

December's Program: How Dense is My County? | How will high density and mixed use development affect both our present and future quality of life, taxes and property values, and public services that affect our communities? | **P. 3**

'What's Trending': Budgetary Shenanigans | What's missing from the County Council's diagram of its FY2018 Operating Budget? Only the third largest expenditure! | **P. 4**

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Like our new Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter.

TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, December 11, 2017, 7:45 p.m. @ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. Program: "How Dense is My County?"

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December's Community Hero

It's Jennifer Alvaro of Bethesda for protecting children from sex abuse in MC Public Schools **P. 5**

Meeting Minutes

November 13 Meeting #889 **P. 11**

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

Federation Meeting 890

Monday, December 11 2017

7:45 p.m.

Lobby Level Auditorium
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street, Rockville

AGENDA

- 7:00 Social Time for Members
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:55 Approval of Minutes, November 13 meeting **P.11**
- 7:56 Treasurer's Report
- 7:57 Community Hero: Jennifer Alvaro **P.5**
- 8:00 Program: *How Dense is My County?* **P.3**
- 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.

The December meeting will be held in the **Lobby Level Auditorium of the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.**

Walkers can enter by buzzing security at the door. You can park for free either in the lot at E. Jefferson and Monroe Streets or in the lowest level of the EOB. Drive onto the ramp in the front of the building (ignore "permit parking only" sign), turn left at the second, lower level; use the intercom at the gate to the parking garage and at the door to the elevators to inform security you're attending the MCCF Meeting. ■

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

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

Civic Federation News

civicednews AT montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 14

December's Program: How Dense Is My County?

By Jim Zepp, MCCF President

The prevailing perspective among professional planners is that high density and mixed use development is desirable as a sustainable form of growth that promotes transit-oriented lifestyles. New York City and some European cities are often cited as models for future growth as efficient approaches for future use of infrastructure and limited resources such as energy and land.

Recent local land use plans and zoning codes have reflected this outlook with high-density developments planned for urbanized areas of the County and the approval of large-scale projects similar to Tysons Corner. Forms which characterize major cities are superimposed onto existing developed areas, with little regard for what makes existing

communities unique. This planning movement alternatively is known as Smart Growth, New Urbanism, and Compact Cities.

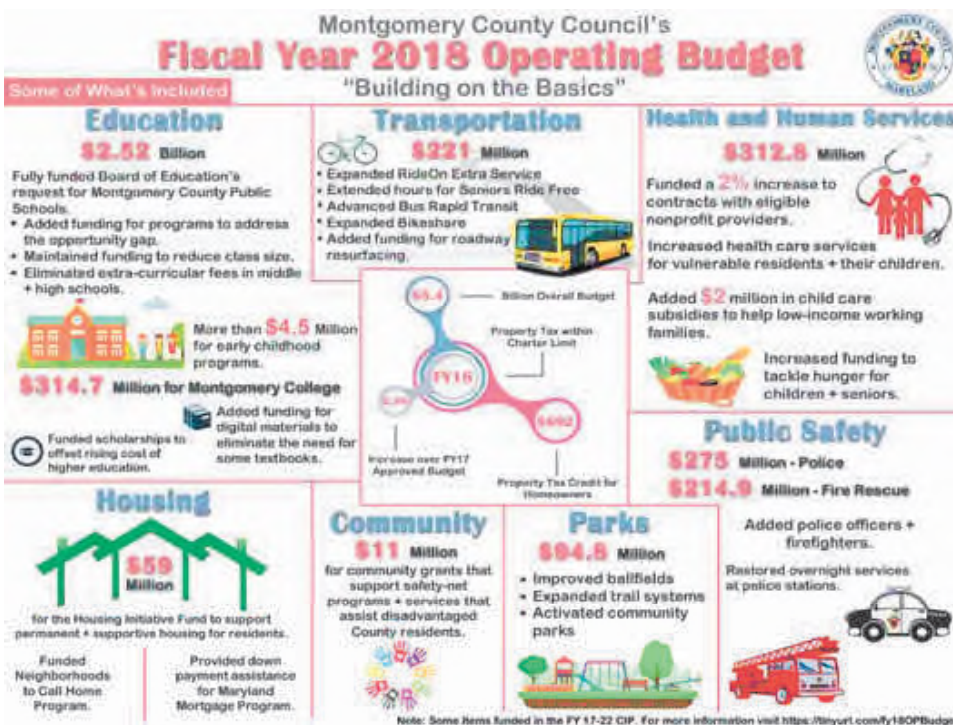
The obvious point is that, although Montgomery County has some very urbanized areas, and it is part of a larger metropolitan region, it is not a city in itself. The D.C. Metropolitan area is still governed by a conglomeration of state and local jurisdictions and a loose patchwork of independent agencies providing utility services like water, sewer, and transit services. Within this region, the constituent governments are often competitors for economic development as well as federal/state/regional resources. This can mean local plans and initiatives that are not necessarily coordinated or are not limited by regional capacities or demands.

