



Civic Federation News

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Serving the Public Interest since 1925

www.montgomerycivic.org

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February Program: Report from the Organizational Reform Commission By Peggy Dennis, President

The program for our meeting on Monday, February 14 will be a panel discussion of the findings and recommendations of the county's Organizational Reform Commission (ORC). This commission, composed of eight County residents who are experienced in government, business or non-profit service delivery, was formed on July 20, 2010 for the purpose of helping "guide the County toward creating efficient models of providing services and operations." The report is expected to contain "recommendations for potential reorganization or consolidation of functions performed by County government and County-funded agencies." We may find recommendations concerning some of the controversial suggestions made during the past year such as the merging of the Parks Department Police with the Montgomery County Police Department, the rationalizing and simplification of the systems by which the public can rent space in public facilities and the question of taking recreational programs out of the Parks Department (MNCPPC) and putting them under the jurisdiction of the Department of Recreation.

The Commission's report will be made public on January 31 and should be available for study on the Council's website at

<http://tinyurl.com/mcorcrep>. As with our

Mark Your Calendar Now
for the
**Montgomery County Civic Federation's
2011 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET**

Friday, May 13, 2011

6:00 to 9:30 p.m.

Conference Center

at the

Universities at Shady Grove

program on the Office of Legislative Oversight's recommendations, we urge everyone to study the report in advance of the 14th, and to come armed with knowledge, insights and focused questions. The public is, as always, welcome.

MCCF Environmental Committee Updates

By Caren Madsen and Ginny Barnes

Stormwater Activity

The Montgomery County Stormwater Partners (of which MCCF is a member) met with Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Director Bob Hoyt, Watershed Management Division Chief Steve Shofar, and Meo Curtis, Manager of Watershed Planning and Monitoring. DEP provided updates on implementation of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) "MS-4" (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer) Permit, issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment February 2010. Steve Shofar reported that, after extensive analysis, DEP estimates that the permit's watershed restoration provision requires treating roughly 4,000 acres of existing impervious surface with a range of retrofit or restoration projects.

"We need armies of citizens to implement ESD (Environmental Site Design) retrofits for this permit," said Director Hoyt. "We can't do this as government alone. We need citizens to communicate to other citizens, neighbor-to-neighbor, the need for sustainable landscaping and

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behavior changes." He also noted that when DEP moved the dialogue on the permit away from concerns of whether the permit could be implemented to how to implement, it was a game-changer.

Under current plans, about 1,000 impervious acres, or about a quarter of the total required acres to be addressed, will have runoff treated with green infrastructure or ESD retrofits, including rain gardens, roadside bio-retention, permeable pavements, tree plantings, conservation landscaping with native plants, and green roofs. About 3,000 remaining impervious acres will be treated with retrofits to conventional stormwater retention ponds to enlarge their capacity to store runoff. After initially planning to use ESD retrofits to treat only about 5% of the required impervious acres (due to official cost estimates that put a very high price tag on ESD retrofits), DEP increased the proportion of ESD retrofits. The Stormwater Partners have highlighted the multiple benefits of green retrofits, and questioned the efficacy of pond retrofits that don't reduce runoff volumes.

DEP plans to submit its draft Implementation Strategy, including watershed plans for the County's 8 major watersheds, to MDE on February 16. These watershed plans and the overall strategy will integrate the permit's relevant requirements, including plans to meet Total Maximum Daily Load Waste Load Allocations, trash elimination, and retrofits. On or about the same date, the draft Strategy will also be released to the public for a 30-day public comment period. DEP plans to then revise its Implementation Strategy based on that input, and submit its final Strategy and Plans to MDE by the end of April 2011.

Steve Dryden of Friends of Rock Creek reported that the Jan. 18th County Council hearing on the Bill 60-10, to increase fines for violation of the erosion and sediment control law to up to \$1,000 per violation, went well. MCCF President Peggy Dennis was among those testifying in favor of the legislation, following unanimous passage of an MCCF resolution supporting the bill. Introduced by Councilmember Marc Elrich (D-At Large), the bill now has a total of four co-sponsors on the Council. The next step is a Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee

work session with the bill expected to come before the full Council for a vote in February.

