



Civic Federation News

January 2012

Serving the Public Interest since 1925

Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Civic
Federation

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Recipients of the electronic version are encouraged to forward it widely

Program: The Cell Tower Application Process

By Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee Chair

The Program for our meeting on Monday, January 9 will be on the cellphone tower application process. How does the process begin? When are applications made public? What steps are required to obtain final approval? What roles do the federal government, the county government, and MCPS play in the approval process? How and when do citizens become part of the process. How do citizens and private landowners who may be affected have an impact on the location, height, and type of tower?

Please join us to hear and discuss the topics with our distinguished panel:

Marjorie Williams oversees Montgomery County's cable and telecommunications franchise programs, and serves as the Chair of the Transmission Facility Coordinating Group (TFCG).

Robert Hunnicut, Tower Coordinator, is a Principal Analyst with Columbia Telecommunications Corporation (CTC), a contractor to Montgomery County. As such he supports the County's Transmission Facilities Coordinating Group. Bob provides tower review services to Montgomery County. He works with CTC's engineers to evaluate applications for tower sites; serves as liaison with cellular carrier representatives; drafts recommendations for local government Tower Siting Committees; attends Committee meetings to explain CTC's recommendations; and oversees the review process.

Susan Present has had an extensive professional career, leading national, regional, and local agencies

and organizations that focus on ensuring decent housing and thriving communities. Perhaps, as a result, when a special exception application was filed to site a cell tower within her own residential neighborhood, it appeared particularly obvious to her that this proposed use posed threats to surrounding residents, their homes, and the neighborhood at-large.

Sue became a prominent opponent of the cell tower application. In that case, she and her fellow opponents brought to the fore issues that had never before been considered in County cell tower zoning applications, and initially their efforts proved highly successful: Two Montgomery County hearing examiners

released findings that the proposed cell tower application did not meet zoning standards.¹

Mark Your Calendar Now!

Montgomery County Civic Federation's 2012 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

Friday, May 11, 2012
6:00 to 9:30 p.m.
New Fortune Restaurant

January Community Hero: Janis Zink Sartucci

By Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee Chair

The Civic Fed is pleased to present the Community Hero award to Janis Sartucci, at our January 9th meeting.

For over a decade Janis has been a dedicated advocate for openness, fiscal honesty and accountability, and responsiveness for each and every child attending Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Beginning first as a PTA member, later as the Winston Churchill High School PTSA cluster coordinator, and then moving into the Parents Coalition of Montgomery County, Janis has brought her enthusiasm, perseverance, honesty and zest for truth to everyone who has met or worked with her over the years. She brought together a group of people to work on what is now the Parents Coalition blog, transforming it from a website to a vital source of news, information and the latest investigative findings. The blog, and its Facebook and twitter feeds, now provide daily updates and information on the local community that would otherwise go unreported. The

¹ *The Montgomery County special exception application, S-2709 (consolidated with CBA-1193), despite the recommendations by the hearing examiners, was approved by the Board of Appeals. The case was appealed to the Montgomery County Circuit Court, and it is currently on appeal in the Maryland Court of Special Appeals*

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blog has had almost 400,000 visitors to date, from across the country and around the world. Janis has worked tirelessly to track the fiscal health of MCPS, with its budget of over \$2 billion per year. She has worked with members of the Special Education community and McNeeds; the gifted and talented community; and anyone and any group with a concern about our public schools. She continues to remind the Board of Education that public education in Maryland is free and not subject to 'fees.'

Janis is admitted to the Virginia Bar, and is a hockey mom as well, rooting for the Montgomery Cheetahs. If you are a parent or a citizen with a concern about the Board of Education, or MCPS, Janis Sartucci is 'the one' to call.

For her extraordinary contributions to democracy and to the public, the Montgomery County Civic Federation is honored to present Ms. Sartucci with the 'Community Hero' award.

