

November Program: Protecting our Trees and Forest Canopy | Peggy Dennis has a proposal for dealing with vine-covered trees in both Montgomery County and the State: a “DOT Tree Hugger” program | **P. 3**

Public Meetings on American Legion Bridge and I-270 Corridor Program Scheduled | Maryland DOT staff will present in Bethesda, Gaithersburg, Frederick, and Rockville to gather community feedback | **P. 6**

Transportation Updates | Jerry Garson provides details on the draft Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program plans over the next six years | **P. 8**

MCTP Holds Public Meeting with MCPS COO | Acting Superintendent Brian Hull is scheduled to speak December 6 via Zoom | **P. 8**

MCCF Unveils New Online Membership Software | SimpliDues makes joining or renewing your Civic Fed membership easier than ever | **P. 9**

Like MCCF's Facebook Page and follow us on Twitter.

TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #947

Monday, November 13, 2023, 7:30 p.m. *online via Zoom.* Topic: “Protecting our Trees and Forest Canopy.”

! **Join the Zoom Meeting Here**

[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]

AGENDA, P. 2 • PROGRAM, P. 3

Meeting Minutes

October 9 Meeting #946 **P. 10**

Executive Committee Meetings

OCTOBER P. 13

Membership Application

JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM

Federation Meeting #947

Monday, November 13, 2023

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.10**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. November Program: Protecting our Trees and Forest Canopy **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.

The November meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 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 13, 2023, 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 854 8562 7976. No password is required.

We hope you will join us! ■

mccf

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

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

Civic Federation News

civicednews AT montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 15

November Program: Protecting Our Trees and Forest Canopy

By Peggy Dennis, MCCF First Vice President

Join us for our Monday, November 13th, MCCF meeting when Caren Madsen, Chair of the non-profit Conservation Montgomery, will share information about the county's tree programs and the new *Healthy Trees, Healthy Communities: A Guide to Tree Care in Montgomery County, Maryland*. This guide is the first of its kind to be produced specifically for our county. A digital version of the book can be located at [this link](#).

Have you noticed how many trees along our roads are being overwhelmed and smothered by vines? Thousands of trees are at risk of being killed if this problem cannot be addressed. Montgomery County's Parks Department already

has its Weed Warrior volunteers trained to cut down invasive vines in our parks. Based on my experience as an Adopt-a-Road volunteer collecting litter from our roadsides, I am proposing a similar program to have volunteers cut the vines and save these trees: a "DOT Tree Hugger" program. That proposal is below.



CONSERVING OUR TREES, COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE

Have you not noticed? Our trees are being overwhelmed and slowly killed by vines. All over Montgomery County. Actually, all over Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region!

The city of Takoma Park partnered with the Chesapeake Climate Action Network to train volunteers to eradicate vines from several thousand trees in the city's parks. Montgomery County Parks Department runs a Weed Warrior program that uses volunteers to take out tree-killing vines in our parks. Where else should this be done? Along our roads where vines of many types are relentlessly overwhelming and slowly killing thousands of street trees.

November Program, cont.

DOT runs an Adopt-a-Road Program to keep our roads litter-free. This is very nice, but should it not be a much higher priority to save the trees, both young and mature, along our thousands of miles of roads? Many are already dead. If we do not eliminate this scourge, we stand to lose many street trees.

There is also a public safety aspect to this problem. A dead tree along a road may topple over at any time, imperiling drivers and snarling traffic. I saw this recently when a vine-infested dead tree toppled over onto Canal Road in the District.

‘TREE HUGGER’ PROPOSAL

DOT should initiate a “Tree Hugger” or “Tree Savior” program using volunteers from a number of civic and conservation organizations:

■ Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.

■ Audubon Naturalist Society/Nature Forward

■ Sierra Club, Montgomery County Chapter

■ Conservation Montgomery

■ Maryland League of Conservation Voters

■ My Green Montgomery

■ Bethesda Green

■ Chesapeake Bay Foundation

■ Montgomery Countryside Alliance

■ Potomac Conservancy

■ Chesapeake Climate Action Network

■ Rock Creek Conservancy

■ Cedar Lane Ecosystem Study

Group

■ 350 MoCo

■ Bethesda Green

■ West Montgomery County Citizens Association

■ Biodiversity for a Livable Climate

■ Environmental Justice Team, Cedar Lane UU Church

■ Green Sanctuary Committee, Unitarian-Universalist Church of Silver Spring

■ Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions

■ Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee

■ Boy/Girl Scouts

■ High school students to earn volunteer service hours

■ When Governor Moore’s program to have high school graduates do a year of community service, these youths would make excellent workers, administrators, and overseers to work with other volunteers.

