



Civic Federation News

December 2008

Serving the Public Interest since 1925

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the Montgomery
County Civic Federation
Session 802
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MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION
presents a seminar on

"UNDERSTANDING HOW PROPERTY TAXES ARE ASSESSED AND APPEALED"

presenters:

**MIKE CHAIT, DEPUTY SUPERVISOR,
STATE DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND
TAXATION, MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

**ARNOLD GORDON, CHAIRMAN
PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT APPEALS BOARD
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Saturday, December 6th, 2008, 9:00-11:30 a.m.

First Floor Auditorium

County Council Office Building

100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville

Free parking in multi-story car park next to building

Light refreshments will be served

PLEASE RSVP TO ATTEND

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frankauffunger@hotmail.com

Tel: 301-570-0481

A small fee may be assessed to defray the expense
of copying materials and refreshments

County Council for changes to be included in the 2009-2011 Growth Policy. Our December program will be an opportunity for our delegates to learn about the changes being considered.

Of specific interest to MCCF Executive Committee members is the issue of what it really means to base the growth policy on "sustainability." Chairman Hanson will also address what would have to be done to reach the Council of Governments' new goals for energy efficient development that can reduce the County's carbon footprint. And we will seek an explanation of how other environmental quality standards might be instituted in the growth policy.

The program on growth should begin around 8:15 after a short presentation on state legislative and budget issues by State Senator Richard Madaleno. As always, the public is invited and encouraged to attend.

Senator Madaleno to Give Briefing on the 2009 General Assembly Session **By Dan Wilhelm, Legislative Committee Chair**

The next session of the Maryland General Assembly starts in January. This session promises to be especially difficult due to the bad economic situation affecting the entire country, including Maryland. All indicators suggest that our revenue picture will continue to worsen over the next few months. Data from September indicate that initial claims for unemployment insurance are up 62.6% over the

Contents

December Program on Growth Management	1
Senator Madaleno to Give Briefing on the 2009 General Assembly Session	1
Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium	2
President's Message	3
Civic Community Perspective Presented at State Hearing on Stormwater Permit	4
Time to Renew Membership	4
Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting – November 10, 2008	
Minutes of the November 19 Executive Committee Meeting	6
Membership Application or Renewal	11

December Program on Growth Management **by Jim Humphrey, Chair, Planning and Land Use Committee**

At our December 8 regular meeting Planning Board Chairman Royce Hanson will be the guest speaker for a program on Growth Management. According to a Planning Department press release, "planners are looking to broaden their traditional scope beyond traffic relief and adequate school capacity to include other public values" that contribute to quality of life. For the first half of the program, which will be restricted to one hour due to time constraints, Chairman Hanson will summarize the issues. A question and answer period will follow.

Over the past month, the Planning Department has hosted a series of public meetings in various locations to gather comments on a rethinking of the County's growth policy. Armed with that input, planners will craft their recommendations to the

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same month last year. Sales tax revenues are down 7.8% for October over last year, and titling tax revenues are down 20%. While the cuts made by the Board of Public Works last month helped address the General Fund shortfall, the state is still facing a \$1.3 billion General Fund shortfall for FY10, the next yearly budget.

As we all heard about a month ago, the State Department of Transportation delayed \$1.1 billion worth of Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) projects contained in the six year Consolidated Transportation Program. A recent Department of Legislative Services briefing to the Joint Committee on Spending Affordability projected that the TTF's projected revenues are overstated by \$2.3 billion for the next six year period. This is 40% of the current \$5.8 billion capital program.

Senator Richard Madaleno who is widely viewed as one of the most knowledgeable Montgomery County Senators on budget matters, and who was recently elected chair of the Montgomery County Senate Delegation, will present a 15 minute update about the budget situation at our meeting on December 8. He will also share his insights into other major issues for the upcoming session. We urge you to attend the December meeting to hear this important update.

December's Community Hero Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium by Wayne Goldstein, Planning & Land Use Committee member

The December Community Hero Award goes to the Sandy Spring Ashton Rural Preservation Consortium (SSARPC) which was formed in 2005 by concerned residents to insure that local development plans would conform to the 1998 Sandy Spring-Ashton Master Plan and its vision of maintaining the small scale of a rural village. SSARPC has worked to educate the local community about the Sandy Spring-Ashton Master Plan, about how developers' projects relate to the Master Plan, and about public participation in the development review process of the Planning Board and the County Council. SSARPC has always been "pro Master Plan, not anti-development".

