



Civic Federation News

*Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation
Serving the Public Interest Since 1925*

Peggy Dennis, Editor - Phone: 301-983-9738 - Email: hotyakker@comcast.net

SESSION 776

WWW.MONTGOMERYCIVIC.ORG

APRIL 2006

You are Cordially Invited to the
Montgomery County Civic Federation's

2006 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Honorees:

The Star Cup: **Dan Wilhelm**

The Gazette Award: **Save Seven Locks School Coalition**

The Sentinel Award: **Clarksburg Town Center Advisory Committee**

Special Civic Federation Award: **Luella Mast**

Friday, May 12, 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

New Fortune Restaurant

16515 S. Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg

Until May 10: \$25 per person or \$40 per couple

After May 10 or at the door: \$30 per person or \$45 per couple

(See reservation form on Page 11)

Inside

Free Library Parking	2
Resolution on Free Library Parking	2
Strategic Planning Steering Committee	3
Annexation of Crown Farm Threatens Many Public Policies	3
President's Message	4
State of Maryland Personal Property Return	6
The Proposed FY 2007 County Operating Budget	6
Policy FAA, FAA-RA, and the Role of the Citizen Task Force	7
Minutes of the March 13 Meeting	9
Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, March 23, 2006	10
2006 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET reservation form	11

Program For April: Introducing Inspector General Tom Dagley

by Marvin Weinman, Public Finance Committee
Co-Chair

The Inspector General (IG) is a relatively new position within our county government. Tom Dagley, our "IG", has recently gained public attention with his report on the Seven Locks School controversy and the financial questions and ramifications of that report. Mr. Dagley will discuss the role of an Inspector General with us. He

will share his thoughts on what that role entails in the current Montgomery County environment including the establishment of working relationships with key organizations such as the County Council, the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO), and the County Attorney. He will provide insights into his multi-year work plan and his current staffing limitations. He will also be able to discuss with us what kinds of issues are appropriate to be brought to the IG's attention and the process for submitting them. This program, which covers topics never before addressed, should be of significant interest to all attendees.

Free Library Parking

by Irwin Charles Cohen, Rockville

The freely accessible public library is a hallmark of American communities. In Montgomery County, 4 regional libraries and 18 local branch libraries serve over 500,000 library patrons, from toddlers to senior citizens.

With no warning or public hearings, the County government initiated the discriminatory practice of charging for parking at certain libraries. Thus, while library users in Potomac, Olney and Chevy Chase have free parking, library patrons at Bethesda, Silver Spring and the future new Rockville library must pay to park.

The Gazette Newspapers hit a homerun when, in an editorial appearing in every one of its March 15, 2006 local community editions, it characterized the County's new practice as "dead wrong". To best serve all residents, library parking policies should be consistent county-wide with free parking at all library branches.

Presumably, the practice of charging for library parking was enacted to prevent commuters and shoppers from abusing the free parking privilege. Free parking for library patrons should be feasible with an electronically coded parking receipt that is machine-validated every half hour or so by a user to establish an electronic paper trail of library presence for that user. At the time of

writing, the exact cost of implementing such a system is not known, but by today's standards it should be a relatively modest price for the general taxpayers to shoulder.

In response to a grass roots petition drive urging free library parking, Councilman Phil Andrews took a leadership role in seeking to correct the County's blatantly discriminatory practice. Councilmembers Denis, Floreen, Knapp, Perez, Silverman and Subin quickly joined him in supporting a resolution to establish a policy under which the County will provide free parking at all libraries.

Until public transport is vastly improved, the automobile is and will remain our primary conveyance. Remedying the discriminatory paid parking policy falls squarely within the stated purpose of the Federation "to protect and improve the quality of life for all County residents". The Montgomery County Civic Federation should, therefore, stand with library users and support the Council resolution to ensure free parking at all public libraries.

