



Civic Federation News

March 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

Montgomery County Civic Federation
Invites you to our

Board of Education Candidates' Forum
Thursday, March 15th 7:30 – 9:30 PM
Silver Spring Civic Building
One Veteran's Place, Silver Spring
(Ellsworth & Fenton Streets)

Free parking - Wayne Avenue Parking Garage - after 6:00 p.m.

March Program: Transit Task Force Recommendations

By Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chair

The program for our meeting on Monday, March 12 will feature representatives of the County Executive's Transit Task Force (TTF).

The TTF has been meeting since March 2010 to address its mission of advising the County Executive on how to achieve his vision to implement a comprehensive rapid transit system in Montgomery County. It is painfully obvious every time we fill up our cars and the price of gas is even higher that we need a transit system that can be used as a great alternative to driving.

The Task Force identified an ideal system but has been facing the realities of building such a system in a county where there is limited right-of-way and the four and six lane roads where it would operate are congested. There is also the question of funding such an effort in these times when governments are still in a recession. The TTF is still working toward its recommendations. In fact, the TTF is having an all day session on Saturday March 10 to make a number of hard decisions. At our March 12 meeting, the TTF representatives will talk about the plan that they will present to the County Executive. The Executive has asked for alternatives so he can select what he wants to present to the Council. At that time, the Council will consider his recommendations, hear from the public and make its decision. I expect that this process will take well into the fall.

I am a member of the TTF and will be part of the presentation panel. Mark Winston, TTF chair, and possibly Tom Street, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer within the County Executive's office will also be on the panel. The purpose of the panel is to educate MCF members about the work of the TTF so that we can develop informed positions as the process moves forward. There is a link on the County's web page where materials the TTF has seen can be accessed:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/apps/cex/transit/

March Community Heroes: Little Falls Watershed Alliance

By Ann McDonald, At-Large Board Member

Due to years of development, and failure to properly contain increasing dirt, pollution and stormwater run-off from our land, our creeks are some of the most impaired in Montgomery County. The Little Falls Watershed - one of the most fragile and stressed ecosystems in lower Montgomery County - is bounded on the North by Goldsboro Rd. and Wilson Lane; on the East by Bethesda, Chevy Chase and Friendship Heights; on the West by Glen Echo, the C&O Canal and Dalecarlia Reservoir; and on the South by American University and Wesley Heights in the District. Any water that falls on the ground in the Little Falls Watershed will eventually flow into the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay via our waterways: Little Falls on the Potomac River, and the Little Falls, Willet's and Minnehaha Branches.

In 2008, a group of neighbors from the communities of Brookdale, Green Acres-Glen Cove, and Somerset came together around common concerns about litter in the wooded and park areas; invasive species; and water quality which has deteriorated to crisis levels. In the spirit of "Think Globally – Act Locally", these residents incorporated the Little Falls Watershed Alliance as a non-profit organization; and combined their resources and environmental expertise to protect the Little Falls Watershed.

The LFWA is a true grass-roots, citizen organization. With no staff, and only the volunteer efforts of a dedicated Board, the group has been extraordinarily active and highly successful creating a vigorous action program joined by many area citizens who volunteer for LFWA events, such as invasive plant removal, trash clean up, raising public awareness of what citizens can do to solve the problem, and advocating with local and state officials for laws and policies to protect the Watershed.

One of the most innovative efforts was recruiting Westbrook

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Elementary School students and parents to build a native species garden on school property along the Little Falls Creek. This project caught the imagination of the entire community, and is helping to insure that future citizens are concerned with and active in environmental protection. Though their efforts may seem small, LFWA's continuing efforts to protect the natural spaces and running water of our area can drastically improve the water quality of our local streams, Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay -- all vital for sustaining life, including our own.

The LFWA is well-known and respected across the Watershed. Our communities are grateful to the group for its hard work and generous contributions of their own time and resources to tackle a major problem that affects us all. Thanks to the LFWA, many more people are engaged in local environmental issues than would otherwise have been the case. And many more neighbors are joining other neighbors to solve local environmental problems through community action. The group was formally recognized when it was selected from among 120 candidates for a 2010 Green Award from the Bethesda Magazine. The Montgomery County Civic Federation is pleased to add to the accolades by presenting LFWA representatives with its Community Hero Award at its March 12, 2012 meeting.

