



Civic Federation News

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Serving the Public Interest since 1925

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Montgomery County Civic
Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org
montgomerycivic@yahoo.com

Peggy Dennis, Editor - Phone: 301-983-9738 - Email: hotyakker@gmail.com
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November Program

Carole Ann Barth, President

Our program for the November 12 regular meeting will be a “free for all” members’ discussion. We want to hear from you about what local and/or regional issues are most important to you, what you have done about these issues and how the Civic Federation may be able to help achieve a favorable resolution. We will also discuss your ideas on how to improve the Civic Federation. Please come. We look forward to a lively discussion.

President’s Message: A Matter of Perspective

Carole Ann Barth

Many of us in Montgomery County feel like our communities are under attack from the County’s push to massively increase densities while failing to maintain basic infrastructure and services for existing developed areas. In turn, planners and public officials criticize citizens for being resistant to change. We are admonished to give up our outmoded ideas of neighborhood and embrace the current one-size-fits-all “vision” of the future.

To me, however, it seems that civic activists are *constantly* fighting for change. I think these efforts are not recognized, however, because it is grass roots change (what we want to strengthen and support our communities) versus top-down imposed change (what they think we need). This is especially frustrating when communities are fighting for changes that cost very little money or actually save

money, while at the same time having to fight against boondoggles that cost the taxpayers millions of dollars.

So, here are some examples of grass-roots-inspired change advocacy from my neighborhood - Northwood Four Corners. I’m using my neighborhood as the example because I am most familiar with our causes; however, I would love to hear from member associations about the changes you are fighting for and against. I would also note that many of the campaigns listed include a strong volunteer component. In other words, we didn’t just advocate for tree plantings; we also bought some trees, planted those as well as ones provided by the County, and have fought to keep them free from invasive vines since.

One of our most successful campaigns took place during the development of the Burnt Mills Shopping Center. We surveyed the residents as to which business they would most like to see at the new center, and Trader Joe’s was the hands-down favorite. We then began to lobby both the shopping center owners and Trader Joe’s. This was not only a success for us. Our local Trader Joe’s was recently named the chain’s “store of the year.” (Note to any entrepreneurs reading this: our number two desired new business was a premium ice cream parlor, and we don’t yet have one.)

Here is a partial list of our other efforts:

- better access to transit
- parkland acquisition
- developing a natural playground at North Four Corners Park
- traffic calming (speed humps)
- plantings (median, traffic circle, parks)
- pedestrian bridges in Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park
- creation of a vernal pool in Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park
- unified reservation system for County ball fields and other rentals

Contents

November Program.....	1
President’s Message: A Matter of Perspective.....	1
Additional Funding for State Transportation Projects.....	2
Committee for Montgomery.....	3
Watch Your Electric Bill: Smart Meters and Shifty Management are a Bad Combo.....	3
Membership Renewals.....	4
Nominate our 2013 Awardees!.....	5
Education Committee Report.....	5
New Group Forms to Improve Food in Montgomery County Schools.....	6
Property Tax Credit?.....	6
Minutes of the October 8, Meeting.....	8
Minutes of October 18 Executive Committee Meeting.....	9
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL.....	11

- improved management and maintenance of parkland and park assets
- trail improvements in Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park
- transit access to nearest senior center and hospital
- inclusion of urban and village greens in park designs
- regulatory and rate changes to improve Pepco's reliability

The point of all this is that most communities do have ideas for changes they'd like to see, even if they don't have a fully articulated vision for the future. Planners, elected officials, and businesses could gain a lot by consulting residents *before* bringing out proposals for public comment. Once upon a time, the master plan process partially served that function with a process built around strong stakeholder groups. Now master plans are rushed through approval containing new zoning codes which haven't even been promulgated. In my opinion, this top-down management style needs to change.

Additional Funding for State Transportation Projects

Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chair

The state fund for transportation is so low that there have been no construction projects for new state road or transit infrastructure anywhere in the state for at least four years. The Purple Line, Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) and other state transportation projects are critical to the county and a source for state funding needs to be identified.

The two major sources of road and transit funding are the gasoline tax and federal funds. A significant amount of the projected federal funds are slated to pay off part of the loan to build the ICC (the other part being tolls). Also, with the federal budget situation, about the best the state can hope for in the next few years is to maintain the current levels, and as we all know that is highly questionable.

