rationale for each award.

The Wayne Goldstein Award is awarded to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County.

The Sentinel Award, sponsored by *The Montgomery Sentinel* newspaper, is awarded to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level.

The Star Cup is sponsored by the Civic Federation and is awarded to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County.

If you can think of an individual or group whom you believe we should honor, please send us your nominations as soon as possible to president@montgomerycivic.org. ■

Nominations Now Being Accepted for MCCF Officers

Our Nominations Committee is accepting nominations for officers for the 2016-2017 membership year. Nominations Committee members are Carole Ann Barth, Peggy Dennis, Jerry Garson, Harriet Quinn, Danila Sheveiko, and Sandy Vogelgesang.

Please send your nominations to mcciviced@gmail.com. Election of officers will take place in June. ■

Mark Your Calendars Now for MCCF's 2016 Annual Awards Reception

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2016 | 6:30-9:30 P.M.
The Room at McGinty's Public House
911 Ellsworth Drive, Downtown Silver Spring

Details and reservation information to follow.

Questions? Call Paula Bienenfeld, 240.899.2335

Fracking and Clocking Your Way to Energy Savings: Adjust Your Furnace

By Louis Wilen

A little known side effect (at least to the general public) of “fracking” in States adjacent to Maryland is that the Btu content (energy content) per cubic foot of gas supplied to your home has *increased* during the past several years. To take advantage of the increased Btu content of natural gas, the air/fuel mixture in a furnace should be adjusted by a competent HVAC technician. (For more information about the reasons behind the change in Btu content in natural gas supplied to homeowners, use Google to look up “ethane rejection.”)

If your furnace’s air/fuel mixture is not set optimally, your heating bills will be higher than necessary. In addition, since the Montgomery County energy tax is based on Btu consumption, you will pay more

MoCo energy tax than necessary.

To precisely set the air/fuel mixture in a furnace, your HVAC technician should use a tool called a **combustion analyzer**. Carrier and Bryant, for example, specify in their furnace installation manuals that the combustion mixture must be set to within 2% of its ideal value.

However, many HVAC technicians simply “eyeball” the flame to estimate if the mixture is set correctly. If it is blue, they figure that the air/fuel mixture is acceptable. Eyeballing the flame was fine in the days of 75% efficient furnaces, but is no longer an acceptable method of determining if a furnace is adjusted correctly.

Since a combustion analyzer costs about \$500 and must be calibrated periodically—and since

most customers don’t know the importance of accurately setting the air/fuel mixture—many HVAC technicians do not own combustion analyzers. So here’s a tip: Ask your HVAC technician if he will be using a combustion analyzer when he checks your furnace. If the answer is no, you might want to find a different HVAC technician.

With no tool other than a stopwatch (or a stopwatch app on your cell phone), you can easily check to see if your furnace’s air/fuel mixture is set correctly and use that information to decide whether it is worth having your furnace adjusted. This method is known as “clocking the meter.” If performed carefully, it is nearly as accurate as using a combustion analyzer.

Adjust Your Furnace, cont.

First, be sure that all gas appliances are off, other than your furnace. For most homes, this means that you must not run your gas range, gas clothes dryer, or gas water heater during this test. You don't need to turn off your gas water to do this test, but you might need to turn the temperature dial down to minimum to keep the burner from coming on. It is okay to leave your water heater's pilot light on during the test.

Next, look at the manufacture's information plate on your furnace to find the INPUT rating. It will be something like 80,000 Btus per hour. Be sure to find the INPUT rating, not the OUTPUT rating. (If you have a two-stage furnace, you will need to obtain the low INPUT and high INPUT ratings and per-

form the procedure below twice, once when the furnace is running on low and once when it is running on high. If you have a "modulating" gas furnace, you will not be able to perform this test because the gas flow intentionally varies.)

Please note: Although the information plate is visible on many furnaces, some furnaces require that you remove doors or covers to see the information. If the doors or covers are intended to be removed only by a professional HVAC technician, we suggest that you do not proceed unless you are qualified to do so.

Go look at your gas meter. There are several dials on it. Look at the 1/2 cu. ft. dial and the 2 cu. ft. dial. You are going to be timing the 2 cu. ft. dial.

