

May Program: Housing Issues

| We continue the discussion begun at the April meeting | [P. 3](#)

MCCF Housing Policy White Paper

| This position paper provides guidelines for developing future MCCF positions on specific housing proposals before the Planning Board and the Council | [P. 5](#)

MCCF Resolution on Priorities, Approaches for Housing Policy, Legislation

| The ideas supported by the Civic Fed | [P. 10](#)

Nomination of MCCF Officers

| The slate of proposed officers for 2024–2025 is announced for voting by Civic Federation delegates via email ballot | [P. 14](#)

MCCF 2024 Annual Achievement Award Nominations Announced

| Check out this year's four nominees | [P. 15](#)

Montgomery County Taxpayers Want to Know What They're Getting for Their Money

| Various members of the Montgomery County Taxpayers League testify about the proposed \$7.1 billion County budget | [P. 17](#)

Karen Cordry | A celebration of life | [P. 20](#)

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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #953

Monday, May 13, 2024, 7:30 p.m. *online via Zoom*. Topic: "Continuing the Discussion of Housing Issues."

! [Join the Zoom Meeting Here](#)

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

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Meeting Minutes

April 8 Meeting #952 [P. 22](#)

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APRIL

Membership Application

[JOIN ONLINE](#) | [MAIL-IN FORM](#)

Federation Meeting #953

Monday, May 13, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: April General Meeting **P.22**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. May Program: Continuing the Discussion of Housing Issues **P.3**
7. Voting on Resolution **P.10**
8. Voting on Awards **P.15**
9. Committee Reports
10. Old/New Business
11. 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 May 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, May 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 **834 7019 1445**. 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 24

May Program: Continuing the Discussion of Housing Issues

The May General Meeting of the Civic Federation will continue our recent discussion of housing issues in Montgomery County.

At our April meeting, we heard from Montgomery County Planning Director Jason Sartori and the Planning Department's housing lead, Lisa Govoni. Their focus was the draft Attainable Housing Initiative Study and its recommendation, now before the Planning Board for their review.

As you will recall, a Civic Federation housing working group was appointed to review and discuss important housing issues under consideration by the Montgomery County Council and the Montgomery County Planning Board. This group has been chaired by Liz Joyce and Cheryl Gannon, co-chairs of the

Land Use and Planning Committee, and included Ken Markison, Brenda Freeman, Genevieve McDowell Owen, Chris Reynolds, Tony Byrne, and Joyce Gwadz. The White Paper prepared by the working group is included in this newsletter (on page 5) as is a Resolution on housing issues to be considered by the membership (see page X).

The issues surrounding housing in Montgomery County are complex and longstanding. Questions about attainable housing versus affordable housing, racial equity and social justice, homeownership versus rentals, demographic changes, adequate public facilities, access to transit, and environmental sustainability are all central to this discussion. Against this background, the working group sought and reached

consensus on useful ways that the County could support additional "affordable" housing for the majority of new residents forecast to move into the County over the next several decades.

To this end, the working group agreed that the following policies could help address the challenges to provide more affordable housing:

- Colocating affordable housing on County-owned properties;
- Adopting a simplified process for zoning flexibility for income-restricted housing on properties owned by faith-based organizations;
- Increased financial support for the Montgomery County Housing Initiative Fund;
- Increasing the capacity of Montgomery County's MPDU program;

May Program, cont.

■ Supporting the preservation of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH); and

■ Increasing attention to and focus on workforce housing, including housing for teachers, police, first responders, and public servants.

The policy changes and initiatives are further discussed in the White Paper included in this newsletter.

The process of developing a housing policy for the County must be a search for the best way forward and result in a dynamic roadmap to implement the results of that search. The working group believes that it is important that policymakers consider the existing wide variations, from urban to rural and in-between, in our County. It is also important that

new housing be distributed throughout the County, working through the master plan process. The goal is to increase the availability and affordability of housing for current and future residents while enhancing the quality of life across the County.

The working group further believes that the Civic Federation must reaffirm its commitment to Master and Sector planning for modifying zoning within planning areas, as those processes allow for consideration of important factors unique to a neighborhood, including existing density, transportation, infrastructure and adequate public facilities, and environmental concerns. These processes also allow for meaningful engagement with the specific community.

