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‘MISSING MIDDLE’ OPINIONS

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TO PRINT, USE **PRINT VERSION**

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #922

Monday, April 12, 2021, 7:30 p.m. online via Zoom. Topic: “The ‘Missing Middle’ Housing Crisis in Montgomery County.”

Join the Zoom Meeting Here
[See further instructions on page 2. A password is not required.]
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Meeting Minutes

March 8 General Meeting #921 P. 26
Executive Committee Meeting:
MARCH 18 P. 32

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

Federation Meeting #922

Monday, April 12, 2021

7:30 p.m.

Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: March General Meeting #921 P.26
4. Treasurer’s Report
5. Announcements
6. December Program: The ‘Missing Middle’ Housing in Montgomery County P.3
7. Committee Reports
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. 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. **So note time change!**

The April 12 meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 3 for program details) 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/Time: Monday, April 12, 2021, 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 883 4037 1773. No password should be required.

We hope you will join us! ■

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 35**

On the April Agenda: 'Missing Middle' Housing in Montgomery County

By Alan Bowser, President

The Civic Federation's April program will focus on the issue of "Missing Middle Housing," a much-discussed topic currently in Montgomery County. As the majority of the Federation's membership is comprised of civic and homeowner associations representing primarily single-family homes, a change to zoning that affects single-family homes is of great interest to our members. We hope you will join the discussion to learn more about the concept of missing middle housing and to get answers to questions that you have.

Our guest speakers from the Montgomery County Planning Department will be **Lisa Govoni**, Housing Policy Coordinator, and

Jason Sartori, Chief of County-wide Planning and Policy. The following information is from the Planning Department's "Missing Middle Housing in Montgomery County" [webpage](#):

Montgomery County, like many high-cost jurisdictions, has struggled with how to ensure its housing is affordable and attainable for residents at all income levels. The county's housing affordability crisis is the result of multiple converging factors, including market forces, policy decisions, declining federal housing resources, stagnant income growth, the increased cost of development, the diminishing availability of land, and demographic shifts. These shifts, including a growing population, create

more demand for housing, but we have not built enough housing units over recent years to meet the demand.

"Missing Middle" housing refers to a range of building types that are compatible in scale, form, and construction with single-family homes, but include multiple housing units. Missing Middle housing is typically a two-to-four story, multi-unit, clustered housing, such as smaller townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes, detached courtyard cottages, attached courtyard apartments, or smaller apartment buildings (with fewer than 20 units) that are typically in walkable, transit-accessible neighborhoods.

Missing Middle housing was

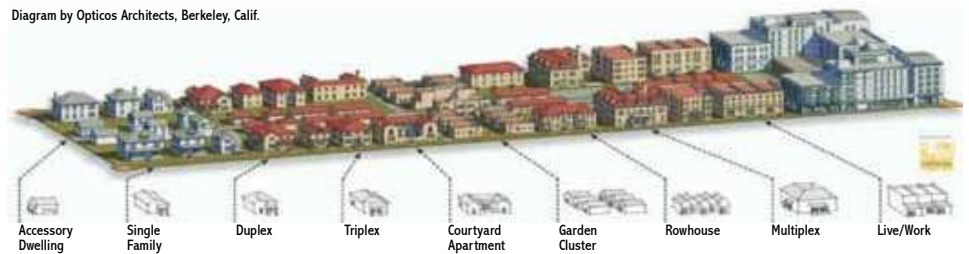
MORE

April Program, cont.

common during the pre-World War II era, but largely disappeared in recent decades with most new construction comprised of either single-family homes or taller multifamily apartment buildings.

Missing Middle housing provides housing options affordable to a range of incomes for an increasingly diverse population of downsizing seniors, professionals without children, young families, and newcomers to the region. However, developing these projects is challenging due to market and economic obstacles, unfavorable neighborhood perceptions, and burdensome regulatory requirements. Generally, many of the existing Missing Middle housing structures could not be built under the current standards of the single-family zones

Diagram by Opticos Architects, Berkeley, Calif.



THE RED-ROOFED STRUCTURES REPRESENT THE TYPE OF 'MISSING MIDDLE' HOUSING BEING CONSIDERED IN MONTGOMERY CO.

in Montgomery County.

Missing Middle housing can provide a transition from low-density single-family neighborhoods to high-density apartment, retail, and office districts. In these transition areas, there are opportunities to provide zoning in the more commercial areas that will encourage Missing Middle housing. In addition, there are opportunities to make changes to single-family zones in these transition areas

to allow Missing Middle housing production. These actions will not eliminate single-family neighborhoods. It may result in some single-family homes being replaced in a compatible form, if a property owner decides to take advantage of future zoning changes or if a developer combines multiple properties. The goal of Missing Middle housing is to allow Montgomery County residents to access more choices in

MORE

April Program, cont.

housing to meet their needs.

Montgomery County's communities have diverse needs in terms of housing—including affordability, the size and type of housing, and proximity to transit. Missing Middle housing, which provides more housing types for multiple households at a similar scale to single family homes, can provide a transition between single-family neighborhoods and commercial business districts (CBDs).

Montgomery County has a current population of 1.06 million and there are projections for 200,000 more residents by 2045. The county is already experiencing a housing shortage. The County has not built enough housing to keep up with demand, and current housing options are often not

affordable for low-income families and middle-income residents, making it difficult for existing residents to remain in the county. Missing Middle housing, according to staff and advocates, can provide new options for existing and new residents to find homes at the right size and price point for their needs and help Montgomery County grow its housing supply.

Montgomery Planning is undertaking two planning initiatives that have a significant focus on Missing Middle housing.

■ The **Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan** will re-examine downtown Silver Spring and parts of the predominantly single-family-home neighborhoods just outside of the downtown area to determine how new and diverse housing types not presently allowed might be permitted in

certain areas. We anticipate that the Montgomery County Council and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) will adopt the plan in Fall of 2022.

■ **Thrive Montgomery 2050** is the update of the county's General Plan, a long-range policy framework for guiding future land use and growth for the next 30 years. **Thrive Montgomery 2050** provides the opportunity to look for new tools—such as Missing Middle housing—to increase our housing production to meet the needs of current and future residents. We anticipate that the Montgomery County Council and the M-NCPPC will adopt **Thrive Montgomery 2050** in 2021.

For both projects, Montgomery Planning will be working with the community, the **Department of**

April Program, cont.

Housing and Community Affairs, and the Housing Opportunities Commission to explore ways to create and expand housing opportunities.

Planning staff also recently completed master plans (the **Veirs Mill Corridor Master Plan** and the **Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan**) where they introduced creative solutions to encourage Missing Middle housing. Some previous approaches to Missing Middle housing in these plans include rezoning to the CRN zone (the least dense zone in the **Commercial Residential** family of zones—CR Neighborhood), capping the building heights to align with the typical Missing Middle product, and providing guiding language in the master plans such as “greater

variation in housing types” or “medium-density housing.”

