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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #937

Monday, November 14, 2022, 7:30 p.m. online via Zoom. Topic: "Running a Successful Civic Association."

■ **Join the Zoom Meeting Here**
[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]

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Meeting Minutes

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Executive Committee Meeting
OCTOBER 20 **P. 30**

Membership Application

JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM

Federation Meeting #937

Monday, November 14, 2022

7:30 p.m.

Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: October General Meeting **P.26**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. November Program: Running a Successful Civic Association **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. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the start time is now at 7:30 p.m.

The November 14 meeting will be held online via Zoom (see p. 3 for program) at 7:30 p.m.:

■ To be part of the video conference, first **visit the Zoom website** to download the program for your phone or computer.

■ Date and Time: Monday, November 14, 2022, 7:30 p.m. (ET).

■ 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 850 0914 5666. No password is 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 30

Running a Successful Civic Association: A 'Not So Secret' Strategy from McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls Civic Association

It has been said that running a thriving civic association is a lot of work. While this is true, there are some tips and tricks for getting the word out and making the most of what you have. No association knows how to do this better than McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls! They are in the heavily sought-after neighborhood located behind the Forest Glen Metro Station and spans from Georgia Avenue to Leslie Street and from Forest Glen Road to Plyer's Mill Road. With roughly 1,600 households in their boundaries, they are one of the larger civic association footprints in Montgomery County.

While business is booming now, this was not always the case. Before COVID, membership stood at roughly 65 households and was stagnant

there for many years. For MHCK, 2020 was a year of ideas. How to keep membership during COVID? How to come together as a neighborhood association during such a hard time? Basically, how to survive as an association? So, what did they do? They grew!

In 2020, a new president was brought in with different ideas and motivation than the association had before. He brought in new board members, new volunteers, and new ideas. With all this at hand, they set out to revitalize MHCK. Image, outreach, memberships, events were all efforts that needed to be addressed to get the word out.

We don't want to spoil the surprises and reveal all their secrets, however. We will let them do it!

Please attend the upcoming Montgomery County Civic Federation meeting scheduled for November 14th at 7:30 p.m. to hear all that McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls did to expand membership and grow to the thriving civic association they are today. Our speakers will be:

- Kerry Murray, President
- Maggie Flowers, Vice-President
- Dave Coyne, Secretary and Membership Chair
- Kristin Nelson, Treasurer
- Joshua Montgomery, Former President

We look forward to seeing all of you for this exciting presentation. Bring all your questions!

The meeting can be attended by using the Zoom link on page one. See the [MHCK website here](#). ■

Memo from MoCo Executive to MoCo Council President on Thrive Montgomery 2050

[The following memorandum was transmitted on October 20, 2022, to Montgomery County Council President Gabe Alborno from Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich regarding the draft General Plan for Thrive Montgomery 2050.]

The Council's loss of confidence in, and decision on October 12 to accept the resignations of, every member of the Planning Board, effective immediately, has shaken our planning process to its core, creating confusion and dismay as the public and all stakeholders try to understand why this grave, unprecedented step was necessary. In the midst of this crisis, the Council has decided to move forward with Thrive, and is scheduled to approve it on the same day that it will appoint a temporary

Planning Board. In making this decision, the Council seems to believe that Thrive was not affected by the pattern of misconduct that led to the wholesale termination of the Board. I disagree.

It is impossible to separate the preparation and presentation of Thrive from the Board's misconduct. While working on Thrive, the Board broke significant rules with respect to the Open Meetings law, the registration of lobbyists, and the use of the consent calendar. These violations impugn the Board's work product and raise concerns that the Board, in search of a certain result, might have been willing to bend the rules on other occasions.

There have also been Council reprimands of the Chair and two other Board members for inappro-

priate conduct in the workplace due to the knowing violation of long-standing, established M-NCPPC policy. And there appear to be ongoing investigations of other violations.

Rather than approving Thrive and sweeping everything under the rug, the public deserves a full explanation—a written report—that explains what has happened, whether more investigations are ongoing or needed, and what steps have been taken to ensure that this doesn't happen again. The Council should not move forward with Thrive until it can assure itself, the public, and stakeholders that there are no improprieties with respect to Thrive.

On September 12, after reviewing the report from the Council's consultants identifying serious concerns

Elrich Thrive Memo, cont.

and recommending significant changes, I wrote to request that the Council disapprove Thrive in order to allow more outreach and engagement of BIPOC and low-income residents. There are more reasons now to disapprove Thrive and send it back to a new Planning Board. As I explain below, the current Thrive draft contains significant errors that could have been avoided if the Planning Board and the PHED Committee had respected and taken seriously the comments of the Executive branch and the public. A more open-minded, even-handed Planning Board, with fresh eyes, may be the antidote that cures Thrive.

For reasons only known to the defunct Planning Board and PHED Committee, the vast majority of the Executive¹ and public comments

have been ignored, minimized, or disputed. One consequence is that the Plan contains significant errors that have never been reviewed.

ERROR NO. 1

At its September 22, 2022 work session, at the last minute in the review process, the Council added three new chapters on Economic Development, Environmental Resilience, and Racial Equity, without any recommendations. These brand-new chapters, none of which contain recommendations, were never the subject of a public hearing because they were written over a year after the public hearings that were held in June 2021.

The public never saw the new chapters until the Saturday before the work session. During the work session, the Council did not review any of the concerns of the public, pro

or con, that had been expressed in over 1500 pages of correspondence; instead, it reviewed two sets of comments--those from Jane Lyons of the Coalition for Smart Growth (CSG) and those of staunch Thrive supporter Dan Reed, of Greater Greater Washington. The Council didn't mention the absence of recommendations in the new chapters. I have been told that there were no recommendations because there was "not enough time."

Error No. 1 Remedy: Disapprove the Plan and send it back to a new Planning Board.