A T&E committee report by Keith Levchenko on artificial turf (AT) is pending. The report will cover pros and cons, including the water quality concerns that prompted the Stormwater Partners' call for a moratorium on the use of AT. One concern is that AT relies on pulverized rubber tires containing toxic chemicals.

Update on Forest and Trees

As discussed in the January MCCF meeting, our county Forest Conservation Law (FCL) is overdue for comprehensive revisions. DEP has undertaken a project to revise the law and is currently negotiating with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), which administers the current law, on a draft bill. DEP has met for the past two years with environmental organizations and members of the building community, which is regulated by the FCL. Councilmember Roger Berliner (D-District 1) is the newly appointed Chairman of the Council Transportation and Environment Committee and will host a larger stakeholder meeting on the DEP proposal.

A goal of the stakeholder meeting is to explore common ground on the current draft and make suggestions for improving the draft before the bill is introduced in the County Council. Submission of a bill is expected soon. Both the environmental community and builders are urging that forest conservation be addressed separately from urban tree canopy protection and restoration in draft legislation.

The current Forest Conservation Law has begun to yield results in reforesting the more rural UpCounty. However, as pressure has mounted for infill development in the DownCounty and dense building to take place on the 4% of Montgomery County where there is still developable land, the urbanized sections of the county have become denuded, resulting in a mere 13% of forested land in the urban ring of the county, according to data from M-NCPPC. Our county currently has no countywide urban tree canopy goal, although urban canopy goals are included in several master plans.

Separate from jurisdiction of the FCL is our county street tree program, which is guided by the State Roadside Tree Law but has a line item in the County budget. The budget for the street tree program was suspended in last year's budget cuts, resulting in no ability for street trees in our neighborhoods to be either maintained or replaced when trees are lost due to age, disease, storm damage or construction damage. With Pepco's ongoing pruning around power lines, remaining neighborhood street trees are looking grim in many sections of the county.

According to land use planner Donald C. Outen, who developed the Baltimore County Forest Sustainability Strategy, Maryland is heading toward a "no net loss of forest" policy. A report from the Maryland Sustainable Forestry Council, appointed by the Governor, is due in December of this year. There is no representation from Montgomery County on this statewide Council. To learn more about this state Council and the Maryland Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009, visit: <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/sfcouncil.asp>

Don't Fear the Trees Part Two: How Trees Enhance our Lives by Carole Ann Barth, Parks & Recreation Chairman

Everyone knows that trees grace our lives with beauty. "No town can fail of beauty, though its walks were gutters and its houses hovels, if venerable trees make magnificent colonnades along its streets." ~Henry Ward Beecher, Proverbs, 1887. We admire the transformation from winter's pared-down sculptural forms to the lush abundance of summer shade. We look forward to the glad rags of autumn and the somber elegance of evergreens in winter.

If we take the time to get to know individual trees, we begin to appreciate their idiosyncratic beauty; a zigzagged trunk that tells of a deadly, slow-motion battle for sunshine; or a lacework wrought by generations of woodpeckers. Like laugh lines on a beloved face, they simply deepen our definition of beauty.

But trees also enhance our lives in very practical ways. They provide a wealth of ecosystem services. While it's impossible to put a price tag on services such as good health, clean air, and clean water, one can estimate the dollar value of some services such as: pounds of pollution removed; reduced heating and cooling costs, amount of carbon sequestration, and so on.

According to Tree Baltimore, when you add these benefits together, it is not unreasonable to conclude that \$57,000 in economic and environmental benefits is provided over the life of a single tree. You can estimate the economic value of a tree in your yard or on your street for yourself with the tree calculator at <http://www.trees.maryland.gov/calculator.asp>.

These services also include some you may not have considered. You may not associate trees with stormwater management, but it turns out that one large tree can eliminate 5,000 gallons of stormwater runoff each year. And while you may know that the net cooling effect of a healthy young tree equals 10 room-sized air conditioners operating 20 hours a day, you may not know that the shade can also significantly prolong paving life, thus lengthening the time between road repairs.