Oppose Reductions in MARCRail Service

By Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chairman

Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) owns the MARC Train Service. MARC is a commuter rail system whose service areas include Washington D.C.; Harford County, Maryland; Baltimore City; Brunswick, Maryland; Frederick, Maryland and Martinsburg, West Virginia. MARC Train Service operates Monday through Friday only. On December 1st the MTA announced proposed changes in the Brunswick line that will be effective January 30.

The Brunswick line is shown in the map. There are nine trains operating in the morning departing from Martinsburg, WV; Brunswick, MD; or Frederick, MD between 5:00 AM and 7:40 AM that arrive at Washington Union Station between 6:25 AM and 9:12 AM. In the evening there are 10 trains that leave Union Station between 1:45 PM and 7:15PM and arrive at Martinsburg, Brunswick or Frederick between 3:08 PM and 9:14 PM. The proposed schedule does not change the number of trains but changes the number of stations where the trains stop. (Trains sometimes pass through a station without stopping.)

According to the MTA web site, they worked closely with CSX management, which operates the Brunswick Line, to produce a new schedule. The revised schedule is designed to improve on-time performance, provide better spacing between trains and more accurately reflect dwell times at each stop.

The proposed schedule only changes the travel time for each train by approximately 5 minutes, but since stops are being added or deleted, riders in those stops are the ones who will gain or lose. According to newspaper articles, the winners of the new schedule are riders who board at the Brunswick and Point of Rocks stations, the busiest Brunswick Line stations. Another train will stop at those stations and in Martinsburg in both the morning and evening.

Of the ten stations in Montgomery County, one loses one train, two lose two trains and one gains one train in the morning. In the evening, five stations lose one train and one loses two trains.

The largest changes occur on train P876 in the morning and P881 in the evening, which have stops in Montgomery County during the 7 AM hour and 6 PM hour. The effect of losing the stops is to lengthen the time between adjacent trains to approximately an hour.

In addition, the schedule cuts impact a number of non-county residents who commute by train to jobs in Montgomery County. At Metropolitan Grove, the first train from

Brunswick will arrive over an hour later, and the last train to Frederick will leave over an hour earlier.

Gaithersburg gets a 1½-hour gap between trains to Brunswick. And Kensington gets a gap of over 2 hours in the morning for trains from Brunswick, and 1½ hours in the evening.

All of these service cuts will reduce ridership. The MARC train is a realistic transportation option only if it provides service where and when people need it. Cutting service and increasing the time between trains makes it harder for people to be able to choose the train. Inevitably, some current riders will drive instead, while people thinking about MARC will just continue driving.

Based upon this assessment of the impact, let it be resolved that MCCF urges MTA to retain the same number of stops, or more, at stations in Montgomery County



Mark Your Calendar

MCCF Monthly Meetings, second Monday of the month:

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| January 9 | February 13 |
| March 12 | April 9 |
| May 14 | June 11 |

July Potluck Supper TBD

A Perfect New Year's Gift: Reusable Bags

By Peggy Dennis, President

Montgomery County's Carryout Bag Law will go into effect on January 1, 2012 and will affect our daily lives, albeit in what we hope will be positive ways. The Civic Federation supported passage of this law and is helping to educate residents about the new law. The Carryout Bag Law will require all retail establishments in the County that sell goods and provide their customers a paper or plastic carryout bag to carry purchases out of the store are required to charge 5 cents per bag. Customers will not be charged if they use their own bags to carry purchases out of the store. Retail establishments include all stores, convenience stores, service stations, supermarkets, department stores, permanent booths and any other sales outlet where a customer can buy goods. The following bags are exempt under the law:

- Bags used to hold prescription drug(s);
- Bags sold for initial use as yard waste bags, pet waste bags, garbage bags, dry cleaning bags, or newspaper bags;
- Bags provided by a seasonal stand or street fair stall, such as a farmer's market, yard sale, or "occasional retailer" (defined in the law as "...a retail establishment that engages in the retail sale of goods no more than six days in any calendar year);
- Bags used to package a bulk item or to contain or wrap a perishable item;
- A paper bag that a restaurant gives a customer to take prepared or leftover food or drink from the restaurant.