SSARPC educates through its email list of 800, through maintaining an excellent website (<http://www.ssarpc.org>), through sponsoring town hall meetings and informal discussion groups, through

working collaboratively with commercial developers and their design teams to help keep designs in accordance with the Master Plan, and through providing input to the Planning Board and planning staff. SSARPC has, at times, even hired a town planner and a lawyer, paid for through volunteer donations raised from the community.

SSARPC has been involved in five projects, and has caused positive changes to be made to all of them. Ashton Meeting Place was the most challenging. When the community objected to the original design and caused it to be rejected by the Planning Board in 2007, SSARPC then helped organize a charrette with the developer and came up with changes that made the project so much more attractive and compatible with the community that the new version was approved in 2008.

SSARPC is currently working to reduce the size and massing of a proposed building next to a historic district that is also a gateway to Sandy Spring. In other undertakings, it has caused the removal of a car wash from a gas station, caused the reduction in the number of drive-through lanes of a proposed bank, and caused the requirement of the replanting with large trees to correct damage done by improper forest clearing.

SSARPC has shown that a well-organized group of residents can influence the outcome of developments in their area by becoming knowledgeable about the project approval process. They are an inspiration to any community that wants to be sure that their Master Plan is also followed.

President's Message By Arnold Gordon

Civic Federation's Saturday Seminars:

We continue to be excited by the response to our series of seminars on subjects of importance to our members and their constituencies. October's seminar on Zoning received rave reviews from all who attended thanks to the efforts of Norman Knopf, Esq., MCCF's Past President, Dick Kauffunger, and Jim Humphrey. Our next seminar on Saturday, December 6th from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. will cover the property tax assessment process, and how to prepare for and conduct an appeal from an assessment the property owner believes to be too high. This seminar should prove to be a very timely and appealing (no pun intended) subject as a large and growing number of RSVPs have already been received. Please review the announcement on page

I for the particulars. We are also planning a seminar on Special Exceptions for February.

Committee Chairs Needed:

Your Civic Fed needs your help! We can't do as thorough a job as we might without active chairs and committees. We need chairmen for our Public Safety and Transportation Committees and more members for other committees. Persons interested in environmental protection, the administration of our parks, the operation of our schools, and the county's fiscal posture can affect the County's decision making processes through our committees and really make a change. We also need chairmen and committee members for our annual Nominating and Awards committees. These two groups work for a shorter period during the winter and spring only. Please consider these opportunities to serve your community and contact me at nmcaprexy@aol.com if you are interested in these assignments.

Sentinel Column:

The Civic Federation prepares a weekly column for the weekly *Sentinel* newspaper. I want our member associations to be aware that this is an opportunity for member associations to present views and opinions emanating from their communities. We encourage you to submit proposed columns to our Editor for the *Sentinel*, MCCF's Past President, Wayne Goldstein, at waynengoldstein@hotmail.com

Forthcoming Programs:

As detailed elsewhere in this Newsletter, we have outdone ourselves in the quality of programs for the next few months. This month we are privileged to have both our program with MNCPPC Chairman Royce Hanson on the county's Annual Growth Policy and a short presentation by state Senator Rich Madaleno on the state's budget problems. In January our program will focus on the county's historic preservation program and policies with special emphasis on the neglect that this program is experiencing in the hands of the present County Council, some members of which seem to be blithely ignoring our laws. In the cold, dark days of February, we will learn about solar energy, green initiatives and the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Design) requirements for new and renovated buildings. Our March program is tentatively planned to enlighten us on issues involving public utilities at the state level.

Your MCCF is only as robust and vibrant as its members wish it to be. Join, participate and help us be more representative of our entire community and its concerns.

Civic Community Perspective Presented at State Hearing on Stormwater Permit By Caren Madsen, MCCF Environment Committee Chair

Stormwater management affects everyone in the county and beyond – namely the ailing Chesapeake Bay where the county is part of the Bay's 64,249-square mile watershed. On Nov. 19, MCCF was represented with 24 members of the community and organizations at a Maryland Department of the Environment public hearing on the state's tentative determination to issue the latest version of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Montgomery County.