The **2018 Missing Middle Housing Study** also highlighted additional strategies that may help inform future action, including:

1. The creation of a Missing Middle Optional Method of Development near transit through a Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA).
2. The creation of a Missing Middle housing floating zone for specific locations in the county.
3. The rezoning of transit-accessible neighborhoods to a CRN zone.
4. The creation of a Missing Middle housing Functional Master Plan for the entire County that identifies ideal locations for this typology and results in a Sectional Map Amendment that would rezone appropriate areas.
5. Evaluation and suggestion

of potential financial incentives for Missing Middle housing typologies.

How can residents get involved in current Missing Middle housing efforts? Here are some ideas:

■ Sign up for the **Silver Spring Downtown and Adjacent Communities Plan eLetter** or contact Project Manager Atara Margorlies at atara.margolies@montgomeryplanning.org.

■ Sign up for the **Thrive Montgomery 2050 eLetter** or email thrive2050@montgomeryplanning.org or Project Manager Khalid Afzal at khalid.afzal@montgomeryplanning.org.

■ Contact Lisa Govoni, housing policy coordinator, at lisa.govoni@montgomeryplanning.org or at 301-650-5624 with any specific housing questions, including any additional questions you have about Missing Middle housing. ■

Will the Proposed Densely Packed 'Missing Middle' Housing Create New Inequities and Disparities?

By Joan Beerweiler, President, Aspen Hill Community Organization

Currently, two Zoning Text Amendments (ZTAs) are being reviewed and finalized to turn a key part of the county's new General Plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, into law, by changing the zoning code. This is occurring before Thrive Montgomery 2050, the vision and framework for development in Montgomery County for the next 30 years, has been fully vetted by the public and approved by the County Council. How can changes in the law be finalized before the vision and framework for development in the county is approved? Regardless, that is what the county is doing.

The ZTAs and Thrive Montgom-

ery 2050 are being rushed through while the public is concerned with other matters, namely Covid, and largely unaware. Councilmember Riemer states the goal is to have it completed by the end of the year. That means, by the end of the year, certain single-family neighborhoods along transportation corridors will be rezoned to multifamily housing. Then, speculators and developers are free to buy properties and create multifamily housing on what was formerly one or more single-family properties. It's not just speculators and developers who can do it. Any owner of one of these properties can develop it into multifamily housing.

Will the residents of these single-family neighborhoods be aware of it only after speculators and

developers begin buying properties and building multifamily housing in their neighborhood? It's entirely possible.

The name for this new multifamily housing, in single-family neighborhoods along transportation, is "Missing Middle Housing." Missing Middle Housing consists of duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes, townhouses, small apartment buildings, and courtyard apartment buildings built on one or more properties that previously had single family detached houses. To fit these larger buildings on what were formerly single-family home properties, zoning must be changed to allow the buildings to be larger and higher, occupy more of the usable area, lessen setback requirements, and lower (or eliminate?) parking requirements.

MORE

Beerweiler, cont.

In the next ten years, the county has a goal of building 40,000 new Missing Middle Housing (MMH) units. That's 4,000 new MMH units per year. That's a lot of housing to be concentrated in relatively few neighborhoods in the county. Density is what the county wants in these neighborhoods and density is what these neighborhoods will get, i.e., 4,000 additional housing units per year, for the next ten years.

How livable will these neighborhoods be? Will you want to live there? Will you be happy to live without a car? Or, if possible, with only one car? The county expects residents to walk, bike, ride the bus and Metro, and not have a car. The buildings may occupy a lot of space. If there is any extra space in the front, side, or back of buildings,

the owners may concrete it over to provide parking. The streets will be crowded with parked vehicles, so it will be difficult to park there. In a planned community or development, there might be an alleyway behind a row of attached homes to provide parking or access to a garage on the ground floor of a townhome. But that will not happen. This is not a planned community.

Infrastructure may be lacking in such a neighborhood. Will the schools be overcrowded? Will the streets be crowded with parked cars, even on narrow side streets? Will school buses be able to get through? If cars cannot easily travel on major roads, will traffic cut through the neighborhood? Will there be enough water and sewer to provide for the density of people? Since there will be a great increase in impervious surface of roofs and

added concrete for off-street parking, will there be a great amount of stormwater runoff? Will stormwater flood properties and buildings in low areas? Will there be excess stormwater runoff, flooding local creeks?

Will many trees be cut down and grassy areas reduced? Where will kids play? Will it be a place where you choose to live?

Why are we under pressure to rezone to allow for so much greater density of housing and people? Four thousand additional Missing Middle Housing units per year, crammed into a small portion of the county, is excessive. Is it to satisfy developers, speculators, and the real estate industry? This will be market rate housing, not subsidized or income-restricted housing. Will it be affordable?

MORE

Beerweiler, cont.

If lower-income residents manage to live there, are we not creating a new paradigm of development that creates a disparity in quality of life and repeats social injustices of the past? More affluent neighborhoods in Montgomery County will go unencumbered with higher density, overcrowding, and overloaded infrastructure. The new General Plan was to right the inequities of the past. With densely packed Missing Middle Housing, is the county creating new inequities and disparities?

Missing Middle Housing is not the solution we are looking for. Nor is creating 4,000 additional Missing Middle Housing units per year, for ten years, in a relatively small area of the county. ■

Opinion: Montgomery County Needs Real Affordable Housing — Not Developer-Priced Housing

[Opinion by Bill Scanlan, President of the Woodside Civic Association, printed in The Washington Post, March 26, 2021.]

The pandemic has changed many things about everyday life, such as the rise in the use of telemedicine and the number of people working from home. Both are likely to remain. But we all hope that in-person education, eating out, live music and sports, to name a few things, will return—and soon.

However, there is one trend that the pandemic has not changed: the demand for housing, especially more affordable housing.

In the Woodside section of Silver Spring, we are keenly aware of this trend as houses that go up for sale rarely stay on the market more than

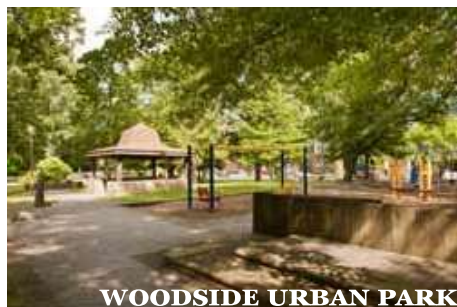
a couple of weeks and often sell in less time with multiple offers above asking price. And this happens regardless of what type of housing it is: single-family or missing middle housing. Missing middle housing is a range of house-scale buildings with multiple units—compatible in scale and form with detached single-family homes—located in a walkable neighborhood. Of the 311 homes in our well-defined neighborhood, slightly more than one-quarter, or 85, are townhouses that have been built in the past 30 years. Because we are close to public transportation, good schools, retail, restaurants, and entertainment, the housing demand in our neighborhood is tremendous, and, therefore, prices continue to

MORE

Scanlan, cont.

rise.

No amount of wishing will change the realities of a market economy. But that is what the Montgomery County Planning Board's proposed changes to the downtown Silver Spring Sector Plan seem to be relying on: magical thinking. The proposal would take nearly one-third of our neighborhood and turn it over to developers to build more townhouses, duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, small apartment buildings or even "McMansions." And though this may result in denser housing, it will not result in more affordable housing, thanks to the realities of market pricing. Under the plan, no housing will be built that would be affordable for first-time home buyers. The planning board acknowledges this, as staff estimates



WOODSIDE URBAN PARK

that the least expensive townhouses would be \$712,000. By no definition is this affordable housing. In Woodside, almost half the houses are valued at less than this amount. To make money, developers would have to buy the lots valued well under \$712,000, eliminating our least expensive housing.

