



# CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation

Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

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733rd Session

www.montgomerycivic.org

December 2001

## Charter Review Commission Hearings

—I. Dean Ahmad, Ph.D., President

Thanks in part to the efforts of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, five of the members of our County Council are elected by the people of the district they represent. Four are still elected at-large. The Charter Review is holding a series of public forums to consider “whether the current system of County Council representation adequately addresses the increased demographic and economic diversity of the county and the prospect that its diversity will continue to increase.”

Four options are under consideration: (1) to retain the existing system without change; (2) to increase the number of single-member Council districts; (3) to increase the number of Council members from each district; and (4) to change the way in which the Council members are elected (such as party lists or cumulative voting.)

The first of these hearings was held on November 14 and I attended representing the Civic Federation. In addition to three Commission members (including commission chairman Kenneth Clark), several past and present County Council members participated and a woman from the League of Women Voters. Most attendees were happy with the current system. Former Councilman William Hanna and I were not. Mr. Hanna preferred the old system, objecting that the current system puts too much pressure on Council members. I argued that the Civic Federation had supported the current system as a step in the right direction, but that the more direct influence that voters have on their representatives the better.



Our October delegates' assembly was held in the cafeteria of the County council building.—Photo by I. Dean Ahmad

I urged the Commission to present their considerations to a general assembly of the Civic Federation and hear the views of our members assembled there. They did not accept my invitation, but they did note that two more hearings will be held in December and January and our constituent organizations are urged to send representatives to address these issues directly.

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## Delegate Meeting Minutes

Nov. 13, 2001

–by William Skinner and Charles Wolff

The business meeting was called to order by President Ahmad at 9:05 p.m. Additions to the agenda: under “old business”: referendum reform. Under “new business”: the Purple Line, NIH parking, Police helicopters. Minutes from previous meeting accepted as published in the Newsletter.

Dick Strombotne on the Referendum to change charter on number of signatures to get on ballot. MCCF needs to notify our own associations. He recommends a committee to oversee project. Volunteers are: Jerry Garson, George Sauer, Wayne Goldstein & Mark Adelman.

Cary Lamari on Zoning. Cary attended hearings. Some people want to change “shall” to “must”. Suggested that some issues need to be defined in the ordinance. Lamari will write up his suggestions to be placed on the MCCF website.

Charles Pritchard on Police Helicopters. Charles offered a resolution asking the County to buy three helicopters for Police Department. Time to debate was extended twice. Peggy Dennis made a motion to first have a program on the subject at a Delegates’ Meeting. President Ahmad ruled motion would be taken as a motion to postpone until there is a Delegates program on the issue. Passed.

Charles Wolf on Canada Dry Building: This is a technical correction to a previous resolution to recommend historic preservation of entire Canada Dry building in Silver Spring. Now **we ask to preserve at least 5% of the Canada Dry Building that is most significant architecturally.** Five seconds obtained. Passed.

New Business: Purple Line. No one wanted to say anything. Dropped.

Corridor Cities Transitway Terminal: Dick Strombotne moved **that Federation work to have proposed terminus located north of Route 121 with easy access to Route 355 and I-270.** Passed unanimously.

NIH Parking: Jeanne Goldstein introduced resolution to **urge NIH to retain all the parking spaces to which it is entitled, since, if relinquished, spaces would go**

**to permit development elsewhere in the Bethesda CBD thus adding to congestion and air pollution.** Motion passed unanimously.

Wayne Goldstein questioned amount of spending for construction at Montgomery College. Limited growth in student population would not appear to justify such high expenditures. Brief discussion followed. No decisions or vote taken.

Meeting adjourned.

## Ex-Comm Meeting Minutes

Nov. 15, 2001

–by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

Meeting started at 8:07, President Dean Ahmad presiding. Quorum is met. Minutes are accepted. Treasurer’s Report. \$2274 in checking; \$5157 in savings. Discussion regarding the eligibility of COST voting status is postponed.