Turn up your thermostat to several degrees above the current room temperature so that your furnace



will operate continuously for several minutes.

Now measure the amount of time, in seconds, that it takes the 2 cu. ft. dial to go around one time. Make this measurement a couple of times so that you can be sure to get

MORE

Adjust Your Furnace, cont.

an accurate reading. Try to measure this accurately, preferably to within about one second.

(Don't forget to set your thermostat back to comfortable room temperature and turn your water heater back to approximately 130 degrees after you measure the dial time.)

Then calculate $7,488,000/T$, where T =time in seconds for the 2 cu. ft. dial to go around one time. This will give you the amount of Btus of gas flowing into your furnace per hour. (This formula is based on the typical value of 1,040 Btus per cu. ft. of natural gas currently supplied in our area.)

Compare the amount of calculated Btus to the INPUT rating of the furnace. If the numbers differ

by more than about three percent, then you should probably ask your HVAC technician to check the air/fuel mixture at your next furnace tune-up. If the numbers differ by more than about 20 percent, then your furnace might be severely misadjusted, and it could be worth having it checked promptly. A severely misadjusted furnace wastes fuel, has a shortened life, and can emit excessive amounts of carbon monoxide and soot.

The air/fuel mixture is just one of several settings that affect furnace performance. At initial installation, a good HVAC technician will also check temperature rise, airflow rate, and static pressure. These and many other parameters should be checked periodically to ensure safe and efficient operation of a furnace. ■

Sunshine and Open Government: The Maryland Public Information Act

By Paula Bienenfeld, President

Last month's meeting coincided with Sunshine Week, an annual event focused on transparency in government. Our First Vice President, Jim Zepp, gave an overview of available datasets here in Montgomery County and discussion followed.

But many of us would like to know more. How much money is the county spending on nonprofits? What are their metrics so we know our money is being well-spent?

What conversations take place among government officials about development, or schools, before decisions are made public? With whom did our elected officials

MORE

Sunshine and MPIA, cont.

meet? How often?

Answers to these questions are available; they take some digging and some persistence. How do you find out the answers, or at least some of them?

The State of Maryland has an equivalent to the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA); it is the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA). So, if you want to find out what conversations were going on before that decision was made that affected your neighborhood, or your child's school, here's how: file an MPIA. It is simple to do, and we encourage it.

The agency has 30 days to respond to your request. That is the law. The agency is required to spend up to two hours for free on

your request, gathering the material. They may charge a fee if the request takes more time than that. If the fee request is onerous, go to the press and make it public. If your request is in the public interest and not for commercial purposes, you can request a fee waiver in your letter.

See the [MPIA Manual online](#).

To find a template letter, go to Appendix A of the Manual; an abbreviated version of it is below. Just cut and paste!

Dear <NAME HERE>:

This is a request under the Maryland Public Information Act, title 4, of the General Provisions of the Maryland Code. I wish to inspect all records in your custody and control pertaining to the following:

<LIST WHAT YOU ARE ASKING FOR HERE>

If all or any part of this request is denied, I request that I be provided with a written statement of the grounds for the denial. If you determine that some portions of the requested records are exempt from disclosure, please provide me with the portions that can be disclosed.

Please advise me as to the cost, if any, for inspecting the records described above. I anticipate that I will want copies of some or all of the records sought.

I look forward to receiving records promptly and, in any event, to a decision about all of the requested records within 30 days. If you have any questions regarding this request, please telephone me at <NUMBER> or email me at <EMAIL ADDRESS>

Thank you.

MORE

Sunshine and MPIA, cont.

SOME HINTS

- Be specific.
- Identify your request as clearly as possible.
- If you are dealing with one issue and several agencies, file with all the agencies that could be involved in the issue.
- Ask for all media—emails, logs, records, copies of written documents, etc. Be comprehensive.
- If you know there is a specific document that you are requesting, just ask for that document. If you know who wrote it, or the date on which it was written, include that information.
- Make it clear you know your rights. ■

April 12 Community Mtg. on Co. Planning Policy Changes

Proposed revisions to the transportation elements of the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) will be discussed at an important community meeting held at the Planning Department in Silver Spring.