Of course we all know that trees are important for wildlife, providing nesting space for birds and nectar, fruits, seeds and nuts to feed many animals. But did you know that Hackberry, Cottonwood, Hawthorn, Wild Cherry, Willow, Ash, Linden, River Birch, Eastern Red Cedar, Chokecherry, Flowering Dogwood, Holly, Muscledwood, Locust, Sweetbay Magnolia, Maple, Pawpaw, Wild Plum, Redbud, Shadbush, Black Walnut, and Sassafras trees are all host plants for butterfly larvae? Did you know that the first hummingbirds to arrive each spring depend on tree sap rather than flower nectar?

Trees also support wildlife that doesn't live in or on the tree. Without the carpet of fallen leaves, salamanders would have no winter home. Without streamside trees, there is no woody debris to form instream habitat, no shade to protect stream life, and no food for the base of the fishes' food chain. Research in the Northwest has documented an additional link between forests and fish. As expected, there are more salmon in well-forested streams. Interestingly, forests also grow better

where there are more salmon, because they get nutrients from the salmon coming upstream to spawn.

Like the relationship of trees and salmon, trees have provided special benefits to humans since time immemorial. Farmers and watermen relied on practical phenology: (the study of periodic biological phenomena, such as flowering, breeding, and migration, in relation to climatic conditions) to correctly schedule their work. No matter how weather patterns sifted from year to year, the farmer knew it was time to plant corn when the leaves of the dogwood tree were the size of squirrel ears, and watermen knew the shad were running up the river whenever the shadbush tree was in blossom.

Today, we pay more attention to how trees provide other economic benefits. According to appraisers, trees add 7 to 25% of the total value of a particular property. Homes adjacent to forests are priced 8 to 20 percent higher. Commercial rents increase 7 percent. Shoppers are even willing to pay 9 to 12 percent more to shop in areas with trees.

Surprisingly, trees also contribute to crime prevention. “Kuo and partners (2003) have found that the presence of trees within high density neighborhoods lowers levels of fear, contributes to less violent and aggressive behavior, and encourages better neighbor relationships and better coping skills” A Recent study in Portland, OR. associated large trees with a reduction in crime. Among the tree variables analyzed, canopy size of both street and yard trees and the number of trees growing on a lot had the most effect on crime occurrence. The researchers reason that large trees signal to potential criminals that a neighborhood is better cared for, and would therefore increase the likelihood they will be caught.

And finally, scientists are beginning to document how trees and nature in general impact our mental and physical health. School children with ADHD show fewer symptoms and girls show more academic self-discipline if they have access to natural settings (Faber Taylor et al. 2001). Hospital patients recover more quickly and require fewer pain-killing medications when having a view of nature, and passive views of nature are associated with reduced physiological stress response (Ulrich 1986). Office

workers with a view of nature are more productive, report fewer illnesses, and have higher job satisfaction (Kaplan 1993).

When you take all these benefits together, it seems clear that we should place much greater emphasis on planting and preserving trees. As Teddy Roosevelt said in his 1907 Arbor Day message, “It is well that you should celebrate your Arbor Day thoughtfully, for within your lifetime the nation's need of trees will become serious. We of an older generation can get along with what we have, though with growing hardship; but in your full manhood and womanhood you will want what nature once so bountifully supplied and man so thoughtlessly destroyed; and because of that want you will reproach us, not for what we have used, but for what we have wasted.”

In the next installment of “Don’t Fear the Trees” we will look at how trees continue to play a vital ecological role even after death.

President’s Message: When You Should Fear the Trees

By Peggy Dennis, President

Trees are wonderful things, and I can’t imagine living in an area that does not have a generous canopy. However, there are circumstances when homeowners should take reasonable precautions with trees.

The term “tree hugger” was used with some derision by a member of the Board of Zoning Appeals some years ago when my neighbors and I were fighting a massive development that would have involved significant tree loss. But I proudly describe myself as a “tree hugger”. When we built our home 20 years ago we roped off every tree we could to spare them from the ravages of the chain saw and the bulldozer. At the time, our young, second growth trees consisted mainly of young locusts and tulip poplars which were barely as tall as the house itself.