Referendum reform. Dick Strombotne. Distributes proposed language, and a strategic plan. Goal is to get this issue on the ballot in November 2002. Dick moves appropriation of up to \$150 for printing petitions. Seconded. Concerns of costs were raised. Richard Zierdt knew of no money that the MCCF had spent on any specific issue in the past. Review of the bylaws says that the Ex-Comm may approve amounts up to \$100 in “emergencies.” President rules that the motion is not an emergency. No vote is taken on this motion.

County property tax. John Nelson & Kevin Schuyler. Property taxes are being increased to reflect actual market value of homes when sold, rather than waiting until the end of the usual 3 year assessment cycle. Pat Cummings moves that **the Ex-Com recommend to the general membership to revive the Property Tax Assessment committee.** Seconded. Passes. Jean Goldstein moves that recent homebuyers have been unfairly targeted by Petitions for Review by the County Dept of Finance. Seconded. Tom DeGraba moves to amend the motion to suggest **that a letter be written to Councilman Howard Denis to review the practice by the Dept. of Finance of targeting recent home sales.** Seconded. Passes 5 - 3. Pat recommends that **real estate agents be required to notify prospective homebuyers of this practice.** Seconded. Motion passes. Kevin will write correspondence.

Police review board. Pat Cummings has been attending police review meetings. Citizen attendees are not being given an adequate chance for input. Steve Block, ACLU attorney, has insisted that the board chair be a lawyer. Ex-Comm agrees with Pat.

Smart Growth. Dean asks for suggestions for speakers for a Saturday Workshop on the issue.

Legislation. Dean Ahmad. Suggests that the number of Councilmanic districts be increased. Richard moves that the Ex-Comm recommend to the MCCF general membership that the number of Councilmanic districts be increased from 5 to 7 and the number of at-large members be reduced from 4 to 2. Passes.

Programs. February: County finance and budget. March: Police Review Board with Pat Cummings to invite speakers. Police Helicopters: Bob Abrahms and Charles Pritchard recommend that Montgomery County purchase police helicopters for public safety and general security. Federal funding may also be available. Police may speak on police helicopters. April: Dick suggests a program on the Transportation Policy Review. May: Bill Skinner suggests a speaker on monorail for May. Dean suggests an alternative view as inspired by the Simpsons. Environment Committee. Charles Pritchard. Attended the Matthew Henson public forum. Main issue is whether or not to pave the trail. Park and Planning wants it paved; MCCF has taken the position favoring not paving the trail.

Membership. Richard recommends that paid members be printed in the Newsletter. Ex-Comm agrees. Thursday, Dec 20 is next Ex-Comm meeting.

Meeting adjourns at 10:11 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Richard Zierdt, MCCF secretary

## Update on the Transportation Policy Report

*–by Dan Wilhelm, 2nd Vice President  
& Chairman, Transportation Committee*

You may have noticed the letters to the editor about the failure of the Transportation Policy Report (TPR) Task Force (TF) to support the ICC. The letters are from the AAA, Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce and others who lambasted transit supporters, environmentalists, and community leaders as "anti-road" members. It is true that 13 of the 33 members could not support the ICC, but it is anything but true that we were anti-road. We proposed several packages that included land use changes for future development, improved local bus service, various rail lines and a great many road improvements. The packages included about \$2 billion in transit projects and over \$4 billion in road projects. The pro-ICC group however decided to oppose every package that did not include the ICC. This opposition extended to the large number of projects in common to both the road emphasis and transit emphasis scenarios presented in October to the public for comment. As a result, the TF ended up recommending only 10 small projects and a number of policies, some of which were watered down. The recommended projects were nine metro stations and the widening of River Road inside the Beltway. The policies can be found on the TPR web site: [www.movemontgomery.org](http://www.movemontgomery.org). To be included as a TF

	2025 road	2025 transit	2050 road	2050 transit
Road Trips	0.5%	-3%	0.2%	-5.2%
Transit Trips	-2.3%	15.7%	0.2%	20.6%
Road Avg Trip time	-2.6%	-2.7%	0.8%	-0.7%
Transit Avg Trip time	-3.2%	-10.0%	-0.2%	-7.8%
Vehicle miles traveled (VMT)	11.7%	0.7%	12.6%	-3.1%
Severely Congested VMT	-27.5%	-7.8%	-1.9%	1.8%

