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**PLEASE NOTE THAT THE SEPT. MEETING WILL BE HELD ONLINE USING THE ZOOM APP AND BEGINS AT 7:30 P.M. USE THE LINK AT RIGHT OR CALL-IN NUMBER ON PAGE 2.**

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**TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION**

## of note

### **Next MCCF Meeting #915**

Monday, September 14, 2020, 7:30 p.m. online via Zoom. Note time change! "Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) Update/New Ballot Initiatives"

**Join the Zoom Meeting Here**

*[See further instructions on p. 2.]*

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### **Meeting Minutes**

June 8 Meeting #914 *Unavailable*  
Executive Committee Meetings

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### **Membership Application**

Join or Renew Now:

**ONLINE PAYMENT OR PRINT FORM**

## Federation Meeting #915

Monday, September 14, 2020

7:30 p.m. [Note Change!]

Online Zoom Meeting

### AGENDA

7:30 Call to Order/Introductions

7:35 Approval of Agenda

7:37 Announcements

7:46 Treasurer's Report

8:00 Program: Proposed Changes to the County's 2021–2024 Subdivision Staging Policy [P.3] and Discussion of County Charter Amendments and State Ballot Questions [P.5]

9:15 Committee Reports

9:25 Old and New Business

9:30 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.

*Note time change to 7:30 p.m.!*

**The September meeting will be held online via Zoom** (see page 3 for program) at 7:30 p.m.:

■ To be part of the video conference, download the Zoom **Zoom Client for Meetings here.**

■ Meeting Name: “MCCF Monthly Meeting.”

■ Date and Time: September 14, 2020, 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

■ To **join the Zoom meeting from your browser, use this link.**

■ To participate by phone (audio only), call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is 814 5052 0898. There is no password required.

We hope you will join us! ■

# mccf

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 22**

## September Program: Proposed Changes to County's 2021-2024 Subdivision Staging Policy

Every four years the Planning Department and the County Council review and update the **Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP)**, which used to be referred to as the Growth Management Policy for the County. The Planning Board has proposed re-naming again to the Growth Policy. This is a complex but very important policy that helps determine whether infrastructure will keep pace with new development and how that supporting infrastructure will be paid for.

The December MCCF meeting focused on the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) and how the SSP is supposed to guide and administer compliance with the APFO. The APFO is a set of laws in the Montgomery County Code that requires the government

to evaluate public infrastructure capacities and find them to be sufficient to support a proposed development before approving certain plans and permits. The SSP provides the criteria, guidelines, and tools to be used for the capacity analysis and determination for how timely delivery of public facilities will serve existing and future development.

The September 14 MCCF meeting will focus on what changes have been proposed by the Planning Board and how they differ from the current Policy. The Planning Board approved its recommendations for transmittal to the County Council on July 30th and the **County Council public hearing is scheduled for September 15 at 7:30 p.m.** MCCF will provide testimony to the Council based on feedback from this

meeting. Residents are strongly encouraged to attend the MCCF meeting on the 14th and to provide testimony or comments to the County Council on this quadrennial policy. The Council must act on the SSP by November 15.

The speakers will include:

**I Jason Sartori**, Chief, Functional Planning and Policy, Montgomery County Planning Department;

**I Brian Krantz**, MCCF representative on SSP Schools Technical Advisory Team.

The County's APFO states: *A preliminary plan of subdivision must not be approved unless the Planning Board determines that public facilities will be adequate to support and service the area of the proposed subdivision. Public facili-*



## September Program, cont.

*ties and services to be examined will include roads and public transportation facilities, sewerage and water service, schools, police stations, firehouses, and health clinics.*

It appears that the Planning Board has proposed many changes to the policy that reflect more of an emphasis on growth instead of balancing the infrastructure to support the new development. They have also proposed additional exemptions from development impact taxes for more areas of the County. Many of these changes would negatively affect the County's ability to keep up funding for new school facilities.

Under the current Policy, if a school cluster is found to be at 120% of capacity, no new development applications can be approved within

that school cluster until a solution to reduce the overcrowding has been identified. Usually such "moratoriums" for an area last no more than 2 years because a "solution" is usually programmed into the next Capital Improvements Program (CIP) Budget by the County Council.