At a minimum, the Council needs to hold a public hearing on the three new chapters since the public has never had an opportunity to review and comment on them. The public hearing should not be held until there are substantive recommenda-

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Elrich Thrive Memo, cont.

tions for each new chapter. After the public hearing, the Council should hold another work session on these chapters to review them and the public comments. The absence of recommendations for economic development and the environment is particularly difficult to understand because the original Public Hearing Draft from Planning staff included chapters on these subject matters along with extensive recommendations.

ERROR NO. 2

Throughout the process, the Thrive drafts have had the wrong Growth Map in the Compact Growth chapter. Thrive has the Growth Map for the 1964 Plan, when, in fact, the current Growth Map is in the 1993 Refinement. The 1964 Plan

had only two land uses: urban and rural. The 1993 Plan added new land uses: Suburban Communities and Residential Wedge. Thrive removes those land uses without ever acknowledging their existence. As a result, Thrive is misleading on a critical component of the General Plan. This material error has never been addressed despite the fact that the Executive branch wrote the Planning Board in August 2020 to highlight this issue:

In the past, Montgomery County planning has been based on offering land use choices over its 507 square miles. See the 1993 Plan—Geographic Components of the General Plan Refinement. "The General Plan Refinement divides Montgomery County into four geographic components: the Urban Ring, the Corridors, the Suburban Communities, and the Wedge...." P. 20, see

also, the Growth Map on p. 22. The draft does not explain why this plan omits any discussion of the suburbs or rural areas. Will suburban and large lot rural areas still exist in 30 years, or is this plan proposing that, for the next 30 years, all development will be compact and dense? In the next draft, please clarify whether this plan still supports the geographic areas of Suburban Communities and the Rural Wedge as part of the future of this County. If not, what does the plan support for those geographic areas? The plan should include a schematic map.

The Executive branch never received an answer to these questions.

Error No. 2 Remedy: Disapprove the Plan and send it back to a new Planning Board.

Alternatively, as with the three new chapters, there needs to be a public

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Elrich Thrive Memo, cont.

hearing on the 1993 Growth Map and how Thrive changes it. The public needs to know that Thrive Montgomery removes Suburban Communities and the Residential Wedge as recognized land uses in certain geographic locations in the County. It has a right to know what effect, if any, this change will have on their individual properties and on future growth in their neighborhoods. Council staff referred to the Thrive Growth Map as “likely the most important graphic in Thrive....”

I have been told that the 1993 Growth Map may be included in the final draft that goes to the Council next week on October 25. Obviously, finally including the map on the day that the plan is approved does not cure the underlying error of omitting it throughout the entire Thrive

process and, in some ways, it makes matters worse because it is a tacit recognition that the omission of the current Growth Map is a material error that must be corrected before the plan is finalized.

The importance of the Growth Map cannot be underestimated. Council staff note in the Staff Report of October 4 that the Growth Map “is likely the most important graphic in Thrive and provides the basis for understanding policies recommended in this chapter.” PDF, p. 9.

ERROR NO. 3

Throughout the Thrive process, County and Planning officials have misled residents and other County officials about the significance of Thrive for rezoning and changes in subdivision and other land use policies. These County and Planning officials claimed over and over in

many different forums that, “Thrive is a policy document and does not change any zoning in any neighborhood.” (See Myths vs. Facts, Montgomery Planning Department website.) The PHED draft similarly stated that Thrive “provides direction for decisions about land use, transportation, and related issues under local government influence, but it does not change zoning or other detailed land use regulations.”

The Updated Council draft for approval next week, however, finally explains Thrive’s true significance as a prerequisite for rezoning. It states: Thrive “provides direction for decisions about land use, transportation, and related issues under local government influence, but it does not by itself change zoning or other detailed land use regulations *although implementation of its*

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Elrich Thrive Memo, cont.

recommendations may require such changes.” See PDF, p. 4, Emphasis added. This clarification, added this month, comes far too late.

In other words, the County Council can only rezone the area recommended for “Limited Growth” in Thrive if Suburban Communities and the Residential Wedge are removed from Thrive as valid land uses and replaced by “Limited Growth.” There is already a ZTA waiting in the wings to accomplish the rezoning, called the Attainable Housing Initiative. The Planning Board and the PHED Committee failed to tell the public what the current land uses are, while also withholding the information that a massive rezoning to urbanize most of the County could only take place after Thrive was enacted with

the new Growth map—thus, the most important graphic in Thrive. Whether or not public officials withheld or buried this information, this information should be shared with the public now so that there is a clear understanding that while Thrive itself doesn’t accomplish the rezoning of all single-family neighborhoods, it provides the basis for doing so.

Error No. 3 Remedy: Disapprove this Plan and send it back to a new Planning Board so that the implications of changes in the Growth Map can be fully vetted and understood by the public.

ERROR NO. 4

The current Thrive draft (PDF pgs. 14–15) misstates the success of the consultants’ RESJ report by omitting the consultants’ conclusion that their own outreach and engage-

ment efforts to BIPOC and low-income residents were inadequate due to insufficient time (only three months) and the greater difficulty in identifying participants during the summer.

Error No. 4 Remedy: Disapprove Thrive to allow more outreach to BIPOC and low-income residents.

Here is my letter of September 12, 2022, detailing the reasons why Thrive should be disapproved to allow more outreach.

The Council made a consequential decision to dismiss the entire Planning Board for the first time in modern Montgomery County history. It has a responsibility to be transparent about that decision and to explain its reasons to the public in a written report. In the meantime, the wholesale dismissal has cast

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Elrich Thrive Memo, cont.

a shadow over the entirety of the Planning Board's actions and work product, including Thrive Montgomery 2050. There is no urgency to pass Thrive 2050 immediately and there are many good reasons to disapprove it and send it back to the new Planning Board. As one of the racial equity consultants hired by the County Council stated, "Compressed timeframes are the enemy of equity." Let's take the time to get it right; we owe it to our residents and everyone who wants to see Montgomery County thrive.