Actual Numbers	1998				
Severely Congested VMT	19.1%	21.6%	27.3%	31.7%	32.9%
Job Accessibility in 45 minutes	2091K	1990K	2137K	2155K	
CLRP and Master Plan Base	1849K	2000K			

recommendation, a single project had to receive either a consensus vote of at least 28 or be part of a package that received a vote of at least 2/3 of the TF (i.e. 22)

Since the October outreach effort, modeling results for the two scenarios have been developed. It should be noted that the public overwhelmingly (by a 3 to 1 margin) supported the transit emphasis scenario. Before summarizing the results, let me refresh your memory about the contents of each scenario. The thrust of the road emphasis scenario was to provide roads while the thrust of the transit emphasis scenario was to improve transit sufficiently to make it a viable choice to driving, to make communities more pedestrian friendly, and to protect the environment. The road scenario proposed \$4.2B worth of projects by 2025 and \$8.7B by 2050 and included the ICC, Techway Light, I-270 widening by 4 lanes toward Frederick, I-495 widening, Montrose Parkway and retention of the master planned land use. The transit scenario proposed the inner purple line, rail on New Hampshire from Langley Park to White Oak, extension of the red line to Metropolitan Grove, North Bethesda transitway, I-270 widening by 2 lanes toward Frederick, adding a northbound lane on the I-270 west spur, widening Muncaster Mill, adding a new road from US29 to US1 along ICC ROW and changing the land use to better balance jobs and housing throughout the county. Both scenarios included improved bus service, Corridor Cities transitway, Georgia Avenue Busway and many smaller local road improvements.

Let me share a few of the results with you shown in the table on the preceding page. Note: 2025 is compared to CLRP and 2050 is compared to master plan build out.

The data shows that both scenarios did better than existing county plans - CLRP and Master Planned. The roads in the future are more congested with either scenario. The road scenario resulted in people driving further. Each scenario did better in some measures. The ICC was the facility within the road scenario that provided the most benefit. Those who opposed the ICC felt that the environmental cost was very high (much worse than any other project), the monetary cost was too high for the limited benefit, that the Council and Governor have decided not be build it, and Federal approving agencies have stated they will not approve it.

There was the question of how well the model predicts the future. Those who support transit believe that the model understates the number of people who will ride transit. The model is calibrated to late 1990s ridership

and does not factor in recent shifts to transit by people trying to avoid road congestion. It also does not address increases in ridership that will occur if the existing transit shortcomings are fixed and road changes are made to improve bus travel times. There are a number of studies showing that bus ridership will be much higher if the shortcomings are addressed. As such, the transit scenario is positioned to take such a shift, whereas the road scenario does not.

One question that was hotly debated was the benefit of changing land use. Both scenarios were modeled with each set of land use patterns. The results show sufficient improvements with the change in land use for both scenarios (revised land use compared with master planned land use):

Scenario	Trips		Travel Time	
	Roads	Transit	Roads	Transit
Roads to Roads	-4.5%	14.7%	-2.1%	-4.8%
Transit to Transit	-4.7%	14.3%	-2.5%	-5.2%
Roads to Transit	-5.4%	20.3%	-1.4%	-7.7%

The full report will not be available until late December. I suggest the TPR web site at [www.movemontgomery.org](http://www.movemontgomery.org) be checked from time to time for the latest information. The Planning Board is having a hearing on December 6 on the recommendations and policies. They will hold work sessions during December and then present a recommendation to the Council by year-end. I understand that the Council will likely hold hearings in January-February.

## Update on Referendum Reform

—by Dick Strombotne  
Vice-President for District 2

Last Spring, the MCCF decided to support and work for a charter amendment in the November, 2002, general election to reduce the number of signatures needed for a referendum on a law enacted by the County Council to 10,000. The current requirement is five percent of registered voters, about 22,600. After that decision, this newsletter printed a series of two articles on the referendum and initiative processes, nationally and locally.

This is a status report. First, some of the essential preliminary work has been done. The Board of Elections has provided information about the procedural requirements for conducting a charter amendment petition drive. The attorney for the County Council has given constructive comments on a draft of the language of the petition and that language has been adjusted. A draft of the complete petition has been written on a computer file for ease of printing.