The MoCo Planning Dept. is updating the SSP (formerly "Growth Policy") for review and approval by the County Council by November 15, 2016. The intent of the SSP is to ensure that public facilities—particularly schools and transportation facilities—are adequate to meet the needs of new development and growth.

A community meeting focusing on key transportation elements of the policy update will be held on **Tuesday, April 12, 2016, from 7 to 9 p.m.** in the Montgomery County Planning Board auditorium in Silver Spring (8787 Georgia Ave.).

This April event follows a **similar public forum** held on March 15, 2016, and, like that meeting, presents the opportunity for the community to learn more about the SSP and proposed changes to the policy. Staff representing the MoCo Dept. of Transportation will participate in the discussions. The Planning Dept. has also held public meetings regarding changes to the school capacity elements of the Policy.

SSP BACKGROUND

Proposed revisions to the SSP are currently underway. Planning staff is researching new ideas in transportation and school capacity planning in preparation for the revised regulations, which will first be presented to the Planning Board in May 2016

MORE

Subdiv. Staging Policy, cont.

for comment. This quadrennial policy includes criteria and guidance for administration of the County's Adequate Public Facility Ordinance (APFO), which matches the timing of private development with the availability of public services. The APFO was designed to ensure that road and school capacity—plus water and sewer and other infrastructure—kept pace with growth. Where new areas of the County were developed, infrastructure to support new homes and businesses was needed.

The Planning Dept. is considering significant changes to the SSP so it's important for neighborhoods to follow the progress and stay informed about how these potential policy changes could affect residents. For more info. about the SSP, view the [upcoming schedule and previous presentations](#). ■

Multimodal Transportation Topics: Go Ride a Bike!

By Peggy Dennis, Transportation Committee Member

While so much of our time and energy has been focused on the BRT proposal, other transportation options should not be forgotten. The Planning Department has begun a comprehensive rewrite of the Bicycle Master Plan.

The new plan will focus on developing a high-quality/low-stress bicycle network, bringing bicycle recommendations in line with industry

best practices, and consolidating all bicycle recommendations into a single plan for the first time since 1978. An emphasis will be placed on evaluating newer facilities, such as separated bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, and bicycle boulevards, as well as secure bicycle storage facilities. As the Civic Federation's representative on the Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Group, I'll report to you on our progress from time to time.

Those of us on the Bike Master Plan Advisory Group have watched the Planning Department's three-part Winter Speakers Series called "Smart Moves: New Ideas for Bikes, Cars and Transit." These are excellent presentations giving much information at a professional level easily understood by the layman, and each can be watched

[MORE](#)



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Go Ride a Bike, cont.

over the Internet in the comfort of your home.

Sessions such as "Putting the Transition Back in Transit: Bringing a Market Analysis Perspective to Transit Planning Using Big Data," "Recent Approaches to Suburban Bicycle Planning" in Amsterdam, and "Smart Development in Transitional Suburban Locations" may be [viewed online](#).

You may also want to visit the website for the [Bicycle Master Plan](#) or check out the interactive [Bicycle Stress Map](#).

For those who haven't bicycled in a while and would like to try it out in a safe and beautiful location, go to the C&O Canal National Historic Park, Old Tavern area at Great Falls. The Bike Loaner program will lend you and your family (or date) a bicycle for two hours at no cost. The ride along

the C&O Canal Tow Path is beautiful at this time of year.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) offers classes and community rides for beginners and cyclists at all skills levels. The "Learn to Ride" class is for adults who have never ridden a bike before and want to start now. Class technique is intuitive and has a very high success rate. The instructors take students through a progressive curriculum, with the goal of riding with two pedals by the end of the session. A bike and helmet are included with your registration.

"City Cycling" is an essential class for all skill levels. If you're a seasoned city rider, WABA's got new tips and tricks for you; if you're new to biking, they'll help you master the fundamentals. This three-hour class helps adults ride more comfortably and confidently! Visit [WABA's website](#) for full information. ■

Minutes of the March 14, 2016, Meeting #874

By Danila Sheveiko, Co-Recording Secretary

Call to Order: President Paula Bienenfeld called the 874th session to order at 7:48 p.m. Introductions followed.

Agenda: It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ April general meeting will be held at the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center, 4805 Edgemoor Lane, Bethesda, MD 20814 ([directions here](#)).