Training

Because our priority should be saving the trees, we suggest using a

November Program, cont.

short video training program that all volunteers can access in their homes and at their convenience. It should cover:

- Safety for the volunteers working along the roadsides.
 - Guidelines for working only in the public right-of-way.
 - A “How To” with visual demonstrations and tips for eradicating all vines on trees and the tools needed. Volunteers should not have to be trained to distinguish between native and foreign invasive vines.
 - Tips on what to say if challenged by those wondering what they are doing.
 - It is possible that training materials can be borrowed and edited from programs already in place
- Volunteers should:

■ Sign a “Hold Harmless Waiver” form exempting DOT from liability if a volunteer is injured while carrying out their assigned work.

■ Wear simple orange safety vests identifying them as “DOT Tree Hugger” or “DOT Tree Savior.”

■ Provide their own tools and equipment.

■ Carry a letter from DOT certifying them as a “Tree Savior” or “Tree Hugger” and spelling out what they can and cannot do.

■ Possibly carry a letter (copies for distribution) from the County asking homeowners to eradicate vines on their own trees.

■ Take photos of the trees they have liberated and provide data on the number of hours worked and trees saved.

The volunteers will be cutting the vines at or close to ground

level and pulling them back from around the tree trunks. This will not, however, kill the vines and they will come back. Over and over. One thing still to be determined is whether, to win the war in the long term, the county should undertake to kill the vines on the ground with herbicidal spray. If so, what department should be tasked with this responsibility? And what will the financial cost be?

GET A ROW TREE

Any resident can request that the [Montgomery County Department of Transportation](#) plant a tree in a right-of-way (ROW). MCDOT also depends upon residents to report concerns about the health of any right-of-way trees. When you contact MCDOT, a certified arborist will address your request. ■

Public Meetings on American Legion Bridge, I-270 to Gather Community Feedback

[The following is from an MDOT October 12, 2023, press release.]

The Maryland Department of Transportation announced a series of open house meetings from November 13-16 to engage the public on the American Legion Bridge and I-270 Corridor Program and gather community feedback as the program advances. The meetings provide the opportunity for corridor travelers, project neighbors, and other stakeholders to directly engage with the program team on potential multimodal transportation solutions for the corridor.

The open houses follow Governor Wes Moore's August 21 announcement of the path forward for the future of the I-495 and I-270 corridors with a comprehensive program to improve access, opportu-

nity, and quality of life in the Washington region through multimodal enhancements along the I-495 and I-270 corridors, including replacement of the aging American Legion Bridge.

The open houses will take place at three venues along the program corridor:

I Monday, November 13, 6:30-8:30 p.m., Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, 4301 East-West Highway, **Bethesda**. Transit Accessible: WMATA Red Line, Bethesda Station; Metrobus J2; RideOn routes 29, 32, 34, 47, 70.

I Wednesday, November 15, 6:30-8:30 p.m., DoubleTree Hotel, 620 Perry Parkway, **Gaithersburg**. Transit Accessible: Ride On routes 54, 55, 56, 59, 61.

I Thursday, November 16,

6:30-8:30 p.m., Frederick High School, 650 Carroll Parkway, **Fred-erick**. Transit Accessible: Connector routes 40, 50, 51.

I Saturday, December 2, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Thomas S. Wootton High School, 2100 Wootton Parkway, **Rockville**. Transit Accessible: Ride On routes 56, 301.

The same information will be available at each meeting at stations staffed by program team members. There will not be a formal presentation. Meeting materials will be available beginning on November 6 at www.americanlegionbridge270.com. The public is strongly encouraged to participate in the open house meetings. The Maryland Department of Transportation is committed to a collaborative approach to develop-

Public Meetings, cont.

ing transportation solutions for the region.

As part of the American Legion Bridge and 270 Corridor Program, the Maryland Department of Transportation is advancing the following transportation solutions alongside stakeholder engagement:

■ *Transit and Ridesharing.* Maryland will advance transit options and transportation demand management enhancements along the American Legion Bridge, I-495, and I-270 corridors. The program will implement strategies such as express bus options in Maryland and connections to Virginia, ridesharing incentives, and parallel transportation improvements, including MARC Brunswick Line enhancements and Bus Rapid Transit.