Second, strategic planning is underway for the next important steps. These include organization and outreach. Organization to conduct the petition drive, keep track of income and expenses, and make sure that all is going as it should. Outreach to enlist other organizations and groups beyond the MCCF to get their involvement, support, and participation in both the petition drive and the subsequent campaign to pass the charter amendment.

The organization and outreach activities can be started this Fall and continue through the Winter months. It takes time for organizations to decide to participate and make their own plans with their members for active support. The next few months can be used to good effect. All MCCF members can start informing the membership of their local civic associations about the charter amendment drive for referendum reform. They can also raise the issue with any other organizations they belong to. Example types of other organizations include good government groups, environmental groups, labor unions, PTAs, church groups, service clubs, political parties and clubs, etc. Involving many other organizations has two obvious benefits. First, many hands make light work and it will be easier for many people to get more than 10,000 signatures of registered voters than for a few. Second, it lays the groundwork for a successful election campaign next Spring and Summer.

The actual petition drive should get into high gear with the first pleasant days of spring and should be completed before the end of school in June. Some people may want to start earlier and there is no reason why they should not. The absolute deadline for the President of the County Council to receive the valid signatures of 10,000 registered voters is August 12, 2002 for the general election on November 5, 2002. Completing the petition drive early would show good support for the issue and might generate a bandwagon effect.

Planning for a successful charter amendment drive for referendum reform will be on the agenda for the November 13, 2001 membership meeting, so bring your ideas and suggestions. Your help is not only welcomed but also needed.

## It's Time to Renew

*–by I. Dean Ahmad, President*

Last month, as required by the Bylaws, we printed the names of the associations that had not yet renewed. Although it is not required by our Bylaws, it has been pointed out to me that it would be nice to thank, by name, the organizations that have renewed. So, thank to the following organizations that, according to our database coordinator Steve Howie, were paid up through June 2002 as of Oct. 28, 2001 (my apologies to any who paid since). **So a big thank you to:**

**Action Committee for Transit  
Aspen Hill Civic Association  
Audubon Naturalist Society  
Avenel Community Association, Inc.  
Bannockburn Civic Association  
Bethesda-Parkview Citizens Association  
Bradley Boulevard Citizen Association  
Burnt Mills Hill Civic Association  
Columbia Road Citizens Association  
Committee to Save the Trail  
East Bethesda Citizens Association, Inc.  
Franklin Knolls Civic Association  
Garrett Park Citizens Association  
Germantown Historical Society  
Greater Bethesda Chevy Chase Coalition  
Greater Goshen Civic Association  
Kensington Estates Civic Association  
Kenwood Park Citizens Association, Inc.  
Parkside Estates Civic Association  
Strathmore-Bel Pre Civic Association  
The Wisconsin Council of Unit Owners  
Warfield Lane Preservation Committee  
West Bradley Citizens Association  
Woodside Park Civic Association Inc.**

### Renew Now!

If your association is not on the list above, please help us to have a successful year by renewing your association's membership now. Copy the application form on page 6 or download a copy from [www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org) to renew.

# *MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION*

*Serving the County since 1925*

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

July 1, 2001 through June 30, 2002

Mail to: Steve Howie  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Inquiries: I. Dean Ahmad  
(301) 951-0539  
deanahmad@yahoo.com

Name of Organization/Individual \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Households (Approx) \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Dues (see below) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Make checks payable to "Montgomery County Civic Federation")

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type	Number of Households	PLEASE CHECK	DUES	Number of Delegates	Voting Privileges
Individual/Associate	(not applicable)	-	\$15	1	No
Neighborhood Organization	Less than 300		\$35	2	Yes
	301 to 600		\$50	3	
	More than 600		\$65	4	
Umbrella Organization	Less than 500		\$35	2	Yes
	501 to 1000		\$50	3	
	More than 1000		\$65	4	
Municipality (Town/City)	(any size)		\$65	2	No
Business Associate	(not applicable)		\$65	2	No
Nonprofit Organization	(not applicable)		\$35	2	No
Public/Govt. Organization	(not applicable)		\$65	4	No

Name your delegates according to the number allowed as indicated above. Each will receive our newsletter.