The last time the gasoline tax was increased was in 1992 when the price per gallon was just over one dollar, and the cost of materials was much lower than today. The Montgomery County delegation and the governor were unable once again to get a gasoline tax increase approved during the 2012

session. The 2012 session was only the most recent effort during the last two decades to increase the gasoline tax. There are two major reasons for the failure to get an increase passed. First, legislators from rural districts oppose using the funds for transit projects (such as the Purple Line, CCT and Red Line in Baltimore). Second, many citizens oppose a tax increase during difficult economic times and when gasoline prices are high. Gasoline prices appear to always be increasing each time the General Assembly is in session.

Since it appears unlikely that the Montgomery County delegation and Governor can get a state-wide increase in transportation funding, an idea has been floated by Councilmember Berliner to ask the General Assembly to give Montgomery County the authority to impose a tax within the county. The revenue would be used by State DOT for state projects within the county that they don't have funds to build. The nature of the tax is not specified but could be gasoline, income or sales tax. The thinking is that the county would identify the priority projects for state DOT, much as they do today.

My expectation is that the proposal will generate a lot of discussion at the state level and nothing would be decided for several years. Maybe the discussion will result in a state-wide increase. If not, it is likely that other neighboring urban counties will also want to take advantage of the same ability and thus support the idea. Assuming that occurs, then Montgomery County will not be an island but part of a region that could include most or all the jurisdictions in the Baltimore-Washington area.

This proposal will be a tough sell since the General Assembly doesn't like giving counties the authority to use "their" taxing sources. While tough, it might be possible to sell this idea since the funds would still be used by the state DOT. Any new idea like this will likely take multiple years to sell. The federal fiscal cliff makes this a difficult time to have this discussion. However, assuming that we avoid going over the fiscal cliff, now would be the time to start having the discussion about county level state transportation funding.

I think the idea of using state taxing sources to generate funds for projects in Montgomery County is a good one. MCCF has complained for years that the County only gets back only a small fraction of the

funds it sends to Annapolis. With this concept, we would get all the funds back. Accordingly, I propose the following motion which will be discussed and voted on at the November 12 meeting:

“MCCF supports the concept to pass state legislation giving Montgomery County the authority to raise taxes that are normally only available to the state and that the funds would be used by Maryland Department of Transportation for road and transit projects in the county.”

Committee for Montgomery

Dan Wilhelm, Legislation & CfM Delegate

MCCF is one of five civic groups represented on the Committee for Montgomery (CfM). CfM is a coalition of forty leaders representing a broad cross-section of Montgomery County business, labor, education, civic, and other community-based organizations. Other organizations include the NAACP, Bar Assn., CASA, Mental Health Assn., Adventist Healthcare, MCCPTA, Montgomery College, League of Women Voters, and the Chamber of Commerce. One of CfM’s missions is to advocate in Annapolis on issues of importance to Montgomery County and the State, including the state budget.

While its membership is diverse and reflects a broad spectrum of political views, CfM members unite in support of its priorities, which include: education, health and human services, economic and workforce development, fiscal responsibility, transportation and the environment. MCCF is not active in all these topics but is most active in transportation and education. To take a position, 85% of the CfM directors must agree. CfM shapes its state legislative and budget priorities based on its goal of preserving and strengthening Montgomery County and Maryland as a place to live, work and learn.

MCCF participates in CfM for two primary reasons:

- *To be more effective.* If CfM supports positions of interest to MCCF it carries more weight because CfM represents a wide cross section of groups in Montgomery County. I share our priorities with the group and sometimes the Civic Fed’s priorities become CfM priorities.
- *To share information and the workload.* There are well over a thousand bills introduced in house in each session. It is a huge effort to

scan that many bills and identify those of interest to MCCF. It is also hard to have enough background to understand what they are attempting to achieve. Working with the CFM Issues Committee and Executive Committee allows me to learn about information that others have learned and also share MCCF’s views with them.

The Committee for Montgomery kicks off the start of the January-April legislative session with a breakfast attended by approximately 600 people, including most county, state and some federal politicians. This year the breakfast will held on Friday December 14, 2012 at 7:00 AM at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. The keynote speaker will be Maryland House of Delegates Speaker, Michael Busch; the County Executive and Council President will also speak. The cost for individuals is \$60. I urge as many as possible to attend. I will email the reservation form to everyone.