The latest version of the draft permit has been three years in the making thanks to the persistence and hard work of Diane Cameron, who chairs the Montgomery Stormwater Partners, a coalition of 22 member organizations, including MCCF. The permit is significantly improved and includes much of the public input the State has received to date. Although the draft permit was lauded as a good product, those testifying pressed for even stronger controls on a number of the provisions. As one request in Ms. Cameron's requests, the Stormwater Partners would like to see specific deadlines and goals attached to the provisions for total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) so that the County will have more measurable results to achieve and can be held accountable for standards set in the permit.

The public comment period ends on December 2. I urge you to send written comments concerning the need for specific deadlines and goals relating to the provisions for TMDLs. Letters should be addressed to Mr. Brian Clevenger, Maryland Department of the Environment, Water Management Administration, 1800 Washington Blvd, Ste. 440, Baltimore, Maryland 21230. To review the draft permit, please visit:

<http://www.stormwaterpartners.org/PDF/DraftPerm%20it090208.pdf> . For a copy of the MCCF testimony, please e-mail me at CarenMadsen@msn.com .

Time to Renew Membership

We ask the organizations and individual members listed below renew their membership and pay their dues for the 2008-2009 year immediately. Delegates are asked to fill in the Membership Renewal Form on page 11 or download it from our

website and give it to your organization's treasurer so that it can be mailed in with the dues check.

Bradley Boulevard Citizen Association
Carderock Springs Citizens Association, Inc.
Chevy Chase Valley Citizens Association
Clarksburg Civic Association
Edgemoor Citizens Association
Forest Estates Community Assn
Glen Echo Heights Citizens Association
Greater Olney Civic Association
Hillandale Citizens Association
Huntington Terrace Citizens' Assn
Indian Spring Citizens Association
Kensington View Civic Association
North Hills of Sligo Civic Association
North White Oak Civic Association
Parkwood Residents Association
Potomac Pond Homeowner's Association
Sonoma Citizens Association
South Four Corners Citizens Assn.
Springbrook Forest Citizens Association
Tulip Hill Citizens Association
Woodmoor Pinecrest Citizens Assn
Woodside Park Civic Association

Arlene Bruhn
French Caldwell
Julie Davis
Blair Ewing
Bernard Fisker
Chuck Floyd
Wilbur Friedman
William Neil
Ben Petree
Bette Petrides
Stuart Rochester

Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting – November 10, 2008 By Peggy Dennis, Acting Recording Secretary

The November meeting of the Civic Federation was called to order by President Arnie Gordon at 7:45 PM. Introductions were made all around.

Announcements: Arnie Gordon reminded everyone about the Saturday Forum on Real Estate Taxes to be held on December 6 and another forum coming up in February on Special Exceptions. Jim Humphrey noted that the Planning Commission will hold a meeting on the Annual Growth Policy also on December 6 from 10:00 – 12:00 noon at MNCPPC. Dan Wilhelm mentioned hearings on the Purple Line

to take place in November at Bethesda and College Park

Agenda: The agenda was modified to allow Councilmember Marc Elrich to make a brief presentation on Bus Rapid Transit to be followed by the program, then approved by acclamation.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader, Treasurer, was absent but his report was available on the table at the back.

Minutes: the minutes of the October 13 Regular Meeting as printed in the November Civic Federation News were unanimously approved.

Presentation: Councilmember Marc Elrich made a presentation on his proposal for a Montgomery County Bus Rapid Transit system. Mr. Elrich has studied this issue in depth because of our need to deal more effectively with traffic and congestion and, at the same time, reduce our CO2 emissions. Technology alone has failed to decrease CO2 levels, and if things continue as they are, CO2 will increase by 48% in the DC Metro region by 2030. An 8.3% reduction in vehicle miles traveled will decrease CO2 levels to those of 2002. A 15-20% decrease will bring CO2 emissions down to 1990 levels. By using BRT, this can be achieved without forcing most people out of their cars but by enticing more people to use our existing and improved transit system. Heavy rail is too costly. Light rail is possible but best achieved only on abandoned rail lines. BRT can be adapted to our existing road network relatively quickly. It is cost effective and will most flexibly increase transit ridership.