Resolution on Free Library Parking

By Arnie Gordon, Second Vice President

Based on the arguments outlined above, I will introduce the following resolution at our April 10 meeting:

"Whereas, to charge for parking at County libraries is to establish a fee which will inhibit the use of our libraries; and,
Whereas, such a fee will most likely fall on those least able to pay it such as teenagers, senior citizens, and the indigent,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Montgomery County Civic Federation declares its support for free parking to be provided by the County at all County libraries and urges the County Council to enact this into law."

Strategic Planning Steering Committee

The Ad Hoc Strategic Planning Steering Committee will discuss ideas, proposals, and plans for initiating, developing, and managing a Strategic Planning Process for the Montgomery County Civic Federation. The committee will present its proposals and recommendations to the Executive Committee at a future ExComm meeting. If you are interested in participating in this process, please contact Fernando Bren, Committee Chairman, at 301-299-0899 or via email at FernandoBR@aol.com by no later than April 15th.

Annexation of Crown Farm Threatens Many Public Policies

by Wayne Goldstein, 1st VP, Planning and Land Use Committee

A developer and a builder are in a big hurry to have the 180 acre Crown Farm near the Washingtonian and Rio complexes annexed by the City of Gaithersburg. The city also seems eager to take many shortcuts to bring this about. Annexations like this have been occurring for decades. Before 1956, the county government usually decided if an annexation would be permitted, and it usually decided in the negative. That year, municipalities gained new authority which allowed some, like Gaithersburg, to grow at an enormous rate. In 1968, one member of the Planning Board went so far as to say, "If the Town of Gaithersburg had its way, it would annex Montgomery County." In 1966, a developer tried to have his land annexed by Gaithersburg so it could be rezoned for the apartments and subdivisions that the County Council refused to approve. He accused the neighboring developer who owned the Washingtonian complex of blocking this effort.

In 1971, state law was changed to give back some controls to the county. Since then, if the County Council rejected the rezoning that was usually part of an annexation effort, then the property could not be

rezoned by the City for five years following annexation. In 1983, a developer seeking annexation was denied his rezoning by both the County Council and the City, largely because of protests by civic associations concerning congested roads. In 1985, two developers sought annexation, over the objections of the Planning Board, to avoid new county controls on growth. When the City approved the plan, it required the same growth controls as the county. In 1986, the County Council turned down another annexation zoning request. When a 1990 annexation request was made for the Washingtonian and Rio site, the City Mayor said that this "would not change the existing county zoning on the property or increase the amount of building permitted on the site."

What makes it different this time is that the Crown Farm owner, while seeking annexation and rezoning, is also seeking to be relieved of many county obligations, and appears to have the hands-on support of one County Councilmember to get out of one of these obligations. The County, unlike the City, would require this developer and builder to follow the Forest Conservation Law, historic preservation law, transferable development rights (TDR) law, the Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) law and pay the development impact taxes.. The loss of the TDR requirement for this project alone would be a great blow to the TDR program and the financial benefit needed by farmers in the Ag Reserve. The developer, a well-known Gaithersburg business owner, wants this project to be part of his City. It certainly doesn't hurt that annexation alone could save the developer tens of millions of dollars. What's worse - it isn't clear whether there will be a binding agreement between the developer and the City to meet the county requirements. The approval process is moving so fast because the developer claims that his financiers expect annexation to be complete by June 1. The City is saying "Trust us" rather than providing a copy of the agreement with the developer. The Planning Board has only focused on the TDR and MPDU requirements, apparently overlooking the efforts of its staff to bring attention to the other important requirements. This is due to the haste with which everything is being handled.

Satisfying the MPDU obligation also looks uncertain, due to a meeting arranged by Councilmember Steve Silverman between the builder and Action in Montgomery (AIM), a large county group that advocates for more affordable housing. According to an AIM leader who attended Mr. Silverman's meeting, the builder indicated that he cannot afford to build any affordable housing but would like to provide some amount of "workforce housing" in its place. Workforce housing is considered to be housing affordable for families earning up to \$100,000 per year. Although Mr. Silverman wants to pass a law to add a County workforce housing requirement to the MPDU requirement already on the books, neither the County nor the City has such a requirement at this time,

Mr. Silverman has spoken and acted in support of affordable housing for years, so it is a mystery why he would have arranged such a meeting. As Mr. Silverman is Chair of the County Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee, which will review this request next Monday, his action does not appear to bode well for the 225 MPDUs that would be required if this project were being built in the county. In fact, the meeting he arranged may have also "poisoned the well" in terms of participants in this process trusting one another. Should we also be concerned about Mr. Silverman's position on the other important county requirements for this project?