Minutes: It was moved and sec-

[MORE](#)

March Minutes, cont.

ended to approve the minutes of the February meeting as they appeared in the newsletter. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Community Hero: Jeffrey Weisner accepted the award on behalf of **Peter Murtha's family and 350MoCo** and promised to keep the Federation apprised of their **quest to divest** the County's pension funds from fossil fuel company securities.

PROGRAM

■ The March program examined information made available to the public through the County government's Open Data Web sites (**Data Montgomery**, **OpenDataMCPS**, and **MNCPPC Interactive Maps**) and provided answers to contest questions published in the March newsletter:

| Net revenue expected in the Department of Liquor Control's FY16 Approved Budget is \$24,116,985.

| Number of sewer overflow incidents reported in 2013 in Sligo Creek is two.

| The most recent reported mean (average) travel time to work (commute time) is 34.7 minutes, and the most recent percentage of commuters who use mass transit in the County is 15.6 percent.

| Annual cost for the County's school crossing guards was \$4.6 million in 2010; there are currently 161 crossing guards, of whom 150 are receiving overtime pay, averaging compensation of about \$40 per hour.

■ Concerns were raised during the program about excessive service fees local agencies are charging to fulfill Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests, like \$1,000 for a request about the new Westbard

Master Plan; the **\$58,000 an activist was charged** for asking about cost-reduction measures for the new Wheaton Library and Recreation Center; and the recent *Washington Post* article: "**Want public information? Too bad.**" A government agency has 30 days to respond to an MPIA request. County government employs about 10,000 people.

COMMITTEE REPORTS*Environment*

■ Carole Ann Barth reported Maryland Senate Bill 323, **Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act of 2016**, made it out of committee and heading for a vote.

■ Danila Sheveiko reported that, to save money, **WSSC uses chloramine** in our **drinking water supply**.

■ Danila also reported that D.C.'s Department of Energy and Environ-

MORE

March Minutes, cont.

ment issued a "Do Not Eat" warning for local rockfish that contain **10 times the PCB levels** reported by Maryland and Virginia agencies that measure toxins in the muscle tissue only, while D.C. follows EPA guidelines and tests rockfish fatty tissues and skin as well.

■ Prince George's County once again beat Montgomery in **waste diversion** to take the top spot in Maryland.

Education

■ Paula Bienenfeld reported that the salary for recently **hired** MCPS Superintendent Jack Smith is **\$275,000**.

■ MCPS is once again **caught hiding funds** from the County Council and the State—millions collected from students, parents, and guardians for certain class fees.

■ Damascus High School booster club to receive **\$200,000 in State funds** to buy artificial turf for a field they do not own.

Planning and Land Use

■ Harriet Quinn reported that the Subdivision Staging Policy Community Meeting on Transportation is tomorrow, March 15, at 7 p.m. (presentation can be **viewed and downloaded here**).

■ Public hearing on the **Zoning Text Amendment 16-03** and **Bill 2-16** to relax rules for transient lodging in residential neighborhoods was on March 8; 20 out of 25 speakers were against the ZTA and companion Bill, and it appears that Committee discussion on this bill will be postponed until June.

■ First Planning Board worksession on the draft **Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan** is Thursday, March 24.

■ County Council **tentatively agreed to decrease proposed density** in the new **Westbard Sector Plan** today.

■ Office of the County Executive is **asking for more money** for more studies for the Purple Line and Bus Rapid Transit.

■ Danila Sheveiko reported that **Bannockburn Citizens Association** is doing battle with a townhouse development proposed in the stream bed of a Rock Creek tributary.

■ Jean Cavanaugh reported that the Maryland Transit Authority asked for an **additional \$14 million** from the County because cost projections for elevators in the Bethesda Purple Line station have doubled. State Board of Public Works to **vote on the Purple Line contract** on April 6.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m. ■

Minutes of the March 17, 2016, MCCF ExComm Meeting

By Danila Sheveiko, Co-Recording Secretary

The MCCF Executive Committee (ExComm) convened at the 3rd District Police Station.

Call to Order: Paula Bienenfeld, President, called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m. **Present:** Carole Ann Barth, Jacquie Bokow, Alan Bowser, Jean Cavanaugh, Jerry Garson, Richard Kauffunger, Harriet Quinn, Jorge Ribas, Virginia Sheard, Danila Sheveiko, Louis Wilen, and Jim Zepp.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: Paula called for and received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda as amended.