Development applications that have already been approved can still move forward even if the cluster is at 120% of capacity. In fact, the County currently has a "development pipeline" of approved projects with 32,378 residential units already approved but unbuilt and 23 million square feet of approved but unbuilt commercial space. All of these previously approved but yet-to-be-built projects could currently move forward even if they are in a "moratorium" cluster. Under the proposed 2020-2024 SSP, there would not be any more "moratoriums" except in

rural areas like Clarksburg.

The Planning Board has also proposed more exemptions from development impact taxes for developments. These exemptions would further reduce revenue for CIP projects like new school construction needed to accommodate new residential development. The Board proposed replacing that lost revenue with another increase in the recordation tax on real estate transactions such as home sales.

Be sure to join us on September 14th at 7:30 to learn more about the proposed changes and how you can weigh in. We hope your association representatives will attend to become informed and involved about how decisions are made regarding how infrastructure is provided to accommodate new development. Bring your suggestions for improvement. ■

## Discussion of County Charter Amendments, State Ballot Questions on November Ballot

A copy of the **Montgomery County Official Ballot for the November 3 Presidential General Election** is now available on the Board of Elections website.

There will be **four County Charter Amendment Ballot Questions** proposed on the Ballot. These proposed Charter Amendments are related to property tax increases and the composition of the County Council. There will also be **two State Ballot Questions**, including a referendum on whether to legalize sports betting. These Ballot Questions will be explained during the September 14 MCCF meeting.

There are two ways that proposed amendments to the County Charter can be placed on the Ballot. One is by petition that requires the petitioners to collect at least 10,000

valid signatures of registered County voters who support placement of the question on the ballot. This public process can take over a year from start to finish. Once submitted, the signatures must be validated by the Board of Elections in order for the item to be placed on the Ballot.

The second way for a Charter Amendment to be placed on the Ballot is that the County Council can adopt a resolution to place their own Charter Amendments on the Ballot without any public input. They can waive requirements to hold a public hearing on their proposed amendments.

Two of the County Ballot Questions, Questions B and D, were placed on the Ballot as a result of different resident petitions.

**COUNTY CHARTER AMEND-**

### **MENT BALLOT QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY PETITION**

Question B would retain the limit on growth of annual property tax revenue increases to the rate of inflation and would eliminate an override by the County Council. The petition signatures for Question B on property tax growth limit were validated and the item was approved for placement on the 2020 Ballot by the Board of Elections on February 24, 2020.

Question D proposes to restructure the composition of the County Council and would require that each of the 9 Council members reside in a different Council District. Currently there are 5 Council members elected in 5 districts that each have approximately 210,000 residents

**MORE**

## Ballot Questions, cont.

and 4 Councilmembers elected “at large” with no requirement to live in different districts. Currently 4 of the 9 Council members, or 44% of the Council, reside in District 5.

If Question D passes, a total of 9 smaller districts of approximately 116,000 residents would be created and there would be no members elected “at-large,” keeping the total number of Council members at 9. The petition signatures for Question D on the County Council composition were submitted on August 3, and the item was approved for the Ballot on August 21, 2020.

### COUNTY CHARTER AMENDMENT BALLOT QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY COUNTY COUNCIL

When the Council recognized that the petitions for two Charter

Amendments were accepted or likely to be accepted by the Board of Elections, they drafted competing questions, decided the order that all the Charter Amendments would appear on the official Ballot, inserted their own language on one of the petition Charter Amendments and—in an unprecedented action—suspended their rules so that they could waive public notice and hearing for their proposed Charter Amendment.