The planning board's proposed changes would also strip the neighborhood from having input into the type of housing being built. Currently, if a developer wants to build

something other than a single-family home, [he] needs a zoning change, which means working with the neighborhood. It was under these rules that four townhouse developments in our neighborhood were built. The Woodside Civic Association worked with the developers to create a plan that we all supported. On the last project, this meant a reduction in the number of townhouses by three, saving a historic home from demolition and getting sidewalks built, making the neighborhood safer for pedestrians. But the units, despite coming on the market in the wake of the 2008–2009 recession, were priced starting at \$550,000. They sold quickly.

Today these townhouses sell for almost \$800,000. This increased neighborhood density, but it did not lead to more affordable hous-

MORE

Scanlan, cont.

ing. Why do the planning board and some on the Montgomery County Council think rezoning will create affordable housing? The opposite is true. By making it easier for developers to build in our neighborhood, they will give them an opportunity to squeeze even more profit out of the units, regardless of housing type.

But there is a way to build affordable housing in Woodside if only the planning board and County Council would get behind it. The county owns a sizable lot within the targeted area for developer-friendly zoning changes. Bordered by Georgia Avenue, Woodside Urban Park and First and Ballard streets, the site is walking distance to Metro and downtown Silver Spring. Plans already call for the site to be developed residential with 30 percent reserved for afford-

able housing. Why not move up the timetable and designate all of it for affordable housing? Because Montgomery County owns the land—and land is what makes development costly—the county could build duplexes or triplexes and set the sale or rental prices to make them affordable.

Woodside has a decades-long history of supporting missing middle housing in our neighborhood. We've fought for and supported the Purple Line and Capital Crescent Trail when other neighborhoods fought against them and even sued. We fought for the development of the downtown plan for Silver Spring. We care about Silver Spring, our neighborhood and, most important, our neighbors.

Don't shut citizens out of the process of neighborhood development. ■

Two Proposed ZTAs on 'Missing Middle' Housing May Alter Neighborhoods

By Cary Lamari, Past President

The County Council and Planning Board have determined that our County will be in need of additional homes in the next 20-30 years for 200,000 new residents—40,000 housing units in the next 10 years. They are considering two Zoning Text Amendments (ZTAs) which have major implications in the new Thrive Montgomery General Plan, but they are promoting them prior to a complete vetting and approval of the new General Plan. They are bypassing the comprehensive process and nature of General Plans by considering these ZTAs, which is a major departure from how they were treated in the previous General Plan.

MORE

Lamari, cont.

These ZTAs have major implications because they will now allow multifamily housing in single family Euclidean-Zoned neighborhoods (R40, R60, R90, R200, etc.) county-wide, increasing density several-fold, while also potentially violating the constitutionality of Euclidian Zones established in *Village of Euclid v. Ambler Realty Co.*, affecting property owners rights.

This ZTA also compromises the comprehensive nature of the planning process by interjecting this major zoning change before the Planning Board actually deliberates on the General Plan. These ZTAs should not be considered before the County Council has approved the new General Plan and the public has an opportunity to participate. What they are doing is a breach of public

trust and due process, in my opinion.

First it is highly dubious and irregular that the County Council would or even should consider a proposal which is part of, and is most likely the keystone of, what should be a comprehensive General Plan (Thrive Montgomery) before the Planning Board has even put the proposed General Plan to a vote. General Plans are supposed to be exactly that: general guidelines developed for the purpose of reviewing local Master Plans, working with the community to evaluate potential unintended consequences in specific locations prior to implementing zoning changes across our County. The public is and has always been a valuable resource in the evaluation of Master Plans for an orderly, comprehensive, and uniform development pattern in our County.

By the County Council considering these ZTA proposals prior to the Planning Board even rendering any opinion on Thrive Montgomery shows disdain to the nature and essence of the comprehensive process and public participation. Residents try to work with Staff prior to any vote from the Planning Board on planning policy. These ZTAs presuppose the outcome and direction of County Land Use prior to the public even having the opportunity to participate. This type of process sends the message of a lack of transparency and disregard for public participation.

These ZTAs render themselves as highly duplicitous and suspect of potential conflicts of interests as it puts the "cart before the horse" with respect to one of the principle elements of Thrive Montgomery.

MORE

Lamari, cont.

Montgomery County has had a long-standing policy and tradition of including residents in all comprehensive processes. Thrive Montgomery is a large departure from the existing general plan, the Wedges and Corridors Plan. Many residents do not even know the process is ongoing due to Covid-19. Residents' attention is diverted away from zoning and planning reviews as a result. I, the Montgomery County Civic Federation, and many others have requested that the Planning Board delay work on Thrive Montgomery until after this pandemic.

These ZTAs and the main elements of Thrive Montgomery seek to change single-family neighborhoods. They propose altering the character of these neighborhoods without considering potential unintended conse-

quences, such as storm water mitigation, aging public infrastructure, lack of transportation and school capacity, and insufficient public services (Police, Fire, and Rescue), all of which are main considerations in individual local Master Plan review, with and through public participation.

This ZTA bypasses the County's entire comprehensive zoning process and, it would seem, is doing so in the dead of night. This proposal would inject this new paradigm where single-family neighborhoods will be allowed, by right, to convert to multifamily housing. They are trying to set up a two-tiered Euclidean zone: one, by right, that continues to adhere to specific guidelines in the zoning ordinance and, overlapping those same zones, a second system allowing development determined (1) by where the homes currently

exist—targeting those along transportation corridors—and (2) through subjective decision making by the Planning Board using individual site plan review (i.e., they can override current zoning to allow multifamily housing at any site a developer wants), even though it may conflict with the constitutionality of the existing Euclidean Zones. By considering this ZTA, we dissolve any semblance of a comprehensive process where a community is involved in the planning of its own neighborhood.

The second reason, but clearly not the only reason this ZTA should be rejected, is it is being proposed under a false and misleading premise that Montgomery County has a missing middle problem. Supposedly, by allowing multifamily housing in single-family zones, housing

MORE

Lamari, cont.

will be more affordable. Our County Council would have residents believe these changes are a panacea, which will improve quality of life; they use words like “creating complete communities” and “livable/walkable communities.” It could be equally argued these changes create incompatible, overcrowded neighborhoods which will dissolve quality of life by over-taxing public services and recreation, transportation, and school capacity. In addition, it could strain our electric grid and public water system, requiring major upgrades and costing residents substantially more in taxes and monthly utility bills. It also could push residents out of their neighborhoods as they become disillusioned with how the character and livability of their community has changed from when they

purchased these homes.

Our zoning ordinance is filled with different types of housing: single-family, some duplex and townhomes, some midlevel housing and still others, high-rise housing. Also, there is an entire realm of Planned Development Zones. Where can anyone honestly say there is a “missing middle” with all the potential options allowed in any of the existing Comprehensive Master Plans?