Where changes in communities are sought, they will be more timely and more successful if they gain local community acceptance and support. Community engagement with meaningful dialogue between community representatives and representatives of the County at every stage of the process is essential. With effective outreach and notice—and presented as a true search for solutions and not as a platform to sell a predetermined approach—community engagement can be highly effective. Meetings and town halls are excellent means for policymakers to become informed and educated by the views and concerns of residents, and vice versa. ■



Montgomery County Civic Federation Housing Policy White Paper

The Montgomery County Civic Federation acknowledges the predicted future growth in County population, welcomes new residents, embraces diversity, and supports providing equitable and affordable housing opportunities (both ownership and rental) to current and future generations of residents. These needs should be met through policies that are effective, environmentally sound, and based on data. This position paper provides guidelines for developing future MCCF positions on specific housing proposals before the Planning Board and the Council. MCCF wishes to partner with the County to achieve these goals.

PRIORITIES

Although estimates can vary, the

Metropolitan Council of Governments estimates that Montgomery County needs to add 41,000 housing units in the next ten years to meet housing demand and that 75% of this housing should be affordable to low- and moderate-income households (incomes between 30% and 150% of Area Median Income or AMI). Housing to meet this need will not be met by private investment alone. To this end, the following measures using governmental resources and programs should be priorities:

I Colocating affordable housing on County-owned properties. This has been accomplished with a few properties and should be continued and expanded. Colocation presents opportunities for public or



nonprofit/private developer partnerships to build more deeply affordable housing.

I Adopting a simplified process for zoning flexibility for income-restricted housing on properties owned by faith-based organizations. One effort in this direction is the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 24-01, also known as the Facilitating Affordable Inclusive Transformational Housing (FAITH) ZTA, which is pending before the Council. An ongoing effort to track data on success of this initiative and identify barriers that impede success is important.

I Increased financial support for the Montgomery County Housing Initiative Fund. The Montgomery Housing Initiative

Housing White Paper, cont.

(MHI) Fund is the County's local housing trust fund that provides loans to the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), nonprofit developers, experienced rental property owners, and for-profit developers to build new housing units, renovate deteriorated multifamily housing developments, preserve existing affordable housing, and provide special-needs rental housing.

Montgomery County's MPDU (Moderately Priced Dwelling Units) program has led the nation in inclusionary zoning requirements for more than fifty years. MPDU requirements provide that up to 15% of housing units in County residential developments are available for low-and moderate-income families. **The MPDU program should be reviewed to assess how well**

it achieves its four program goals: enable County residents and workers to purchase or rent affordable housing; better distribute low-and moderate-income households throughout the County; expand and retain an inventory of housing accessible to low- and moderate-income individuals; and provide funds for future affordable housing projects via windfall. To maximize the availability of low-and moderate-income units, policymakers should consider expanding MPDU's reach, where possible (by, for example, increasing the percentage of required units, adjusting the MPDU income requirements, requiring that MPDU units reflect the mixture of unit sizes available in the project, and ensuring that projects replacing projects meeting MPDU requirements at least main-



tain the percentage of affordable units). Policymakers should be mindful that too-stringent MPDU requirements can be counterproductive if they hinder the development of projects with additional affordable housing.

Where Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) exists in older multifamily developments slated for redevelopment, policymakers should seek to ensure that replacement projects will include affordable units at least equivalent in number, size, and rental cost to those currently available. The County should pursue antidisplacement initiatives in vulnerable communities.

Increasing attention to and focus on workforce housing, including housing for teachers,

Housing White Paper, cont.

police, first responders, and public servants. For this purpose, policymakers should utilize and consider expanding the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program where possible. Identify projects on County-owned or faith-based properties that might designate a specific number of units for the County workforce housing program lottery.

APPROACH

I The process of developing a housing policy for the County must be a search for the best way forward and result in a dynamic roadmap to implement the results of that search.

The process must be data-driven and informed by the work of a range of experts (including economists

and social scientists) with differing approaches and conclusions, all following rigorous accepted research standards of reliability, objectivity, and relevance. Policymakers should set benchmarks and periodic reporting requirements and must be willing to re-evaluate and change direction if initial (or modified) plans and tools are not achieving the intended results.

I It is vital that policymakers consider the existing wide variations—from urban to rural and in-between—in our County.