Now the trees along our side yard set back—mostly tulip poplars—are 70 feet tall, headed for 100 feet or more, and they tower over the house. We love the way the trees look and the shade they offer. But we have become concerned about the risk of falling

branches—tulip poplars are notoriously brittle and several trees have already lost their tops and major limbs in windstorms. The concern was precipitated when we decided to have solar panels installed on the roof – a considerable investment. In “going green” and reducing our carbon footprint we had to consider the loss of energy generation that would occur from having large trees shading the solar panels well into the morning. We also had to think about the heavy financial costs of replacing damaged and destroyed solar panels and repairing or rebuilding the house itself should one or more of those trees come down onto the house.

While it’s statistically comforting to think that mature trees close to your home are a small risk, that risk may still be significant. I recall with a shudder the little house in Cabin John that was roped off with “Condemned” signs all over it after a beautiful old tree crashed down on it and destroyed it. Friends in Damascus suffered lesser but significant damage to their home when a tree fell on it. Although their homeowners insurance covered a large part of the repair costs, they were warned that if they did not remove additional trees that presented a similar risk, their insurance rates would be increased. A neighbor whose home is surrounded by mature tulip poplars had a large branch break off in a storm and come straight through her roof and onto her bed. Had she been in bed at the time, she would likely have been killed.

So we made the decision to have our most problematic trees removed, but we will enjoy picking out other varieties to replace them. I have a starter list of relatively low growing trees that will provide a more attractive and varied mini-forest along our eastern property line. It includes native trees pawpaw, Cherokee dogwood, Appalachian dogwood (a disease resistant white variety), redbud and sweet bay magnolia, and imports; Japanese maple, cryptomeria, and Enoki cypress. I’m open to additional suggestions from other “tree huggers”.

Thank You Notes

By Peggy Dennis, President

The Civic Federation wishes to thank Jerry Garson, long time MCCF delegate from Regency Estates Citizens Association for his auditing of the MCCF

accounts, a task mandated by our bylaws whenever there is a change in treasurers. We understand that, according to his audit, everything on our account books is “ship shape”.

We also want to thank Jerry Garson and Mary Kiraly, MCCF delegate from the Congressional Forest Community Association, for their years of service on the Montgomery County Board of Elections. May the Board of Elections’ loss be our gain!

Get Well Message

By Peggy Dennis, President

I learned this past weekend that Richard Tingley, delegate from the McKenney Hills / Carroll Knolls Civic Association has been taken ill, but he is making a strong comeback and his prognosis looks promising. Please join with me in wishing Dick a speedy and complete recovery. Our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Mark Your Calendar for MCCF Meetings

Monthly Meetings

February 14
March 14
April 11
May 9
June 13

Executive Committee

February 23
March 23
April 20
May 18
June 22

The Annual Awards Banquet will be on Friday, May 13.

Summer Potluck Supper in July on a date to be determined

Proposed Bylaws Amendment By Dan Wilhelm, Vice President

In 1984 an award called the “Journal Cup” was instituted by the Montgomery Journal to honor “an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County”. With the demise of the Montgomery Journal, the award was taken over by the Gazette newspapers and renamed the “Gazette Award”. As the Gazette newspapers lost interest in sponsoring this award, the MCCF voted last year to rename the award in honor of the late

Wayne M. Goldstein. At the January membership meeting, it was pointed out that Article XV (Annual Achievement Awards) had not been updated to reflect this name change. The following bylaw change will therefore be introduced at the February meeting and voted on at the March meeting:

b. ~~Gazette~~ Wayne Goldstein Award - sponsored by the ~~Montgomery Gazette~~ newspaper and to be awarded to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County.

Civic Federation Leadership 2011-2012

Nominations Committee

We urgently need 5 to 7 volunteers including a chairman to serve on the MCCF Nominating Committee. There is no better way to help highlight shared County concerns and provide more clout for citizens and their civic associations. The Committee will be filling the elective positions on the Executive Committee: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Most of the work will be done by telephone. No travel! No meetings! This committee was supposed to have been announced in this newsletter and elected at the February meeting, so we're running late. Please contact Peggy Dennis at 301-983-9738 or by email at hotyakker@gmail.com to sign up to help with this important task.