Delegates to Vote on Position on “Big Box Store” Legislation

by Jim Humphrey, Chair, PLU Committee

On January 31, two Zoning Text Amendments and a bill were introduced in the County Council which address the issue of large, combination retail stores. The Council hearing on all three is set for the evening of Tuesday, March 13.

Zoning Text Amendment 12-01 would permit 'large retail stores', defined as having a ground area footprint greater than 50,000 square feet, on C-4 zoned property within one-half mile of a Metro Station (in all other locations, Special Exception approval is required on C-4 zoned property). The ZTA sets a limit of 80,000 sq. ft. footprint for single retail use, and would require space for small retailers, allow other uses (residential) in addition to retail use, and require conformance to design elements detailed in the legislation. In addition, the use must be consistent with the recommendations in an approved master or sector plan.

Zoning Text Amendment 12-02 would allow 'combination retail stores' with ground area footprint greater than 50,000 square feet (down from current 120,000 sq. ft.), on property in the C-2, C-3, and C-4 zones by Special Exception approval from the Board of Appeals (unless property is within one-half mile of a Metro station or in a regional shopping mall, in which case it would be a permitted use). The ZTA also requires space for small retailers if existing retail space is demolished for the project, and sets standards for issues such as vehicular access,

parking, and landscape buffering and limits on lighting if adjacent to residentially zoned property.

Bill 4-12 would require a 'large retail store' (at least 75,000 sq. ft. of retail space in a single location) to meet the county's minimum wage standard and offer their employees' health insurance including coverage options reasonably comparable to those offered county employees, if such store is located on property for which grants in excess of \$100,000 are received from the Economic Development Fund or on property sold or leased by the county under an urban renewal plan.

The MCCF Planning and Land Use Committee considered the legislation and made a recommendation to the Executive Committee at their February 16 meeting. The ExComm approved the following recommended position which will vote on at our meeting on March 12.

Recommended MCCF position: The Federation would support Council approval of ZTA 12-01 and ZTA 12-02 if all large combination retail stores addressed in the legislation required Special Exception approval, regardless of their location. MCCF adopts no position on Bill 4-12.

Education Committee Report

Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee Chair

Civic Fed will Host a Board of Education Candidates' Forum March 15th, 7:30PM

The Civic Fed is sponsoring a Board of Education Candidates Forum Thursday, March 15th, at the Silver Spring Civic Building, 7:30 PM - 9:30 PM. Please come and bring your questions! Editors from the Montgomery Blair High School newspaper, *Silver Chips*, will help moderate, and we plan to stream the event. Directions and additional information is on our website, at <http://www.montgomerycivic.org/>. The BOE is responsible for over half of our entire county budget, with an annual budget that exceeds \$2Billion. *Even if you do not have children in the schools, this enormous amount of money and how it is spent affects every aspect of county life. Please attend this important forum.*

Opposition to HB596 Growing

HB596, Child with a Disability - Individualized Education Program Meeting - Document Access, was introduced in Annapolis by our own delegates. Del. Anne R. Kaiser (District 14) is the sponsor of the bill, with co-sponsors Delegate Charles Barkley, District 39, Delegate Bonnie Cullison, District 19, Delegate Ana Sol Gutierrez, District 18, Delegate Jolene Ivey, District 47, Delegate Ariana B. Kelly, District 16, Delegate Eric G. Luedtke, District 14, Delegate Kirill Reznik, District 39, Delegate Shane Robinson, District 39, Delegate Melvin L. Stukes, District 44, Delegate Michael G. Summers, District 47, and Delegate Craig J. Zucker, District 14.

The bill proposes to alter “the period of time that appropriate school personnel must provide a copy of specified documents relating to the development of an individualized education program for a child with a disability to the parents of the child to at least 5 calendar days before a specified meeting.” The bill was initiated and supported primarily by the school psychologists. If passed, the bill will change the number of days parents have to review important documents from 5 business days to 5 calendar days. This will reduce the amount of time a parent or guardian has to evaluate important legal documents concerning their child. As has been pointed out by Joan Taylor, a special education advocate, the Draft Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), along with any other documents to which the school and its representatives will be referring at the meeting, must currently be sent to the parent 5 business days (a week) before the meeting. If the parent is using the assistance of an educational/special needs advocate, this gives the parent reasonable time to get the new paperwork passed along to the advocate for review.