It is also important that new housing be distributed throughout the County, working through the master plan process. The goal is to increase the availability and affordability of housing for current and future residents while enhancing the quality of life



across the County.

I The Civic Federation reaffirms its commitment to Master and Sector planning for modifying zoning within planning areas, as those processes allow for consideration of important factors unique to a neighborhood, including existing density, transportation, infrastructure and adequate public facilities, and environmental concerns. These processes also allow for meaningful engagement with the specific community.

I The Civic Federation supports the goal of creating greater opportunities for home ownership and resulting wealth accumulation, particularly for communities that have historically been denied these opportunities. We note that 95% of the new multifamily housing approved

Housing White Paper, cont.

and built in Montgomery County since 2017 has been rental and not ownership housing. This trend must be analyzed, the data tracked, and policies put in place to promote more home ownership opportunities in new developments.

■ The Civic Federation notes that scarcity in housing—particularly for home ownership opportunities—is one factor causing housing prices to increase.

Scarcity can be worsened by recent trends in investor-owned properties and land banking. The SDAT recently noted an increasing trend in investors buying single-family homes in Maryland, and the estimate for inventory of investor-owned single-family homes in the D.C. metro area is now at 10%. There is a danger that first-time home buyers will have

a difficult time outbidding an institutional investor. The County should address these issues before trends worsen, looking at a variety of tools to discourage land banking or investors buying single-family homes, including possibly tax measures and owner-occupancy requirements as the County ADU law provides.

■ The MCCF reaffirms its commitment to the adequate public facilities ordinance and the need to evaluate the impact of new development on an area and the adequacy of public facilities.

DATA

■ There are conflicting views on the extent of the housing needs in our County and on how needs at different income and price points



should be prioritized and addressed. **Policymakers should compile reliable housing-related statistics that residents can easily understand.** Such data should include: the number of additional housing units needed, especially for those of low- to moderate-income (including workforce housing); how much of these housing needs can be accommodated by development under the current zoning requirements; how many residential units have been approved but are still in the pipeline (and, if construction has stalled, why, and how it might be expedited); and how many approvals have been pending for a number of years, suggesting that land has been “banked” as an asset. Median housing prices should be tracked on a regular basis.

■ Where zoning changes are



Housing White Paper, cont.

being considered, policymakers should prepare and share with residents relevant supporting data including: the types of housing sought; the extent to which zoning changes are needed to accommodate those types of housing and what those changes might be, under alternative scenarios; and projections of how much and what types of housing such changes might yield under different scenarios. Significant housing initiatives, such as the Attainable Housing Initiative, should begin with laying out specifics, including the number and type of ownership opportunities, tracking sale prices on homes sold after the initiative, as well as average rents on new units.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

I Where changes in communities are sought, they will be more timely and more successful if they gain local community acceptance and support. Community engagement with meaningful dialogue between community representatives and representatives of the County at every stage of the process is essential. With effective outreach and notice and presented as a true search for solutions and not as a platform to sell a predetermined approach, community engagement can be highly effective. Meetings and town halls are excellent means for policymakers to become informed and educated by the views and concerns of residents, and vice versa. ■



CIVIC FED TONIGHT!

*SEEKING POSSIBLE SPEAKERS
FOR YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION
MEETINGS?*

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

Resolution on Priorities and Approaches for Housing Policy and Legislation

Whereas, the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., acknowledges the predicted future growth in county population, welcomes new residents, embraces diversity, and supports providing equitable and affordable housing opportunities (both ownership and rental) to current and future generations of residents; and

Whereas, these needs should be met through policies that are effective, environmentally sound, and based on data; and

Whereas, the MCCF wishes to partner with the County to achieve these goals.

Therefore, be it resolved that the MCCF adopts the following Priorities and Approaches to Housing Policy and Legislation as the policy of MCCF and to guide MCCF

evaluation of housing legislation and policies as may be proposed by the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council.

*Approved this 13th day of May 2024
Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary*

Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. Priorities and Approaches to Housing Policy and Legislation

PRIORITIES

Although estimates can vary, the Metropolitan Council of Governments estimates that Montgomery County needs to add 41,000 housing units in the next ten years to meet housing demand and that 75% of this housing should be affordable to low-

and moderate-income households (incomes between 30% and 150% of Area Median Income or AMI). Housing to meet this need will not be met by private investment alone. To this end, the following measures using governmental resources and programs should be priorities:

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Resolution/Priorities, cont.