■ *Transit-Oriented Develop-*

ment. The Maryland Department of Transportation will advance Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) opportunities throughout the corridors. Maryland has previously supported TOD planning and implementation efforts throughout the WMATA Metrorail system. As part of this program, Maryland will look to accelerate investment in key corridor TOD projects to unlock new developments that create sustainable and inclusive communities.

■ *Phased Approach to Managed Lanes.* Implementation of managed lanes will be phased, with the American Legion Bridge, I-495 to the I-270 West Spur, and the I-270 West Spur being the focus for initial implementation. The section from the I-270 West Spur to I-370, including through the City of Rockville, will be addressed in a later phase. This phasing will allow for a rational

and fiscally prudent phased development.

■ *A Comprehensive Planning Strategy for I-270.* Maryland will launch a formal environmental study to identify the transportation needs of I-270 North of the Intercounty Connector/MD 200, consider a range of concepts, including transit and transportation demand management, and evaluate multimodal approaches for near-term implementation and construction.

■ *Engagement on Delivery Method.* Maryland will engage the public on the potential implementation of the managed lanes as a publicly funded and delivered project.

Those needing an interpreter for hearing/speech difficulties or assistance with the English language should email SHATitleVI@MDOT-maryland.gov in advance (indicate desired language in subject line). ■

The Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program

By Jerry Garson, Chair, Transportation Committee

The road show meeting on the Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program covering items for MoCo was scheduled to be presented on the evening of October 26, 2023, but was cancelled in the afternoon.

Maryland DOT's six-year capital budget for transportation projects—called the *Draft Maryland Consolidated Transportation Program FY2024–FY2029*—lists very few projects in Montgomery County.

There is no money listed for FY 2024 on the implementation of the innovative congestion management tools to reduce congestion on I-270, including the east and west I-270 spurs (31.5 miles). Improvements will include a series of roadway and technology-based improvements.

One of the projects that will not be completed is the improvements between Shady Grove Road northbound and I-370 which has major congestion in the afternoons and reduces the amount of traffic that can use the Intercounty Connector eastbound.

There is \$483,000 budgeted for completion of the engineering and utilities for the Brookville bypass for MD 97 Georgia Avenue.

There is for FY 2024 \$5,493,000 budgeted for Georgia Avenue Safety and accessibility improvements to MD 97 in Montgomery Hills, between MD 192 and MD 390. Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations will be included near the Beltway.

There is \$5,386,000 budgeted for Construct MD 185 Phase 3 intersection improvements at Jones

Bridge Road. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be provided where appropriate. BRAC Intersection Improvements to be completed in Fiscal Year 2024.

There is money to resurface and rehabilitate some roads in Montgomery County. ■

MCTL Meeting with MCPS

By Gordie Brenne, MCTL Treasurer

The Montgomery County Taxpayers League is hosting a meeting with MCPS COO and Acting Supt. Brian Hull on December 6 at 7:00 p.m. via Zoom. Open to the public and topics will include transparent budgets and reports, HR policies for effective principals and teachers, and internal controls for fraud, waste, and abuse. Please go to the [MCTL website](#) to register for the meeting. ■

New Online Software to Streamline MCCF Dues Payments, Member Communications

By Liz Joyce, Second Vice President

We are so proud to announce our new membership software, SimpliDues. Joining or renewing your membership is now easier than ever.

On our new online membership portal, the confidential information you provide will enable you to get automatic dues renewal reminders and online meeting notices and alerts from the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.

To pay or renew annual Civic Federation dues, [use this link](#). (There's also a link to this from the [MCCF website](#), of course!)

■ You'll see MAKE A PAYMENT.

■ Check the PAY DUES box. A drop-down menu will appear listing the amount of annual dues that correspond to the number of households in your civic association or

homeowners' association. OR you can register as an individual. CLICK the appropriate level.

■ **SELECT YOUR ORGANIZATION:** A drop-down menu will appear listing the names of many civic and homeowners' associations.

■ **I DON'T SEE MY ORGANIZATION IN THE LIST.** If you don't see your association in the list, ADD IT, by listing your organization's (1) name, (2) type, and (3) website address (if you have one).

■ **Click CHECKOUT.** On the next page, you list the primary contact for billing and communications AND your designated Delegates to the Montgomery County Civic Federation. You can list 1–4 Delegates as appropriate for the size of your association.

■ At the bottom of this page,

please PROVIDE YOUR CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD INFORMATION, then click PAY.

■ You will receive a receipt for the transaction by email. The link in this email will give you access to edit your entries at any time, so it's a good idea to bookmark it.