With the proposed change to 5 calendar days, the parent, by way of example, could receive the materials on a Friday, and mail them to their advocate on Saturday. The advocate may receive them on Monday (if lucky) or more likely on Tuesday. This leaves the advocate only one day to review the new materials, assuming the advocate is available at that time to drop everything else, since the meeting is the next day.

There is an online petition opposing the bill that has been signed by over 500 people as of this writing, including Senator Karen Montgomery (District 14), members of the Howard County Board of Education, and Montgomery County Board of Education candidate Saqib Ali. To go to the petition, go to <http://www.change.org/petitions/the-md-state-house-oppose-house-bill-596>.

Rock Creek Hills Local Park is Preferred Site for new B-CC Middle School

After the feasibility study recommending the Rosemary Hills/Lyttonsville Local Park as the site of a new B-CC middle school was overturned, the Board of Education turned its attention to Rock Creek Hills Local Park in Kensington, which was also studied as part of the original feasibility study. The Park’s potential use as a school site will be on the agenda for the Planning Board on March 15th. Rock Creek Hills Local Park is a 13.3-acre park which now includes a playground, two soccer fields, two tennis courts, and woods.

Superintendent Forums

Superintendent Joshua Starr will hold four forums this spring. All forums will be held from 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

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

Forum Topics and Dates

- English language learners — Monday, March 12, at John F. Kennedy High School
- Gifted education — Thursday, March 22, at Col. Zadok Magruder High School
- Special education — Monday, April 16, at Seneca Valley High School
- Social and emotional learning — Thursday, May 10, at Walt Whitman High School

Superintendent’s Book Club

The book to be discussed at the third Book Club is *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need--And What We Can Do About It* by Tony Wagner. To see a discussion by Wagner on youtube, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3gpjI0qHA>.

Superintendent’s FY2013 Operating Budget is Out – Please Review and Comment

Superintendent Josh Starr released the proposed MCPS Operating Budget last December and it is making its way up to the County Council. 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.

To read the budget, go to <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/budget/fy2013/superintendent/>.

Remaining Timeline for the Operating Budget

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

Roadside Solicitation

by Dan Wilhelm, Legislative Chair

MCCF has supported bill MC12-12 (also known as HB720) to give the county the authority to enact a local bill that would require a permit to solicit for donations or to ban the practice entirely. We actually want a complete ban. This bill received an unfavorable vote by the Montgomery County House Delegation on Feb 24. They did approve MC10-12 (aka HB721) that would give the county the authority to enact a local law requiring a permit. The senate will act next on HB721. HB721 was amended to also give people the right to stand (1) in a roadway, (2) on the median, and/or (3) on sidewalk next to the road. Allowing people to stand in the roadway is a change to current state law and is contrary to our objective. We, the County Executive and County Council also oppose allowing solicitors to stand in the median. It was stated that if bill HB720 is enacted, the county will have the authority to implement a permit system and permit or limit any of the three places to collect donations.

State Legislation

By Dan Wilhelm, Legislative Chair

As of February 24, 2012, a total of 1042 bills had been introduced into the state senate and 1388 into the house. Each day there is a synopsis of bills introduced (see the legislature's website: <http://mlis.state.md.us/>) which I review to identify bills of interest to MCCF. I identified bills in subject areas where MCCF has taken positions in the past and summarized the following bills that were discussed at the Executive Committee (ExComm) on Feb 16. The bills and the position the ExComm took are as follows:

- HB87/SB152: Budget Reconciliation and Financing act of 2012. One part would change the tax brackets so that singles making more than \$100K and married filing joint returns of \$150K and more could see reduced personal exemptions and deductions. *ExComm opposed. It would affect a large part of the middle income wage earners in Montgomery County.*
- HB87/SB152: Another part of this bill would start charging sales tax on internet purchases. *ExComm supported: Since a large share of state revenue (\$4.178B projected for YF13) comes from sales tax, the rapid rise online sales means that other taxes would need to increase or services cut, neither of which we want. Also, online sales and in-store sales need to be taxed evenly to treat all stores equally.*
- HB87/SB152: A third part of this bill would shift a substantial part of teacher pensions from state funding to local jurisdiction funding. The state currently pays \$957M annually (state wide) for teacher pensions and local school boards pay \$479M for social security. The proposal is for the counties to pay half this amount, thus shifting \$239M to the local level. *ExComm opposed to any shift: Moving costs from the state to the counties will just make each county's already bad budget situation worse. Since it looks like some kind of shift will occur*

this session, it needs to be phased in over time in a much less painful manner.