The net consequences of these ZTAs will make housing in Montgomery County more expensive and harder for young families to compete for single-family homes, especially in transit areas. This proposal will create a new enterprise for speculator developers to compete for the limited older single-family homes with first- and second-time homebuyers and then these speculators will slice and dice

these properties to sell their products. These properties will be more expensive for new homebuyers because of the dynamics involved with razing older homes, some with asbestos and lead, creating costs to safely dispose of demolition and then develop these lots for multifamily housing. What will result is more expensive housing and fewer opportunities for young families to buy into Montgomery County, Md. These new densely packed neighborhoods will erode the quality of life residents invested decades building and, afterwards, will young families be attracted to what these neighborhoods have become?

One can only conclude this new paradigm is highly suspect, it is duplicitous, and rejects the nature of a comprehensive process with community participation. This begs

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Lamari, cont.

the question, why should the public involve itself in any public process when the County Council ignores the very nature of public participation and a fair analysis of what is supposed to be a comprehensive process? In my humble opinion, these ZTAs circumvent the comprehensive nature of planning and may be not only be a violation of public trust but also a violation of the intent and spirit of the law, if not the laws themselves.

I respectfully submit this County Council should reject these harmful actions and allow the public to participate in land use as it has in the past, rather than cater to the whims of greedy developers which could create a deleterious quality of life for County residents. Our County leadership should champion

the public interest and fight to build public trust in our land-use process and preserve and enhance the wonderful attributes that attract people to Montgomery County, Md. ■

Are You Knowledgeable About Something?

Then the MCCF needs you! You can help in following our County-wide portfolio of important community issues.

We're looking for volunteers to help us monitor issues in education, public safety, public finances, environment, transportation, land use and planning, and legislation. If you have expertise in any of these areas, your County Civic Federation is interested in hearing what you have to say. Please email *president AT montgomerycivic DOT org*. ■

In Search of...

Will MCCF have awards this year? We need volunteers to serve on the Civic Federation's Annual Awards Committee. Know of any individuals and/or groups you would like to nominate for an award? The awards are: **The Wayne Goldstein Award** (for outstanding service to the people of MoCo), **The Sentinel Award** (for a significant contribution to good government at the local level), and **The Star Cup** (an MCCF Delegate or Committee for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County).

Please contact our MCCF President, Alan Bowser, by email [*president AT montgomerycivic DOT org*] if you have a nomination or if you are willing to serve on the Awards Committee. We cannot do this without your help! ■

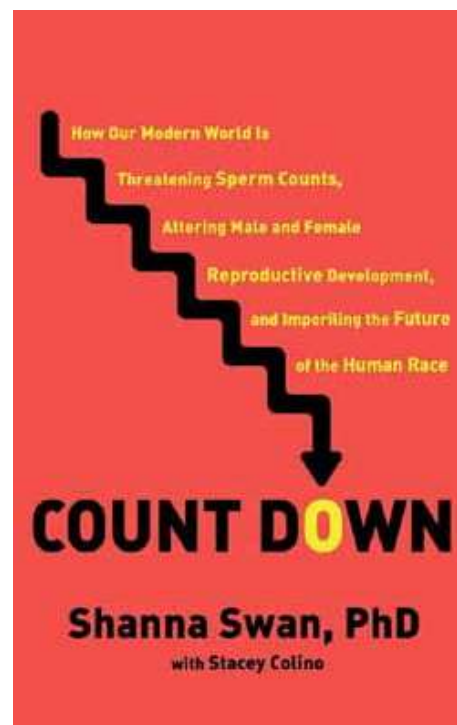
Human Fertility Declines Precipitously, Growing Chemical Exposure May Be Cause

By Bailey Condrey, Immediate Past President, MCCF, Inc.

A March 5 article in *The New York Times*, "The Everyday Chemicals That Might Be Leading Us to Our Extinction," reviews a book by Dr. Shanna Swan:

Count Down, which Swan wrote with the health and science journalist Stacey Colino, chronicles rising human infertility and warns of dire consequences for our species if this trend doesn't slow. The reason, Swan explains, may be growing exposure to "endocrine-disrupting chemicals" that are found in everything from plastics, flame retardants, electronics, food packaging, and pesticides to personal care products and cosmetics.

She outlines the danger. These substances interfere with nor-



mal hormonal function, including testosterone and estrogen. Even in small doses, they pose particular danger to unborn babies and young children whose bodies are growing rapidly. These hormone-warping chemicals, which can enter even the placenta, have the ability to alter the anatomical development of girls and boys, change brain function and impair the immune system.

It's more data to add to the pile of science we have shared already with local, State, and Federal legislators on why synthetic turf should be banned nationwide. "Male fertility has dropped precipitously in Western countries, 59 percent in just 38 years. And male sperm health can affect whether a woman can carry a pregnancy to term," said *The Times*.

Human Fertility, cont.

The photos at right show the broken down components of a synthetic turf field that existed in this condition for years at Walter Johnson High School. The photo on the right reveals that someone may have been making piles of broken plastic grass blades. The plastics and used vehicle tires that made this field contain phthalates, flame retardants, PFAS, lead, and a host of other toxic compounds. The field literally decomposed under the feet of its users. All the while it exposed them to multiple endocrine-disrupting compounds and methane and ethylene gases.

The science told us years ago that these chemicals were harming the environment and reproductive health of numerous species. The science now says that overexposure



THIS FIELD HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN REPLACED. THE SAND IN BOTH PHOTOS HAS RUN IN FROM THE TRACK AND FIELD PIT.

to these chemicals may be crushing human fertility. We've subjected an entire generation of children to these toxic plastics playing fields. Just how far are we willing to take the experiment on their future chances for procreation? Institutions of learning should be protective of their clients' futures by embracing science in every aspect of this caretaker role. Buying synthetic turf shows a casual

disregard for this principle.

All of the plastics and tire pollution from this field was dumped somewhere when they removed it. MCPS was supposed to provide a letter stating that the old toxic field had been recycled. This was just a public-relations lie that was foretold in the [March 2020 edition of CFN](#). We're still waiting for that MCPS letter. ■

Resolution of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.