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Resolution/Priorities, cont.

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Resolution/Priorities, cont.

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Nomination of MCCF Officers 2024–2025

At its April meeting, the MCCF Executive Committee received a report from the Nominations Committee recommending the following individuals to serve as Officers of the Montgomery County Civic Federation in the 2024–2025 membership year:

■ **President:** Cheryl Gannon, Woodside Civic Association

■ **First Vice President:** Peggy Dennis, West Montgomery County Citizen's Association

■ **Second Vice President:** Elizabeth Joyce, Sarasota Village Neighbors

■ **Secretary:** Alan Bowser, Park Hills Civic Association

■ **Treasurer:** Jerry Garson, Regency Estates Civic Association

New Officers, cont.

The Executive Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommendations of the Nominating Committee and to present the nominations to the membership.

The Executive Committee wants to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their service: Jerry Garson, Chair; Elizabeth Joyce, Jacquie Bokow, Richard Kaffunger, Ira Unger, Ken Markison, and Chris Reynolds. ■

MoCo Civic Federation 2024 Annual Award Nominees

By Awards Co-Chairs Peggy Dennis and Alan Bowser

At its April meeting, the MCCF Executive Committee received a report from the Awards Committee unanimously nominating the following groups and individuals to receive the annual awards from the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., for 2024.

THE WAYNE GOLDSTEIN AWARD

The Wayne Goldstein Award recognizes outstanding public service contributions by an individual or group in Montgomery County. This year we nominate two organizations united in one common purpose: **Conservation Montgomery** and **Tree Friends United**.

Both of these dynamic nonprofit organizations support environment

protection and sustainable development. They are working with the County's Department of Transportation on a task force to address the problem of invasive plants in our communities by establishing a program to allow volunteers to cut the vines jeopardizing the trees along our public roads and highways. Conservation Montgomery brings a wealth of advocacy experience to this project and Tree Friends United provides the hands-on experience needed to make the program work.

Conservation Montgomery led the Trees Matter coalition, which resulted in the passage of two landmark Montgomery County tree laws in 2013. The successful "Tree Montgomery" planting program is a result of the urban canopy bill.



2024 Awards, cont.

Tree Friends United started a year ago with a small group who, with the blessing of Glen Echo Park, began to cut the invasive vines that were strangling and smothering so many of the trees on the Park's perimeter. They now number more than 130 activists concerned with the accelerating spread of invasive species overwhelming our parklands, roads, and neighborhoods. These volunteers assist the National Park Service (NPS) and the Montgomery Parks Department doing the "hands-on" work to remove vines smothering trees and other invasive species in the greater Glen Echo area.

THE SENTINEL AWARD

The Sentinel Award is awarded annually by the Civic Federation to an individual or group, typically

outside government, for a significant contribution to good government at the local level. This year's nominee is the **Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic Association**.

For more than 50 years, **SOECA** in Silver Spring has mobilized its community resources to address issues of environmental protection, public safety, pedestrian safety, traffic, and community development.

THE STAR CUP

The Star Cup honors a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding service on behalf of Montgomery County. This year's nominee is **Alan Bowser**, who was elected President of MCCF in 2020.

During his tenure, he has worked to increase the Federation's membership and to raise its profile within the County. He currently serves as President of the Park Hills Civic

Association in Silver Spring and as President of Safe Silver Spring, Inc., a community-based nonprofit established to facilitate dialogue and cooperation between residents and the MoCo Police Department. As MCCF President, Bowser has focused attention on many issues of community concern, notably, public and pedestrian safety, environmental protection and sustainability, affordable housing, transportation, land use and planning, community engagement, and transparency and accountability. Representing the Federation, he is Secretary of the Committee for Montgomery, Inc.. He is an attorney in private practice in Silver Spring.

The Executive Committee thanks the members of the Awards Committee for their service: co-chairs Peggy Dennis and Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Daniel Meijer, and Jay Elvove. ■

Mont. County Taxpayers Want to Know: What are They Getting for Their Money?