To dispense with the fractiousness of these situations, some metropolitan areas have consolidated into city/county forms of government such as Miami-Dade County, Indianapolis-Marion County, and New York City and its Boroughs.

Obviously there are implications for both the present and future quality of life, taxes and property values, as well as public services that affect our communities. So this discussion is important and timely.

A representative from the County Planning Dept. has been invited to present on the County's current Master Plans and their impact for overall growth patterns. A national expert on Smart Growth practices has also been invited. I will also present on current research about high-density and transit-oriented development. ■

WHAT'S TRENDING IN THE COUNTY



Budgetary Shenanigans

The diagram at left is prominently displayed on the [County Council Website Budget Updates home page](#), meant to educate the public about the County's FY2018 Operating Budget.

Question: What's missing from this diagram?

Hint: At \$408 million, it's the third largest expenditure item after schools and public safety.

Answer: Debt service is missing: \$408 million in payments to service County-issued bond obligations. Most people would probably like to know that. Instead there is a little red tab disclaimer noting that the diagram depicts just "Some of What's Included" in the operating

Jennifer Alvaro of Bethesda Named MCCF's Community Hero for December

By Danila Sheveiko, 2nd Vice President

Our October newsletter covered the lack of transparency and accountability surrounding the **heart-breaking stories of child sex abuse in Montgomery County's Public Schools** system. Jennifer Alvaro has been on the front lines of this battle to protect Montgomery County children for over five years.

In 2012, Ms. Alvaro began searching for information regarding the prevention of child sexual abuse in MCPS—a school system she graduated from and where her children are currently enrolled. Little did she imagine then the path this would lead her on. Not finding the information she was looking for (policies, codes of conduct, information on background checks, informa-

tion on basic prevention tools), Ms. Alvaro started making phone calls. When she was transferred from one department to another and received conflicting and incomplete information at every turn, Ms. Alvaro knew she had to do more. After all, she is a licensed clinical social worker and certified sex offender treatment provider with over 20 years of experience as an educator, supervisor, therapist, and case manager in the field of child protective services.

After two years of outreach and advocacy by Ms. Alvaro, MCPS created a Child Abuse and Neglect Work Group to begin to address these issues. In February of 2015, the group was changed from Work Group to Advisory Group. The last Advisory Group meeting was held in June of 2015. In August of 2016, after a

year of requests for the next meeting date, and being told it would be “soon,” all information regarding the Work Group has disappeared off the MCPS Web site. Neither Ms. Alvaro nor the other parent representative on the Work Group were told it had

MORE

What's Trending, cont.

budget, and another even smaller disclaimer at the bottom noting that some of the public benefits and amenities depicted in the diagram are actually funded by the FY 17-22 Capital Improvement Program Budget... *which is also funded by debt.* It's been over two weeks since Civic Federation delegates made a request to the County Council to correct the diagram. No response so far. ■

Community Hero, cont.

been disbanded and repeated requests for meetings and information have gone unanswered. Ms. Alvaro wants to be clear that, while some positive changes and actions have been implemented, there is still no transparency in the process. Abuse can only thrive in an atmosphere of secrecy, and Jennifer Alvaro will continue to advocate for transparency and action to protect our children. That is why she is our newest Community Hero.

Two months ago, even *The Washington Post* had to admit that another child sex abuse “case appears to be the latest of several in which a **Montgomery County school system employee was admonished for repeated incidents of inappropriate behavior** with students but stayed on the job and allegedly

crossed the line again.” The mandated reporters—principals and MCPS administrators—repeatedly failed to report incidents to Child Protective Services.