On July 28, during one of their final meetings before summer recess, the Council approved a resolution to place their own Question regarding property taxes on the Ballot, which they placed as Question A. Question A redefines what the “Charter limit” is on property taxes. Under the current Charter, the “Charter limit” on property taxes limits the total amount of property tax revenue that can be increased annually. This defi-

nition of “charter limit” has existed for 30 years. This takes into account increases in property assessments as well as the rates. Currently, the Council may not increase the total property tax revenue annually above the rate of inflation (new construction and zoning changes excluded) unless there is a unanimous Council vote to increase the tax revenue above the inflation rate. The Council has unanimously increased property tax above the “Charter limit” several times, most recently in 2016 when they unanimously approved an 8.9% increase. Question A would change the calculation of the “charter limit” to the property tax rate rather than total property tax revenue. Given the ever-increasing property assessments, Question A would allow substantial increases in the amount of property tax collected from prop-

## Ballot Questions, cont.

erty owners because it does not limit total property tax revenue increases.

Although the Council was in summer recess, on August 4th the Council called a special session in part to introduce and adopt a resolution to place a competing Question on the ballot regarding the composition of the Council.

Question C would increase the number of Council members by 2 to a total of 11, comprised of 7 district Council members and 4 at-large members. The Council suspended their own rules in order to adopt a resolution to place “Question C” on the ballot that the public was not notified of and that did not schedule a public hearing. The Council also added language to Question D that was not part of the petition.

This is not the first time Council

members tried to thwart a ballot initiative submitted by voters by petition. In 2016, some Council members organized fund-raising efforts to pay for litigation to prevent the term limits Charter Amendment from appearing on the ballot. That effort to prevent voters from being able to vote on the term limits proposal failed, and the term limits Charter Amendment passed with 69% of the vote.

The language for each 2020 Ballot question is below.

### **Statewide Question 1: Constitutional Amendment (Ch. 645 of the 2020 Legislative Session): State Budget Process**

*The proposed amendment authorizes the General Assembly, in enacting a balanced budget bill for fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter, to increase, diminish, or*

*add items, provided that the General Assembly may not exceed the total proposed budget as submitted by the Governor. (Amending Article II Section 17 and Article III Sections 14 and 52 of the Maryland Constitution)*

*[Vote “For the Constitutional Amendment” or “Against the Constitutional Amendment”]*

### **Statewide Question 2: Commercial Gaming Expansion Referendum (Ch. 492 of the 2020 Legislative Session): Expansion of Commercial Gaming—Sports and Event Wagering**

*Do you approve the expansion of commercial gaming in the State of Maryland to authorize sports and events betting for the primary purpose of raising revenue for education?*

**Ballot Questions, cont.**

*[Vote “For the Referred Law” or “Against the Referred Law”]*

Proposed by the Maryland General Assembly.

**Question A: Charter Amendment by Act of County Council: Property Tax Limit—Limit Tax Rate Increases**

*Amend Section 305 of the County Charter to prohibit the County Council from adopting a tax rate on real property that exceeds the tax rate on real property approved for the previous year, unless all current Councilmembers vote affirmatively for the increase.*

*This amendment would replace the current property tax limit, which requires an affirmative vote of all current Councilmembers to levy a tax on real property that*

*would produce total revenue that exceeds the total revenue produced by the tax on real property in the preceding fiscal year plus any increase in the Consumer Price Index. The current property tax limit exempts real property tax revenue derived from: (1) newly constructed property; (2) newly rezoned property; (3) certain property assessed differently under State law; (4) property that has undergone a change in use; and (5) property in a development tax district to provide funding for capital improvements. [Vote “For” or “Against”]*

Submitted by the Montgomery County Council on July 29, 2020.

The current charter limit is an annual growth limit (limited to the growth in the consumer price index) that is applied to the total dollar volume of real property tax collections except on new construction during

the fiscal year.

Under the proposed *Question A* charter limit, the weighted tax rate on real property would not be allowed to increase without a unanimous vote of current council members.

**Question B: Charter Amendment by Petition Property Tax Limit—Prohibit Override**

*Amend Section 305 of the County Charter to prohibit the County Council from levying an ad valorem tax on real property that would produce total revenue (not including property tax revenue from certain enumerated sources) that exceeds the total revenue produced by the tax on real property in the preceding fiscal year plus a percentage of the previous year’s real property tax revenues that equals any increase in*



## Ballot Questions, cont.

*the Consumer Price Index. Section 305 currently permits the County Council to exceed the limit on real property tax revenue only upon the affirmative vote of all current Councilmembers.*

*[Vote “For” or “Against”]*

Known as the “Robin Ficker proposal,” it would amend Section 305 (“Approval of the Budget; Tax Levies”) of the Charter of Montgomery County.