- HB87/SB152: A forth part of this bill would double the existing \$2.50 fee to improve waste-water treatment plants and water quality across the entire state. *ExComm: supported. There is a need to improve the sewage treatment plants across the state, which will help protect and restore the bay.*
- HB1302/SB971: Maryland Transportation Financing and Infrastructure Investment Act of 2012. This bill would do two things recommended by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Funding. First it put a question on the ballot for a constitution amendment to require funds collected for transportation be used only for that purpose except in a financial emergency. Second, it would impose for the first time the sales tax on motor fuel, phased in at 2% a year for three years. *ExComm supported the first part and opposed the second part at this time because gasoline prices are increasing rapidly. (Note that MCCF took a position in 2002 to support a gasoline tax increase.) A lockbox is needed since funds have been taken from the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) many years since 1984. All but \$68M of the \$571M taken from the Maryland Department of Transportation Funds have been repaid but none of the \$947M taken from local government funds have been repaid.*
- HB146/SB403: Transportation Trust Fund Protection Act. This puts a lockbox on TTF funds like the first part of the prior bill. *ExComm: supported*
- HB121/SB65: Dedicated Funds - Prohibition of Transfer - Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund and Bay Restoration Fund. This is the same idea as the prior bill except for funds used to protest and restore the bay. *ExComm: supported*
- HB23: Dedicated State Funds Protection Act. *This bill would achieve the same purpose as the prior two bills. ExComm: supported*
- HB41: Election Law - Petitions - Public Verification and Counting of Signatures. This bill would require that the process of verifying and counting signatures on petitions be open to observation by the public. *ExComm: supported. With the high rejection rate of signatures on recent petitions, the process needs to be more transparent and maybe the public will discover changes to the process are needed.*
- HB42: Election Law - Petitions - Resubmission of Signatures. *ExComm: Opposed. This bill would have no effect since once a signature is rejected it would be too late to resubmit, even if the person could be found.*
- HB67/SB177: Vehicle Laws - Nonfunctioning Traffic Control Signals - Requirement to Stop. *ExComm: support. The bill is needed to make Maryland Laws consistent with DC and Virginia and conform to what news reporters are telling everyone.*
- HB83: Property Tax-Charter Counties-Limits. This bill would authorize the county council of a charter county, by a two-thirds vote of the full membership of the council, to set a property tax rate that is higher than the rate authorized

under the county's charter. *ExComm: oppose. A change to what the public has passed via ballot questions needs go back to the public to change.*

- HB180: Task Force to study the county and Municipal Revenue Structure. *ExComm: support. We heard over a decade ago that the revenue distribution laws require the county to pay more than its fair share. The facts need to be understood.*
- HB195/SB270: Public Funding and Small Donor Act for General Assembly Elections. *ExComm: support: We have a long standing position supporting public funding for elected officials.*
- HB229/SB164: Maryland Plastic Bag Recycling Act. The bill would prohibit a plastic carryout bag manufacturer from providing, selling, or offering for sale plastic carryout bags for use or distribution in the State unless specified language is printed or displayed on the bags. *ExComm: oppose. A better way to encourage recycling is what Montgomery County has done- a bag usage fee. It is much more effective at getting the public's attention to the need to recycle (see next bill.)*
- SB511. Community Cleanup and Greening Act of 2012. Requiring specified stores to charge and collect a specified fee for each disposable carryout bag the store provides to a customer. *ExComm: support*
- HB234: Corporate Income Tax - Rate Reduction *ExComm: oppose. Exacting this bill would mean individual taxes need to increase, which we oppose. (Note there were a number of bills similar to this one.)*
- HB253: Department of Planning - Local and Regional Planning and Land Use Powers - Prohibition on Restriction. This bill would prohibit the state Department of Planning from adopting any regulation or taking any action that restricts the planning and land use powers of local governments or regional planning agencies; etc. *ExComm: support. We don't want the state taking away county land-use authority.*
- HB275/SB210: Income Tax - Subtraction Modification - Qualified Maryland Toll Expenses. The bill would allow a subtraction modification of \$500 for individuals under the Maryland income tax for specified tolls paid through the use of the E-ZPass Maryland program. *ExComm: oppose. Use of toll roads should be considered an expense of driving. Reducing the revenue would mean taxes for others would need to increase.*
- HB373/SB362: Education - Age for Compulsory Public School Attendance – Exemptions. The bill would increase from 16 to 17 the maximum age at which children are required to attend a public, subject to specified exceptions. *ExComm: support. Those without a high school education are at a major disadvantage in terms of earning enough to live on, which will then cost society in many ways.*
- HB211/SB544: Elected Officials - Removal from Office – Crimes. The bill would require that an elected official of the State or of a county or municipal corporation who is convicted of or enters a plea of guilty relating to a felony or