Let's hope that Mr. Silverman has a good explanation for his actions. Let's hope that he and the rest of the County Council will take all the time needed to carefully scrutinize every aspect of this massive proposal for 2000 new homes and a 300,000 square-foot shopping center, and that any rezoning will also require that all current county policies be meticulously enforced by the City. If needed, I will introduce a motion at our April meeting asking that MCCF oppose any annexation zoning that does not meet these criteria.

President's Message

By Dan Wilhelm

What does it take to make an effective civic advocate? I want to share what I have observed over the years about those people whose strategy and tactics combine to make them into citizens who make a difference and get positive results.

First, effective advocates are **informed**. They know the facts, the rules and regulations, and the processes that will govern the issue in question. As land use issues most often generate fledgling activists, let me use the Planning Board as an example: whether you are up against a special exception, a site plan, subdivision or an application for a zoning variance, if you are new to the land use process and you don't know the zoning and subdivision rules and criteria, start by talking with and learning from the Park & Planning (M-NC/PPC) staff. Touch base with multiple staff members - community planning, environmental, transportation, and the overall coordinator. The Zoning & Land Use Chair of the MCCF is another excellent source of advice. Informed involvement and leadership makes a world of difference!

Next, civic activists must be **reasonable**. Often citizens come across as opposing an entire development proposal when it is only some particular aspect of it that concerns them. Citizens must realize that they can't oppose a project just because they don't want any development. Rather, they can oppose the type of development or oppose a specific aspect of the development such as the impact on local traffic or deficiencies in storm water management. Explain your specific concerns to the staff and they will help you understand whether those concerns can be addressed to your satisfaction.

The Planning Board is calling on developers to contact and work with local citizens groups early in the planning phase before submitting plans to the Board. If given this opportunity, I encourage citizens groups to **meet with developers at the earliest possible time**. Face-to-face discussions in one or more meetings give you a better chance to express your concerns and to work out some

compromises that satisfy both sides. During these meetings, request the specific changes you want the developer to consider. While they are not required to acquiesce to all of an individual's or a community's desires, smart developers will modify their plans to accommodate citizens as long as the developer's objectives can still be satisfied. Things like set-backs, layout, exterior lighting, control of storm water run-off and to some extent roads are things developers may consider changing.

Once a plan has been submitted to the Planning Board, **start working with the planning staff.** Your objective is to gain staff support for your position. The chances of getting at least some of what you want is much greater when you start working early in the process with the staff than if you wait and only make a presentation to the Planning Board. In some cases, the developer may change his plans because of staff suggestions when he wouldn't modify them in response to your concerns and suggestions. If the developer will not make changes, the second way staff can help is to present the citizen's view in their report to the Planning Board and adopt it as their own recommendation. Even if staff doesn't support your point of view, encourage them to present your view in their report so that the Planning Board can have a better understanding of what the citizens want and why.

Should a development proposal come before the Planning Board, Hearing Examiner or the County Council and your concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily, how can you make the most convincing argument for your case in testimony? My strongest impression of people who make a difference is that they treat everyone they deal with in a **respectful manner.** When presenting testimony before the Planning Board, give the developer and staff credit for changes they made to support your desires. Where you still disagree with them, acknowledge what they are proposing, go on to state why your position is superior, and link your position to the applicable master plan or zoning regulations. This does not mean that you do not confront those with whom you disagree! An important part of who we are as citizen advocates is voicing our

opinions, which often means we are confronting people. But we can disagree with people's ideas or actions and not attack them personally. We also need to realize that we are attempting to point out facts that they may not be aware of or to offer a different perspective. In many cases, those to whom we are speaking or writing are the ones we hope will consider and adopt our position. If we attack them, they will likely not hear or consider a word we say. Everyone appreciates a debate in which those involved listen to other points of view and treat fellow debaters with respect. A frank exchange of views will sometimes allow other alternatives to be developed that factor in both points of view, and thus both sides may be satisfied.