The bag law also applies to purchases made over the phone/Internet/fax when the customer is having the purchase(s) delivered in a carryout bag provided by the store.

Retailers will retain 1 cent out of every 5 cents collected per bag. The 4 cents collected by the County for each bag will go into the County's Water Quality Protection Charge fund which finances County watershed protection activities, including litter control and stormwater pollution control.

Europeans and shoppers in most of the world have been using "net" or plastic mesh bags for many decades. I have, too. It doesn't take much to learn a new habit: keep your reusable bags in the car and take them into the store(s) with you. Then pat yourself on the back for doing good by your pocketbook and by the environment.

For More Information: visit
montgomerycountymd.gov/bag or call 311

Deer Policy Meeting Scheduled

The County Council's Public Safety Committee (PSC) has agreed to hold a work session on the County's

management of the deer population. The PSC is tentatively scheduled to take up this topic on Thursday, January 26, at 9:30am. County, state and federal officials will be invited to participate. Work sessions do not usually allow for direct public input, but residents with concerns about the excessive deer population would do well to attend this meeting. Residents are also encouraged to write in advance of the meeting to pose questions they would like to see the committee address. Submit questions via email to councilmember.andrews@montgomerycountymd.gov or by regular mail to: Councilmember Phil Andrews, Chairman, Public Safety Committee, Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850. Please check the Council's website closer to the date to make sure this item is still on the PSC's agenda, or you may call Councilmember Andrews' Chief of Staff, Lisa Mandel-Trupp at 240-777-7812.

Education Committee Report Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee Chair

Farquhar Middle School Proposed Land Swap Public Meeting Tuesday Jan 3rd

This proposed 'land swap' discussion continues. There will be a public meeting on Tuesday, January 3rd, at 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm at the Farquhar Middle School cafeteria. Representatives from MCPS and the M-NCPPC Parks Department will discuss the proposed 'swap.'

Superintendent's Book Club

The first of three book clubs was held on November 29th at Carver. The book discussed was *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Dr. Carol Dweck. If you were not able to attend that book club, you can go to Dr. Dweck's website and her articles are available free online. <http://tinyurl.com/dweckweb>

The two other book clubs are scheduled for **January 31, 2012**, and April 24, 2012. The next book will be *Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us*, by Daniel Pink, a best-selling motivational author. To see Pink's TED talk, go to <http://tinyurl.com/danpinktalk>. Andrew O'Connell, reviewing the book for Harvard Business Review online wrote, "[the book is] a lively tour of recent scholarship on motivation." And, Pink "looks at motivation from the viewpoints of both the leader and the led. To managers, he says that coaxing great performance out of employees is no longer a matter of compensating them lavishly for putting the business first and suppressing their inner selves. It's about satisfying workers' desire for autonomy, which stimulates their "innate capacity for self-direction."

Regional Survey and Meetings for Next State Superintendent

The State Board of Education is continuing its search for the next state superintendent. Regional meetings were held, and there was also an online survey. The State Board discussed the input at their December 6th, 2011

meeting, where they heard from the search firm Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates (HYA) on their Leadership Profile Report. The Final report is due out this spring 2012.

Superintendent's FY2013 Operating Budget is Out

Superintendent Josh Starr released the proposed MCPS Operating Budget on December 7th. The budget is well over half of our entire county budget, and runs into the billions of dollars each year. Starr is recommending a \$2.128 billion Operating Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2013, a 2 percent increase (\$41.4 million) over the current budget.

Please read the budget carefully and let us know if you have questions. We will be taking a close look at the budget as well. Beginning on Monday, December 19, 2011, at 9 a.m., individuals wishing to testify must register by calling **301-279-3617**. Individuals will receive three minutes to testify.