Petition signatures were submitted February 22, 2020. This proposed amendment to the County Charter would limit property tax increases to the rate of inflation.

### **Question C: Charter Amendment by Act of County Council—Increase to 11 Councilmembers**

*Amend the County Charter to:*

**█** *expand the County Council to consist of 11, rather than the current*



*9, Councilmembers;*

**█** *increase from 5 to 7 the number of Council districts; and*

**█** *elect 7 Councilmembers by district and 4 Councilmembers at large.*

*[Vote “For” or “Against”]*

### **Question D: Charter Amendment by Petition County Council—Alter Council Composition to 9 Districts**

*Amend Sections 102 and 103 of the County Charter to:*

**█** *divide the County into 9, rather than the current 5, Council districts;*

**█** *elect all Councilmembers by district, rather than the current 5 by district and 4 at large; and*

**█** *reduce from 5 to 1 the number of Councilmembers each voter can vote for.*

*[Vote “For” or “Against”] █*

## Voting Locations throughout Montgomery County on November Third

By Jerry Garson

A portion of the September 14, 2020, Zoom meeting will be on the Ballot Questions on the November 3, 2020, General Election for which absentee ballots will be arriving in late September. You can [see what the actual ballot will look like here](#).

Early Voting will take place at 11 Early Voting Centers. The voting will take place over an eight-day period beginning on Monday, October 26, to Monday, November 2 (including Saturday and Sunday), from

7 a.m. to 8 p.m., with early voting centers also open on election day, Tuesday, November 3, 2020. The locations are:

- Activity Center at Bohrer Park
- Damascus Community Recreation Center
- Executive Office Building
- Germantown Community Recreation Center
- Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center
- Marilyn Praisner Community Recreation Center
- Mid-County Community Recreation Center
- Potomac Community Recreation Center
- Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Department (The Ballroom)
- Silver Spring Civic Building
- Wheaton Library and Commu-

nity Recreation Center

Election day voting also will take place at the following High Schools: Bethesda-Chevy Chase, Montgomery Blair, James Hubert Blake, Winston Churchill, Clarksburg, Damascus, Albert Einstein, Gaithersburg, Walter Johnson, John F. Kennedy, Col. Zadok Magruder, Richard Montgomery, Northwest, Northwood, Paint Branch, Poolesville, Quince Orchard, Rockville, Seneca Valley, Sherwood, Springbrook, Watkins Mill, Wheaton, Walt Whitman, and Thomas S. Wootton.

All other local polling places will be closed. You can vote at any location in the County. ■





## **It's Time for You/Your Civic Association to Renew Your Civic Federation Membership!**

Dear Civic Leader.

I'm writing to remind you to renew your membership in the Montgomery County Civic Federation as we begin our 2020-2021 membership year. Or, if you and your association are not current members of the Civic Fed, we invite you to join us in our work. If you have already renewed your membership, thank you very much.

As you know, by renewing or joining the Civic Federation, you become part of our County-wide organization in support of our civic associations and homeowner's associations. With your help, we can continue our active advocacy work on behalf of our neighbors and maintain the high level of service we provide to Montgomery County's residents.

We are fortunate to have a great group of Civic Federation officers who give selflessly of their time to monitor programs, policies, and events at the County and State levels, and who work tirelessly to educate our members and advocate for valuable changes in policies.

We invite the participation of you and your organization at our meetings and in the work of our Executive Committee and in our subject-matter committees. And there are many opportunities for your delegates to serve as chairs of Civic Fed committees and to be part of our Executive Committee team.

Why support the Civic Federation?

■ For ninety-five years, the MCCF has been devoted to improving

the quality of life in Montgomery County, advocating for improvements in the infrastructure of the County, and evaluating and discussing issues of concern to its members.

■ We are the only Montgomery County-wide membership organization which addresses critical issues across a wide spectrum, including land use and planning, public safety, environment, education, public finance, health, and community development.

■ We have successfully mobilized community support to make meaningful changes in transportation, environmental, and public accountability issues.