Approval of Minutes for February ExComm Meeting: Paula called for and received unanimous approval of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson, Treasurer, reported net expenditures over income of \$7.60 for the period.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Alan Bowser, 2nd Vice President, reported on the **38th annual Greater Olney Civic Association awards** ceremony.

Jean Cavanaugh, Co-Recording Secretary, reported that County Executive's representatives asked the Montgomery County Delegation in Annapolis to lobby for postponement of the **Wynne tax case** payments to 2019–2024; Montgomery

County **Taxpayers League** hosts **Jennifer Hughes**, Director of County Office of Management and Budget to discuss FY 2017 on March 23rd.

Paula reported that Jerry Garson, Treasurer, and Harriet Quinn, Member at Large, have signed up for the County **Operating Budget hearings on April 5, 6, and 7.**

Luxmanor Citizens Association to host a Board of Education Candidates Forum on March 24th, said Paula.

PROGRAMS

Paula introduced discussion of future programs.

April: FY 2017 County Operating Budget—Jerry lined up Jennifer Hughes and Steve Farber.

May: Senior Villages—Alan.

MORE

March ExComm Mtg., cont.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

Event planning for this year's annual awards tentatively scheduled for June at **McGinty's Public House** in Downtown Silver Spring.

Discussion of State Legislature and MCCF priorities. Engineering documents for development applications should be signed under penalty of perjury. The Maryland Public Information Act Board is now fully funded for a change thanks to an effort led by **Delegate Bonnie Cullison**, District 19. Court of Special Appeals of Maryland set a precedent by limiting parties of record to within 2,000 ft. in rezoning cases that the court hears.

MCCF newsletter layout feedback, layout, print version. Locate master copy of the MCCF logo.

Harriet reported from the Coun-

cil's meeting on snow removal where Councilmembers talked about the need to improve the online map and 311 service.

Improving MCCF image and relevance. Jorge Ribas, Past President, volunteering to set up a Facebook page for MCCF. ExComm explored the potential benefits of RSS feeds to promote MCCF content.

Nominating Committee will meet via conference call—Harriet, Sandy, Danila, Carole Ann, and Jerry.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning and Land Use

After strong public opposition to **Zoning Text Amendment 16-03**, the Council is delaying the bill until June. This ZTA would change the locations, process, and standards for approval of short-term (less than 30 days) transient lodging hotels in residential neighborhoods. MCCF

opposes the efforts to overturn decisions already made by the full Council with regard to short-term lodging in residential neighborhoods, as well as the lack of notice and lack of stakeholder discussion regarding this bill.

Transportation

Jerry Garson, Acting Chair, reported additional **Corridor Advisory Committee** meetings scheduled for the 355 corridor.

Utilities

Louis Wilen, Chair, reported that WSSC is changing its rate structure.

Louis also explained how Washington Gas changed the gas mixture, adding more ethane, which increases the Btus per cubic foot of gas, so customers are charged more per foot, and should adjust heaters for this

MORE

March ExComm Mtg., cont.

change [[see story](#)].

■ Dick Kauffunger, Past President, reported on the [PEPCO-Exelon merger](#).

■ Jean reported that Washington Gas is asking for a surcharge increase.

■ Danila reported that WSSC [still uses chloramine](#) to save money.

Environment

■ MCCF will be filing a public information request on maintenance costs and procedures at County high schools.

■ Jean reported that Stormwater Partners and Department of Environmental Protection developed a draft definition for green infrastructure.

■ The Maryland Pollinator Protection Act is ready for a third read-

ing after passing the Senate with a 32–14 vote.

OLD BUSINESS

■ Regional Civic Summit – Jim is looking for locations.

NEW BUSINESS

■ Newsletter deadline and articles March 26th at 6pm to Jackie Bokow at cfneditor@verizon.net.

■ Date and location of next two ExComm meetings:
| April 21—via conference call.
| May—TBD.

Adjournment: Paula called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 10:07 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org

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Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the month. Send to CFN at civicednews@montgomerycivic.org. Please send all address corrections to membership@montgomerycivic.org.

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