Recognizing the Distinguished Service of Congressman Jamie Raskin and the House Impeachment Managers

Whereas, Delegates of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., took note of the Second Impeachment Trial of former President Donald J. Trump convened on February 9, 2021, and ended on February 13, 2021, in the United States Senate in Washington, D.C.; and

Whereas, the Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, on January 12, 2021, named Jamie Raskin of Takoma Park in Montgomery County, Maryland, and a Representative of Maryland's 8th Congressional District, the House of Representatives Lead Impeachment Manager; and

Whereas, Speaker Pelosi also named U.S. Representatives Diana DeGette of Colorado, David Cicilline of Rhode Island, Joaquin Castro of

Texas, Eric Swalwell of California, Ted Lieu of California, Stacey Plaskett of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Madeleine Dean of Pennsylvania, and Joe Neguse of Colorado, as House Impeachment Managers; and

Whereas, the Impeachment Managers conducted themselves in the finest tradition of U.S. elected officials dedicated to supporting the Constitution of the United States and its hallowed traditions of selfless democratic representation and faithfully promoting the rule of law; and

Whereas, Representative Raskin and the other Impeachment Managers brilliantly and forcefully articulated the essential arguments in favor of Senate conviction, without fear or favor; and

Whereas, citizens from Maryland

and across the Nation favorably took note of the hard work and dedication of the Impeachment Managers in the Senate trial of the former President;

Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.:

■ Commends the distinguished service on behalf of all American of Jamie Raskin of Maryland, Diana DeGette of Colorado, David Cicilline, Joaquin Castro of Texas, Eric Swalwell of California, Ted Lieu of California, Stacy Plaskett of the U.S. Virgin Islands, Joe Neguse of Colorado, and Madeleine Dean of Pennsylvania as the Impeachment Managers of the U.S. House of Representatives; and

■ Recognizes their hard work and their commitment to protect and de-

Resolution, cont.

fend the Constitution of the United States; and

■ Commends, with pride, the shining example that they have set for the residents of Montgomery County, Maryland, and all Americans who believe in the rule of law, that we cannot take our democracy for granted, and that we all need to work together to make our processes of government more fair, transparent, and accountable.

Adopted this 12th day of April, 2021, at the General Meeting of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.

Karen Cordy, Secretary

COVID-19 Update: 27.8 Percent of Montgomery County Residents Have Received At Least One Vaccination

By Alan Bowser, President

Maryland State statistics regarding COVID-19 vaccinations show that, as of Thursday morning, March 25, more than 292,300 Montgomery County residents (27.8 percent of the total population) have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The statistics show that 150,100 residents (14.3 percent of the population) are fully vaccinated.

While the number of people receiving vaccination continues to increase, confirmed COVID-19 cases, COVID-19 testing positivity rates, and COVID-19 hospital bed use rates are generally going down. See the Montgomery County [COVID-19 Data Dashboard](#) for details.

Maryland Governor Larry Hogan has announced that a State mass

vaccination site will open at the Germantown campus of Montgomery College. In addition to the Germantown site, the Governor announced five other new mass vaccination sites. In total, there will be a dozen sites throughout Maryland by the end of April.

The Montgomery College site was scheduled to open the week of April 5. Residents can [preregister for State mass vaccination clinics online](#) or by calling 1-855-MDGOVAX (1-855-634-6829).

All Maryland residents age 60 and older can now preregister for vaccination at sites operated by the County health department. The County wants to remind residents that it will take some time before

MORE

COVID Update, cont.

there is enough vaccine for everyone, so eligibility and preregistration does not mean a person will get an appointment immediately.

The health department is continuing to vaccinate all essential employees and residents age 65 and older. The County is trying to get doses to residents in zip codes that have been heavily impacted by COVID-19 deaths and to those who have difficulty accessing vaccinations.

The County health department is encouraging residents to preregister with the State and with the County, and to take the first vaccination appointment offered at any clinic.

The County is improving its preregistration system and now has the ability to have residents who have been vaccinated to [cancel preregistration for a County-run clinic](#).

Completing this form will remove a person from the County's preregistration list and streamline the ability for others to get appointments.

As more residents get vaccinated, it is still important for other residents to get tested. Testing helps health officials track the spread of

COVID-19 in the community. There are free testing clinics every week throughout the County. Find a complete schedule of upcoming clinics at www.MoCoCOVIDTesting.org.

This information is from the Montgomery County Government. For more details, [visit this site](#). ■

Elrich's Proposed \$6.7B Budget Includes No Tax-Rate Increases, a Police Reorganization Spending plan focuses on recovery, response to COVID-19

By Briana Adhikusuma, Reprinted from Bethesda Beat, March 15, 2021

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich on Monday released a \$6.7 billion budget plan for the next fiscal year, recommending no tax-rate increases, a reorganization of the county's police department, and targeted funding to support recovery from the pandemic.

Of the \$6.7 billion, roughly \$6 billion would go to the operating budget and the remainder would go to the Capital Improvements Program, debt service, and reserves. The recommended \$6 billion budget is an increase from the \$5.8 billion budget the County Council approved in late May.

Most of the proposed money

MORE

BB on Budget, cont.

for fiscal year 2022, which begins on July 1, would be funneled to county government and Montgomery County Public Schools operations at \$2.2 billion and \$2.8 billion, respectively.

The rest of the budget would be split among Montgomery College, Maryland-National Capital Parks and Planning Commission, retiree health insurance, and debt service.

“The toll that this [COVID-19] disease has taken on us has been in the forefront of our minds as we have worked to minimize the impact the virus takes in our community,” Elrich wrote in his proposal. “We have put public health first and it has been hard on all of us. Our businesses, nonprofits, educators, children, and their parents have had to adjust to a new normal

that [has been] extremely challenging.”

The current weighted average property tax rate is 97.85¢ per \$100 assessed value. The income tax offset credit—provided against the county’s real property tax rate to offset increases of more than 2.6% of the county income tax revenues—is at \$692. Elrich proposed the same rate and credit for FY22.

Even though the rate would stay the same, property taxes could rise as assessments go up.

The recommendation of no tax-rate increase is the opposite of what Elrich proposed last year for the current fiscal budget: a roughly 5¢ tax increase, most of which would go to the public school system through a special 3.18¢ supplemental property tax. The County Council rejected the

tax increase.

In his new budget proposal, Elrich included a reorganization plan for the Montgomery County Police Department to “address community concerns, create service efficiencies and realize financial savings.”

This reorganization includes eliminating 29 positions across the police department, 25 of which are for sworn officers.

Many of those positions are currently vacant. Officers and staff members in other positions that are being cut will be reassigned within the department.

The cuts would include five vacant middle school school resource officer positions, as well as other positions in patrol, collision reconstruction, traffic complaints, SWAT, K9, and emergency services.

MORE

BB on Budget, cont.

“For far too long, the county, like most jurisdictions across this country, has allowed major social problems to become problems that have been left to the police to address, such as incidents involving residents presenting mental health issues,” Elrich wrote. A reliance on police for those cases will be reduced, and social services and emotional supports will be enhanced.

Even with some positions being cut, the police department’s budget is proposed to increase by \$1.6 million, about 0.6% from the FY21 budget.

The budget includes adding six additional support positions to the Mobile Crisis and Outreach Team to create three new crisis outreach teams. The teams respond to resi-

dents with a mental and/or substance abuse disorder.

Elrich also proposed \$14 billion for total 2022 cumulative project funding in the FY22 capital budget and FY21-26 Capital Improvements Program (CIP).

About 24%—or \$3.5 billion—would be for 88 MCPS projects, including school additions and facility renovations.

Another 24%—or \$3.5 billion—would go to 123 transportation projects.

One is a Great Seneca Science Corridor improvements project for new premium transit services, with upgraded transit stations and dedicated bus and bicycle lanes. Another is a managed lane project on the U.S. 29 corridor from Musgrove Road to Southwood Drive, and from Dale Drive to Spring Street.

Another 20%—or \$2.9 billion—would be used for 41 projects under the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

The council will review the proposed operating and capital budgets, then vote on final versions by June 1.