■ With member feedback, communications, resolutions, and tes-



## Renew Membership, cont.

timony are provided to the County government, State government, and bi-County agencies on a regular basis.

For example, recently—with help from our members—our efforts to promote good government resulted in the Maryland State Legislature creating new Inspector General authority for Montgomery County Public Schools, the



Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

As we approach the 100th anniversary of the Civic Federation, we seek to expand our membership and to enhance the effectiveness of our education and advocacy mission. We can do that with your membership.

You can [join the Civic Federation online](#) and pay via PayPal after submitting your application.

We'll be meeting virtually for the foreseeable future due to the coronavirus pandemic, so it will be easier to participate in our regular monthly and special meetings.

Thank you for your time and we hope to see you soon.

—Alan Bowser, President

## 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 Alan Bowser at [president at montgomerycivic dot org](mailto:president@montgomerycivic.org). Include topics/possible dates.



## Thrive Montgomery 2020: The Need for a Pause During This Time of Pandemic

*By Alan Bowser, MCCF President*

As many of you know, the Montgomery County Planning Department is undertaking an update of the County's General Plan, the long-term vision of Montgomery County's goals for land use planning, housing supply, protection of environmental resources, and efficient transportation systems. All future master plans for the next 30 years will be based on the recommendations in the General Plan.

The Planning Department has labeled this new plan "Thrive Montgomery 2050" and has slowly begun to reach out to our residents for their thoughts about what is important to them and their neighbors. [[Check out the Planning Department's work plan here.](#)]

The broad goals of Thrive Mont-

gomery 2050 are: Complete Communities, Connectedness, Diverse Economies, Safe and Efficient Travel, Housing Affordability and Attainability, Healthy and Sustainable Environment, Diverse and Adaptable Growth, and Culture and Design.

We look forward to working with the Planning Staff on this important project and facilitating a dialogue among our members and the public to help craft the best possible plan for the County's future. The Planning staff has indicated that community members should be able to support the final Plan and understand its vision, and that under-represented audiences should be able to participate in the process.

There are concerns, however, that the present timeline for the de-

sign and finalization of the new General Plan is too optimistic in light of the current economic environment and public health emergency caused by the global coronavirus pandemic. Many of the important underlying assumptions of a General Plan for the County will need to be reconsidered—and even changed—given the currently observed changes we see in transportation demand, housing demand, economic activity, education modalities, and infrastructure needs.

At present, the timeline for a new General Plan indicates a Working Plan Draft in September 2020, Planning Board Review and Transmittal between October 2020 and March 2021, and Council Review and Approval in April 2021.

This accelerated schedule is not



## Thrive Montgomery, cont.

practical or reasonable for a project of such great importance to the County's long-term planning framework. Our members—and the community-at-large—have had insufficient time and information to appropriately weigh in on the many complicated issues involved in a General Plan. The community outreach and the opportunity to participate in the Plan's design has been severely curtailed by the constraints imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. Moreover, as the effects of the pandemic on the County's economic environment will not be known for some time, it is crucial for Planning staff to study a range of alternative economic scenarios that will provide the background for the County's future planning environment.

There must be sufficient time and opportunity for residents throughout Montgomery County to consider the assumptions and implications for the Thrive Montgomery project. It is appropriate and necessary that the process take into account the impacts arising from the pandemic. The current timetable does not permit adequate community consultation and input.

We call on the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council to take into account the changed

circumstances affecting the design of a General Plan and to postpone its finalization by the Board and its transmittal and consideration by the County Council for at least one year and until after the State of emergency in the County is rescinded ([see the Resolution on page 16](#)). MCCF members—and the Montgomery County community-at-large—must have an appropriate opportunity to discuss the assumptions and recommendations of this project so important to the County's future. ■



## A Proposed MCCF Resolution on Montgomery County's General Plan

*Whereas* the Montgomery County Planning Department is undertaking a revision of the County's General Master Plan, called Thrive Montgomery 2050, which seeks to set a Comprehensive Plan for the County's land use, development, transportation, environmental, economic and public facilities resources for the entire County for the next 30 years; and