Thank you for your consideration. ■

¹ The Thrive Montgomery Working Group (OMB, DHCA, MCDOT, MCPL, OAS, DGS, MCFRS, DEP, MCPD, DTS, DHHS, and the Office of Racial Equity) commented on Thrive to the Planning Board in August 2020, after the Planning Department circulated a draft in June 2020. The Working Group prepared extensive comments then, and also for subsequent drafts and revisions both at the Planning Board and Council. The County Executive testified at public hearings at the Planning Board and before the County Council.

MC Council Votes to Approve Thrive Montgomery 2050

[The following is a press release from the Montgomery County Council regarding approval of Thrive Montgomery 2050, Oct. 25, 2022.]

The Montgomery County Council voted unanimously today on a resolution to approve Thrive Montgomery 2050.

For 18 months, Councilmembers have been working with staff and listening to suggestions from residents across Montgomery County to develop a general plan for the County's future. The Council's revised version of the Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to Montgomery County's current General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors).

"Thrive is a compelling vision for Montgomery County's future and lays a framework to preserve things that make our community great, while meeting the unique needs of our growing County," Council President Gabe Albornoz said. "We're grateful to everyone who engaged with us and shared valuable insights that helped inform our decision-making. Throughout this process, the Council has made time to incorporate voices from communities across the County and gather diverse perspectives and input."

"Thrive affirms and deepens the vision that our County Council has embraced over the past decade of master plans and policy work—locating new development around transit to create walkable communities with

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CC Approves Thrive, cont.

great amenities," said Councilmember Hans Riemer, who chairs the PHED Committee. "Thrive outlines strategies to promote affordability, social and racial equity and economic competitiveness, while reducing climate emissions. I am grateful to my Council colleagues, our staff and Planning staff, and all of the thousands of residents who participated in shaping this plan, whether they ultimately supported it or not. This plan represents a small shift in direction for our County that will nevertheless bring great benefits down the line."

The document provides a framework for Montgomery County's future growth and encompasses broad, countywide policy recommendations for land use, zoning, housing, the economy, equity, transportation, parks and open space, the environ-

ment and historic resources. The plan defines the basic land use policies for all public and private development in Montgomery County.

"From the beginning of this process, we have worked in close partnership with community members and the County Council to think about the future of our County," said Acting Planning Director Tanya Stern. "Thrive isn't about reinventing the County. It's about enhancing what's great, reinforcing what works, and rethinking what doesn't. Using Thrive as a guide will help us realize a more equitable Montgomery County with accessible, mixed-use corridors connecting residents, employees, and visitors and more housing and community amenities for all."

"The Thrive 2050 document approved today lays out a high-level vision for a prosperous, more equitable and sustainable future for

our County," said Councilmember Andrew Friedson, who is a member of the PHED Committee. "Over the last 18 months, we have received an unprecedented volume of feedback on the plan and made numerous substantive changes to the document as a result. Implementation of this vision will come later and will involve significant opportunities for public engagement."

"I'm committed to ensuring that we implement Thrive Montgomery 2050 in a very measured way that reflects community concerns and hopes for housing, transportation, and development," said Councilmember Will Jawando, who sits on the PHED Committee. "I view Thrive 2050 as a tool in the toolbox to help move the County forward and create a better place to live and call home for our current and future residents. The

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CC Approves Thrive, cont.

work ahead will require the Council and Planning Department to engage in an inclusive, public process to make Montgomery Co. better for all.”

The Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted the Planning Board Draft Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan to the County Executive and the Council on April 13, 2021.

The Council held two public hearings on the Planning Board draft on June 17, 2021, and June 29, 2021. The General Plan was then referred to the Council’s PHED Committee for review and recommendations.

The PHED Committee held nine worksessions and the Council held two more listening sessions devoted to the PHED Committee draft of the plan. Community meetings were also coordinated by each of the County’s Regional Services Center directors in

partnership with Council staff.

The Council met nine times to discuss the plan. The first full Council worksession to review the PHED Committee draft was held on Feb. 15, 2022. After being briefed by the Office of Legislative Oversight regarding an equity analysis of the plan, the Council approved additional outreach and assistance with a racial equity and social justice review of the plan’s recommendations. The goal of this additional outreach was to ensure that all residents had the opportunity to provide their views about the County’s future growth.

The revised plan, as approved by the Council, adds three new chapters, one on each of the three overarching objectives of economic health, racial equity and social justice, and environmental resilience. The plan emphasizes improvements in transit, bicycling, and pedestrian infrastruc-

ture, while balancing the needs of car-dependent residents and industries. Additionally, the plan supports policies to increase energy efficiency, stormwater management, and other factors that increase environmental sustainability.

The chapter on racial equity and social justice was written by Nspire-green and Public Engagement Associates, which is a consulting team secured by the Council to perform targeted outreach through focus groups, community pop-up events, and surveys to solicit direct feedback from Black and Indigenous residents and people of color across Montgomery County. This chapter touches on social justice in planning, the history of land use in Montgomery County, housing and environmental justice, and transportation. The goal of this additional outreach was to ensure

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CC Approves Thrive, cont.

that all residents had the opportunity to provide their views about the County’s future growth.

The chapter focused on economic competitiveness provides an overview of the economic strengths and challenges facing the County and the themes connecting land use and housing production to economic goals to serve a growing and diverse population.

The chapter about environmental health and resilience emphasizes three aspects of environmental stewardship and performance: mitigating and adapting to climate change, focusing on environmental justice, and protecting and improving human health.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 promotes housing for all residents by supporting a diversity of housing

types to meet the unique needs of residents, supports the strengthening of tenant protections to ensure healthy and fair housing, and supports the creation of neighborhood stabilization strategies for communities of color.

The plan also highlights the need for strategies and partnerships to address the digital divide and bring network resources to vulnerable communities.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 is a foundational document that provides comprehensive information and tools for implementation of the plan’s recommendations.