To read the MCPS budget, go to <http://tinyurl.com/MCSchoolbudg2012>.

Timeline for the Operating Budget

Board of Education Community Conversation	October 12, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.
Board of Education Community Conversation	October 27, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.
Superintendent presents Recommended Operating Budget	December 7, 2011
Sign-up begins for BOE Operating Budget Hearings	December 21, 2011
BOE Operating Budget Hearings	January 11 & 18, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
BOE Operating Budget Worksessions	January 25 & 26, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
BOE Operating Budget Action/Adoption	February 14, 2012
BOE FY 2012 Operating Budget Request presented to County Executive and County Council	March 6, 2012
County Executive issues Operating Budget	March 20, 2012
County Council holds Operating Budget Hearings and Worksessions	April – May 2012
Council approves Operating Budget	May 17, 2012
Final Board of Education Action to approve FY 2012 Operating Budget	June 14, 2012

Websites for Operating Budget

Community forums/conversations:

<http://tinyurl.com/mcboeforum>

Signup for budget hearings: <http://tinyurl.com/mcboesign>

BoE Calendar: <http://tinyurl.com/mcboecal>

CIVIC FEDERATION LEADERSHIP, 2011-2012

Nominations Committee

We need 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 is looking to fill the elective positions on the Executive Committee: President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. No travel! No meetings! Most of the work will be done by telephone. Please contact Peggy Dennis at 301-983-9738 or by email at hotyakker@gmail.com to volunteer to help with this important task.

2012 Awards Committee

The Civic Federation's Annual Awards Banquet on Friday, May 11, is just around the corner. The work of this committee -- accepting 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 January Executive Committee meeting. Please also start thinking now about individuals and/or groups you would like to nominate. Here are the descriptions of the awards and the rationale for each award:

- **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 Peggy Dennis at 301-983-9738 or by email: hotyakker@gmail.com if you are willing to serve on this committee. We cannot do it without your help!

Minutes of the December 5 Meeting

By Sue Schumacher, Secretary

Call to Order: President Peggy Dennis called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm and announced that the Community Hero, Marvin Weiman was in the hospital and therefore unable to receive his award. Introductions of those present followed.

Agenda: The addenda was approved with the addition of an emergency resolution by Jim Humphrey in

opposition Bill 29-11 which exempts an indeterminate number of market rate new housing from paying development impact taxes. The motion received more than the five required seconds.

Announcements: Dan Wilhelm announced that our March Program will be on the proposed Rapid Transit Vehicles (RTV) system.

Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the November 14 meeting minutes as printed in the December newsletter. The motion was duly approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader reported that since his report in November, another individual member had paid his dues..

Program: Peggy Dennis introduced Carolyn Biggins, Montgomery County Division Chief of Transit Services, Ride On and Charlie Scott, Government Relations Officer Maryland Office of Policy and Government Relations, WMATA (METRO). Carolyn Biggins started the program explaining that the county's main objective is to coordinate with METRO to get bus riders to Metro stations. She gave several statistics including that 4% of the ridership is seniors; Ride-On accounts for 60% of all county bus ridership; 60% of the ridership uses Smart Card, and bus service is provided within a quarter mile of 76% of the residents and 89% of employees. The primary metric used to determine the discontinuance of a bus route is people per hour using the route. In addition, she answered many questions and indicated that the phone number for complaints, problems and schedules it is 311.