A few years ago there was a hearing before the Planning Board scheduled for 3:00 p.m. A number of citizens and I had previously supported building the grade-separated interchange at US 29 and MD 198, but some of our fellow citizens were objecting to the design. Until about 1:00 p.m. that day I was weighing whether or not to testify. After thinking about what part of the design the minority opposed, I decided to testify and recommend a change in the design of the north east off-ramp. I testified early and the others who followed supported my suggestion - all unplanned. SHA Neil Pederson was at the hearing and indicated to the Planning Board that SHA would consider my proposed modification. A week later Neil told the Council that SHA accepted a variation of what I had proposed. The revised design was not only acceptable to the citizens and affected business owners but probably reduced the construction cost to SHA. The point of this story is to emphasize the importance of identifying specific and reasonable changes that you want, and presenting your testimony in a respectful manner and your points in a positive and constructive way rather than just opposing the project.

I learned a great deal from my experience with the Transportation Policy Report (TPR) task force. A group of almost 40 of us spent the better part of two years talking about a variety of solutions to decrease road congestion. At the beginning, we didn't agree on the facts, but by the end most people were in agreement. Obviously, it was important to come to an agreement on

the facts, even though some of the facts were not to everyone's liking. And that didn't mean that we all came to an agreement on the conclusions. What we found was that each of us held different positions concerning the importance of different aspects. You may find this the situation with your issues.

State of Maryland Personal Property Return

by Luella Mast, MCCF Treasurer

Many civic association treasurers know about the federal requirement that organizations have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and that organizations with gross receipts exceeding \$25,000 should file a Form 990 return with the IRS. For most of our member organizations whose annual income is far below \$25,000 no filing is necessary.

What many of you may not know is that, if you are incorporated, with that pesky "Inc." after your name, you should be filing a personal property return with the State of Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Personal Property Division. All businesses that are incorporated, qualified or registered to do business in the State of Maryland are required to file. This includes corporations (INC), limited liability companies (LLC), limited partnerships (LP), business trusts, and real estate investment trusts (REIT). The return is required even if the business owns no property in the State or has not conducted any business activity during the year.

The due date for filing the personal property return is April 17. The Department of Assessments and Taxation may grant a two month extension to file the return. To get copies of the form (called Form 1) go to the Department of Assessment and Taxation web site: dat.state.md.us. Under forms and applications you will find Business Personal Property Annual Report. This will bring up a copy of the form (Form 1 – Personal Property Return) and instructions (Instructions for Form 1) for filling it out.

There is no filing fee for Domestic Non-Stock Corporations. If you are like most civic associations you will need to fill out only Sections I and III. If you have never received a file copy of Form 1 from your predecessor treasurer or other officer, I would suggest that you make a copy of your filing for future treasurers or for your own reference next year. Once you have filed the first time you should receive a copy of next year's form mailed to the address you give the State shortly after January 1.

As few member association treasurers are delegates to the Civic Federation, I strongly urge delegates to pass on this recommendation to their treasurers. I hope it will prove useful.

The Proposed FY 2007 County Operating Budget

by Chuck Lapinski, Public Finance and Utilities Chairman

Costly to the Taxpayer? You bet! This budget definitely tops any prior budget in what it attempts to do, what it should do and what it fails to do. Yes, it is an election year, and the process has been full of surprises. For the first time the County Executive has publicly released key parts (transportation, public safety, and education) of his budget before the formal release date of March 15. Yes, part of the mystery was taken out of this year's formal release, but that just provided three more opportunities for press time. The proposed budget increases to a staggering \$3, 862.5 million, a 7.6 % increase over last year's proposed budget. There wasn't much time to review this, thus I'll only toss out some brief observations.