*By Gordie Brenne, Treasurer,
Montgomery County Taxpayers
League*

Testifying about the proposed \$7.1 billion county budget, the leaders of the Montgomery County Taxpayers League (MCTL) called on the County Council to roll back the unnecessary property tax increase, implement more incentive controls, and share performance data so residents can see what they are getting in the proposed budget. MCTL pointed out that the budget under review by the Council is an incomplete operating plan because it lacks incentives and performance targets.

TESTIMONY EXCERPTS

MCTL President Esther Wells asked the Council to reverse the

4.7% property tax increase it approved this year saying it is not necessary because the county has a 15% fund balance reserve, above and beyond the required 10%. Wells recommended that the Council could reverse the 4.7% tax rate increase and restore the CPI limit on property tax receipt increases. Alternatively, the Council could use the reserve's excess to reduce debt, currently costing the county \$450M at 6.4% for payments and interest annually. Wells told the Council that, "Taxpayer fatigue is one of the leading causes for residents and businesses choosing to migrate to places outside Montgomery County and Maryland. Montgomery County must focus on growing its economy and remaining competitive. We cannot tax or fee our way into more

revenue."

MCTL Treasurer Gordie Brenne told the Council, "This is the year for redemption after last year's budget debacle, and taxpayers want accountability and transparency." He pointed to last year's 4.7% tax rate increase called an "emergency" for the purpose of funding schools but it was neither an emergency nor did it fund schools. Instead, it gave county employees "huge pay increases of more than 10% and funded projects not approved in the budget process."

Brenne further explained that too many fixed-income property owners and renters were hurt by the combination of tax-rate increase and by record property assessment increases resulting, in

MoCo Taxpayers, cont.

cases, in more than 20% increase in property assessments and 10% tax increases without commensurate performance increases.

Brenne called on the County Council to share performance data. The budget should include information that responds to questions such as:

- How much will crime be reduced by the proposed budget?
- How many more affordable housing units will be started next year with additional subsidies?
- Why is WSCC raising water bills when it has a 20% lost-water rate? Why not fix the problem?
- How many new riders could be added by shifting bus capacity to popular routes?
- How many more MCPS students will become proficient in literacy

and math next year?

MCTL leaders made substantive recommendations for the Council to address in the 2025 budget:

1. Severe Inequality: Low-Performing and High-Performing MC Public Schools

In her testimony, Leigh Henry called on the County Council to respond to the demographic shifts in the county and the growing inequalities between low-performing and high-performing public schools, so severe that it undermines economic development in the county. “In Gaithersburg, the number of adults without a high school diploma increased 41%. These newcomers—high-achieving children of immigrants and low-skilled, workers escaping foreign violence—want the same thing: a good education and a bright future

for their children. Highly educated young professionals will not send their children to schools with abysmal achievement scores. Instead, they move to access crowded, high-performing schools. Thrive will not change this.”

She pointed out, “Property values fail to keep pace in areas with low-performing schools, and pockets of poverty expand. Yet affordable housing remains out of reach for low earners. In neighborhoods served by high-performing schools, there is virtually no housing availability. She called on the Council to be innovative, “to put everything on the table—financial incentives, creation of smaller school districts, charter schools in areas where the public school are failing.”

2. Tie the MCPS Budget to Im-

MoCo Taxpayers, cont.

proving Student Outcomes

Gordie Breene testified, “The biggest transparency problem is that reading and math proficiency rates are not disclosed in the budget, even though they are below pre-Covid levels for low-income kids and little progress has been made in spite of all the money we’re throwing at the problem. The budget request also fails to disclose that interventions and tutoring for struggling low-income students reach fewer than half of them. Unfortunately worse, the proposed budget doesn’t include any significant plans to expand teacher interventions or tutoring and what’s currently being done is buried in base spending activities, without disclosure. The biggest accountability problem is that MCPS

doesn’t set any performance targets for low-income kids and cannot be held accountable for performance and related costs since the budget isn’t traceable to intervention and tutoring strategies. This leads to the biggest problem of all: incentives. The accountability and transparency problems are management, not money problems, and new incentives are needed.

3. Redirect MCPS Overhead to More Instruction

Brenne testified that, at “present, 45 cents of every dollar is spent by MCPS on non-instruction. The 45% spent on non-instruction grows every year under the Maintenance of Effort mandate controls the county has implemented and acts much like a cost-plus contract.”