If you have any questions about the Committee for Montgomery, log onto their website at committeeformontgomery.org., or contact me, Dan Wilhelm, at 301-384-2698 or by email at djwilhelm@verizon.net.

Watch Your Electric Bill: Smart Meters and Shifty Management are a Bad Combo

Carole Ann Barth, President

Residents in the Four Corners communities were among the first to get the new smart meters installed by PEPCO contractors. Benefits of smart meters (from PEPCO’s website) are supposed to include:

- Smart meters will ensure that your energy bill is based on your actual, rather than estimated use.
- Smart meters will reduce the need for PEPCO meter readers to come to your home. New features will enable wireless meter reading.

Thus many residents were shocked to get inexplicably high estimated bills after installation of the new meters. Many of us got bills for about double what we use in the hottest month of the year. One neighbor, however, had an estimated bill 400% above normal! Seemingly, through incompetence or malfeasance, PEPCO managed to turn the installation

of smart meters into a dodge for getting interest-free loans from the rate-payers.

This was, of course, completely avoidable. As part of the installation, PEPCO takes a picture of the old analog meter. PEPCO could have used that picture to read the old meter or they could have used previous usage (as they normally do) to estimate power usage on the old meter. Estimating how much power you would use after the new meter was installed and before it was activated for remote readings could easily be based on prior usage. Either way, there's no legitimate reason for inflating the estimate.

At first, PEPCO maintained that these were random, isolated incidents, but there was a clear pattern in both Northwood Four Corners and Woodmoor-Pinecrest. Eventually they admitted to there being at least 600 cases and they agreed to call all the affected customers and recalculate their bills.

However, PEPCO still maintains that this occurred because the meters were switched during a particular time in the billing cycle. (If true, then one would be moved ask why PEPCO chose that time to install the meters.) However, we know from our residents that the installation has been gradual, taking place over the last three months. Some residents got the inflated estimates for their August bills, some for their September bills, and some for both, so the timing argument does not seem to hold water. In fact, one Woodmoor resident even got the inflated estimate before her smart meter was installed!

Of course part of the estimated bill would eventually have been rectified by an actual reading, but the part of the estimate attributed to usage on the old meter would not be automatically rectified. Moreover, this situation caused a lot of aggravation. It takes persistent, concentrated effort just to get your complaint acknowledged by PEPCO. Even worse, imagine the distress this has caused people on fixed incomes as they struggle to pay their monthly bills. Surely there are plenty of folks who don't understand what an estimated bill is, much less how to challenge it. Meanwhile, PEPCO had a nice infusion of cash to play with.

So, what do you do if this happens to you? You can submit a photo of your meter online using the form www.Pepco.com/contact/photometerform.aspx to get an actual meter reading or call 202-872-3377 and

report the reading over the phone. You can also call Customer Service at 202-833-7500 or submit an email complaint at <https://www.pepco.com/contact/online/>.

Also note that you are not required to pay the full amount of a disputed estimated bill. You can send in what you paid last month or the same month last year and you will not be liable for any late fees.

Membership Renewals

As of October 27, the following groups and individual members have yet to renew their memberships for the 2012-2013 year which began on July 1. We want to keep you as members so please renew your membership. The December newsletter will be the last one delivered to members who have not paid their membership dues.

Delegates: because association treasurers rarely receive the newsletter, please print or cut out the Membership Form at the end of this newsletter, fill in the information needed and get it to your treasurer for them to include a check for the dues.

Groups Yet to Renew

Bannockburn Civic Association
 Bradley Boulevard Citizen Association
 Clarksburg Civic Association
 Darnestown Civic Association
 Edgemoor Citizens Association
 Glen Echo Heights Citizens Association
 Greater Olney Civic Association
 Hillandale Citizens Association
 Kensington View Civic Association
 Kentlands Citizens' Assembly
 Kenwood Condominium
 Kenwood Park Citizens Association, Inc.
 Manor Oaks Neighborhood Association
 McKenney Hills Carroll Knolls Civic Assn.
 Montgomery County Taxpayers League
 North Bethesda Neighborhoods
 North White Oak Civic Association
 Rock Creek Hills Citizens Assn.
 South Tuckerman-Inverness Citizens Association
 Tivoli Community Association
 Tulip Hill Citizens Association
 Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

Individuals Yet to Renew

Donna Baron

Paula Bienenfeld
 Julie Davis
 Marie De Maria
 Jenny Sue Dunner
 Jennifer Fajman
 Jordan (Jay) Harding
 Agnes Jones Trower
 Fife Northrop
 Robert E. Redding
 Joan Snow
 Beverly Sobel
 Dick Strombotne
 Dale Tibbitts
 Richard Zierdt

Nominate our 2013 Awardees!