- Council exercise (or not) of its oversight and accountability responsibilities: This issue will not go away, and it must be addressed as part of the budget hearing process, work sessions, and even as a campaign issue. The council has certain fiduciary responsibilities and it, in concert with offending agencies such as the Board of Education, must develop and implement the appropriate oversight.

Our children and our scarce financial resources are too precious not to exercise prudent oversight and accountability. No part of the budget should get a free ride.

- Spending Affordability Process, Prudence and Discipline
 - Priorities and Constraints: repairing our aging infrastructure (e.g. county office buildings and lack of sufficient local road repair and maintenance) continues to get short shrift. This should have been a major budget priority, but it barely received a quick promise.
 - Budget Optimism and Realism: I'm still waiting for a prudence miracle! We taxpayers have been too generous! Property values go up. Property taxes go up. Recordation taxes and fee revenues go up. You earn more and you declare more capital gains, then those revenues go up. And, they want to spend all of it!
- Trends and Growth in Revenue Sources
 - Personal Income Taxes: Receipts are heading higher but probably at a lower rate that is not accounted for. Because the state released more county revenue from income taxes and real estate transactions than original projected, we have more unallocated carryover to FY07.
 - Property Taxes and Property Assessments: Huge reassessments will result in continued revenue increases even with a decrease in the tax rate.
 - Construction Impact Taxes and Fees: This past year we didn't take in anywhere near what was projected. The process was altered so that it allowed too many tax and fee loopholes for new development.
 - Other Miscellaneous Taxes and Fees: Receipts trending up
- Operating Budget Cost Drivers
 - Employee Total Compensation: personnel costs account for over 80 % of the budget. We have done one Comprehensive Total Compensation Review during the last 15 years. A new review is long overdue.
 - Benefits: Health costs continue to spiral up in both the public and private sector, and this

expenditure element is part of a total compensation review.

- Lack of Cost Estimating Realism in Project Estimates: I'll save this for another day!

Policy FAA, FAA-RA, and the Role of the Citizen Task Force

by Mark R. Adelman, Chair, and Wayne Goldstein, MCCF Education Committee

Last year the MCCF Education Committee learned that the PTAs were alarmed about proposed revisions to Board of Education's (BoE) "Policy FAA" which covers Long Range Educational Facilities Planning. We joined the PTAs in expressing objections to the proposed revisions. Everyone feared that taking many crucial elements out of the policy document (FAA) and putting it in the easily changed regulatory document (FAA-RA) would greatly reduce all citizen input. Many argued that regulations prepared by the Superintendent's office were routinely approved by the BoE, again with little citizen input. Although certain BoE members assured us that citizens would continue to have input into both FAA and FAA-RA, we protested the drastically revised policy, which was nevertheless adopted. [See our website for Newsletter articles and Sentinel pieces]

After adopting the revised Policy FAA, the BoE and the Superintendent quickly prepared an Interim FAA-RA, included it in the CIP, then invited members of the PTAs, MCCF, and other groups to serve on a Working Group that spent several months reviewing the interim regulations and proposing detailed revisions. We have reported on that process, our position paper (also on our website), and the Working Group recommendations. The BoE Policy Committee reviewed the recommendations and presented no significant changes to the Superintendent. We have now examined the new FAA-RA regulations and the Superintendent's memorandum (sent to the BoE) explaining which Working Group recommendations should be accepted or rejected. They shed light on the disregard with which MCPS treats citizens when they work together on such documents.

As adopted, FAA-RA regulations include three decisions by the Superintendent that we do not accept.