Charlie Scott representing WMATA, announced that METRO has a robust capital budget for the system's bus garages, and escalators. He said that in 2014 METRO will be getting 428 new train cars, 300 of which will replace the remaining original cars in the system and the rest will be for the Silver Line (Dulles Airport). In addition, Charlie told MCCF that there are a total of 1,500 buses and that every year METRO buys 100 to replace the oldest in the fleet and reconditions another 100. He discussed the \$143 million short fall facing METRO. In the Q and A period Charlie Scott said that the 24 bus routes in the lower part of the county carry most of the passengers

MCCF Emergency Resolution: Jim Humphrey, Planning and Land Use Chair, introduced Emergency Resolution to Oppose Bill 29-11. Whereas it is not known how the county government would make up for the shortfall in revenue caused by exempting an indeterminate number of market-rate dwelling units from paying the development impact tax (for transportation) and school impact tax; and Whereas we do not believe that exempting an indeterminate number of market rate dwelling units from paying impact taxes is fiscally sustainable in the long term; Therefore, the Montgomery County Civic Federation opposes County Council approval of Bill 29-11, legislation to exempt market-rate units in any project that consists of at least 25% affordable dwelling units from paying transportation and

school impact taxes . It was moved and seconded to approve the resolution. The motion passed 17 for, 0 against, 2 abstaining.

Committee Reports

Planning and Land Use: Jim Humphrey reported that the Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity Sector Plan contains protections for the Kensington View neighborhood. He also reported on proposed rezoning changes for Battery Lane in Bethesda. The Brown family owns several properties there and is seeking rezoning not recommended in the Bethesda CBD Sector Plan.

Legislation: Dan Wilhelm gave an update on the legislation concerning roadside solicitation. He also announced that the Committee for Montgomery Breakfast is Friday, December 16.

Parks and Recreation: Carol Ann Barth reported that the Parks department is holding planning meetings on a large number of expensive facilities.

Public Safety: Carol Ann Barth reported for Jim Zepp that the County Council debate on the proposed Youth Curfew had fractured and did not look as though it would be enacted. She also reported that Jim had given a briefing on allocating resources for quick response to reported crimes to the Montgomery County Police Department and MCPD was interested in it.

President Peggy Dennis announced that the February meeting will be the County's Inspector General.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Minutes of the December 15 Executive Committee meeting By Ann McDonald, Acting Secretary

Call to order at 7:50 PM by President Peggy Dennis at the home of Paula Bienenfeld. Attendees: Bill Schrader, Ann McDonald, Dan Wilhelm, Virginia Sheard, David Shaw, Paula Bienenfeld, Sandy Vogelgesang, Jim Zepp, Carol Ann Barth, . The agenda for the December ExComm meeting was approved.

Minutes: Minutes of the November, 2011 meeting were approved. .

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader reported MCCF has 45 paid member organizations. Donations are down this year. President Dennis to send Bill the receipt for deposit she paid on the venue for the next Awards Banquet.

Special Presentation on Social Media: Peter Dennis and his friend Hamza Khan, both active in IT design and uses, gave a detailed presentation on different types of social media, e.g. Facebook, Blogs, Twitter. The meeting discussed which format(s) might be appropriate for MCCF, to expand our outreach to communities and young people. Using the "Like" system on Facebook,

MCCF could quickly distribute ideas to a very broad range of groups/people. An organization's Facebook page is like a Blog, but postings are limited to 200 words. It is not suitable for communicating/discussing complex detail behind the topics/ideas put out, but it could be linked to the MCCF web site where the detail is available for anyone to read. Facebook owns all postings, not the poster. Twitter limits posts to 140 characters, but it is very good for pulling a wide range of people together for a common purpose in a short amount of time. It can also be useful for getting a conversation going about an issue with lots of people and input/feedback. A Facebook page can be linked to a Twitter account. One drawback to Twitter is the sheer volume of communications which can overwhelm, and discourage people from "following" MCCF postings. The likely target of a MCCF Facebook or Twitter account would be a younger demographic already comfortable with these media. There are issues of how to manage a Facebook or Twitter account: Someone would have to cut down and distill the ideas MCCF wants to communicate, in order to fit the very limited formats. The flow/exchange of communications would have to be monitored by someone to keep undesirable postings out, and respond promptly to legitimate posts/inquiries. If this is too time-consuming for MCCF to handle itself, we could outsource the management of a Facebook or Twitter account via a contract paid for with MCCF funds. But clear guidelines would have to be provided for the manager to follow