Board of Education Members and County Councilmembers are not holding MCPS accountable for



ALVARO

these failures to report sex abuse of students to the proper authorities. Only **two States have no penalties for failing to report child sex abuse, and Maryland is one of them.** In this literally lawless atmosphere, it is time the Civic Federation's voice be heard. Please see below a draft resolution to join the Parents' Coalition in support of Ms. Alvaro's quest for **Montgomery County Board of Education to create a Web page that lists all known abusers and lists every school and program that each were involved with.** The resolution will be put to a vote on the floor of the Federation's 890th general session on December 11th following the presentation of Community Hero Award to Ms. Alvaro.

RESOLUTION ON COVER-UP OF CHILD SEX ABUSE IN MONT-

MORE

Community Hero, cont.

GOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (MCPS)

Whereas principals and top MCPS administrators have repeatedly failed to report child sex abuse by teachers and staff to the proper authorities;

Whereas MCPS leadership and the Montgomery County Board of Education have failed to develop, implement, and enforce reasonable policies to protect children from sexual abuse by staff; and

Whereas the Civic Federation has worked to make Montgomery County government more transparent and accountable since 1925;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation calls on Superintendent of Schools Dr. Smith to:

1. **DISCLOSE** the number

of lawsuits MCPS settled and total amount paid, and list the lawsuits it is currently facing due to abuse of MCPS students by staff;

2. **POST** a list of all MCPS employees and contractors who have been criminally charged and/or have had their license suspended or revoked due to the mistreatment of children, including a complete accounting of any and all schools, programs, sports and other activities that person has engaged in with students;

3. **INFORM** every MCPS parent with a letter containing an overview of scope of the problem (dozens of arrests and convictions over the past ten years), an apology for knowingly leaving our children in harm's way, and a commitment to changing the culture of cover-up and deceit in Montgomery County Public Schools. ■

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT?

*Need to share
a community concern?*

*Want to know how to do
something for your association?*

*Would like to meet
your fellow civic activists?*

Come early to the December 11 meeting. From 7:00 to 7:45 p.m., members of the MCCF Executive Committee will be available to talk in the EOB Auditorium. Light refreshments will keep you from going hungry. Be social, be a part of the civic movement, and be here.

Is Accountability for WSSC Just Water Under the Bridge?

By Jim Zepp, President

Last year, State Del. Ben Kramer championed an effort to establish Inspector Generals (IGs) for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). IGs are important for investigating instances of fraud, waste, and abuse in large organizations and provide a resource for citizens and whistleblowers concerned about issues that may be difficult to call attention for oversight, especially if there is a possibility of reprisals for doing so.

Both agencies operate as independent entities directed by political appointees, who are chosen by the Montgomery and Prince George's County governments. Regarding oversight and ethical issues, both

have asserted their status as state government agencies, which means that local governments do not have authority over them, but the Counties do have approval over the general annual budgets for the portion of each agency's operations serving them. MNCPPC is responsible for local land use and zoning planning, and planning and operating park services for both Counties. WSSC provides water and sewer services to both Counties.

WSSC's FY2016 operating budget was \$560 million and WSSC has over 1,700 employees. MNCPPC's FY2017 budget is \$382.6 million and it has 2,813 employee work-years. Far less in public dollars are subject to effective review in this State, so this is a serious omission in assuring open and clean government that Montgomery and Prince George's Coun-

ties and the State of Maryland have felt necessary and essential for their agencies' operations.

The bill creating the IG for MNCPPC was passed and became law on July 1st. The Planning Commissioners retain hiring and firing powers over the IG, but no one has been hired yet. The bill creating the IG for the WSSC was defeated.

Consequently, Del. Kramer has submitted a slightly revised bill (PG/MC 101-18) for the creation of an IG for the WSSC. MCCF will continue its support for improving the accountability and transparency for an agency that its operations affect the health and well-being of all County residents, institutions, and businesses. Please share your concerns about this with your association members and State Delegation members. ■

CIVIC FED TONIGHT!

SEEKING POSSIBLE SPEAKERS FOR YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETINGS?

Members of the MCCF Executive Committee have extensive experience in issues such as transportation, land use and zoning, schools, parks, environmental concerns, taxes, and public spending. Plus, they have a community-oriented perspective on these matters. If you would like an executive committee member to speak at a meeting, contact President Jim Zepp at *president at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

Volunteers Needed for 2018 MCCF Awards Event

The Civic Federation's Annual Awards event will be in May 2018. More details on the event will follow in future newsletters.