If you prefer to pay by check, please make checks payable to "Montgomery County Civic Federation." Mail to Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., P.O. Box 1123, Bethesda, MD 20827-1123.

If you mailed in your renewal, we will enter your information into the system, and you will receive future emails and renewal reminders from SimpliDues.

We thank you for supporting the Montgomery County Civic Federation! ■

Minutes of October 9, 2023, MCCF General Meeting #946, 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.]

1. Call to Order. Alan Bowser, President, called Meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. Meeting is being recorded. There were 52 participants.

2. Approval of Meeting Agenda. Moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote. The September 11 general meeting minutes were moved, seconded, and approved by voice vote.

3. Treasurer's Report. Jerry Garson reported \$1,330 in dues as of beginning of current fiscal year starting July. Expenses of \$770.75, net

balance of \$562. Bank balance of \$8,054. Projected budget of \$2,650 total revenue with dues of \$2,150. Projected expenses include postage \$190, website \$600, meetings \$50, awards dinner \$500, supplies \$300, committees \$50, memberships \$300, and insurance \$650.

4. Announcements

■ We will host Safe Silver Spring Meeting later this month. The Lieutenants of the 3rd Police District in Silver Spring and others will be there to talk about their actions and what they are planning.

■ There will be a Lantern Walk in Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville/North Woodside area. There used to be some activities on the bridge there but the structure was removed for Purple Line construction. They are

doing a walk on November 11 to keep the linkage active. The rain date is the 12th.

5. OCTOBER PROGRAM SPEAKERS. Planning Board Chair Artie Harris and Acting Planning Director Tanya Stern were the speakers.

Mr. Harris noted his prior activities as a developer with Bozzuto and then as head of the Montgomery Housing Partnership, which have given him 30 years of experience in developing multifamily housing and rental property. He talked about his vision for where the Board will be going, noting that it has been completely reconstituted with new members Shawn Bartley, Josh Linden, Jack Hedrick (with a finance back-

October Minutes, cont.

ground working on nonprofit issues), and Vice-Chair Mitra Pedoeem (who worked at the Parks Department for many years),

The program was recorded and is [available here](#), as is his PPT discussing these issues [[here](#)]. His main goals are to accelerate housing production, to implement the Thrive 2030 plans, and to work on regional coordination of traffic/business development. On the economic development side, they are looking at everything from small shops up to international bio-science facilities. They also have a Development Review Process Workgroup that is working on streamlining the approval process. He also noted that we have a huge park system with some 419 parks totaling more than 37,000 acres. There is ongoing renovation

and they are adding more urban parks.

Director Stern came from D.C. Planning offices. Her PPT [[here](#)] described the projects they are working on in terms of park design, master plans, and a variety of other topics, including an “Innovative Housing Toolkit” and “Attainable Housing Strategies.” Also putting together metrics on how Thrive 2050 is being implemented. Among the activities she noted are:

- Putting together a 2024 Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP) (which replaces the Subdivision Staging Policy). They are looking at meeting the 2050 goals and adequate infrastructure facilities; the first step is to evaluate changes made in 2020 changes to see how they have been working before they

propose anything new.

- Evaluating the Incentive Zoning point system put in place in 2011 for best practices and to make sure the points align with overall priorities and do a proper cost/benefit balance.

- Implementing Thrive 2050’s objectives of Economic Health, Community Equity, and Environmental Resilience.

- Considering Racial Equity and Social Justice issues. This is a major focus of planning and development. The County population has gone from about 95% white in 1960 to less than 40% now and much of the county has not dominant racial/ethnic group. The county has an active planning equity agenda to address past problems and ensure new prob-

October Minutes, cont.

lems do not develop.

■ Working to ensure community engagement. They have been doing virtual meetings since the pandemic which have been very useful and they will keep doing both kinds.

■ Using tools to keep focus on areas with greatest needs: Equity Focus Area, Community Equity Index—looking at a variety of indices.

There were many audience questions from what are next steps for Thrive 2050; to ways to increase community engagement (including points made about having direct engagement groups such as Area Neighborhood Councils as in D.C. or the possible reinstatement of the Office of the People's Counsel); to discussions about ensuring racial equity; to the environment (with a

number of the questions being noted as more matters for the Parks Department than the Planning Board); to the adequacy of the current infrastructure (and what funding is available to cover those issues); to how to preserve existing affordable housing and develop more such housing all over the county in the face of development pressures (where it was noted that the Dept. of Housing Cmty Affairs has responsibility for those units, but they have been studying those issues and how to deal with the economics of rehabbing older units). The last topic had the most questions and both Chairman Haris and Director Stern repeated their interest and willingness to hear from the community on the issues and to continue to engage with us.