Elrich noted the financial and economic struggles that the county, businesses, and residents have had to face in the last year. He wrote that he has a plan in the FY22 budget proposal to restore the county’s reserves to 10% of adjusted governmental revenues within three fiscal years.

If the County Council approves the budget as proposed, Elrich estimated that fiscal year 2022 reserves would be brought up to 9.6%.

The county has to use its re-

MORE

BB on Budget, cont.

serves for costs responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of those costs are expected to be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The recently enacted federal American Rescue Plan Act will provide \$204M in federal aid to the county for economic assistance to residents and businesses, Elrich wrote in his proposal.

The County would fund \$1.8 billion for the school system, which has an overall proposed budget of \$2.8 billion. The funding level would exceed the State's maintenance of effort requirement by more than \$40.2 million—a result of declining enrollment numbers—and would qualify the public schools for \$29.7 million in additional State incentive funding.

Maintenance of effort refers to a state law that says a County must fund its school system at a per-pupil rate that at least matches the previous year's level.

"We are actively working with our partners in the General Assembly to ensure that any future Maintenance of Effort requirements will not be based on the artificially high per pupil allocation for FY22," Elrich wrote.

The three outlined goals in Elrich's budget for FY22 are "response, recovery, and resilience."

Here are some other highlights:

- \$15 million for the Working Families Income Supplement program, which provides financial assistance to low-income working families, and \$5 million to expand the program for residents who have a taxpayer identification number.

- \$3.6 million to strengthen community hubs that provide residents with groceries, meals, telemedicine and other services.

- \$89.1 million for affordable housing, the highest level in the County's history.

- \$312.5 million in funding for Montgomery College.

- \$1.7 million to create a Multilingual and Multicultural Communications Unit in the Community Engagement Cluster, which will connect limited English-proficient residents to needed services.

- Nearly \$900,000 for a Mobile Health Clinic to increase health care access and alleviate disparities in the county.

You can view the County Executive's [FY22 Recommended Operating Budget](#) online here.

[The Montgomery County Budget Page](#) is here. ■

Taxpayers League April 7, 2021, Testimony on Co. Executive's FY'22 Budget Request

By Gordie Brenne, Treasurer of the Montgomery County Taxpayers League

This budget squanders the \$204M Federal rescue on inefficient and ineffective programs, hurting our poorest residents the most while enriching employees with above-market compensation increases, and fails to fully fund reserves or the employee retirement trust.¹ Also, adding 83 positions (pg. 8-1) is an ill-advised use of this one-time funding, and increased spending in the face of uncertain revenue projections (pgs. 5-12 to 5-15) may require spending cuts next year.

Proposed above-market pay raises of 4.5% (1% GWI [General Wage Increase] plus step and longevity) on top of bloated base pay,

reduce productivity² without corresponding performance improvements, and add to the compensation increase the Council approved in March. This insults hard-working taxpayers and squashes fixed-income retirees.³

Poor management—absent incentives and budgets tied to annual performance improvement targets—also reduces productivity. For example:

- **Transportation:** Nearly empty Ride-On buses continue a 4-year slump with no ridership projection increases.

- **Public Safety:** 911 call center response delays and staffing increases are not tied to innovative process improvements. Create a spin-off organization similar to Fairfax's to incentive performance,

innovation and cost controls. Also, the bloated Investigation Division has a mediocre closure rate per employee.

- **MCPS:** Summer classrooms will be nearly empty, and no new interventions tied to achievement gap reduction targets have been set. Hold the budget to MoE [Maintenance of Effort] and reduce bloated 45% overhead to increase instruction for at risk kids.

- **WSSC:** Above-Market-rate increase (5.9%) for WSSC is largely devoted to replacing lost revenues with no public analysis of why sewage and teleworker consumption shift revenues were lost, or how this will be fixed to avoid insolvency and a taxpayer bailout. Record low budget for vital large diameter

Brenne on Budget, cont.

pipe and large valve replacement is a time bomb.

Affordable Housing: Inventory supply is stuck at 2009 levels and falls way short of demand by our poorest residents (30% AMI [Area Median Income]).

Economic Development: Lags our neighbors, placing more pressure on our overtaxed homeowners, and forces our residents to leave the county for jobs (OLO 2021-2, Figures 3-7 to 3-10).

FOOTNOTES

¹The 3-year plan to fully fund reserves is not acceptable. Reserves are being under-funded (just 9.6%) to pay for unjustified compensation increases. Em-

ployee retirement trust (OPEB [Other Post-Employment Benefits]) prepayments should not use the artificially higher discount rate proposed by the Executive (pg. 4-8 and pg. 70-27).

²Productivity improvement is cited three times in the proposed budget as a policy objective (Fiscal Policy for expenditure reduction, pg. 4-5; Budget Process policy for budgeting for outcomes, pg. 3-5; governmental management policy for productivity, pg. 4-13). When looking at productivity, both base and incremental spending must be evaluated against performance.

³The outdated, 2011 high level employee wage survey (OLO 2011-2 [Office of Legislative Oversight]) needs to be updated to show how much our employees are overpaid

compared to peers in Howard and Fairfax Counties. The management salary survey done 5 years ago showed we pay managers 18-24% more than our neighbors (OLO 2016-1). This waste insults the average taxpayer who is lucky to have a job, let alone a pay increase, and those on fixed incomes struggle to pay property taxes partly because Finance's exemption of rebuilt McMansions from "new construction" gives them charter protection which limits increases, and results in their subsidy by unimproved home owners (pg. 4-15 and OLO 2018-1).

[Note: You can read the entire 815-page proposed budget online [here.](#)] ■

Minutes of March 8, 2020, MCCF General Meeting #921, Virtual Zoom Meeting

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the General Meeting was held via Zoom as a virtual meeting.

Call to Order: President Alan Bowser called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m. There were 41 participants on line over the course of the meeting.

Approval of Agenda: It was moved and seconded agenda be approved; approved by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded minutes be approved; approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson

reported that the total dues collected since July 1 were \$1,401, with \$320 in dues coming in in the last month. There has been a cumulative total of \$830 in expenses this year. The current bank balance is \$9,819.

Announcements: None.

PROGRAM

The program focused on a County COVID-19 update and a presentation on the County's pedestrian safety efforts.

Dr. Travis Gayles, Montgomery County Public Health Officer

■ Dr. Gayles provided a general overview of the County's efforts for the last year since the COVID outbreak arrived in MoCo. We have improved greatly from earlier in the

winter, but it has stabilized now at about 95-110 daily cases, so more work is needed.

■ The vaccines are letting them protect the most vulnerable; they have started with older residents and those with greater occupational exposures and are looking at the impact of the new variants in Maryland before moving to open widely. We are doing aggressive testing and the positivity levels are coming down.

■ We have been distributing Pfizer and Moderna vaccines since December and will start with J&J this week. The vaccines look to be 100% effective for death and generally in the 80-90% range for severe illness.

■ We are pushing for more doses since we are the largest jurisdiction and have been hit hard; we are now

March Minutes, cont.

offering from 1A through 1C priority, since we don't have enough to go around yet.