*Whereas* the social and economic disruptions of the current global coronavirus pandemic have raised significant concerns about the future of the national and regional economies and the unpredictable and enduring impacts on transportation needs, job creation, environmental stewardship, and education; and

*Whereas* the implications of the global pandemic—and alternative

economic scenarios—must be taken into account for any comprehensive planning framework adopted by the County; and

*Whereas* the public health emergency in the State of Maryland and Montgomery County has imposed significant limitations on the ability of the County's residents to fully participate in this comprehensive planning project; and

*Whereas* the current announced timetable for the design, finalization, and approval of the proposed General Plan—without sufficient and meaningful public consultation and input—is not reasonable and not suitable for a legitimate community process in which residents can take ownership of the final Plan;

*Therefore, be it resolved* that the Montgomery County Civic

Federation, Inc. (MCCF) calls on the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council to defer further action by the Planning Board and the County Council on a new County General Master Plan for at least a year and until after the the coronavirus public health emergency has been rescinded; and

*Further, be it resolved* that the MCCF calls upon the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council to ensure that all public stakeholders, and especially the residents of Montgomery County, have adequate time to fully participate in the design of the proposed General Plan through a broad-based public process.

[To be approved this 14th Day of September 2020.] ■

## A Proposed MCCF Resolution on the I-495 (Beltway), I-270 Expansion and DEIS

*Whereas* the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration's (MDOT SHA) 18,000-page Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for SHA's proposed Beltway and Interstate 270 widening plan was released on July 10 with a comment period initially established for October 8 and subsequently extended to November 9; and

*Whereas* the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and other agencies have raised serious objections about the \$11 billion project and did not concur with the proposed list of alternatives and the objections included but were not limited to:

■ a lack of financial viability and

incomplete project costs;

■ the proposed Limits of Disturbance (LOD) does not adequately reflect the area that will be impacted during expansion of the highway;

■ an insufficient range of alternatives; and

*Whereas* the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. (MCCF) concurs with many of M-NCPPC's concerns; and

*Whereas* the MCCF believes that residents and Montgomery County government agencies need significantly more time to review, evaluate, and comment on the DEIS; and

*Whereas* the MCCF believes

that the underlying assumptions of the 300 page DEIS and its 18,000 pages of appendices need to be reevaluated in light of the changing economic and transportation conditions resulting from the global coronavirus pandemic, notably the increase in the use of telework and the recent decline in traffic volumes;

*Therefore, be it resolved* that the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., requests that MDOT SHA place the project on hold until the health emergency is over, and that the traffic data analysis be reevaluated based on the new travel conditions.

[To be approved this 14th Day of September 2020.] ■



## Community Survey on Road Safety

*By Alan Bowser, President*

Earlier this year, the Montgomery County Civic Federation was invited to participate in a county-wide community survey organized by the Office of the County Executive on road safety.

Wade Holland, the County's Vision Zero Coordinator, said that Montgomery County is building on its existing Vision Zero efforts, which began in 2018, to develop a ten-year strategic plan to guide the County towards the goals of eliminating serious and fatal crashes by the end of 2030.

The Civic Federation welcomed the County's efforts to poll our membership about roadway and pedestrian safety, which are priority goals of the Civic Fed. To support the County's efforts, we prepared a SurveyMonkey questionnaire and

circulated to MCCF members. And we got a good response from associations in Silver Spring, Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Kensington, Olney, and Clarksburg.

Civic Federation members were asked to consider the following:

■ In your organization's view, what are the top five priorities for improving roadway safety?

■ Considering the County's current roadway safety efforts, are there particular actions or investments that you would recommend the County to do more or less of?

■ What is currently lacking in our communities to make it safe to walk, use a wheelchair/scooter, bike, get to and from a bus stop or train station, or drive?

■ What would need to change to get more Montgomery County resi-

dents to walk and bike?

With regard to priorities for improving roadway safety, our members highlighted the need for more sidewalks, continuous bike lanes, improved lighting, increased traffic enforcement, and a better connected network of slow streets and bike trails to get around the County.