1 - Preferred Range of Enrollment: The Superintendent declared that such enrollment numbers be increased, in part because some schools are already operating above the previous acceptable range. He claimed that keeping the previous range would create "unreasonable" expectations for smaller schools and that studies of optimal school sizes have been inconclusive. Our recommendations, however, were NOT for small schools. Both the Superintendent and the Working Group agreed with the lowest numbers of 300 for elementary schools, 600 for middle schools, and 1000 for high schools. We wanted the upper end to remain as previously and our recommendations were just a little lower than what was inserted into FAA-RA: 620 vs. 750 for elementary schools, 1125 vs. 1200 for middle schools, and 1800 vs. 2000 for high schools. We believe the real lesson learned here is that the Superintendent will always choose his preference over those of the parents and other citizens. MCPS seems to be doing all it can to redefine the optimal size for schools so that no school will ever be determined to be overcrowded. The "preferences" in FAA-RA are NOT those of the parents and other citizens who pay for the operation of the school system. Rather they are the preferences of the Superintendent and the various elected officials who make decisions in these matters, insist on "growing" our county without "growing" the funding sources needed to assure adequate public facilities, and then declare the overcrowded schools that their ill-advised decisions have helped create to be the "preferred" size.

2. Relocatable (portable) classrooms: These were barely mentioned in the Interim FAA-RA. We recommended defining both conditions for their use and standards for their maintenance that would minimize negative impacts on the surrounding community. The Superintendent decided our wording was "vague" and chose to simply delete the parts that addressed impact on communities. The Education Committee knows of portables that are an eyesore and a blight on the adjacent neighborhoods, but we welcome additional

brief reports with photographs from delegates who see the same problem in their local schools. We hope to use such material to educate our elected and appointed officials on the need to do much better.

3. Community involvement: Our major goal in participating in the Working Group was to help create a document that ensured involvement of the wider community in the school planning process. Both PTAs and local civic activists should be included whenever plans for new or remodeled schools are being undertaken. The Superintendent's version of the FAA-RA regulations sent to the BoE contains many, but not all, of our suggested revisions. Our recommendation to include local civic associations in the Site Selection Advisory Committees (SSACs) was not accepted. There had been much discussion of this issue by the Working Group, including the concern that SSAC community members, worried about the impact of a particular school site on their property values, might have a conflict of interest that could affect the negotiations to acquire such sites. Again, the Superintendent deleted our suggestions without offering alternative wording. It is an insult to the civic community - and citizens in general - to suggest that those who work on SSACs as representatives of the PTAs can work with MCPS staff, but that other citizens should not. EVERYONE knows how important MCPS is to our property values and our taxes. [We urge you to read Section VI.2.a.3 of the Superintendent's version - draft dated 2/22/06 but not yet posted to the BoE website - and tell us what you think of the decision not to include the broader community in SSACs.]

We devoted much time and effort to the dialogue on Policy FAA and to revising FAA-RA regulations. Despite the Superintendent's dismissive attitude toward us, the effort was worth it. We learned how complex the process is; how factors such as concern about lawsuits affect decisions about wording; how hard the PTAs work on these matters, and how much they can teach us. We will continue to participate and will continue to ensure that the voices of the community are heard.

Minutes of the March 13 Meeting

by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

MCCF President, Dan Wilhelm calls the meeting to order; introductions: 30 are present at 7:50 PM; 41 are present at 8:30.

Minutes from the February 13, 2006 meeting are accepted as published in the March Newsletter.

Treasurer's Report. Luella Mast leaves her report on back table.

Program. Budget. Panel guests: Sunil Pandya, Budget Manager, Office of Management and Budget; County Councilwoman Marilyn Praisner; Joe Beach, from the County Executive's office; and County Council President George Leventhal. Mr. Beach distributes a handout on the County's FY06 budget, a budget of \$3.7 billion. Mr. Pandya reports the County Executive has recommended for the FY07 budget: Public safety: 14% increase, 200 additional positions; Police: 28 new positions, \$3.2M for the speed camera program. 7.3% increase for education including full all-day kindergarten. Full funding for Montgomery College. General discussion and Q/A of about 30 minutes follow.

Resolution in support of the IG's Report as stated on page 3 of the March Newsletter. Motion passes unanimously.

ZTA 03-27 on building height definition. Jim Humphrey moves that the MCCF support efforts to require the DPS to write draft regulations to implement ZTA 03-27 and allow public comment. Five Seconds. Passes unanimously.