Q. Any chance that supplies will be increasing significantly?

A. We're pushing for same numbers per capita, which hasn't been true for large counties. We'd also like more doses going to the health department rather than pharmacies, where we'd have more say. We want a mass vaccination site, since MoCo is 20% of the state population and there are no such sites west of I-95, so Western Maryland counties are also hurt.

Q. What priority is there for people under 65 but with underlying conditions? What about priority for service contractors going to many

homes?

A. There are a lot of employee categories that are prioritized; we follow CDC guidance. I think utility workers get Tier 1C. We are going down priorities and are now at 1-C. The [age] 65–74 population is more than 100,000; there are more than 40,000 older than 70. The County is getting 12,000–15,000 doses a week, which we expect to increase shortly.

Q. With public schools partially reopening, how closely do you work with them on mitigation, oversight?

A. We have been meeting since before we got first case on March 5, 2020. We meet with them weekly on strategies and guidance.

Q. Seems like a lot is being left to principals and actions aren't wholly consistent.

A. We give guidance, we can't totally monitor what they do.

Q. Why can't we make teachers highest priority? Rather than older folks, vaccinate teachers who are really needed.

A. We are prioritizing them; we have invited 20,000 public school teachers/staff and expect to offer to all by week's end. We are also offering to private school teachers/staff and have asked schools to prioritize staff so we give to those who come back first.

Q. When is the maximum protection?

A. Two weeks after last dose needed (either 1 or 2).

Q. What outreach is there to communities of color?

MORE

March Minutes, cont.

A. The Office of Community Partnership and other offices have outreach campaigns through social media and ads telling people where to go. We have been trying to set up pop-up clinics, placing sites conveniently, and we're working on outreach to homebound folks. When we increase doses, we will give them to regular community providers.

Q. When should everyone be able to get one? President Biden said by the end of May.

A. Our allotment has been pretty stable but, if production increases, we do expect to cover everyone by early summer. State was getting 72,000 total; now up to about 100,000, but much is going to other providers not the counties. We're still pushing to have State support,

maximize local government efforts.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY DISCUSSION

Evan Glass, Council Member

▮ Vision Zero has a goal of zero pedestrian fatalities. This has been part of County efforts for several years but, even with (or perhaps because of) everyone staying home, we had record-setting numbers of incidents in the county last year. We've already had 2 fatalities, including one on Viers Mill this year. Those deaths have been predominantly people of color in areas that have also been hard hit by COVID.

▮ We have made some progress over the years, but a lot more still to do. We had Town Hall in January on Saturday morning with 300+ people. We're happy to hear about specific streets and intersections.

▮ The "Shovel our Sidewalks" Act

(Bill 9-21) was submitted to have sidewalks in "Equity Emphasis Areas" handled by the County to ensure they are clear. MoCo already does 60 miles; this would add a few more miles.

▮ For more information, contact: Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; or his staff member Sean Emerson.

▮ Information [online here about Council of Governments \(MWCOG\) equity emphasis areas.](#)

▮ [Public hearing registration link for Bill 9-21.](#)

Wade Holland, Vision Zero Coordinator County Executive office.

▮ He appreciated our sending out survey to member civic groups to get data for county analysis. Those responses focused on the need for more and better sidewalks, ensuring

MORE

March Minutes, cont.

they are cleared; more bike lanes; and better lighting.

■ He provided an update on numerous actions being taken by the county on pedestrian and bike safety issues. [[Holland's slide presentation that night can be viewed here.](#)]

■ In connection with the completion of the Park and Planning Building in Wheaton, numerous steps have been taken in the Wheaton Triangle, including a lower speed limit on Viers Mill Road and roadway changes to make traffic slow, such as narrowing traveling lanes, adding parking on Georgia, and revising intersections. Another focus area was around Seneca Valley High School, with a variety of upgrades there.

■ They have been doing socially distant youth programs: Safety

Week, Bike Rodeos. They are working with MCPS and DOT as kids are going back to school to make sure they are safe and active.

COVID Effects

■ With traffic down, there has been an uptick in speeding, unbelted crashes, street racing, engine revving offenses, and the like. A Holiday Task Force was set up to cut down on impaired driving; the 262 arrests were not markedly different from prior years. We did avoid any DUI-fatalities during that period, but there were still plenty during other periods.

Shared Streets Program

■ Closing streets so restaurants could have outdoor tables. This was done due to COVID but they will be looking at continuing it and what they will be doing after COVID.

They plan on adding a number of pedestrian beacon signs.

Bikeway Projects

■ A lot going on, especially along Purple Line route. Several in design phase; 8 in construction now.

■ Biggest project is in area around Pike & Rose development and White Flint. These include realigning roads, adding sidewalks, streetscaping, and busbay infrastructure.

Vision Zero Efforts

■ [View the website.](#) There's a pilot project to try to reduce speed to 20 mph in dense areas. Grant from Metro Wash COG on impaired vision accessibility design.

■ Vision Zero Youth Ambassadors—34 this year.

■ Working on 10 year plan, 1 year in. Have had fact finding and work-

MORE

March Minutes, cont.

group discussions. Working on getting out plan for community review from March through May, with goal of getting final plan done. We work with kids in MCPS in Safe Routes to School program to teach safe walking and biking habits.

Distracted Driving

■ [Penalties for distracted driving escalate](#): \$83 for 1st offense then up to \$160 for third and subsequent offenses.

Kristy Daphnis, Chair, Ped./Bike/Traffic Safety Advisory Cmte.

■ The Committee has been working with police to figure out how to get real enforcement of traffic measures; looking at automatic enforcement; red-light cameras, etc. The PBTSAC has been working with

Wade on putting together the VZ 10-year plan with a number of special meetings and that has just wrapped up.

Open Street Programs

■ Looking at ways to close streets to cars totally for some or all of the time or at least opening up more space on the side of streets to give more access for pedestrian use.

■ Open Streets Coalition created liaison to MCDOT so we could think carefully about finding space for recreation, for restaurants outside, and improved connectivity between communities.

Peter Gray, VP of Washington Area Bicyclists Alliance

■ Open Streets Coalition urged County/State for actions such as "Shared Streets/No Through Traffic" to keep neighborhood streets from

being used as cut-throughs. [Neighborhoods can apply online.](#)

■ Along University Blvd from Arcola to Amherst, they're looking at putting in protected bike lanes on each side. This will also help with slowing down traffic on the street. [The Bicycle Master Plan](#) treats every street in County; the biggest issue is getting between communities.

Allison Gillespie

■ Safe Streets program set ups mostly short-term shut-downs for an activity on a weekend or a week, such as an ice cream party or street hockey. Other projects, such as on Woodland, have been permanent. That change has really opened usage of an unsafe street and points out other streets with problems so we need to get folks out of cars and into walking/onto bikes.

MORE

March Minutes, cont.

■ Sligo Creek, Rock Creek, and Little Falls Parkway have been closed to cars in whole or part to give more access for walking, biking, and roller skating. There has been some effect in terms of displacing traffic, and Woodland was an area that had that concern. There has been some increase and County has been engaged with neighbors to speak to their concerns; the point is that we need to cut down overall traffic.