4. Establish an Independent Inspector General

Joan Fidler testified that MCPS “is a \$3 billion high-risk enterprise with 160,000 students and 27,000 staff. What are we as taxpayers and more important, our children, getting for this \$3+ billion? Where is the oversight? Where are the results? The part time Board of Education has failed miserably. Are there any other Beidleman fiascos hidden in the underbelly of the school system? Do we really expect 2 FTEs in the County’s IG Office to oversee what appears to be an ungovernable organization? A structural change is the only solution. We need an independent MCPS Inspector General with full statutory rights to review, investigate, and oversee the governance of this \$3 billion enterprise, an that

MoCo Taxpayers, cont.

IG can investigate complaints, an IG that can review outcomes for heavily funded programs, an IG that can check for internal controls, an IG that can ensure that the Board receives data and information unfiltered by unelected bureaucrats, an IG that can question sole source contracts, an IG that can compel the Board to comply with its findings and recommendations. In sum, an IG that can hold the system accountable.” She asked the County Council to work with County legislators to establish an independent IG at MCPS. ■

Karen Cordry: A Celebration of Life

By Alan Bowser, MCCF President

The Celebration of Life event for Karen Cordry, a highly respected member of the Montgomery County community, was a deeply moving experience. Karen was an extraordinary individual who dedicated her life to public service and made significant contributions to our community.

At the time of her untimely passing, Karen held several key positions within the community. She served as the Vice Chair of the Montgomery County Charter Review Commission, the President of the Kensington Heights Civic Association, and the Secretary of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. Her leadership extended to the Wheaton Urban Development Advisory Committee, the Wheaton Redevelopment Advi-

sory Committee, and the Planning Board’s Attainable Housing Advisory Group. She was also a valued member of the Ten Mile Creek Coalition.

Karen’s commitment to her community was evident in her successful campaign against the establishment of a Costco mega gas station in her neighborhood. Her tireless efforts and strategic leadership led to a significant victory for her community. In addition to her local involvement, Karen was a long-standing senior staffer of the National Association of Attorneys General. Her colleagues revered her as a “titan of the Bankruptcy Bar,” a testament to her expertise and dedication.

In recognition of her outstanding public service, the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.,

Karen Cordry, cont.

awarded Karen the Civic Federation's Star Cup in June 2023 (presentation shown at right). This prestigious award is given to an individual who has performed exceptional public service on behalf of Montgomery County.

The celebration of Karen's life was held at the Rock Creek Mansion in Bethesda. Friends and relatives from all corners of the country came together to honor Karen's memory. The event was beautifully organized by Donna Savage, Peggy Alpert, and Stuart Phillips, who deserve our heartfelt congratulations for creating such a fitting tribute.

The celebration was attended by a host of distinguished guests, including Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, Special Assistant to the County Executive Dale Tibbitts,



Montgomery County Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez, Maryland State Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, and Maryland State Delegate Jared

Solomon. Other attendees included Montgomery County Democratic Committee Member Shruti Bhatnagar; MCCF representatives Alan Bowser, Carol Ann Barth, Jim Zepp, Paula Bienfeld, Danila Sheveiko, Jerry Garson, and Dan Meijer; along with Mark Wenner, Jeff Griffin, Joe Libertelli, Laura Henderson, Peter Henderson, Karen's partner Stuart Phillips, and many others.

Karen's life and work left an indelible mark on our community. Her dedication to public service, her leadership, and her unwavering commitment to the betterment of Montgomery County will continue to inspire us. As we remember Karen, we are reminded of the profound impact one individual can have on a community. Her legacy will live on in the many lives she touched and the positive changes she brought about in Montgomery County. ■

Minutes of the MCCF General Meeting #952, April 8, 2024, via Zoom

By Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

I Call to Order. The meeting was called to order by President Alan Bowser at 7:35 p.m.

I Approval of the Agenda. The agenda for the April 8, 2024, meeting was approved with amendments.

I Approval of the Minutes. The minutes of the March 11, 2024, meeting #951 were approved.

I Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a Federation bank balance of \$7,211.00.

I April Program: Housing in Montgomery County. Montgomery County Planning Director Jason Sartori and Housing Planner Lisa Govoni discussed housing issues in Montgomery County, with a particular emphasis on the Planning Staff draft on the Attainable Housing

Initiative Study under consideration by the Planning Board. The draft can be [viewed here](#).