2011 Awards Committee

The Civic Federation's Annual Awards Banquet on Friday, May 13 is just around the corner, freezing, thawing and winter weather notwithstanding! Jorge Ribas has graciously volunteered to chair the 2011 Awards Nominating Committee, and he is looking for others - delegates and associate members - to help him in this pleasant task. The work of this committee - taking nominations for award recipients, evaluating those nominations and making final recommendations on the awardees - should be of short duration and may be done largely by phone. The committee will be confirmed at the February Executive Committee meeting on February 23.

Please also start thinking now about individuals and groups you would like to nominate. Here are the descriptions of the awards and the rationale for each award follows:

- The **Wayne Goldstein Award**: awarded to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County.
- The **Sentinel Award** - sponsored by the Montgomery Sentinel newspaper and awarded to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level.
- The **Star Cup** - sponsored by the Federation and to be awarded to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County.

Please contact Jorge at 301-404-1946 or by email at jribas@ribasconsulting.com to serve on the committee with him or to nominate someone for an award. We cannot do this without your help!

Take Online Survey to Provide Feedback on Pepco Service

The Pepco Work Group appointed by County Executive Ike Leggett is conducting an online survey of residential and business customers in order to receive the broadest possible range of feedback about their experiences with the electric utility company. The surveys are designed to obtain information on how the public views Pepco's service, the extent to which customers have experienced outages, the economic impact of those outages and some insight as to what additional costs customers would be willing to incur in exchange for improved service. Residential customers should complete the survey at the following link by **Monday, January 31**.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/pepcoresidential>

Intensive Job Search Training Classes Offered

If you are 50 or over, looking for a job, and a Montgomery County resident, The Career

Gateway! is here to help you. It is a “public-private collaborative” with grants from the Montgomery County, Maryland Health & Human Services Department, the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, and JCA -- the Jewish Council for the Aging. This innovative program will help you turbo-charge your resume, hone your interviewing skills, network effectively, discover the hidden job market, and develop a personal job-search plan. The Career Gateway! offers individual attention in small classes, a long-term mentor, 30 hours of intensive training over two weeks, valuable take-home materials, and a choice of sessions starting in early February and running through mid-May. The cost of the Job Search Training Classes is \$75. Classes begin February 7, March 7, April 4, and May 9.

Space is limited, so sign up now. Call JCA University at 301-255-4200/4215 or email us at JCAUniversity@AccessJCA.org.

Minutes of the January 10 Regular Meeting

By Dan Wilhelm, Acting Recording Secretary

Call to Order: President Peggy Dennis called the meeting to order at 7:50 P.M. with introductions all around (35 people signed the attendance sheets but more were in attendance). The agenda for the meeting was approved with one additional item dealing with County Bill 60-10. The minutes of the December 13, 2010 meeting were approved as printed in the newsletter. Bill Schrader gave the Treasurer’s report.

Announcements: Arnie Gordon reported a federal law 'Local Community Radio Act.' had been passed and signed by the president that would allow groups like a civic association to operate a radio station within a small area.

Main Program: Peggy Dennis introduced Valerie Ervin, Council President, who then introduced the staff from the Office of Legislative Oversight: Director Karen Orlansky, and OLO staffers Aron Trombka, Craig Howard, Leslie Rubin and Sarah Downie. Valerie Ervin also participated in the program by answering some of the more policy-based questions.

Valerie indicated the FY11-12 budget is the third year in a row where the County has faced significant budget short-falls that have to be addressed to reach a balanced budget. Last year the short-fall was approximately \$300M. The County Executive will present his proposed budget to the Council on March 15.