Q. Is there a police contact where people can ask for increased enforcement at problem areas?

A. People are looking for more red-light cameras; but there are limits on how many cameras are available and how many we can put out. Wade Holland said they look at all aspects, including speed

cameras and/or enforcement by live officers. Another answer is system design that affects people so they have to slow down and see how we want them to drive. This can include removing traffic lanes, although we have to balance all uses of roads: traffic throughput and getting people there alive.

Q. What about outreach to non-English speakers?

A. They are doing a lot in that area and have worked with some students to help us do outreach to several language groups. Holland noted that there was some upgraded enforcement near schools, but it did not appear permanent cameras were used there. Gillespie noted that they couldn't seem to get as many cameras as they wanted, especially now that people seemed to prefer those over more subjective enforcement

work. Holland said they do expect to be able to get more cameras in with next contract. He ended by noting that they had no authority on private shopping mall property; Wheaton Mall might be doing some redevelopment, which could help with its lack of sidewalks.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education

■ None.

Public Safety

■ Safe Silver Spring meeting with Police this week.

Land Use

■ We will have a Missing Middle housing meeting in April with reps from the Planning Department. There is another draft ZTA going around to expand the proposed

MORE

March Minutes, cont.

changes.

Legislation

■ There are a number of bills under consideration, which were discussed in the March newsletter.

Environment

■ There are issues with respect to the proposed placement of 5G towers (which we have already opposed). MCCF has signed onto Climate Mobilization Coalition letter regarding the County's Climate Action Plan, which asks them to come back with more specific action recommendations by Earth Day, April 22, 2021.

Transportation

■ In view of numbers of tractor-trailer accidents recently, the County has added abrasives on Westbound

I-495 from Georgia Avenue to I-270, which seems to have helped.

■ Jerry Garson spoke today at a public hearing to oppose WMATA proposals to cut way back on outside I-495 Metro station service, to shut down Grosvenor altogether, and to cut out Q bus lanes along Veirs Mill.

■ The State's proposal to add toll lanes on I-495/I-270 continues to move forward, but the west side work isn't likely to be done until 2026, so the east side work will be many more years.

Adjourn: At 9:50, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was approved by voice vote. ■

MCCF ExCom Meeting March 18, 2021, Via Zoom

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Call to Order: 7:30 p.m.

Attendees: Alan Bowser, Sue Schumacher, Jacquie Bokow, Jerry Garson, Bailey Condrey, Tim Willard, Peggy Dennis, Cary Lamar, Harriet Quinn, and Karen Cordry.

Approval of the Meeting Agenda: Moved, seconded, and approved on voice vote.

Approval of Minutes: For the February 2021 Executive Committee meeting were moved, seconded, and approved on voice vote.

MORE

March ExCom Mtg., cont.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson reported we had \$334.85 but paid \$590 insurance, so minus \$255 for this month. Since July 1, 2020, we received \$1,461 in dues. Net income of \$40 since beginning of year. Bank balance is \$9,288.79. Alan questioned why website was so expensive (\$395); Jerry noted he was also adding Constant Contact services into that amount. Jerry to give more detailed breakdown so we can decide if we can reduce costs.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Schools are back open, but are getting some outbreaks there according to *Bethesda Beat*.

APRIL PROGRAM

■ Subject will be "Missing Middle Housing." Karen Cordry will par-

ticipate in County task force discussions; Cary Lamari will be MCCF designee.

■ Lisa Govoni and Jason Satori will be our guests at the April meeting from the Planning Board.

■ Cary offers to have any of the member organizations communicate to him. He will write piece for newsletter and give contact information.

■ Concerns about the speeds at which they are moving on this, while the Master Plan process is still in discussion/consultation process. This started with a Silver Spring proposal, that was expanded on by Jawando's ZTA, and then a different and broader proposal by Riemer and Hucker. May look for someone with opposing view or just leave it to audience questions.

OLD BUSINESS

March Meeting Debrief: Covid 19

and Pedestrian Safety

■ The concensus was that the meeting was well run; everyone had good information. Perhaps we had too many speakers, but it worked reasonably well. We should try to follow up on both COVID and pedestrian safety proposals to keep up with ongoing developments. Alan says mass vax sites are being added in Hagerstown and Germantown; White Oak Community Center will be set up shortly.

June 2021 Annual Meeting and Nominations Committee

■ We need to identify award winners. Peggy Dennis will be Awards Chair to work on getting ideas for awardees, cc Alan.

Membership Update/Association Software Trial

MORE

March ExCom Mtg., cont.

■ Wild Apricot software trial expired yesterday but will try to get it extended. It's a database to keep track of association members, named representatives for each group, membership renewals, etc. There was second one we can also look at but Alan hasn't had chance to review it yet.

Communications

■ Press releases, social media issues. Did last meeting on Facebook; been uploaded on Youtube. Have been adding links from *Bethesda Beat* onto our Facebook page.

Committee for Montgomery

■ Nominations? Alan is now co-chair of CfM's nominations committee. Group looks to advocate for MoCo interests at State level. Henri

St. Gerard, Bonnie Casper are President and VP.

Resolution Proposed

■ Thanking Jamie Raskin for work on impeachment resolution, etc. Alan has started, Bailey will draft.

NEW BUSINESS

FY22 Budget

■ **Recommended budget from Co. Executive released on Monday.** No tax increase; some police reorganization. Bailey says there is some language on CAP. Should have an article on the budget. About 45% of budget goes to MCPS; 10.5% to public safety. Jerry has questions as to what school enrollment will be after COVID changes; also not clear how much transit use will go up and, in particular, how much revenues will be coming in from fare boxes to help cover those costs. Alan and Bailey

will work on general budget issues for newsletter article.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education & Public Utilities

■ Nothing to report.

Public Finance

■ The MoCo Budget is out.

Planning and Land Use

■ MCCF opposition to ZTA 19-07 on small cell tower installation in residential neighborhoods is on the Planning and Land Use [webpage](#).

Transportation

■ WMATA proposal after COVID Act passed; all drastic cuts proposed before that are all on hold for now for about 6 months to allow chance to see how ridership recovers over that period. Rail ridership contin-

MORE

March ExCom Mtg., cont.

ues to be at about 10–11% of normal usage. But auto usage way back up; Beltway backed up at rush hour.

Environment

■ It does look like global warming is continuing to move forward relentlessly. County Executive does have several positions in the budget. Net zero for 2035 seems to be very optimistic for our area. Kumar Barve at State level is very concerned about failure to move forward aggressively in the Ag Reserve. Not clear why the pricing is supposedly impractical for rooftop and elevated over parking lots, etc.; over sidewalks, etc. Good idea for an article/discussion would be for the details on what the pricing tradeoffs are. Peggy notes that MCPS has program for placing solar on rooftops when

buildings are being renovated.

Legislation

■ (Dennis) <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite> <http://montgomerycountydelegation.com/>. One proposal being considered is to have financial incentive for deer hunters to take out additional deer so that meat can be used for donations.

April Newsletter: Deadline for stories is March 26, 2021.

May Environment Meeting and County Climate Action Plan:

Bailey and Tim to work on this.

Adjourn: Moved, seconded, approved by voice vote at 8:42 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

Twitter Feed @mccivicfed

[MCCF Facebook Page](#)

cfn

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Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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