specified misdemeanors be removed from office by operation of law. *ExComm: support.*

- HB441/SB237: Maryland Offshore Wind Energy Act. *ExComm: Take no action. The ExComm was split. Many like the idea of clean energy and reducing the dependence on foreign oil, but the projected cost doesn't justify it. The bill would limit the individual increase to \$2 per month but the increase on governments would be much higher. See fiscal note on state web site under this bill.*
- HB722: Montgomery County - Real Property - Enforceability of Recorded Covenants and Restrictions - Agricultural Activities and Structures MC 16-12. The bill would allow farmers to farm on agriculturally zoned land in the agricultural reserve part of Montgomery County contrary to any covenants on the property *ExComm: Support with the Barkley Amendment. This was discussed at the February meeting. The covenant restriction would not apply if it was in place prior to the enactment of agricultural reserve law in 1981.*

MCCF Committee Membership

Nominating Committee: Paula Bienenfeld, Chair, 301-984-2944, paula_bienenfeld@yahoo.com; Sue Schumacher, Bill Schrader, Dan Wilhelm and Chuck Lapinski.

Awards Committee: Yale Wiesberg, Chair, 301-648-0145, yjwiesberg@prodigy.net; Peggy Dennis, and Virginia Sheard.

Residential Safety Tip

Ken Hartman, Director of the BCC Regional Services Center, provides useful information for all of us. Seth Maiman of the Maplewood Citizens Association had contacted Ken concerning “a string of emails on the Maplewood list serv about aggressive Verizon and Comcast solicitors going door to door in the evening (dark). Given the recent home invasion and other incidents homeowners are pretty skittish these days.”

Ken's response: “Vendors are prohibited from going door-to-door after sunset by Chapter 47 of the County Code. Residents who receive solicitors after sunset should contact the non-emergency number of the Police Department at 301-279-8000. If the vendor is who they say they are, the Police need to know. If they are licensed vendors working in violation of the sunset prohibition of Chapter 47, the Police can also enforce Chapter 47. Our Cable office will send a reminder to Comcast, Verizon, and RCN that their paid door-to-door solicitors cannot work after sunset.”

Transparency Camp

Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee Chair

The Sunlight Foundation is holding its annual Transparency Camp event this spring, on April 28-29th, this year at Founders Hall, George Mason University. Registration is only \$20 and includes coffee, breakfast, lunch, and great company. I went last year and it was a real eye opener and a chance to meet up with fellow community activists from across the nation and

around the globe, as well as “transparent government” program developers. This year for the first time the camp will hold a Hackathon, on Monday, April 30th. The Hackathon will focus on the Pew Foundation’s Voting Information Project. To learn more about the Hackathon, go to <http://transparencycamp.org/viphackathon/>. I would encourage anyone who is thinking about it to attend. This is an ‘unconference,’ which means those attending develop the conference agenda and sessions. If you have an idea for a session, go to the T-Camp website and sign up. The link is <http://transparencycamp.org>, and the link to the Sunlight Foundation’s website is at <http://sunlightfoundation.com>.

Minutes of the February 13 Meeting

By Sue Schumacher, Secretary

Call to Order: President Peggy Dennis called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm and introductions of those present followed.

Agenda: The agenda was approved with the following changes and/or additions: add under Old Business the need for volunteers for both the Nominating Committee and the Awards Committee; change meeting date of the ExComm meeting from Tuesday, February 21 to Thursday, February 16. The Excomm meeting will still be via teleconference.