We need volunteers to help coordinate the event as well as volunteers to serve on the Awards Selection Committee. The work of the Awards Selection Committee includes accepting nominations for award recipients, evaluating those nominations, and making final recommendations on the awardees. The work should be of short duration and may be done largely by phone. If you would like to help with the event and/or the committee, please let us know. Please also start thinking now about individuals and/or groups you would like to nominate for the following awards:

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

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

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

If you can help with the Event and/or Selection Committee or have a award nomination, please contact Jim Zepp: *president AT montgomerycivic.org*. We cannot do this without your help! ■

Seven County Civic Associations Join Coalition Against Beltway Widening

By Alan Bowser, At-Large Member

Seven Montgomery County civic associations joined with the Action Committee for Transit, the Woodside Forest Preservation Working Group, and the Sligo Creek Golf Association to form a coalition to oppose Gov. Larry Hogan's plan to add four toll lanes to the Beltway.

The civic associations are Forest Glen Estates, Indian Spring, Linden, North Hills of Sligo, North Woodside, Woodside and the Long Branch Civic Association.

The groups rallied at a recent meeting of the County Council's Transportation and Environment Committee and heard from Maryland Transportation Secretary Pete Rahn about the governor's plan.

"We are working to oppose this appallingly bad idea that threatens

to destroy large swathes of Woodside Forest, as well as Sligo Creek Park and Sligo Creek Golf course, two of the ever-dwindling recreational amenities inside the Beltway which happen to border our community," said Jeff Russell, chairperson of the Woodside Forest Preservation Working Group.

Gov. Hogan announced his plan to add four lanes of toll roads to the Beltway, I-270, and the B-W Parkway on Sept. 21 without consultation with local officials and few details other than a vague promise that the plan would cost \$9 billion and be borne entirely by a public-private partnership.

"He could have put all the information about this dubious toll road plan in a tweet," said Woody Brosnan, president of the Sligo Creek

Golf Association and organizer of the Don't Widen the Beltway Coalition. "We don't need gigantic slabs of concrete dividing the Silver Spring community and polluting our streams with more runoff," said Brosnan.

Noted local transportation expert Ben Ross said, "The plan's enormous cost will require sky-high tolls. Only the wealthiest drivers will be able to pay, revenue will fall far short of what is needed to pay back investors and lenders, and taxpayers in all income brackets will get stuck with the bills."

Ross, the chair of the Maryland Transit Opportunities Coalition and former chair of Action Committee for Transit, calculated that based on a previous State Highway Administration study, a toll road from Frederick to the Shady Grove Metro

Beltway Widening, cont.

Station would cost more than \$4 billion and require a \$41 one-way toll to come close to covering the costs. Adding toll lanes and ramps to the Beltway would require huge cloverleaves half the size of downtown Bethesda at key intersections, said Ross.

Action Committee for Transit is circulating an online petition drive opposing the Hogan plan. Ronit Dancis, president of ACT, said next year is an election year and ACT will be asking candidates whether they oppose widening the Beltway.

The Sligo Creek Golf Association said that it was prepared to assist the coalition with a yard sale campaign like the one that helped persuade the County Council not to close the community nine-hole course eight years ago. ■

Minutes of the November 13th, 2017, Meeting #889

By Danila Sheveiko, 2nd Vice President, and Bailey Condrey, 1st Vice President

Call to Order: President Jim Zepp called the 889th session to order at 7:45 p.m. Introductions followed.

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

Minutes: The October 9th, 2017, general meeting minutes were approved by affirmation.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Jerry Garson reported net income for period of \$503.01 and a bank balance of \$11,253.46. Copies of the Treasurer's report are available upon request.

COMMUNITY HERO

Chris Richardson, President of the **Park Hills Civic Association** in east Silver Spring, was instrumental in reconstituting PHCA, **one of the oldest civics in Montgomery County**. Whether it has been school issues, transportation issues, library issues, environmental issues, or general community development issues, Mr. Richardson has worked tirelessly to bring neighbors together and to work with elected officials and county government representatives for solutions to longstanding problems.

PROGRAM

Transportation issues affecting Montgomery County residents were the focus of the meeting featuring

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guests from the Maryland State Highway Administration and the Purple Line. SHA representatives shared information on projects currently under construction. The **I-270 Innovative Congestion Management Project** is planning 14 roadway improvements that will increase capacity and address safety deficiencies for less than \$100 million. The **Watkins Mill Road interchange on I-270** is under construction and costing \$118 million.