Karen Orlansky and staff spoke to a 24 page handout on the OLO’s report: “Achieving a Structurally Balanced Budget in Montgomery County” and answered questions. Several highlights are:

- Tax supported expenditures increased 59% from FY02 to FY11, but FY09 was higher than FY11. Over that period, inflation was much lower at 29% and inflation plus population growth was 40%.
- The budget is composed of four separate “agencies” which consume the following percentage of the tax supported expenditure: MCPS (57%), County Gov’t (34%), Montgomery College (6%) and Park and Planning (3%). Personnel costs make up 82% of the total and the other 18% covers operating expenses (utilities, supplies, infrastructure repairs, vehicles, contracts, etc).
- The revenue growth for FY02 to FY11 as calculated from the graph was about 58%. The peak growth was during FY03-09 at 7.4% per year. The projection for FY11-18 is 2.7%.
- Expenditures are projected to exceed revenues for the FY11-18 period. The gap can be closed by some combination of reducing costs (cost per person, work-years or number of people, and debt) or increasing revenue. Some reduction in operating expenses is probably possible but that is not an area in which large savings can be expected.
- The number of workyears has increased overall by 10%: MCPS (14%), County Gov’t (0.4%), College (30%) and P&P (negative 10%). The large increase in personnel cost is not the result of increased

staff but growing employee and retiree costs – salary and benefits. Over the last decade, salaries on the average grew by 50% and benefits by 120%. Each agency has its own salary and benefit structure. Health benefits cost 27% more than those of the federal government, which most consider the “gold standard”.

- Debt service (principal and interest) was \$177M in FY02 and has grown to \$259M in FY11. It is projected to sharply increase by 50% to \$391M by FY16. For the FY07-FY11 period, the increase was 19%.

Valerie indicated that, rather than the typical public hearing, the council will be having five sessions like the one with MCCF and the Executive is having another five sessions. Relative to MCPS, the Council defines expenditures within 12 categories that MCPS/Board of Education cannot change without their approval.

Business: The Environmental Committee (Ginny Barnes and Caren Madsen) proposed the following resolution (after minor changes) dealing with County Bill 60-10, which after receiving the required five seconds was approved unanimously:

Whereas, one of the most significant pollution impacts to the Chesapeake Bay is sediment from run-off entering the estuary from all major tributaries, and

Whereas, all streams originating in or passing through Montgomery County have sediment from run-off discharged into them, and

Whereas, sediment enters streams as the result of inadequate sediment and erosion control measures or the failure of such measures.

Be it resolved, the Montgomery County Civic Federation supports adoption and enactment of Montgomery County Council Bill No. 60-10 to increase the maximum penalty for violation of the county erosion and sediment control law to at least \$1,000.

Committee Reports:

Environmental: The committee provided a draft Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

hand-out that indicated forest conservation is starting to work in the up-county area but not in the down-county area and proposing a number of actions. DEP favors the proposed actions but neither builders nor environmentalists do. Caren and Ginny indicated that trees and forests need to be separately addressed. They have finally started talking with developers to find out areas where there can be agreement.

Planning and Land Use: Chair Jim Humphrey provided an update on the zoning ordinance rewrite underway.

Public Finance: Chair Chuck Lapinski spoke about the \$1.6B budget shortfall facing the state.

Legislation/CFM: Chair Dan Wilhelm indicated that Melanie Wenger, Director of County Office of Intergovernmental Relations, spoke at the Jan 3 CFM meeting and identified County priorities for the upcoming session in Annapolis. Education will be a primary target to balance the state budget. Also more funds are needed for transportation (don't have enough to maintain what exists).

Parks and Recreation: Chair Carole Ann Barth reminded everyone to respond to her email about parks.

Education: Chair Paula Bienenfeld indicated the Board of Education is starting to schedule forums about the qualifications for a new superintendent. They will also be talking privately with 50 organizations and there will be an online survey, open to anyone in the world. A video of the December panel discussion on choosing a new superintendent exists on the Parents Coalition web site that she encouraged people to review

Old and New Business and Adjournment

There was no old business. Jim Humphrey pointed out under new business that the bylaws need to be updated to reflect the change in the name of the Gazette Award to the Wayne Goldstein Award. The meeting adjourned at 10:10PM.

Minutes of the January 20 Executive Committee Meeting by Paula Bienenfeld, Acting Recording Secretary

Attendees: Peggy Dennis, Jim Humphrey, Dan Wilhelm, Paula Bienenfeld, Bill Schrader, Virginia Sheard, Caren Madsen, Carole Anne Barth, Jim Zepp, Chuck Lapinski

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 pm. at the home of Paula Bienenfeld.