Announcements: Jim Humphrey announced Planning and Land Use Committee current issues webpage now has list of projects in the pipeline that have been approved for development. President Peggy Dennis announced the upcoming performance of Die Fledermaus being presented by the Victorian Lyric Opera Company. It was announced that Ron Berger passed away. Ron was from the Olney area and was instrumental in the development of the Norbeck Meadows Park playground.

Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the January 9 meeting minutes as printed in the February newsletter. The motion was duly approved.

Treasurer’s Report: Bill Schrader reported that 52 associations have paid their dues.

Community Hero Award: Jim Humphrey, Chair of the Planning and Land Use Committee introduced Eleanor Duckett and Judith Higgins, two women from the Kensington View neighborhood. These two women along with Virginia Sheard, worked tirelessly to protect residential neighborhoods in the CR mixed use zones amendments and revision of the Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan.

Program: President Peggy Dennis introduced the guest speaker, Edward Blansitt, the County’s Inspector General (IG). Mr. Blansitt began working as the IG in late April of 2011. His staff consists of 5 others including his deputy. The mission of his office includes preventing and detecting fraud, waste, and abuse in county government activities. Their responsibilities include all executive departments plus agencies such as Parks and Planning, Montgomery College, WSSC, MCPS. The objectives of the IG’s office are to earn the trust of the stake

holders; not discuss people’s identity, and address allegations and complaints from county leaders. One item his office is working on concerns children attending MCPS, who are not residents of the county and are not paying the required tuition.

Mr. Blansitt reported on one accomplishment of his office: an audit of the Vehicle Light Fleet, which consists of passenger vans, passenger cars and light trucks. As a result of this audit the county can now “right size” the fleet, since 51% of the vehicles are over-aged and many were driven under 5,100 miles a year, thus showing that the county has too many vehicles in the fleet.

The IG ended his presentation with the announcement of a Citizens Advisory Group that is being formed to assist his office.

A Q and A period followed.

Resolution: The resolution to support measures to control the county’s white tail deer population as it appeared on page 3 of the February Newsletter. It was moved and seconded. During discussion a friendly amendment was accepted to include “to expand funding” as part of the resolution. The resolution was passed 19 for, 1 against and 1 abstention.

Committee Reports

Nominating Committee and Awards Committee: President Dennis asked for volunteers for these committees. The following people will serve on the Nominating Committee: Paula Bienefeld, Sue Schumacher, Bill Schrader, Dan Wilhelm and Chuck Lapinski. The Awards Committee will consist of Peggy Dennis, Yale Weisberg, and Virginia Sheard.

Public Finance: Chuck Lapinski reported that the proposed transfer of funding part of the county’s teachers’ pensions would cost the county approximately \$150 million. In addition, he noted that the proposed “gas” tax would be an increase of 10% in the cost per gallon.

Legislation: Dan Wilhelm urged those present to write to our State delegation that we are against roadside solicitation and we support HB720. There was an email urging support for HB722, which would negate any homeowner association covenants that preclude farming on agriculturally zoned land. A representative from the Brook Hollow sub-division, which is in the Agricultural Reserve spoke on the issue and asked MCCF to please support the Barclay amendment, which would limit the bill to apply to covenants written since the Agriculture Reserve was created in 1980.

Transportation: Dan Wilhelm indicated that the Transit Task Force is working out competing objectives.

Planning and Land Use: Jim Humphrey, Chair reported on ZTAs 12-01 and 12-02 introduced in Council to set new standards for large combination retail stores, in anticipation that Walmart will be building a store on Rockville Pike and Halpine Road. Bill 4-12 will require a minimum wage and health insurance for employees of large combination retail stores under certain circumstances.

Education: Paula Bienenfeld announced that the Board of Education candidates' forum scheduled for March will be streamed. She also reminded everyone to make sure that their organizations know that if someone who is 17 now but will be 18 by or on Election Day, that 17 year old may register to vote and vote in the Primary in April.

Meeting Adjourned at 9:58 p.m.