Parking at Public Libraries. Mr. Erwin Charles Cowen speaks about how parking should be free at public libraries, and that enforcement methods exist to prevent abuse by non-library parking, such as by commuters. Arnie Gordon moves that MCCF support free parking at all public libraries. Seconded. Some feel that paid parking such as at the Bethesda library, which charges

75 cents per hour until 2 PM is necessary to discourage commuter parking. County Council HSS Committee will meet pm 3/27 to discuss the issue. Motion fails 10-12-1.

Committee Reports.

Education. Mark Adelman. MCCF secretary receives a copy of Mark's report. It discusses how the impact of the IG report on MCPS and BoE handling of the Seven Locks ES replacement school issue is still unfolding. Mark testified at County Council's hearing on 3/7 urging that the Council deny the MCPS request for a supplementary allocation of \$3.3 million to facilitate construction on the Kendale site "replacement" of Seven Locks ES. Mark reports that the BoE has NOT responded to several questions the committee raised in its testimony on 1/19 about the MCPS budget. The Committee had discussions with Jeff Hooke of the Maryland Tax Education Foundation regarding the premise that MCPS (and many other school systems) spending has increased MUCH more over the last 5 years or so than can be accounted for by inflation, more students, special challenges, etc. Performance measures do not seem to support the contention that the extra money GOT us something. More study and discussion is needed. Policy FAA-RA outcome is still in question. Mark will write an article about this. We need more anecdotal info on portables that lack adequate maintenance. The Committee has started an effort to dialogue with teachers who might wish to share concerns about excessive testing, lack of support in disciplinary matters, etc. If delegates know of such teachers, urge them to contact Mark, who will keep all such contacts confidential.

Questions were asked about school violence, and the under reporting, and late reporting of such behavior. The Examiner had a 6-part series on this, available on Neighbor's Pac website www.neighborspac.org, under "How safe are MoCo schools").

Housing. Jim Humphrey. Discusses the DHCA violations of MPDU laws. Condo Conversion bill in Maryland General Assembly. If anyone knows of

inadequate building construction in the County (buildings that violate zoning or building code regulations), let Jim know.

Peggy Dennis asks that delegates contact Senate President Mike Miller to lobby on behalf of SB-569, the bill to provide public financing of state campaigns.

Adjournment. 10:08 PM

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting, March 23, 2006

by Peggy Dennis

Meeting at Dan Wilhelm's home called to order at 7:55.

Present: Dan Wilhelm, Lee Shipman, Peggy Dennis, Luella Mast, Sandy Vogelgesang, Marvin Weinman, Lyle Schofield, Charles Wolff, Chuck Lapinski, George Sauer, Mark Adelman.

Treasurer's report: Luella Mast reports we saved money last month with 8-page Newsletter, and printed 125 copies foregoing distribution through libraries.

ExComm Meeting venue: discussion of several sites. Decided to book Julius West Middle School for April and Crossways Community Center for May. Also, change ExComm meetings to Wednesdays, nine days after regular meeting to avoid conflicts with Planning Board hearings.

Award Banquet: Price will be \$25/40 for those paying in advance and \$30/45 for those paying at the door. Groups of 10 may have pre-assigned tables. RSVPs must be in by Wednesday evening to insure head count for restaurant. Volunteers for reception table: Peggy, Luella, Sandy, Lee, Mark & Fran Kauffunger. Dan doing invitations by email. All candidates running for county elective office to be invited. Sandy & Carol Rose doing certificates and engraving. Dan & Sandy doing program.

Nominating Committee: Slate will be announced in May Newsletter. So far positions filled are: President,

Wayne Goldstein; 1st VP Arnie Gordon; 2nd VP, Peggy Dennis; Treasurer, Luella Mast; Rec. Secretary, Richard Zierdt; District Vps - 14, Alyce Ortuzar; 15, Sandy Vogelgesang; 16, Lee Shipman; 17, 18, 19, 20 & 39 still open and committee welcomes volunteers interested in serving.