6. Next Meeting will be on November 13 and the topic will be preserving good trees and dealing with invasive plants. Caren Mattson, the Chair of Conservation Montgomery, will be the speaker and will discuss a book she has written on care of neighborhood trees and a Tree Care 101 program with arborist who can walk through a neighborhood to describe what can be done.

7. Committees. We have eight committees and need help on all. Legislation is Peggy Dennis who noted she's the only one on this and can't really cover both county and state bills when both are meeting.

8. MCCF Communications. Leanne Tobias noted that Civic Fed

October Minutes, cont.

needs to do more to reach out to Civic Associations and community through a variety of means, such as online petitions, Survey Monkey petitions, fillable form letters, etc. She can do content but need help on the IT side. Kim Persaud is going to help us with some community engagement on the social side to get some in-person meetings for Happy Hour-type events.

9. Formal meeting ended at 9:15 p.m. There was further informal audience discussion about next steps to stay engaged on these issues. Final adjournment at 9:47 p.m. ■

Executive Committee Meeting Minutes October 19, 2023

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Attendees: Alan Bowser, Karen Cordry, Jerry Garson, Jacquie Borkow, Liz Joyce, Cheryl Gannon, and Peggy Dennis.

1. November 13 General Meeting. The topic will be on the tree canopy and dealing with invasive plants. Caren Mattson, who is the chair of Environmental Committee on behalf of Conservation Montgomery, has written a book—*Healthy Trees, Healthy Communities*—that will be the basis of her talk. Peggy Dennis will be inviting someone from County government to talk about invasive plants.

2. Treasurer's Report. Jerry Garson reported that dues received to date are \$1,370; expenses \$778; net of \$592. \$8,095.05 is the bank balance.

Liz Joyce will check on whether any of the local Associations we are targeting have joined yet.

3. Review of October Meeting. It was noted that the discussion was a fairly generalized discussion but they did indicate a willingness to continue to work with us so hopefully we can get into more detailed discussions later. We will be looking at the speakers' Powerpoints for places where there are issues we can drill down on.

Oct. ExCom Minutes, cont.

4. Kim Persaud has agreed to set up some social events in between the monthly meetings to give people a chance to actually meet with each other and stay in touch.

5. There was some discussion about how the Civic Federation is perceived, particularly with respect to the issues relating to Thrive 2050 and the other proposals for developing additional and more moderately priced housing, and that we needed to do a better job of making clear that we did support inclusion and support for communities at all income levels. Our concern with ensuring that adequate planning went on and that provision was made for necessary infrastructure should not be seen as incompatible with wanting those goals.

We can look at a statement on these topics that deals with all the necessary features—including preserving existing housing, creating more MPDUs, and ensuring needed infrastructure—which will likely require added funding for affordable buildings for actual working folks.

6. We have renewed our membership in Committee for Montgomery. Alan Bowser will be their secretary going forward. The next meeting is on December 15 from 7:00 to 9:30 a.m. at the Bethesda Marrott. It will be a legislative breakfast with all of the elected officials and other groups.

7. Newsletter items are due on the 26th. Peggy will do the article on the program; run info on the dues

system again, Peggy has sent information on meetings on the American Legion Bridge/I-270 project meetings in November. Liz will do an article about the Planning Board presentations, what else we need to know, and how to get more information about what the County is getting done on affordable housing. Peggy will also get notes in about requests for volunteers for two committees.

8. It was also suggested that we should add links to our website to other county agencies and activities, and to state offices to make the site a single place where people can go to get more information about a wide variety of activities they may want to get more information about.

Oct. ExCom Minutes, cont.

9. Alan Bowser noted that Mike Reilly, head of MoCo Parks will be leaving by the end of the year and we should push for a national search for director of that department as they are doing search for position held by Tanya Stern, i.e., Planning Director.

It was discussed that we should push for an Environmental officer and to reestablish the Office Of People's Counsel. Cheryl Gannon noted that PG County had such Counsel that was funded by the state and was included under state law. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org
info AT montgomerycivic.org
Twitter Feed @mcciviefed
[MCCF Facebook Page](#)

cfn

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except July and August by the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. 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.”

Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month. Send to CFN at [civiefednews AT montgomerycivic.org](mailto:civiefednews@montgomerycivic.org).

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

VIEW PAST ISSUES ONLINE [HERE](#)