Minutes of the February 16 Executive Committee Meeting

by Jim Humphrey, Acting Recording Secretary

Meeting was convened at 7:58 p.m. by teleconference. Attending were President Peggy Dennis, Dan Wilhelm, Jim Zepp, Carole Ann Barth, William Schrader, Jim Humphrey, Sandy Vogelgesang, Paula Bienenfeld, Ann McDonald, and David Shaw.

Agenda for meeting was approved.

Minutes of the January 19 ExComm meeting were approved with amendment to remove the phrase "to provide commercial restaurants" from explanation of commercial kitchens ZTA in Planning & Land Use Committee report.

Treasurer's Report: Mr. Schrader gave report, noting membership application received from Manor Oaks Neighborhood Association. He has submitted fees to county for reservation of Council Building 1st floor auditorium for 2012-13 year monthly meetings; second Monday in December was unavailable, so he reserved the first Monday.

Program: The program for the upcoming March 12 meeting will be Transit Task Force final recommendations. Speakers list has not been finalized but could include Council member Marc Elrich, Tom Street, and Mark Winston. Mr. Wilhelm is coordinating. Ms. McDonald suggested future program with chairs of MCCF committees giving updates on current issues before them.

Ms. Dennis mentioned PEPCO has requested time at a monthly meeting to explain installation of "smart meters." She will ask PEPCO to send a short article for the newsletter, then see if there is interest in the membership to have them come in for a short Q&A session in the spring.

Community Hero award will be presented in March to Little Falls Watershed Alliance. Ms. McDonald is coordinating.

Discussion issues: A short continuation of discussion on creating MCCF blog ensued; ExComm will continue to investigate. Members also discussed possible increase in MCCF dues for those who receive hard copy of newsletter, but agreed to maintain current dues policy and urge those receiving mailed copies to use electronic version instead. Ms. Dennis will put an appeal regarding same in next newsletter.

Committee Reports

Education Committee - Ms. Bienenfeld reported on the BOE Candidates' Forum that she is organizing. She has contacted candidates, only a few of whom have conflicts due to previous commitments. The MCPS second site selection process for another middle school in the B-CC cluster is continuing; no date for recommendation from the task force. Council Education Committee worksession on promethean boards was delayed after it was revealed that scheduled fourth payment is actually the fifth.

Parks and Recreation Committee - Ms. Barth reported on Parks Department meeting she attended in January on draft Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, noting the facility needs analyses are free of priority and budgetary considerations. She will draft MCCF letter to Parks Department urging use of standardized areas for conducting all parks and recreation facility needs analyses, suggesting use of the five Council districts which have equal population.

Planning and Land Use - Mr. Humphrey moved acceptance of PLU recommendation on ZTA 12-01 and 12-02, Council legislation introduced January 31 regarding large combination retail stores. ExComm agreed to report out committee position at March delegates meeting, which supports the two ZTAs if amended to allow such stores by Special Exception approval only, regardless of location. No position taken on Bill 4-12 imposing minimum wage and health insurance requirements on large retail stores under certain circumstances. ExComm accepted PLU recommendation to urge passage of state bill HB722 declaring covenants and restrictions on agricultural activity unenforceable, with suggested amendment that the bill only apply to covenants entered into after creation of the Agricultural Reserve in 1980. Mr. Humphrey will draft MCCF letter to send to county delegation.

Public Safety - Mr. Zepp reported he is working on improving police/community relations in District 3. Need to have more transparent crime data reporting throughout county.

Legislation - Mr. Wilhelm presented list of state bills on which the committee recommends MCCF take a position. ExComm took vote on each, and will report them in the newsletter.

Ms. Dennis listed newsletter assignments, and noted deadline for submission is midnight on Sunday, February 26. The next ExComm meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, March 20, at Mr. Wilhelm's home. Meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.



Edward L. Blansitt, Inspector General for Montgomery County, presents February program



Eleanor Duckett, Jim Humphrey, and Judith Higgins on presentation of the February Community Hero Award



Federation Meeting

Session 835

Monday, March 12, 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 February 13 meeting
7:55 Treasurer's Report
7:55 Community Hero: Little Falls Watershed Assn.
8:00 Program: Transit Task Force Recommendations
9:15 Resolution on Land Use ZTAs
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: **Sunday, March 25.** 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: TUESDAY, MARCH 20

7:45 P.M.

At the home of Dan Wilhelm

904 Cannon Road, Silver Spring, 20904



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

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