Program: Jim Humphrey, Chairman of the Planning and Land Use Committee lead a program on Housing Affordability with presenters: Richard Nelson, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Linda McMillan, a Council Senior Legislative Analyst, and Sharon Suarez, Housing Coordinator for the Planning Department. Ms. McMillan reported that the thrust of the county's Housing First initiative is to get those most in need - the homeless, spouses escaping domestic violence and those coming out of incarceration without homes to return to - into stable, permanent housing as quickly as possible. The county is using 4 ½ million dollars to move towards the Housing First model and away from the old shelter system; also to make needed changes to the shelter system.

Mr. Nelson said there is almost no funding for the old Section 8 voucher program. The county's

MPDU program is available to those at or below 60% of the area median income - \$60,000 for a family of four. We're creating very few new MPDU units, but under the new rules, units stay in the system longer - 30 years for sale units and 99 years for rental units. The waiting list is shorter than in the past and there is some turnover. On the mortgage foreclosure issue, Mr. Nelson said Maryland is to get \$26 million to buy foreclosed homes. Germantown, Gaithersburg, Aspen Hill and Wheaton are the most affected communities. Habitat for Humanity will raise money to rehab 10 homes.

Ms. Suarez discussed the rewrite of the chapter on housing for the county's General Plan. Policy adopted in 2001 provided reason to reopen the General Plan to provide for Workforce Housing. The current Planning Commission members want a functional master plan with specific categories of housing.

In the Question & Answer portion of the program, issues discussed were the possibility of rent stabilization, use of the Community Land Trust model, possibly moving to smaller lot sizes (6,000 to 3,000 square feet) for single family homes. Preservation of existing "affordable housing" is the top priority.

Websites with information on this topic are communitylandtrust.org and Affordable Housing Task Force Recommendations on DHCA's website.

Resolution on Housing Affordability: The Resolution printed in the November Civic Federation News was made and seconded. In discussion, objections were raised to the 3rd (to use Community Land Trust to create affordably priced housing on public lands) and 4th (offer employer-assisted housing for County government and MCPS employees) points. The resolution failed by a vote of 15 for, 16 against. Jerry Garson offered an amendment: "that we amend the motion on housing to a limit of 24 months for any MPDU or other bonus". This motion was seconded and failed by a vote of 12 for, 13 against and 2 abstentions. A third resolution was offered in support of the original resolution but without items 3 and 4. This resolution was seconded and passed on a vote of 16 for, 13 against and 2 abstentions.

Resolution on Bill MC 919-09: The Resolution printed in the Civic Federation News was made by Chuck Lapinski and seconded. A clarification/correction was given that the bill would only apply to primary residences, not second homes or investment properties. The resolution passed, 24 for, 0 against and 1 abstention.

Reports on Committee Activity and Other Substantive Issues:

Legislation & Committee for Montgomery:

Dan Wilhelm reported that the Committee for Montgomery had been briefed on the state's projected budget shortfall, and its implication particularly for the Department of Transportation.

Historical Preservation: Wayne Goldstein described how the longstanding Historic Preservation program is threatened. One new policy is that the County Council will not take up the historic designation of any property if the Planning Board does not make a positive recommendation, even though only the County Council can make the final decision on such matters. Furthermore, it may be that if owners of such properties object to historic designation, even in disagreement with the Planning Board, the Council will listen to them. If these policy changes hold, the only properties that the Council will ever approve for historic designation in the future could just be those which are supported by the owner.

Education: Wayne reported that the Maryland High School Assessment Test results are in and that Montgomery County now ranks 19th of 24 jurisdictions - a not-unexpected comedown based on years of declining SAT scores.

Public Finance: Marvin Weinman reported that the 2008 override of the Charter Amendment limits cost homeowners an additional \$260 million. Excessive spending by the Council is illustrated by their previous May action of exceeding the Spending Affordability Guidelines (SAG) set in April in 12 of the last 18 years. The MFP Committee on November 24th will be reviewing possible new options related to revision of the SAG process. The citizens of the county have come to recognize these excesses and cast their votes in favor of Ballot Question "B" which will require nine votes to approve future budgets. This might be viewed as a problem except for the fact that in the last 14 years only two token votes were cast against budget approval. Typically 6th floor Council discussions have resulted in compromise on budget spending differences of opinion.