The December meeting minutes were approved without amendments. The Treasurer's report was adopted. As of January 19th, 2011, total income is \$3,390.00 and total expenses are \$1,456.41. The checking account balance is \$11,866.63. There are 4 new members, including three new associations, and one individual. It was noted that the website includes the number of households in member associations.

The January 24 meeting with Francoise Carrier (Planning Board Chair) was discussed, including who would attend and what topics could be raised

Awards Banquet: The banquet will be held May 13th at the Conference Center, Universities of Shady Grove. Jorge Ribas is chairing the committee to recommend award nominees, and he needs several more committee members.

MCCF Nominations Committee: Dan Wilhelm will serve, but we need at least four more members including a chairman.

By-laws: Peggy Dennis plans to go through the pertinent sections of the By-laws that describe the responsibilities and time lines for different officers and put on the website.

Upcoming Programs. Ms. Dennis arranging the February program on report of the Organizational Reform Commission (final report due January 31); March on County's FY12 Capital Budget, and April on FY12 Operating Budget. Possibilities for future programs: public safety topics; Zoning Code Rewrite; bus rapid transit; creating better local and neighborhood association; Charter Schools

Next Executive Committee Meeting will be at Sandy Vogelgesang's home.

Discussion on Community Heroes. There was discussion on future 'Community Heroes' with Chuck Lapinski to see about Mike Heyser's availability for February. Tony Hausner under consideration for his work on "Safe Silver Spring.

Committee Reports:

Caren Madsen – **Environment Committee** Co-chair: the committee continues to meet with people from Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Park and Planning, and is setting up a meeting with Department of Permitting Services (DPS). There is supposed to be a 'stakeholder' meeting in the future. DEP appears more willing to revise the bill but it is not ready to move forward at present. Other issues: Maryland is working to figure out how to preserve and protect the state's "Scenic Byways". MoCo has two. There will be a forum on Scenic Byways at Glenview Mansion (Rockville).

Also, there is a Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009, with a Sustainable Forestry Council. There is no representative from Montgomery County on the Council.

Dan Wilhelm – **State Legislation Committee** Chair: Committee for Montgomery had several issues meetings, on transportation, pensions, etc. . It looks like Annapolis is moving towards raising the gasoline tax.

Dan Wilhelm— **Transportation:** indicated that there is going to be a county committee on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), and Dan was asked by County Executive Ike Leggett to be on it. He thinks Leggett wants to make BRT a major priority over the next few years. Jim Zepp pointed out that a study done about US29 shows that BRT would snarl traffic worse than it currently is. Dan pointed out that BRT study put forth over 10 years ago and that major problems exist between University Blvd and New Hampshire Ave.

Paula Bienenfeld – **Education Committee** Chair: correction, MCPS paid Deutsche Bank \$22 million, not \$3 or \$5million. No one knows what the money was for. In addition, Louis Wilen of the Parents Coalition has been posting credit card records on the Parents Coalition blog, showing

expensive meals paid for by taxpayers, for MCPS staff, including for example a meal at Il Pizzico on the first day of school, that cost \$72, attended by Superintendent Weast, Brian Edwards, and Bob Hellmuth. The superintendent search is still ongoing. There are public forums and private meetings. Paula and Peggy Dennis were both invited to one of the private meetings. There is also an online survey open to everyone.

Carol Ann Barth – Parks and Recreation

Committee Chair: There continue to be maintenance issues. There is a Montgomery County Parks Foundation, however, because of staff cuts, there is no one at the Parks Department to speak with about new ‘partnerships.’

Jim Humphrey – Planning and Land Use

Committee Chair: the Takoma Langley/Crossroads master plan hearing is January 25th. These two plans are at the council. There are these proposed new zones: CR Town Zone, for moderate density and medium height buildings; and a CR-N (Neighborhood) Zone, for edge properties in mixed use areas. There is a question as to whether there is a process or the authority for the Council to transmit plans back to the Planning Board. There is some discussion about leaving the zoning in place. We need to see the final language. They may go back to substitute the CR-Town Zone. They haven’t proposed specific language so it is not possible to see what is mapped. Some developers are asking for interim steps to develop parts of properties. There is no need right now for the Civic Fed to weigh in, as the language is not clear. The Zoning Code rewrite project is drafting ‘modules’ to be presented. All the districts will be one ‘module.’ On February 8th there is a panel in Silver Spring, ‘Zoning in the Neighborhoods.’ Jim Humphrey will be on the panel.