Residents can view the [Thrive Montgomery 2050 resolution here](#) and the [Council Draft of Thrive Montgomery 2050 here](#). Additional information can be found on the [Thrive Montgomery 2050 resource page here](#). ■

MoCo Planning Controversies Lead to Resignations of All 5 Commissioners

By Josh Kurtz, Maryland Matters, October 12, 2022

Will the last person at the Montgomery County Planning Board please turn out the lights?

A county whose leaders revere the planning process now has zero members serving on its all-important Planning Board.

Capping a stunning three weeks of developments, the Montgomery County Council announced Wednesday afternoon that it has accepted the resignations of all five Planning Board members—Board Chair Casey Anderson, Vice Chair Partap Verma, and Commissioners Gerald Cichy, Tina Patterson and Carol Rubin. The resignations are effective immediately.

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Five Resignations, cont.

“The Montgomery County Council is united in taking the steps necessary to ensure that the Montgomery County Planning Board can serve its critical functions and oversee the Planning and Parks Departments’ important work for our community,” Council President Gabe Albornoz (D) said in a statement. “The Council has lost confidence in the Montgomery County Planning Board and accepted these resignations to reset operations. We are acting with deliberate speed to appoint new commissioners to move Montgomery County forward. We thank the commissioners for their service to our County.”

In a separate statement, Council Vice President Evan Glass (D), who is likely to take over as president in December, said, “My colleagues and

I have lost confidence in the board and we have determined that this decision is in the best interest of the community.”

The County Council appoints the Planning Board members and oversees its operations.

Albornoz’s statement said the Council is scheduled to select new temporary acting Planning Board commissioners on Oct. 25 and is seeking individuals with expertise in land use, planning, economic development, transportation, and environmental and park issues to apply for the vacancies. Montgomery County residents who are interested in filling these acting positions should apply to the Council by next Tuesday at 5 p.m.

The public controversy over the Planning Board began last month, with revelations that Anderson had kept a well-stocked bar in his office at the Planning Department’s head-

quarters in downtown Wheaton and had occasionally shared after-hours drinks with colleagues—a violation of county personnel rules. That publicity resulted in the Council docking Anderson a month’s pay and docking Verma and Rubin a single day’s pay.

But it’s clear that there are deeper controversies at the agency, involving everything from opinions about Anderson’s consequential 11-year tenure, which was due to come to an end next year, to allegations of workplace harassment and misconduct, to the egos and ambitions of other Planning Board members and various county leaders, to the fate of a comprehensive and controversial planning document known as Thrive Montgomery 2050 that the County Council could vote on in a matter of weeks.

There have been other noteworthy developments in recent days:

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Five Resignations, cont.

Last Friday, the four Planning Board members, minus Anderson, fired Gwen Wright, the agency’s longtime planning director who was due to retire in December and was an ally of Anderson’s. She had led the agency since 2013 and worked there since 1987. And according to *The Washington Post*, Miti Figueredo, the Parks Department’s deputy director who is a well-connected figure in Montgomery County politics and was also a close ally of Anderson’s, recently filed a complaint against Verma.

How these all get resolved could depend on the actions of the Council and the new interim Planning Board over the next several weeks.

“The Council is confident that the Planning Department’s newly appointed Acting Director Tanya Stern will provide steady leadership in the

weeks ahead,” Albornoz said. “The Council also appreciates and supports Park and Planning staff.”

Stern has been the agency’s deputy director since 2018 and spent 14 years working for the Washington, D.C., government before that. In a statement of her own Wednesday, she promised continuity at the agency.

“Our commitment to Montgomery County and our planning work remains steadfast during this transition,” she said. “The Montgomery County Planning Department will continue to move forward on our robust master planning and regulatory work program as the County Council appoints new Planning Board members.”

More information about the process of filling vacancies can be found on the Council’s webpage. The Council will separately conduct a formal application process for individu-

als wishing to be appointed to serve out the terms of the officially vacant seats.

Montgomery County Planning Board commissioners are Council appointments and generally serve four-year terms. The Planning Board serves as the Council’s principal adviser on land use planning and community planning. Additionally, Planning Board members serve as commissioners of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, the bicounty agency that works alongside Prince George’s County on regional matters.

County Executive Marc Elrich (D) does not have any formal role in appointing or oversee Planning Board members, but he expressed hope that the mass resignation of commissioners would change the culture and focus of the agency.

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Five Resignations, cont.

“It is clear that new people and new voices are needed on the Planning Board,” he said. “Park and Planning has been run by a group of insiders for far too long. There needs to be a respectful balance of the views of developers and those of the community. I hope that the new Planning Board appointees reflect the demographics of this community and are committed to our residents, community input, and an efficient and transparent process.”

In a tweet Wednesday afternoon, Alan Bowser, the president of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, expressed the bewilderment and sorrow of many county leaders over the multiple controversies surrounding the planning agency.

“Where do we go to get our reputation back?” he wrote. ■

Montgomery County Council Appoints Temporary Acting Planning Board Members to Ensure Continuity of Service

[The following is the text from a Montgomery County Council Press Release, October 27, 2022.]

Today the Montgomery County Council appointed five temporary acting Montgomery County Planning Board members. The Council selected Jeffrey Zyontz as temporary acting chair and Amy Presley as temporary acting vice chair. Cherri Branson, David Hill, and Roberto Piñero were appointed as temporary acting Planning Board members. The temporary Planning Board members reflect Montgomery County’s diversity in their backgrounds, experience, and party affiliations.

“Given the unprecedented challenges at the Montgomery County Planning Board, the Council has selected a diverse group of experi-

enced leaders, who will reset operations, support the Park and Planning staff, and provide a bridge to the next Planning Board,” said Council President Gabe Albornoz.

“Restoring trust in the agency is job one. The Council is confident that this group of dedicated individuals will immediately hit the ground running and work collaboratively with Acting Planning Director Tanya Stern and Park and Planning staff to restore the public’s confidence in the agency. They will perform the critical functions of the Planning Board and move planning projects and services forward for residents.