Members gave particular attention to the need for improved road and sidewalk maintenance, listing ADA compliance as an essential goal. They also called for dedicated bike lanes throughout the County, reconsideration of bus stop locations, and increased bike storage at Metro and Purple Line stops.

If your association has not yet responded to the County's survey, **we encourage you to do so here.**

The Civic Federation will host a meeting on pedestrian and roadway safety later this year. ■

## Minutes from the MCCF Executive Committee Meeting on August 11, 2020

*By Karen Cordry, Secretary*

### **Attendees** (by conference call):

Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Tim Willard, Karen Cordry, Harriet Quinn, Jim Zepp, Carole Ann Barth, Jacquie Bokow, Sue Schumacher.

Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

■ Motion to approve agenda made, seconded, and approved.

■ Motion to approve June ExCom Minutes made and seconded.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Jerry Garson reported that MCCF received \$100 in dues and spent \$96 to the Constant Contact website. The account balance is \$9,152.26. There are some Paypal payments that need to get moved to the bank account.

### **SUGGESTED 2020-2021 MEETING TOPICS**

- Sept. Subdivision Staging Policy and Referendums approved for 2020 Ballot (see newsletter articles) [Harriet]
- Oct. General Plan [Harriet]
- Nov. Transportation [Jerry]
- Dec. Upcoming State Legislative Session [Alan, Jerry]
- Jan. Discussion Session with County Executive [Alan]
- Feb. Police Reform [Jim]
- Mar. Pedestrian Safety Issues and Initiatives [Karen]
- April County Budget [Jerry]
- May Environmental Justice Issues [Tim, Carole]
- June Awards Ceremony

### **MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH**

■ Sue suggested that Past Presi-

dents should be asked to reach out to new/lapsed members.

■ Jerry noted that the membership year runs from July-June so it's time to send out a reminder to all to sign up and renew their dues.

■ Alan will identify some additional groups to solicit to join.

■ It was noted we needed to do more to automate the process and Carole will work on that through the Constant Contact list.

### **ROADWAY SAFETY**

■ Wade Holland, the County's Vision Zero Program Coordinator, asked Alan for MCCF's input on our priorities and feedback on the County's Vision Zero efforts. Alan sent out a survey to our members and got back about a dozen good re-

**Aug. ExCom Minutes, cont.**

sponses which he passed on to Holland. He'll do a newsletter article on the responses.

There are a lot of questions about how much progress we have made in a program that's been going on for quite some time. Some of the questions are whether the problems are on state roads that either aren't being implemented or aren't being coordinated with us. Some of the suggestions were for more protected bike lanes in Silver Spring and more HAWK signals.

**NEW BUSINESS**

■ Agenda items were discussed.

■ Draft letter on slowing pace of General Plan drafting and review in light of ongoing effects of COVID, both as to the ability to participate in the process as well as the effects on

the economy and development itself. The suggestion would be to push back the report date until next year and, in any event, until in-person meetings could resume. The plan, Thrive 2050, is expected to extend out until that date, so it doesn't make sense to push forward aggressively at this point. It was moved by Alan, and seconded by Sue, to put together a resolution supporting the pause. The motion was approved. Alan will draft the resolution and circulate for review.

■ Ballot initiatives will be discussed at September meeting.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS***Committee for Montgomery*

■ Moved by Alan, and seconded by Jerry to pay \$300 dues to CFM. Motion approved unanimously. CFM will be doing Zoom meetings; they will have a virtual legislative

briefing in December and their January meeting will be on social justice issues with a large group of speakers. They are concentrating on economic development, education, and transportation which are also issues we are concerned with. They also discussed social justice issues, including pandemic preparedness and health disparities.

*Education*

■ We're looking for Committee Chairs. One of the biggest current issues is distance versus in-person learning.

*Public Utilities*

■ No report.

*Public Finance*

■ Jim noted that the County was leaving up to \$60 million behind

**Aug. ExCom Minutes, cont.**

in assessments that weren't being collected from improperly coded properties and that the State and County should focus on correction and collection.