I Delegates asked a variety of questions about the Attainable Housing Initiative draft, including questions about plans for priority housing districts, pattern book conformance, equity, owner occupancy, adequate public facilities, rentals, homeowners insurance, the housing pipeline, small lots, parking requirements, the recommended walk shed around transit, affordable housing, community land trusts, tax abatements, ties to bus rapid transit and the residential capacity analysis.

A recording of the General Meeting is online [2:32 in length] may be [viewed here](#).

I Proposed Bylaws Amendments for 2024 Only. Members

discussed and approved amendments to the MCCF bylaws for voting and elections in 2024. The amendments would apply to 2024 only.

a. Election. The amendment ratified by the membership: *3. Officers shall be elected by the annual meeting in June and shall assume office at the close of the June meeting.*

b. Voting. The amendment ratified by the membership: *Voting shall be by email balloting. In the case of email balloting, all eligible Federation delegates will be sent a ballot containing the names and association affiliations of the nominees. Voted ballots must be timely returned to the Nominations Committee for the vote to be tallied and reported at the June General meeting.*

April Minutes, cont.

ing.

I Awards Committee. The 2024 MCCF Awards Committee was established to include Alan Bowser and Margaret Dennis as co-chairs, with members Jay Elvove, Dan Meijer, and Jerry Garson. Members will nominate awardees for the Star Cup, the Wayne Goldstein Award, and the Sentinel Award. The Committee was approved by the membership.

I Nominations Committee. Alan Bowser recommended members of the 2024 Nominations Committee to include Jerry Garson, Chair, and Liz Joyce, Jacquie Bokow, Richard Kaffunger, Ira Unger, Ken Markison, and Chris Reynolds. The Committee was approved by the membership.

I Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m. ■

Executive Committee April 18, 2024, Minutes

By Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

The meeting was called to order by MCCF President Alan Bowser at 7 p.m. Members present: Alan Bowser, Peggy Dennis, Elizabeth Joyce, Cheryl Gannon, Jerry Garson, and Dan Meijer.

I Treasurer's Report. Jerry Garson, Treasurer, presented the Treasurer's Report.

I The April 8 General Meeting Debrief. Members discussed the April 8 General Meeting program with guests Jason Sartori and Lisa Govoni of the Montgomery County Planning Department on attainable housing issues. Members agreed to prepare written comments to the Planning Board on the Civic Federation's concerns about the Planning Staff draft and issues arising from

the Planning Board Work Sessions.

I May General Meeting. Members agreed that the May General Meeting would focus on Housing Issues, and particularly on the White Paper developed by the Land Use and Planning Committee. The membership would be asked to approve a Resolution which would include the White Paper in its entirety. Members agreed to include both the White Paper and the Resolution in the May 2024 newsletter.

I Nominations Committee. Jerry Garson, Chair of the Nominations Committee, presented the recommendations of the Committee for officers for the 2024-25 membership year. The Executive Committee unanimously voted to approve the following nominations: Chery Gan-

April ExCom Mtg., cont.

non, President; Peggy Dennis, First Vice President; Elizabeth Joyce, Second Vice President; Alan Bowser, Secretary; and Jerry Garson, Treasurer. The Executive Committee expressed its thanks to members of the Nominations Committee. Ballots will be sent to all Federation Delegates after the May General Meeting.

I Awards Committee. Peggy Dennis, co-chair of the Awards Committee, presented the recommendations of the Committee for Civic Federation Awards for 2024. The Executive Committee unanimously voted to approve the following nominations: The Wayne Goldstein Award: Tree Friends United and Conservation Montgomery, Inc.; The Sentinel Award: The Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens Association; and The Star Cup: Alan Bowser,

President, Montgomery County Civic Federation, and President, Park Hills Civic Association.

The Executive Committee expressed its thanks to members of the Awards Committee. The Awards recommendations will be presented to the membership at its May General Meeting.

I 2024 Annual Meeting. The Annual Meeting will be held on Monday, June 10, 2024. It was suggested to hold the meeting at the American Legion Post 41 in Silver Spring, Maryland. At the meeting, the results of the MCCF Elections would be announced, and the 2024 election results would be presented. Details about the location need to be finalized.

Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. ■

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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.”

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