Planning and Land Use: Jim Humphrey recommended delegates read the Federation Corner column in the November 6 Montgomery Sentinel in which he provided updates on five unresolved county land use issues.

New Business: Dan Wilhelm noted the State Highway Administration's "Road Show" coming up

on November 13 and the priorities hearing on November 20.

Motion to Adjourn: Offered and passed unanimously at 9:55 PM.

Minutes of the November 19 Executive Committee Meeting By Luella Mast, Recording Secretary

Attendance: President Arnie Gordon, Peggy Dennis, Wayne Goldstein, Jim Humphrey, Dick Kauffunger, Chuck Lapinski, Luella Mast, George Sauer, Bill Schrader, Virginia Sheard, Sandy Vogelgesang, Marv Weinman, Dan Wilhelm, Charles Wolff.

Call to Order, Secretary and Treasurer's Reports

Mr. Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:55 PM at his home. The October 22 Executive Committee meeting minutes were approved on a voice vote. Mr. Schrader presented the mid-November Treasurer's Report. Income: none this month; Current balance: \$11,047.48.

President's Report: Mr. Gordon

MCCF Web Site: We have cost information from a possible web site designer and administrator: \$700 one-time site development fee with a \$35/hour maintenance fee. It would take about 10 minutes/month to put the newsletter on line. Several members had additional suggestions for a possible designer/administrator. Committee chairs would like to be able to post their own information themselves. Ms. Dennis, Mr. Wilhelm and Mr. Gordon will serve as an ad-hoc web site committee charged with meeting with possible designers and bringing a recommendation to the Executive Committee for a final decision.

Seminar Series: We have 19 people signed up so far for "How to Understand Your Property Tax Assessment and the Assessment Appeals Process" to be held in the Werner Council Office Building first floor auditorium from 9:00-11:30 a.m. on Saturday, December 6. Panelists will include Mr. Jack Brennan, Supervisor of Assessments in Montgomery County for the Maryland State Department of Assessments and Taxation and Mr. Gordon. Attendance is expected to be much higher as several Executive Committee members sent the information to members of their own associations. Several individuals plan to come to discuss the fact that those living on roads that are privately maintained by the property owners themselves still pay the same

county tax rates as those living on roads maintained by the county or state. We will continue to generate an ever expanding email list using the contact addresses of those who attended the first seminar.

ICC presentation: Mr. Greg Smith, well known ICC opponent, would like to make a brief presentation to the MCCF membership on the status of the ICC and its current financing. After discussion it was decided that Mr. Smith will be asked to put the information into an email that can be sent to the Board.

Correspondence: We sent a letter to our Delegation's Chair and Vice-Chair expressing our opposition to Bill MC 919-09, which would allow credit for recordation and transfer taxes and up to five years of property taxes for Montgomery County employees who buy a house in Montgomery County, and giving the reasons why. Mr. Wilhelm said it should be sent to all delegation members, not just the chairs. Mr. Gordon will follow up.

1st Vice President's Report: Ms. Dennis

December program: "Legislative Issues for the 2009 Session." All members of our House Delegation and any Senators who have a joint county they have introduced for the 2009 Legislative Session will be meeting in Rockville on the night of our December 8 regular meeting. State Senator Rich Madaleno, who has no pending joint bill will be our guest speaker for approximately 15 minutes. Mr. Wilhelm and Ms. Dennis are coordinating this part of the program. Following Mr. Madaleno, Mr. Royce Hanson, Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board, will make a presentation on the Planning Board's "Growing Smarter Montgomery" plan which critics say will completely undermine our current growth policy. Mr. Humphrey will chair this part of the program.

January program: Mr. Goldstein will plan a program explaining the role of the Historic Preservation Commission, the process by which resources are designated historic, and a presentation on some of the historic resources in Montgomery County.

February program: Ms. Barth, Ms. Madsen and Mr. Goldstein are coordinating a program on solar energy, green initiatives and LEED (Leadership in Energy and Design) requirements for buildings.