Chuck Lapinski – Utilities and Public Finance

Committee Chair: There is a \$2 billion gap at the state level. Federal funds (\$323million) were used to pay pensions and that money is no longer available. The key thing seems to be the Annapolis delegates from the other counties want to give a greater share of the burden to Howard and Montgomery counties. Montgomery County is expected to get zero for school construction. The

Public Service Commission (PCS) is looking at fines for unreliable service. If there are fines, they need to be large enough to make an impact.

Jim Zepp passed around a draft letter to County Executive Leggett regarding the newly appointed Work Group on PEPCO. He has concerns that the Work Group is lacking public participation and transparency. The meeting schedules, discussions, and results should be published, and available online. The meetings should be well-advertised and scheduled for times during which most residents can attend.

New Business: Peggy is organizing the all-county Bicycle Conference to be held on Saturday, May 14th at the EOB from 9:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. All relevant stakeholders will be invited and co-sponsors sought among key government entities and advocacy groups.

Old Business: Regarding Orphaned Roads, Fawsett Road is the only road that petitioned the DOT for improvements to bring it up to County standards. Fawsett road will be the guinea pig test case to see if it is possible for an old, unimproved road to be improved through the County’s CIP process.

Meeting adjourned, 10:15 pm

MCCF Officers

Position	Name	Home Phone	Office or Cell Phone	Email
Elected				
President	Peggy Dennis	301-983-9738	202-744-3019	hotyakker@gmail.com
1st Vice President	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	Call home	djwilhelm@verizon.net
2nd Vice President	Carole Ann Barth	301-593-7863		cbarth@mindspring.com
Treasurer	Bill Schrader	301-946-6545	same	schraderw@erols.com
Recording Secretary:				
Appointed and Past President				
Member at Large	Virginia Sheard	301-949-3372	same	boots3303@aol.com
Member at Large	Jim Zepp	301-593-7863		jzepp@mindspring.com
Member at Large	<i>vacant</i>			
Member at Large	<i>vacant</i>			
Member at Large	<i>vacant</i>			
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Committees				
<u>Education</u>	Paula Bienenfeld	301-984-2944		paula_bienenfeld@yahoo.com
Environment	Ginny Barnes	301-762-6423		ginnybarnes@juno.com
	Caren Madsen	301-587-8128	301-713-9042	carenmadsen@msn.com
Legislation/Committee for Montgomery	Dan Wilhelm	301-384-2698	Call home	djwilhelm@verizon.net
Planning and Land Use & Housing	Jim Humphrey	301-652-6359	same	theelms518@earthlink.net
Utilities	Chuck Lapinski	301-384-0392	Call home	charles.lapinski@yahoo.com
Public Finance	Chuck Lapinski	301-384-0392	Call home	charles.lapinski@yahoo.com
Public Safety	<i>vacant</i>			
Transportation	<i>vacant</i>			
Parks and Recreation	Carole Ann Barth	301-593-7863		cbarth@mindspring.com

Federation Meeting

Session 824

Monday, February 14, 2011
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building.
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

7:45 Call to Order & Introductions
7:53 Announcements
7:56 Approval of Agenda
7:57 Approval of Minutes of January 10 Meeting
7:58 Treasurer's Report
8:00 Program: Report of the Organizational Reform
Commission
9:15 Bylaws Amendment introduction
9:20 Committee Reports
9:44 Old Business / New Business
9:45 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, 100 Maryland Avenue, 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, February 26, 2011.** Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to an e-mail, and send it to: **hotyakker@gmail.com**

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, February 23, 7:45 p.m.

At the home of Sandy Vogelgesang

9009 Charred Oak Drive

Bethesda, MD 20817



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

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