“The Council was fortunate to have many qualified individuals who applied to serve as temporary acting

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Temporary Planning, cont.

members of the Planning Board. We extend our gratitude to our civically minded community members for their commitment to public service and willingness to engage in this process. We encourage the applicants who were not selected to consider applying to become members of the Planning Board once the new Council takes office.”

The next Montgomery County Council will be charged with selecting the new Planning Board members, who will serve out the remaining terms of the members. Once the new Council is inaugurated on Dec. 5, the process will begin to fill three Planning Board positions, which is expected by March 1, 2023, and the remaining two positions, including the chair, which is expected by June 14, 2023. The incoming Council will

determine the final schedule.

Information about the five temporary acting Planning Board members is below.

■ **Jeffrey Zyontz** started his career at Montgomery Planning in 1974 and held various positions at the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission, including serving eight years as chief of the Countywide Planning Division. He also is a former legislative attorney at the Council, where he worked on countless land use and planning issues and was instrumental in helping the Council review the Planning Board’s rewrite of Montgomery County’s Zoning Ordinance. Mr. Zyontz is a Democrat and lives in Rockville.

■ **Amy Presley** is a former member of the Montgomery County Planning Board, where she set policies on growth, transportation, and envi-

ronmental protection. She became involved in planning through her community activism as president of the Clarksburg Town Center Advisory Committee, Inc. She is the managing partner of Trusted Estate Partners. Ms. Presley is a Republican and Clarksburg resident.

■ **Cherri Branson** is the former director of Montgomery County’s Office of Procurement, where she managed a staff of 37 employees and oversaw a \$4.4 million budget. She is also a lawyer and a former member of the Montgomery County Council, where she served nearly one year to complete the term of former Councilmember Ervin. Ms. Branson is a Democrat and lives in Silver Spring.

■ **David Hill** served on the City of Rockville’s Planning Commission for a decade, and prior to that

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Temporary Planning, cont.

he was a member of the city's Board of Appeals. He currently works as a senior systems analyst at Westat. Mr. Hill is an unaffiliated registered voter and a Rockville resident.

I Roberto Piñero has been a senior analyst focused on housing, financial markets, and community investment in the U.S. Government Accountability Office for nearly 20 years. He also is a former Housing Opportunities Commission member. He has stepped down as a member of Montgomery County's Board of Appeals to become a temporary Planning Board member. Mr. Piñero is a Democrat and lives in Silver Spring.

The Montgomery County Planning Board serves as the Council's principal adviser on land use and community planning. Planning

Board members also serve as commissioners of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.

No more than three members of the Planning Board may be from the same political party, and each member must be a resident and registered voter of Montgomery County when appointed. The chair of the Planning Board is a full-time position. Planning Board members are part-time positions.

Some of the Planning Board's responsibilities concerning planning include the development of the County's General Plan, master plans, and functional plans, the formulation of subdivision regulations, and the preparation of, or recommendations on, text amendments to the Montgomery County Zoning Code.

The Planning Board also sits as the Park Commission. It approves

the annual Parks Department operating budget and capital improvements program and reviews and approves land acquisition contracts, major development contracts, and development plans for individual park facilities. ■

UPDATE YOUR DATA!

Montgomery County civic associations and home owners associations are asked to update their information on the County Planning Department's website. Notify MCCF of any changes, too, at info@montgomerycivic.org. Let's keep in touch!

MCCF Comments on Pedestrian Master Plan Draft Design, Policy, and Programming

By Jerry Garson, Chair of the MCCG Transportation Committee

The Montgomery Civic Federation, Inc., will make the following recommendations to the Montgomery County Planning Board on its Draft Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations for the Pedestrian Master Plan.

I Page 1, Goal 2: Why only improve comfortable access to elementary schools, and not also to Middle and High Schools?

I Page 3, B-1c: Add all parks to paragraph, including both Montgomery County and Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission parks.

I Page 4: Why not mark all crosswalks with priority within 3,000 of all schools and by bus stops and all signalized intersections on all four

corners?

I Page 5, B-1f: In the paragraph, Montgomery County's Residential Permit Parking does not include removal of parking restrictions near high schools.

I Page 6: Change pedestrian recall default to hours between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. to reduce pollution caused by vehicles waiting for green light at late night hours.

I Page 10, B-4a and B-4b: Require sidewalks in all parking lots to provide safe walking from vehicles to stores or building entrances.

I Page 12, B-4g: Do not block roads to Sligo Creek Golf Course.

I Page 12, B-4h: Add parks and trails to have public seating.

I Page 13, B-5a: There should be a requirement for street lights in all areas with sidewalks; there should

not be more than 150 feet between street lights.

I Page 15, B-7c: Add words requiring sidewalks in front of all parks.

I Page 16, B-7e: Remove incentive but keep requirement in new developments to connect to nearby sidewalks. Make it a requirement.

I Page 19, B-10: Has the cost of assuming county control of state highways been considered? The cost of maintaining and snow removal is a major added cost to the county.

I Page 21: Add language to require that county snow plows not place snow in marked and unmarked crosswalks.

I Page 24, P-1a: Require all current county and public agency vehicles to have backup cameras and

Pedestrian Master Plan, cont.

require all future new vehicles have forward and rear pedestrian detection equipment.

Page 26, P-1e: Require the county to mail to each resident at least yearly all changes to traffic rules and regulations, instead of requiring drivers to have an in-person knowledge test every eight years.

Page 27, P-2b: Require marked crosswalks at the nearest intersection for all bus stops.

Page 29, P-3a: Require walking paths or sidewalks in all parking lot design standards.

Page 32: Require sidewalks to where parents pick up students from all Public Schools.

View the MoCo Planning Department's "Pedestrian Master Plan: Draft Design, Policy, and Programming Recommendations" [here](#). ■

WMATA Plans 'Better Bus' Service in DMV Area

Washington Metro Area Transit Authority's 2020 Bus Transformation Project outlined 26 recommendations in its Strategy and Action Plan to transform the system over the next ten years into "a fast, frequent, reliable, affordable service that feels like a unified system and is not beholden to geographic or funding boundaries."