March program: Mr. Lapinski will chair "Utilities at the State Level," looking at electric and gas services including energy distribution and other

issues. Since several potential speakers will not be available in February, this program will be held in March.

April program: Mr. Weinman will chair the program on the County's FY10 Operating Budget.

2nd Vice President's Report

Ms. Vogelgesang reported we have 42 association members and 16 individual members. There has been some, but not a significant, response to the November Newsletter listing of those in danger of being dropped for failure to pay their dues.

Committee Reports

Planning and Land Use: Mr. Humphrey

Oral arguments were made with regard to a proposed development in the Planned Development Zone that does not meet the use, height, density or setback requirements in the Master Plan. Disregarding the fact that the proposed development is not in compliance with the master plan, the Council voted 8 to 1, Mark Elrich voting no, to approve the development. The possible rationale for Council support is similar to that made by the development community in opposing a proposal to implement TDR (Transferable Development Rights) legislation in Prince George's County -- the economic climate requires that the county government support development projects in order to generate revenues from developer investment in Montgomery County.

White Flint Sector Plan: The Planning Board has disbanded the 12 member Citizens Advisory Committee and replaced it with a 15 member Steering Committee that has six members from the civic community, eight from business, and one from the public/private sector. The Steering Committee will oversee the implementation of the yet to be completed sector plan. It would appear this action is premature as the Steering Committee will also oversee the writing of the staff draft plan which has traditionally been finished before a Citizens Advisory Committee is disbanded.

Mr. Goldstein reported that Park and Planning staff claimed that they were doing a financial feasibility study of the costs of constructing all of the necessary infrastructure in White Flint and on Rockville Pike to handle the pending increased office and retail square footage proposed by the plan. However, it is the White Flint developers who hired and paid a firm to do such a study. Community members are skeptical of the costs and benefits alleged by someone paid by a group who seek a tremendous increase in density.

The White Flint development district will be set up to pay back the government bonds sold to cover the costs of the new development. Buildable Lot Termination (BLTs) will be applied in Twinbrook and White Flint. When a TDR land owner sells TDRs he is allowed to keep the right to build a structure on the original property. When a land owner sells a BLT he sells the right to build any structure on his property. The BLT allows a buyer to increase the commercial density above that allowed in the master plan. White Flint has a relatively low commercial floor area ratio (FAR) so that BLTs are very valuable here. The estimated value of a White Flint BLT-TDR is \$200,000.

Planning Board procedures: Mr. Humphrey reported that Chairman Hanson and Planning Director Rollin Stanley are proposing to do away with the master plan Staff Draft process in which the Planning staff prepares a draft plan which is then reviewed by the Planning Board, modified as decided, and finalized as the Board Draft plan. The proposed changes, are opposed by all Council PHED Committee members, but are being implemented in the revision of the Twinbrook and Germantown master plans to produce a single draft plan. Mr. Kauffunger wants to determine if Park and Planning, a creature of the State, is meeting the requirements for the Agency as defined in State law, the Regional District Act (RDA), which established it as a bi-county agency. After discussion members agreed that Mr. Humphrey and Mr. Kauffunger would attempt to clarify the Agency's authority under the RDA.

Historic Preservation: Mr. Goldstein

Historic Preservation is about recognizing historic resources and integrating them into the community, making it both about historic preservation and a land use issue. Mr. Goldstein reviewed the Council's recent policy not to even consider a property's inclusion in the Master Plan of Historic Preservation if the Planning Board makes a negative recommendation. Council Senior Legislative Attorney Michael Faden argues that if the Planning Board makes a negative recommendation then in fact there is no recommended property for the Council to consider. Traditionally the Planning Board has not had the role of final authority as is now the case with negatively-recommended properties. The Watson House in Silver Spring is now off the list for consideration by the County Council, as is a former Germantown church. Nominations for the Master Plan may come in as individual properties or as a group of properties. The policy was consistently applied for almost 30

years. The three-week old new policy has been constantly changing.

Mr. Goldstein reviewed a second new hurdle for inclusion in the Master Plan. Council President Knapp believes that properties should not be added to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation if the owner opposes inclusion, a policy that has never been applied before and is not written into the law.