MDOT SHA helpful telephone numbers for Montgomery County residents:

■ District 3 Maintenance Office:
301.513.7305;

■ Fairland Maintenance Shop (southern Mont. Co.): 301.572.5166;

■ Gaithersburg Maintenance Shop (northern Montgomery):

301.948.2477;

■ Augustine Rebish, MDOT SHA District 3 Deputy District Engineer: arebish@sha.state.md.us or 301.513.7331 (maintenance);

■ Derek Gunn, MDOT SHA District 3 Assistant District Engineer: dgunn@sha.state.md.us or 301.513.7331 (traffic-Montgomery);

■ Search for Maryland State Highway Administration on Facebook or contact via Twitter @MDSHA.

How many trees have been removed along state roads and what has the project paid the County to plant new trees? Bike lanes on River Road seem to disappear at intersections; can they be redesigned?

The plan to improve and sustain traffic flow on I-270 includes lane shifts and metering. The I-270 project is a public-private partnership. The County Council's Transportation and Environment Committee will

discuss Gov. Hogan's big transportation plan soon. The Governor's announcements have created a great deal of concern among the communities that border the Beltway. Many were blindsided by the project: merge lanes, continuous flow lanes, new third local lanes that require widening, shoulders may become HOV lanes.

What can be done to evaluate pedestrian safety of roads along Route 29 from N.H. Ave. south to Burnt Mills and Sligo Creek?

The County Council is frustrated with SHA; they don't think they are being very nimble with their response. Examples of SHA failure to move quickly and put solutions in place: the place where three people have been killed is poorly lit and SHA owns lights and Montgomery County owns lights, but they are

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November Minutes, cont.

maintained by PEPCO. SHA has been generally very responsive. Delegates are concerned that Bus Rapid Transit on Route 29 will play havoc with light changes and place pedestrians at greater risk.

What coordination exists between SHA and Ride On and WMA-TA for placement of bus stops?

Purple Line

The Purple Line is under construction as well (see [aerial views](#) that allow an up-close look at the Purple Line alignment in your neighborhood).

Sixteen miles of light rail with overhead electric power will connect four different Metro stations and MARC trains. With 21 stations—Bethesda to New Carrollton—it is to be constructed and operated as

a public private partnership. Estimated to carry 64,500 daily riders by 2030 and 74,000 daily riders in 2040. Most riders will travel for three to four miles, and a full-length ride will take close to 63 minutes. The Line plans to open for 2022 with five-car CAF Light Rail Vehicles popular in Europe. Public outreach information can be obtained from outreach@purplelinemd.com and there is a 24/7 hotline: 240.424.5325.

Not sure what fare system will be implemented and whether it will be compatible with Ride On and WMA-TA Metro Smart Cards. The 16 miles will cost \$2.1 billion, with a total \$5.6 billion for the concessionaire to operate for 30 years.

The Inter-County Connector cost \$2.5 billion or \$4.3 billion including interest payments. Transit ridership is decreasing and transit is burdened by labor costs. Some MCCF Trans-

portation Committee members think that the fixed-route transit systems are doomed. There is lack of clarity on Purple Line construction timeline and other pertinent information.

If College Park can have an interactive map describing what group is undertaking what construction project at what time, why can't Montgomery County?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Environment

■ Lisa Feldt, Director of the Montgomery County Department of Environment Protection, has reportedly left her job with less than two weeks of notice. Acting DEP Director is Patty Bubar, Deputy Director for Administration and Operations.

■ The County is issuing revenue bonds against future revenues from the Water Quality Protection Charge

MORE

November Minutes, cont.

to pay for past projects.

Planning and Land Use

■ [Video is now available online](#) from the October 23rd community meeting on the neighborhood cell tower Zoning Text Amendment.

Education

■ MCPS has made many changes to the Capital Improvement Program budget over the last year.

■ Down-County and Walter Johnson clusters are severely overcapacity.

Public Finance

■ The diagram prominently displayed on the [County Council online Budget Updates home page](#) and meant to educate the public about the County's FY2018 Operating

Budget is missing the third largest expenditure—\$408 million of debt service, the interest and principal payments on bonds issued by the County. (See ["What's Trending" on page 4.](#))

NEW BUSINESS

■ Homeowners in the Greater Olney area are being asked to pay for repair, upgrades, and retrofits of stormwater management systems and culverts under driveways located in the County right-of-way.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:58 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month. Send to CFN at civiefednews@montgomerycivic.org.

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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