Programs:

- January – Cell Tower Approval Process in Montgomery County: Paula Bienenfeld has commitments from Marjorie Williams and Bob Honeycutt who review applications for new cell towers; and from Susan Present, involved in the Hillandale community's cell tower fight. Paula is trying to get someone from the FCC, to round out panel. Peggy suggested that the panel also address changing technology, e.g. smaller cell towers.
- February – Peggy confirmed new MoCo Inspector General, Edward Blansitt is scheduled for the February 13 program.
- March – Transit. Dan Wilhelm is on track for the Transit program for March. It is too early in the Task Force work to know who will present.
- April – President Dennis said Chuck Lapinski will organize his annual MoCo budget presentation. No details yet available on panelists.

Community Hero: Marvin Weinman, Taxpayers' League, is recovering in the hospital. When he is well enough to attend a monthly MCCF meeting, we will present him a Community Hero award, but not set aside one month to feature Mr. Weinman alone. Paula Bienenfeld is on-track with Janis Sartucci for the January award. No Community Hero is designated for February,

yet. The group approved Ann McDonald's suggestion of an award for local environmental activist group, the Little Falls Watershed Association. She will check to see if they would like to receive the award in March.

Issues to Discuss:

1. Resolution to oppose proposed changes to MARC Rail schedule: Responding to a question from a Dec. 5 meeting attendee (Tina Slate, President of ACT), President Dennis suggested adopting a MCCF resolution opposing proposed changes in MARCRail train service, (see Montgomery County Sentinel article, "New Schedule Cuts for MARC Train Service", Dec. 15, 2011), because eliminating 8 station stops could increase traffic congestion/pollution. Although Dan Wilhelm thought MCCF had adopted a similar resolution in the past, the group felt we needed more facts about the issue; that it may not be appropriate to oppose what is essentially an economic decision by MARC; or to comment on transit that affects other areas besides MoCo (W. Virginia, Frederick). Dan reported the Planning staff recommended to the Board undertaking an evaluation of the MARC Growth and Investment Plan's recommendation for a third track along the CSX line within Montgomery County from Kensington to the county line. . The Board is talking about MARC as part of the overall strategy for high-growth development under the Wheaton and Kensington sector plans.

2. MCCF Brochure: Having read the most recent MCCF brochure, Paula Bienenfeld asked about the expected audience and purpose for a possible new brochure. Suggestions included: targeting citizens' associations we haven't worked with yet; getting younger people to join MCCF; informing the public about the types of issues MCCF deals with; showing what services MCCF can offer to community groups, (e.g. teaching people how to deal with the Planning Board and Sector Plans); distribution to the general public at area events. Some ideas for format included: providing a link in the new brochure to the MCCF web site; and doing a "rack card" version (one-piece with writing on both sides), rather than a traditional folding brochure. We are not planning on a big mailing of the new brochure. But President Dennis said we are getting some results from having MCCF members email the newsletter to their communities: A few new people have expressed interest in MCCF. Paula will do a mock-up of a new brochure and send it out for comments. The group discussed additional things MCCF might do, to increase visibility/usefulness and attract new members: a Saturday seminar on how communities can create new and/or reinvigorate old citizens' associations in conjunction with the directors of the Regional Service Center Directors and using the "Community Tool Kit." Also suggested: business cards for MCCF committee chairs to carry/distribute at hearings/meetings/events to help connect with local residents and county office staffers. - the foot soldiers who work on issues we are interested in.

Committee Reports

Legislation – Dan is preparing for the 7 am, Friday Dec. 16 Committee for Montgomery Breakfast.