Awards Committee: Sandy outlined all nominations. Votes were unanimous to award the Star Cup to Dan Wilhelm; the Gazette Award to the Save Seven Locks School Coalition; the Sentinel Award to the Clarksburg Town Center A.C. and a Special Federation award to Luella Mast.

Programs: Marvin Weinman organizing April program with the Inspector General. May; the People's Counsel; June, Housing.

Strategic Planning Committee chaired by Fernando Bren will meet this spring and report to the ExComm.

Public Finance: Marvin will testify for the Taxpayers' League and Dan for MCCF at Council hearing on 4/17. MCCF positions will support continued funding for infrastructure repairs; increased funding for parks; serious study with public hearings on total employee compensation packages; transportation funding to go to increasing/improving public transit and no forward funding for local intersection improvements of state roads as we never get reimbursed by SHA for the cost of doing their work.

Public Relations: Lyle Schofield. Will get Calendar Announcements into all county newspapers for Awards Banquet. Mark has already talked with WashPost, Gazette papers and Potomac Almanac about providing press coverage.

Education: Mark Adelman. Education Committee has decided to not do forums for BoE candidates. Instead will send out questionnaire surveys and post responses on MCCF website. Memo from Leventhal & Praisner on "Lessons Learned from Seven Locks School" should also be posted on website. Dan received email from Rich Madaleno regarding bill that would improve

teachers' pension packages.

Candidates' forums: Because Primary Election will be so early in autumn, organizing one or more forums deemed impractical. Determined to use

questionnaire/survey approach and post responses on website as the best way to provide info on many running for office in county. Responses can also be sent to members by email.

Meeting adjourned at 10:05.

Montgomery County Civic Federation's
2006 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Honorees:

The Star Cup: **Dan Wilhelm**

The Gazette Award: **Save Seven Locks School Coalition**

The Sentinel Award: **Clarksburg Town Center Advisory Committee**

Special Civic Federation Award: **Luella Mast**

Friday, May 12, 6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

New Fortune Restaurant

16515 S. Frederick Avenue, Gaithersburg

Until May 10: \$25 per person or \$40 per couple

After May 10 or at the door: \$30 per person or \$45 per couple

Directions: New Fortune is in the Walnut Hill Shopping Center, on Route 355 one block northwest of the intersection with Shady Grove Road & I370.

Menu: Appetizer, Roast Chicken, Beef Chow Foon, Chinese Broccoli with Oyster Sauce, Fried Tofu with Vegetables, Twice-cooked Pork, Singapore Noodles, Fried Rice, Steamed Fish Cantonese Style, Orange Wedges, wine and sodas. Cash bar.

Please cut off and fill in this stub. Mail with a check payable to the Montgomery County Civic Federation to: Ms Luella Mast

MCCF Treasurer, 809 Hobbs Dr., Colesville, MD 20904

I/We will attend the banquet

Name

Association or Organization (if applicable)

Name

Federation Meeting

Monday, April 10
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building.
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

7:45 Call to Order
7:46 Introduction and Announcements
7:55 Adoption of Meeting Agenda
7:56 Approval of Minutes and Treasurer's Report
8:00 Program: Inspector General
9:00 Resolution on Free Parking at Libraries
9:10 Resolution on Crown Farm Annexation (?)
9:20 Committee Reports
9:35 Member Issues
9:40 Old Business
9:50 New Business
10:00 Adjourn

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation** is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization. It was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Its monthly Federation meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Monday of each month September through June at 7:45 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.**"

Submit contributions for the next issue by: **Midnight, Saturday April 22**. Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to e-mail, and send it to hotyakker@comcast.net Please send all address corrections to Dan Wilhelm, 904 Cannon Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904, 301-384-2698, or djwilhelm@erols.com.

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, April 19, 7:45 p.m.

Location TBA, probably Julius West Middle School
Please check Web site!

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

DAN WILHELM, DATABASE MANAGER
904 CANNON ROAD
SILVER SPRING, MD 20904
DJWILHELM@EROLS.COM

Address Service Requested

First Class Mail

Printed by **The Image Group**, 8930 Brookeville Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910 301-608-9334