December Community Hero: Mr. Goldstein

The Sandy Spring Ashton Reserve Preservation Committee (SSARPC) worked with the developers of property at the corner of Route 108 (Sandy Spring Ashton Road) and Route 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) to first fight excessive development and then work with the developer to design a plan that the community could support. Mr. Goldstein will develop an article for the Newsletter re this Community Hero and the Certificate awarding the designation.

Education: Mr. Goldstein

MCPS has done a public/private partnership with the developers of the "Reading First" program. An analysis of the program outcomes found no measurable improvement in student reading scores. MCPS has invested \$14 million in Promethean Boards, classroom white boards that work as computer screens. There is nothing in the Board of Education's minutes to show when this expenditure was authorized. Mr. Weinman reported that the MCPS audit report has not been released.

Public Finance: Mr. Weinman

Small municipalities are getting more in tax funds than they need. Although the distribution formulas need to be changed no one is looking at this issue. Mr. Weinman handed out half of the results from the fall "Taxpayer Survey for Montgomery County Residents." His numbers will be combined with those that Mr. Wilhelm has and then the results will be printed in the newsletter. Mr. Weinman feels that the passage of Question B (Ficker Amendment) should not change the way the Council has done business. In 12 of the past 18 years the Council has passed a funding bill in April and then overridden their own bill in May. In only in two of the last 14 years has a funding bill not passed unanimously. Others didn't share his opinion.

Mr. Humphrey reported that the Bethesda parking lot district has a surplus of \$18 million. Should non-profits turn money raised over to the county? The Bethesda Urban Partnership set up the parking lot district and levies taxes on the property owners in

the district to improve Bethesda. The property owners are taxing themselves. The money has been used for the Circulator Buses. An extension of the bus route to serve a senior housing project will be tried, at an expense of \$2 million.

Sentinel Column

Mr. Goldstein will report on MCPS's results on the Maryland State Assessment (MSA) tests compared to other Maryland counties. Several counties with higher free and reduced meals (FARMS) numbers performed better on the tests. Mr. Humphrey reminded Executive Committee members that all committee chairs should be using the Column as a way to inform elected officials, who do read the column, about their issues.

Transportation

Mr. Gordon and Mr. Wilhelm attended the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) "open house" on proposed road changes on Route 28/198. Delegate Roger Manno has been contacted about the proposed improvements. Mr. Gordon feels that the widening cannot be made unless a grade separated interchange is first built at the 28/97 (Georgia Avenue) intersection. We support the expansion of 28/198 to four lanes.

Mr. Wilhelm attended the Maryland State Department of Transportation Road Show. The contract for ICC Section 'B' (Georgia Avenue to Route 29) has been awarded for engineering efforts. It would be easy to get out of 'B' right now but it won't be unless things happen quickly. There was also discussion about the need to find a different way to fund the Transportation Trust Fund.

Legislation: Mr. Wilhelm

The Delegation's priorities hearing will start at 6 pm on November 20. Mr. Wilhelm received no comments on the draft testimony sent to Executive Committee members. Mr. Gordon will testify for Norbeck Meadows Civic Association.

Mr. Wilhelm asked for our position on three bills: MC 101-09 would authorize the office of the Inspector General to conduct an audit(s) of WSSC. It is WCCS's position that, as a State Agency, the County has no oversight authority. Since the bill would give the Inspector General the authority to do an audit if he wishes, but does not require that one be done, the Executive Committee agreed to support MC 101-09.

Delegate Susan Lee has again introduced bill MC 913-09 dealing with Campaign Finance Disclosure.

We will find out more about this bill before taking a position.

Senator Rich Madaleno has introduced a bill dealing with highway maintenance revenue. We will find out more about the purpose of this bill before taking a position.

Public Utilities: Mr. Lapinski

Mr. Lapinski reported on two bills concerning WSSC. Bill MC/PG 104-09 would change the exemption to the requirement for payment of the system development charge to any property used to provide programs and services to youth that is also exempt from federal taxes. The change in the exemption is that it would apply now to properties used primarily rather than just exclusively. Such properties could include government buildings and churches. The system development charge is the tax placed on rate payers to cover the cost of infrastructure improvements. The Executive Committee agreed to vigorously oppose this bill.