1. Name (President\*) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
City,State,Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E Mail \_\_\_\_\_

2. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
City,State,Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E Mail \_\_\_\_\_

3. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
City,State,Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E Mail \_\_\_\_\_

4. Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
City,State,Zip \_\_\_\_\_ E Mail \_\_\_\_\_

\*President of applying organization or permanent substitute designated by the president.

## 2001-2002 MCCF Officers and Committee Chairs

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<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Jeanne Goldstein	301-652-3064	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com
<b>2nd Vice-Pres.:</b>	Pat Cummings	301-977-6004	301-840-0921	301-840-0967	<call first>
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Chris Suzich	301-417-9522	same	<not available>	jsuzich@erols.com
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<b>Education:</b>	Mark Adelman	301-942-6893	301-295-3208	301-942-4108	adelman3@erols.com
<b>Environment:</b>	Charlie Pritchard	301-593-1781	same	<not available>	erc69434@aolcom
<b>Legislation:</b>	George Sauer	301-762-7260	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Membership:</b>	Jeanne Goldstein	301-652-3064	same	<not available>	<none>
<b>Pl. &amp; Land Use.:</b>	Tom DeGraba	301-340-2570	<not available>	<not available>	<none>
<b>Pub. Fin. &amp; Util.:</b>	Chuck Lapinski	301-384-0392	703-506-4600	<not available>	clapinsk@mcri.com
<b>Transportation:</b>	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	same	<not available>	djwilhelm@erols.com

## From the President

There is no meeting in December. Instead we shall gather together on Dec. 2 for our annual reception for the elected officials. This year a special community hero award will be given to our honorees the firefighters and rescue teams who did such valorous work at the Pentagon. Of course the recent tragedies are what sparked this award, but these outstanding men and women, both volunteers and professionals, deserve our constant gratitude for the work they do day in and day out. Just knowing that they are there and can be depended upon is a comfort to us all.

And since we have no business this month, I shall with pleasure use this space to extend holiday greetings to everyone. By a happy convergence this month marks Hanukah, Christmas, and the Eid-al-Fitr. So a happy holiday to all!

—I. Dean Ahmad, Ph.D.



Jim Johnson addresses our November meeting on issues in the Eastern part of the downcounty.—Photo y I. Dean Ahmad.

*Delegates Meeting*

***There will be no delegates meeting in  
December!***

***Next Regular Delegates Meeting:  
Monday, January 14 7:45 p.m***

**First Floor Auditorium  
County Council Office Building, Rockville, MD**

**Pictures of our December reception  
Will be placed on our website:**

**[www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org)**

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation**, a nonprofit, educational, and advocacy countywide group, was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. The monthly Delegates Meeting is open to the public and it is held on the second Monday of each month (except for holidays, July, August and December) at 8:00 p.m. in the First Floor Auditorium, County Office Building, Rockville, MD.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly. It is mailed to Delegates; associate members; news media, and local, state, and federal officials. Permission is granted to reprint any article provided proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County Civic Federation." Deadline for submissions for the next issue: 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 22 Attach submission to e-mail to: [Hotyakker@aol.com](mailto:Hotyakker@aol.com) file in fully justified 11-point Times Roman font (preferably as a Word document.) Send editorial content to Peggy Dennis, 11115 Fawsett Road, Potomac, MD 20854.

**Please send all address corrections to Steve Howie**, P.O.Box 325, Clarksburg, MD 20871, 301-972-2736, [stevehowie@aol.com](mailto:stevehowie@aol.com).

**Next Executive Committee Meeting**

Thursday, Dec. 20 2001, 7:45 p.m.

**Bethesda-Chevy Chase Services Center**

4805 Edgemoor Lane in downtown Bethesda

(Note: there are two entrances to the parking garage—one on Edgemoor Lane and another on Woodmont Avenue.)

**Montgomery County Civic Federation  
Steve Howie, Database Manager  
P.O. Box 325  
Clarksburg, MD 20871**

*Address Service Requested*

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