Better Bus is a key recommendation of the 2020 Bus Transformation Project, which resulted in Metro's vision to make the bus the best way to travel on the region's roads. The Bus Transformation Project identified top priorities for bus improvements, which included more frequent bus service, priority bus lanes, improved bus storage and maintenance facilities, and a network redesign—all part of the plan for Better Bus.

Better Bus, a new initiative to "rethink, redesign, and revitalize bus service," according to an October 11, 2022, press release, will be a "bold inaugural effort to redesign the current bus network." The seven in-person events all happened within 10 days after the Oct. 11 press release. The only one in Montgomery County was scheduled on a Thursday afternoon (Oct. 20, the last one) at the Takoma-Langley Crossroads Transit Center. All but one were held *on weekday afternoons*, most at bus bays; although the two in Prince George's county *were held at grocery stores on the weekend*.

This project is the region's first "comprehensive redesign of the entire Metrobus network since its creation in 1973." As part of the ef-

MORE

Better Bus, cont.

fort, Metro will also support partner agencies in Prince George's County (TheBus) and the City of Fairfax (CUE) in redesigning their local bus networks. The stated goals on the WMATA website are to:

Keep up with our changing region and the people that live and work here. Our region adds approximately 3,000 people and 2,200 jobs every month. [Where can they be living, I wonder?] Bus service needs to better align with changes to where and when people want to travel. We also have an opportunity to coordinate bus service with bus priority investments—like bus lanes and transit signal priority—across the region.

Better connect people to where they need to go. About half of our region lacks access to

frequent transit service. Buses keep our region moving, but are more and more often getting stuck in traffic, making them slower and less reliable. Speeding up bus trips will help make it easier and faster for customers to get around the region. [No details were provided as to how they would "speed up bus trips" for buses stuck in traffic.]

Promote equity, inclusiveness, and access to opportunity. Half of Metrobus customers are low income (\$30,000 annually or less) and 84 percent are people of color. The redesign effort is an opportunity to create a more equitable transit

network that serves our communities, including the needs of essential workers.

Create a network that is easy to use no matter where you are. In the Washington region, Metro operates about 200 Metrobus routes, while seven other transit providers operate another 250 bus routes. While that means lots of ways to get around, the overall system can be difficult to understand.

The Better Bus team is conducting [an online survey](#) through Friday, November 11. If you *ever* take the bus, please participate. Learn more at wmata.com/betterbus. ■



A Citizens Guide to Safe Bow-and-Arrow Hunting for Deer in Suburban Neighborhoods

By Peggy Dennis, Past President

This is my annual exhortation for civic organizations and individuals to take action. As deer populations have increased, suburban and urban areas in Montgomery County suffer from too many deer. Many localized populations of deer are estimated to be more than 10 times what the land and/or local residents can support or tolerate. Although pleasing to watch, large numbers of free-roaming deer increase the risk of human injury from deer-vehicle collisions (DVC). Montgomery County had 1,787 and 1,421 reported DVCs in 2020 and 2021, respectively. This statistic does not include the thousands of deer which are injured or killed but are not reported.

Most people know that black-legged ticks (also known as “deer

ticks”) spread Lyme disease. How many are aware that they are also associated with debilitating and costly diseases such as Babesiosis, Bartonella, Ehrlichia Chaffensis, and Powassan encephalitis? Excessive deer droppings are a concern, so decreasing our deer overpopulation is good for public health.

Deer can cause extensive damage to the environment. They have destroyed the understory of many of our regional, community, and stream valley parks; denuded hill-sides of native plants; destroyed habitat for other species; accelerated soil erosion; and promoted the take-over of invasive species. Some naturalists now consider overabundant deer as significant a threat to select bird populations as climate change. There have been a few cases in which

deer have become bold or aggressive with people, especially during the springtime fawning period. And if you have too many deer, forget about your landscaping or trying to grow your own fruits and vegetables in your back yard!

THE BOWHUNTING OPTION

You can help solve this ongoing problem. Other options for deer management—such as feeding, exclusionary fencing, and fertility control (“birth control”)—are impractical, counterproductive, or prohibitively expensive. Regulated hunting, specifically bowhunting, is a safe, ethical, humane, and efficient method for decreasing the number of deer in residential neighborhoods. It provides deer population control

[MORE](#)

Deer Hunting, cont.

at the least cost to taxpayers because volunteer bowhunters do the “work” of removing deer as a public service.

Hundreds of metro areas including Fairfax County, Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; the Pittsburgh suburbs; and many cities in Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Canada allow bowhunting. Few problems and no accidents have been reported. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports the use of bowhunting to curb deer populations in suburban areas. In 2020, the Urban/Suburban Deer Management Zone was re-established and comprises Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince Georges counties. Within this zone, the archery antlerless limit is unlimited.



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Archery is one of the safest sports in the United States. Most accidents involve the bowhunter falling out of a tree stand. In Maryland and Virginia, there have been no recorded incidents involving injury to persons, pets, or property caused by a bowhunter.

Bowhunters typically hunt from elevated positions or tree stands. This means that an arrow is shot at a downward angle. If it misses the deer, it goes harmlessly into the ground. An arrow, under most

conditions, cannot travel any appreciable distance once it hits even a twig or small limb. National surveys show that most deer harvested with a bow are shot at distances of 20 yards or less, which makes it ideal for hunting in and around suburban and urban areas.

Deer taken by reputable hunters are never “wasted.” All the meat (venison) is used, either by the hunter or by donation to local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. In Montgomery County, this is done by an organization called Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry. Property owners who wish to obtain venison may do so through arrangement with their hunter. [\[See details about this program here.\]](#)

Many individuals know little about hunting, particularly bowhunting. Bowhunting in residential

[MORE](#)

Deer Hunting, cont.

neighborhoods should never be undertaken by amateurs, but left to licensed, well-trained, skilled sportsmen.