Transportation – Dan reported that a financial study done for the Governor indicates that bus rapid transit (BRT) yields twice the economic benefit of light rail largely because it is projected that funds would be available in 2028 rather than 2038 to build it. County Executive Leggett sent a letter to the Council indicating his willingness to switch his preferred approach to BRT. Indications are that a majority of the Council will concur. The CCT Coalition and Science Center Partnership concur as long as that means it will be built sooner. The Governor must still make a decision. If the change to BRT is approved, it will become part of the Rapid Transit Vehicle (RTV) system and the Transit Task Force (TTF) hopes it could be built well before 2020.

Dan reviewed the hearing and work session earlier in the day before the Planning Board on the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways. The staff proposed methodology called for a three tiered approach for BRT where only Tier 1 (three routes) would be considered for dedicated lanes. Four task force members recommended at the hearing that the tier approach be eliminated and all 20 routes be considered for dedicated lanes. The effort then would be to determine where existing and planned land use would allow for one or two dedicated lanes. Two board members are knowledgeable on BRT/RTV since they have been attending some of the TTF meetings and PB member Casey Anderson just returned from a fact finding trip to Seattle and Eugene, OR to review their BRT systems. The Board deferred action on the staff report and asked them to review the TTF consultant report due by mid January and re-evaluate the approach and report back to the Board by the end January or early February.

The TTF target for completing its report is late February or early March. After the meeting, the TTF decided to prepare two briefings: one to be given to groups in February that would be present the concept, routes and available information (but no financials) and the second one in March that would cover all the topics including financials. The second one is the one targeted for MCCF March meeting.

There is a proposal in Annapolis to increase the state gas tax by 5 cents/gallon for each of the next three years to meet budget shortfalls/ transit needs. The TTF plans to give the first presentation to the Montgomery County Delegation to improve their understanding of the RTV system when they consider the gas tax and other transportation tax increases

Education – Paula reported Superintendent Starr's proposed, new \$2.1 billion MCPS budget is out. The public testimony schedule is on the School Board web site. She will provide a link to it on our MCCF web site. She complained to the Complaints Board about the County Council's closed-door decision-making process on artificial turf. They replied that the Council had complied with the open meetings act, because there was no citizen resolution presented to form a group to

look at the issue. However, the letter seemed to rebuke the Council for the way they handled this.

Land Use- Virginia Sheard reported the Big Box Bill originally proposed by former County Council President Valerie Ervin was tabled. It was poorly drafted, and did not clarify essential elements, e.g. who the stakeholders would be who would negotiate with Walmart. The Planning Department is reportedly drafting new proposed rules/procedures for land use policy. (It would not be surprising if the new rules further reduced citizen participation in planning.)

Public Safety – Jim Zepp reported the County Council could not agree on the proposed Curfew and Anti-Loitering bills, and set them both aside. It is not clear where it goes from here. The County Executive criticized the Council's failure to make a decision.

Newsletter Assignments: Deadline for submissions to President Dennis is midnight Sunday, December 18.

Old and New Business: None

Next ExComm Meeting: Thursday, January 19, 2012, at Bill Schrader's house.

ExComm meeting on Tuesday February 21 will take place at 7:45 pm by teleconference.

Adjournment: 9:48 pm.

Spread the Word – Share the Newsletter

Share the newsletter! We ask our delegates and associate members to forward the electronic newsletter to all their members and others who might want to know more about what's going on in the county, the issues we're covering, and the actions we're hoping many residents will take. Please – be proactive and take a few clicks to help spread the word.

Federation Meeting

Session 833

Monday, January 9, 2012
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building,
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

7:45 Call to Order & Introductions
7:50 Approval of Agenda
7:52 Announcements
7:53 Approval of Minutes of December 5 meeting
7:55 Treasurer's Report
7:55 Community Hero: Janice Sartucci
8:00 Program: Cellphone Tower Process
9:15 Resolution opposing MARCRail cuts
9:20 Committee Reports
9:40: 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 Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly, except in July and August. 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, Sunday, January 22.** Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to an e-mail, and send 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

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 19

7:45 P.M.

At the home of Bill Schrader

12824 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, 20906



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

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First Class Mail

Address service requested