*Planning and Land Use*

■ Issues with respect to the SSP/General Plan noted above

*Transportation*

■ SHA is still pushing forward on the I270-495 widening project with several virtual hearings in Aug. and Sept. and two in-person hearings on Sept. 1 and Sept. 10. There are problems with the Private-Public Partnership (P3) idea as seen with the Purple Line. Jerry will testify at an 8/20 SHA hearing on behalf of Seven Locks Citizens Association.

■ The Draft Environmental Impact

Statement (DEIS) is 370 pages with 18,000 pages of appendices. Harriet proposed, and Karen seconded a motion that MCCF present a resolution that the State MDOT study should be paused due to COVID and data collected was pre-Covid. Moreover, 45-day comment period is far too short in light of the enormous volume of materials. The Motion passed.

*Environment*

■ Tim reported that the County came out with its 2019 global warming stats. They were improving and are on target to meeting the goals on CO2 reduction. Co. Exec Elrich is pushing to make certain items in the Green Building code mandatory.

■ Carole noted that there were "Green Teams" (DEP, Pepco, Park & Planning and DOT) with communities to try work on problems

with trees such as insect outbreaks. There is a backlog on being able to get more street trees in (including the need to remove some 8,000 stumps). We will include a link in the newsletter to the Tree Montgomery program.

*Legislation*

■ Discussion of "penalty of perjury" legislation to have more filings required to use such terms.

**Newsletter:** Articles were assigned for the September issue.

Community Hero recognition awards will be revived so nominations from the community are welcome.

**ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved, seconded, and approved to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. ■

## Minutes of the MCCF Executive Committee Meeting on June 25, 2020

*By Karen Cordry, Secretary*

**Attendees** (via Zoom conference call): Alan Bowser, Bailey Condrey, Jerry Garson, Tim Willard, Karen Cordry, Harriet Quinn, Sue Schumacher, Jim Zepp, Carol Ann Barth, and Jacquie Bokow.

Alan called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

**Treasurer's Report:** Jerry reported we'd received \$67.30 in dues and a \$210 refund check from the County for meeting room rental costs. Account balance is \$9,453.57, after payment to Gladiator for the plaques, etc., for the awards event.

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

■ Discussion on membership renewal and recruitment. Sue identified about 30 more civic groups that could be members and suggested each commit to calling about five.

■ Condos and co-ops could also be considered.

■ Additional work needed regarding automating the renewal process with reminders. Members may now renew and pay on the MCCF site.

### FY 2020/2021 PROGRAMS

■ Discussion on programming for the coming year. ZOOM meetings provided greater opportunity to reach more folks and to do special events in concert with other groups.

■ Tim submitted a tentative list for discussions purposes. The final list of programs is on the website.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### *Transportation*

■ MCDOT is requesting that we post its Vision Zero community survey for responses on pedestrian safety issues. Parks Department is conducting road closures on weekends to encourage biking and walking and we should see how those interrelate with the Vision Zero process. MCDOT is working on the Open Streets initiative. MCDOT hired Wade Holland as coordinator for the Vision Zero Program.

■ Comment period on the I-495/270 expansion project has been proposed to be extended to 90 days. Some changes are being prepared and we'll wait to comment until the time period is set. Purple Line: the state and the private part-

## June ExCom Minutes, cont.

ners are at an impasse on cost overruns. The contractor gave a 60-day notice of termination and has sent notice to hundreds of employees of a possible shutdown. The parties are trying to resolve this but it may require a major renegotiation of the original deal to get them.

■ Transit ridership is down due to the pandemic. Lower traffic volume is also affecting toll revenue.

■ Silver Spring Justice Coalition requested support for its letter opposing fare payment enforcement on public transportation like the Purple Line and BRT. The Committee deferred action until the full membership can weigh in. MCCF supports free RideOn.

### Planning and Land Use

■ Subdivision Staging (Growth)

Policy is being revised for 2021-2024 and will be the program discussion for the September meeting.

### Environment

■ Council Member Huckler and DEP Director Ortiz are interested in the Urban Tree Canopy Initiative.

Next Executive Committee meeting is third Thursday in August, although Alan may try to set one up for July. Additional Committee Chairs needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m. ■

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### 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 [civicfednews@montgomerycivic.org](mailto:civicfednews@montgomerycivic.org).

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