HOW TO FIND A SAFE & RELIABLE HUNTER

In Montgomery County, several groups can link you to an expert bowhunter. The Animal Connection Deer Management Team (ACDMT) is an organization of skilled, veteran bowhunters with strict rules and enforcement to ensure the safety of hunters and the public. Most members of ACDMT are members of the Maryland Bowhunters Society, an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting safe and responsible bowhunting; educating the non-hunting public about the role of the bowhunter in wildlife management

and conservation; and educating bowhunters in safety, shooting skills, hunting techniques, and relations with property owners. Both groups strongly advocate ethical bowhunting within the laws of the jurisdiction hunted. A third organization is the Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland. (See below for websites).

Not every suburban yard is appropriate for bowhunting. The bowhunter will first tell you if your property has a suitable location for hunting. If it does, the bowhunter should provide you with copies of his/her hunting license, safety certificate, a release of liability form, and a copy of the permission form for you to sign, plus copies of the permission form for your neighbors to sign, if needed. Your contract or agreement with the bowhunter may stipulate what days and times hunting may take place, how you

will know that the hunter is at work, where the hunter will be shooting from, where bait will be located, whether the hunter may field dress the animal and leave remains on your property or not, and whether you wish to be gifted with venison for your own consumption.

GET BUY-IN FROM YOUR NEIGHBORS

Hunters are required to make every attempt to track, euthanize, and remove a wounded deer, even if it is no longer on the property where the shooting occurred. Under current law, owners of inhabited dwellings within 50 yards of the hunting location must give permission before hunting takes place. In seeking permission from your neighbors, you should draw the distinction between the shooting that will take place on

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Deer Hunting, cont.

your property and the permission that the hunter may need to enter your neighbor's yard, should a wounded deer stray onto their property. If your neighbors have questions or express anxiety or reluctance, it will help if you hold a meeting with them and the bowhunter(s). The bowhunter(s) can then explain how, where, and when the hunting will take place. It is crucial that your neighbors understand that this form of hunting is safe, humane, and presents no risk to people, pets, or property.

The 2022–2023 season for archery hunting has already begun but it is not too late to discuss archery hunting with your neighbors and local civic association and line up one or more hunters to work in your neighborhood. Hunting ends in January; dates varying depending on whether the deer are antlered or antlerless.

To find an experienced, licensed archery hunter, contact one or several of these organizations:

- [Animal Connection Deer Management Team.](#)
- [Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland.](#)
- [Maryland Bowhunters Society.](#) ■

Montgomery County Thanksgiving Parade Held Saturday Before T-Day

Saturday, November 19, 2022, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Larger than life inflatable turkeys and penguins, glittering floats, marching bands, dancing groups, and Santa and his elves! The Montgomery County Thanksgiving Parade is the only Thanksgiving Parade in the metro D.C. area.

Held in downtown Silver Spring, the exciting parade traditionally heralds the start of the holiday season. The parade steps off from Ellsworth Drive and Fenton Street and proceeds south on Georgia Avenue, ending at Silver Spring Avenue. It's free and *everybody* is welcome. #MOCOTHANKSPARADE



Fourteenth Annual Tribute to America's Veterans Concert in Silver Spring

Thursday, November 10, 2022, 6:00 p.m.

Montgomery County's annual "Tribute to America's Veterans" concert is Thursday, November 10, 2022, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. at American Legion Post 41 in Silver Spring. The annual concert features Klezmer music and Django Jazz with award-winning woodwind musician Seth Kibel and his band, the Kleztet. The concert is FREE and sponsored by Silver Spring Town Center, Inc., the Montgomery County Commission on Veterans Affairs, and the Silver Spring Sons of the American Legion Post 41. The address is 905 Sligo Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Parking is free.

Marine Corp Veteran Wayne Miller, who is Chair of the Commission on Veterans Affairs, will be the keynote speaker. Military dress is encouraged for attending veterans. Light hors d'oeuvres will be provided by the El Golfo restaurant. For more information, call 240.595.8818 or email lisa@silverspring-towncenter.com.

For more information about Veterans ceremonies and programs throughout November, [click here](#).



Minutes of October 10, 2022, MCCF General Meeting #936, 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. A total of 34 persons attended on the Zoom platform.]

Call to Order: Alan Bowser, President, called the Meeting to order at 7:33. Meeting is being recorded through the end of the formal program.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

Approval of September General Meeting Minutes: moved, seconded and approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report (Garson): Budget for FY 2023 contained in the newsletter (page 7). Dues are owing for year starting July 1, 2022. Budget estimates \$2,300 in dues and expenses of \$2,300. Budget moved and seconded, approved by voice vote. If we have an in-person awards dinner, we will revise the budget. Since July 1, annual receipts of \$375 and expenses of \$649, net negative \$274. Current bank balance is \$8,429.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Tues. Oct. 11, "Kojo in Your Community" will be holding open meeting at SS Civic Center. There will be a panel discussion on Thrive with the emphasis on the housing issues. They do want people to register but it's free and looks like it will be well-

attended. Print out registration and bring vaccination or negative test.

■ Nov. 10, Commission on Veterans Affairs and the American Legion will be holding a concert at American Legion Post in support of our veterans. Event will be from 6-10 with a paid bar. Elected officials will make presentations from 6 to 7.

■ The Thanksgiving Parade will be the Saturday before Thanksgiving. Civic Fed will march and HOAs can join the group.

PROGRAM: PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN ("PMP")

Speaker: Eli Glazier

This is the first effort to look at whole county to make walking/rolling safe, comfortable, and at least optional for short trips to be done

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October Minutes, cont.

that way. Goals to get more people engaged, and make it safe to ensure people don't get injured while participating.

Public Engagement started in September 2019. Sent out 60,000 postcards to public, got back 2,400 (better than expected) and have contacted homeowner groups.

Existing conditions report completed by March 2022. Crash analysis, pedestrian survey, extensive data collection on every sidewalk and roadside in the County including around schools. Recommendations development is ongoing since that point. Setting priorities for capital projects, including looking at informal shortcuts as to see where they are and how to incorporate them.