Bill MC/PG 105-09 would specify that if either the Montgomery or Prince George's County Councils did not concur with a proposed WSSC funding level, then the funding would be frozen at the previous year's level. The failure to concur then constitutes approval of the previous year's funding level. Members agreed to take no position at the current time.

December newsletter

Ms. Dennis reviewed newsletter assignments. Members are still needed for the Awards and Nominating Committees.

Old Business There was no old business.

New Business:

Mr. Humphrey will print new Executive Committee name tags for those who need them using clip on holders provided by Ms. Mast.

Ms. Mast reported that a member from Greater Colesville Citizens Association felt that the split program at the November meeting negatively impacted the housing part of the program. After discussion, Executive Committee members decided that split programs should continue to be the exception rather than the rule. The program announcements that Ms. Vogelgesang has placed in the Washington Post are being read. We had at least one individual at the November meeting who came as a result of the announcement.

Ms. Mast suggested that MCCF consider implementing voting cards similar to those used by

the Montgomery County Council of PTAs at their general meetings. The topic will require further discussion.

Adjourn

The motion to adjourn was made and passed at 10:15 PM. The December meeting will be at Ms. Vogelgesang's home.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

Serving the County since 1925

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009

Mail to: William Schrader (Treasurer) Inquiries: Sandy Vogelgesang (2nd VP/Membership)
 12824 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, 9009 Charred Oak Dr, Bethesda, MD
 MD 20906 20817
 301-946-6545 301-365-2347;
 schraderw@erols.com everest.associates@erols.com

Name of Organization/Individual _____ Date _____

Number of Households (Approx) _____ Annual Dues (see below) \$ _____

(Make checks payable to **Montgomery County Civic Federation**)

Membership Type	Number of Households	PLEASE CHECK	DUES	Max Number of Reps.	Voting Privileges
Local Association (civic, community, homeowner or municipality. Must represent at least 30 households - not paid members. Cannot be a single local issue group.)	10 to 50		\$25*	1	Yes
	51 to 300		\$45*	2	
	301 to 600		\$65*	3	
	601+		\$85*	4	
Umbrella Association (Two or more local associations. Cannot be single local issue group.)	60 to 500		\$45*	2	Yes
	501 to 1000		\$65*	3	
	1001+		\$85*	4	
Regional or County-Wide Organization (environmental, transportation, or other civic/community).	50+ memberships, not households		\$45*	2	Yes
Individual Associate	(not applicable)		\$20*	1	No
Associate Group (Gov't agency, business, or other organization)	(not applicable)		\$85*	2	No

***A \$5 discount may be taken for each person who elects to receive the newsletter via email – please check email box below.** You can also select less than the allowed number of members and pay according to that number. Please provide all the information below no matter the newsletter delivery method. We are planning to produce a membership directory. Please identify whether you want your email address included.

1.	Name (President+)		Phone (H/W)	
	Street		E-mail Address	<input type="checkbox"/>
	City, State, Zip		Put email address in directory: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
2.	Name		Phone (H/W)	
	Street		E-mail Address	<input type="checkbox"/>
	City, State, Zip		Put email address in directory: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
3.	Name		Phone (H/W)	
	Street		E-mail Address	<input type="checkbox"/>
	City, State, Zip		Put email address in directory: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4.	Name		Phone (H/W)	
	Street		E-mail Address	<input type="checkbox"/>
	City, State, Zip		Put email address in directory: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

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

Federation Meeting

Monday, December 8, 2008
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building.
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

- 7:45 Call to Order
- 7:46 Introductions and Announcements
- 7:50 Adoption of Meeting Agenda
- 7:55 Treasurer's Report
- 7:58 Approval of November 10 Minutes
- 8:00 Briefing by Senator Rich Madaleno on the 2009 Legislative Session
- 8:15 Program: MNCPPC's Royce Hanson on Growth Policy
- 9:15 Community Hero Award
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 9:45 Old Business
- 9:50 New Business
- 10:00 Adjournment

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, December 21.** Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to an 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@verizon.net.

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, December 17, 7:45 p.m.

At the home of Sandy Vogelgesang

9009 Charred Oak Drive
Bethesda 20817



**Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Civic Federation**

First Class Mail

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Address service requested