Design, Policy, and Programming: 34 Recommendations,

6 themes, 94 key actions. Themes are to build, maintain, protect, expand access, monitor, and fund. The presentation expanded on each of those themes and how they would be implemented.

Website resources are available here: [main website](#), [recommendations](#), and [tools and resources](#). One of the features on the site is a Pedestrian Prioritization Tool where one can assign values to ten separate factors and see how they affect the map priorities.

Timeline: after engaging with the community this summer, a draft went to the Planning Board in September. With further work this fall, they hope to finalize early next year.

There was then open discussion with Jacquie Bokow as moderator.

Mr. Glazier noted that they would welcome comments on priorities for the different recommenda-

tions; comments can be sent directly to him. He answered numerous questions from the chat, including how specific the plan could be. He noted that this was a master plan that did not get down to individual spaces but it would be used with the Complete Street Guide to decide what basic structures were needed and how given blocks measured up. They will continue to collect data on various metrics such as whether kids walking to schools goes up, etc., which will help them prioritize ongoing efforts.

Jason Satori, another MoCo speaker, noted that they had done a 2021 traffic monitoring report and will do another one in 2023, as well as also expecting that they will have a report on the bike master plan in 2023. Expecting to start pulling all of these together into a global report.

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October Minutes, cont.

They also noted that the "Twenty is Plenty" initiative that was being used worldwide to try to reduce speeds to that level particularly in older, more crowded areas. State has passed laws allowing us to do that and they will be looking at in some areas.

PROGRAM: STATE HIGHWAY – I-270/BELTWAY SPUR PROJECT

Speakers: Cathy Smith, liaison for SHA; Project Director Jeff Folden. Experts on call as needed.

Ms. Smith presented a Power Point discussing the scope and design of the project which included a traffic relief plan, managed lanes study, northern expansion, and use of a Public Private Partnership.

Phase 1 South—from GW Memorial Parkway to I-360. NEPA

review has been completed. Phase 1 North, would proceed up to I-70. Have done preliminary work; formal review is next year.

Private financing will save state about \$1.2 billion of the total \$3.75 to 4.25 billion; since the bridge needs replacing in any event, that is a pure saving to the state and allows a project we can't do with existing funding capacity. The HOT lanes are estimate to reduce delay on I-270 by up to 38% and decrease surrounding roadway delay by about 5%. Estimated about \$12.6 billion boost in area economy from the project. It will also provide payment for 355 BRT, upgrading the Shady Grove Metro and other transit centers, etc., and will be integrated with Park and Ride and other transit options. There will also be shared-use bike/pedestrian path across the bridge to connect with trails on either side of

river.

Ms. Smith also described the lengthy study process that had been carried on since 2019 and efforts to involve stakeholders. The bridge will be fully rebuilt while staying open; the new outside lanes will be built first and then traffic will be moved there while interior lanes are done.

The HOV lanes will go to HOT with an added HOT lane that are expected to improve speeds generally. They will cover a 12-mile length and will probably be less than \$4. The EIS process has resulted in significantly reduced impacts, and no businesses or residential buildings will need to be displaced.

There was then a discussion and question period.

There were concerns about whether this would just encourage further development that would

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October Minutes, cont.

fill the road back up again before long. In response to a question on the timetable, they stated that the assumption was that it would take about 5–6 years for the first phase to be complete and the second phase would start immediately thereafter. Ms. Smith also described the \$600 million allotted for transit work in County and stated that the approval of the project was conditioned on those transit commitments being made and fulfilled. The footprint of the roadway will not necessarily expand dramatically and they haven't needed to remove any homes. But it was also noted that some of the homes being left would only be 100 feet or so from the roadway, so that might be a mixed blessing.

A question was raised about the effects of teleworking and they noted

that traffic levels on the roads were back to pre-COVID levels so they think the project is needed regardless. The forest canopy will be reduced by 455 acres; there should be mitigation/restoration but concerns were raised about how well that worked in the past.

[Video recording ended at this time.]

There was general discussion on developments at the planning board and whether the Civic Fed should weigh in on the events and or taking any positions. It was noted that Liz Joyce will be speaking for Civic Fed on the Kojo Nnamdi show on Oct. 11. Some suggestions included looking at the current bicounty approach and whether it was useful any more; term limits for Planning Board chair; funding for a People's Counsel; and strengthening the IG position.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Legislation

■ A few areas we should continue to push include the Office of People's Counsel.

■ Peggy Dennis noted we should be proactive to push our delegation as to what *we* want to see them pursue and meet with them prior to their planning meeting this fall.

■ Liz Joyce noted better ethical controls over M-NCPPC should be set since there no current oversight requirements for them.

GENERAL BUSINESS

It was also announced that we need to elect new officers and have chairs for committees. There is a real need for more people to step up and take on leadership roles.

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 10:09 p.m. ■

MCCF Executive Committee Minutes October 20, 2022

By Karen Cordry

The Executive Committee met via Zoom at 7 p.m. Members present: Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Elizabeth Joyce, Joshua Montgomery, and Jacquie Bokow.

Members discussed the November 8th program on best practices for Montgomery County civic and homeowners associations. The featured speakers will be from the McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls Civic Association.

Members discussed the Montgomery County Council schedule to pass the General Plan draft, Thrive Montgomery 2050. They also discussed the turmoil at the Planning Department and its impact on countywide planning projects.

Members also discussed several upcoming events, including the Con-

servation Montgomery Annual Meeting, the Silver Spring Town Center annual Veterans Concert, and the Montgomery County Thanksgiving Parade and encouraged all members to support these events.

Members also discussed MCCF legislative advocacy efforts for the upcoming year to include funding for the Office of the People's Counsel, General Plan guardrails, deeply affordable housing and proposals for reform, and additional oversight of the Montgomery County Planning Board and M-NCPPC.

Jerry Garson highlighted some suggestions and concerns about the draft Pedestrian Master Plan and will submit some comments to the Planning Board staff.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm. ■

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

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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