Peggy Dennis, Awards Committee Chair

It's already time to start thinking about and nominating the recipients for our 2013 awards. Look over the lists of our past awardees to get some ideas. These lists are on our website: www.montgomerycivic.org.

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 have nominations to make at any time during the next several months.

Education Committee Report

Paula Bienenfeld, Education Chair

School Start Times

A group of parents have re-opened the discussion concerning the early start times of high schools in the County and are working towards changing the start

times to 8:15 a.m. This subject was last reviewed by MCPS in 1998-99 and since that time new scientific data have come to light about the adverse impact on adolescents caused by such early start times (MCPS high schools begin at 7:25 a.m. and bus pick-up times are much earlier.) Led by Mandi Mader, residents have joined with the national Start School Later (SSL) (www.startschoollater.net) and started a local Montgomery County SSL chapter. SSL is a national coalition working to ensure that all public schools can set hours that are compatible with health, safety, equity, and learning.

When teens get the required 8.5 to 9 hours of sleep:

- School attendance goes up,
- Tardiness decreases,
- Students:
 - Sleep less in class,
 - Get in fewer car crashes,
 - Visit nurses and counselors less often,
 - Report less depression and irritability
 - Drink less caffeine, and
 - Are less prone to obesity.

For more information email Mandi at madertherapy@aol.com. There is an online petition to MCPS Superintendent Josh Starr, which says, "We respectfully request our school board to officially recognize the large and compelling body of research regarding teen sleep and academic achievement, and, with a resolution, to set a goal to start high schools in Montgomery County, MD, after 8:15 AM." To sign the petition and leave comments, go to <http://signon.org/sign/changing-montgomery-county>.

Safe Routes to School Grant Funding

A new round of Safe Routes to School grant funding has been announced. This round will have more than \$4 million available to state and local agencies, as well as non-profits. These projects are 100% federally funded (no matching funds required). Safe Routes to School funds can be used for infrastructure (examples: sidewalks, crosswalks, bike racks, pedestrian beacons, ADA ramps) as well as non-infrastructure education and encouragement (examples: project coordination, education programs and materials, special law enforcement details, safety equipment and training for crossing guards, walking school buses). Any school, or non-

profit, including civic associations and citizen organizations, may apply. All state, regional, and local agencies, including non-profits, are eligible for funding.

To apply, please register and attend the information seminar, to be held on Tuesday, November 13, at the State Highway Administration Office of Traffic & Safety, 7491 Connelly Dr., Hanover. Registration for the seminar is due by Nov. 7. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Mr. Joe Pelaia, SRTS Coordinator, at 410-787-7620 or jpelaia@sha.state.md.us.

Thanks to Delegate Al Carr (D-District 18) for this information. If you would like an assist with grant preparation, please contact him at Alfred.carr@house.state.md.us, or by phone at 301-858-3638.

Civic Fed BOE Candidates' Forum

Thanks to everyone who attended the Civic Fed BOE Candidates' Forum held at the Rockville Memorial Library on October 17. We had a great turnout; I counted about 50 people. I want to thank our timekeeper, Peggy Dennis, and Ann McDonald who helped with set-up and once again helped carry the coffee from the local Starbucks. We also thank our two moderators, both editors at the award-winning Rockville HS newspaper, *The Rampage*. Anthony Ellis, editor-in-chief, and Nicholas Cropper, integrity chief, organized the many questions and kept the proceedings moving smoothly. Thanks also to Ms. Jessica Nassau, staff advisor to *The Rampage*. And, thanks to Janis Sartucci, of the Parent's Coalition, who videotaped the entire forum. The video is now online at:

<http://parentscoalitionmc.blogspot.com/2012/10/2012-civic-federation-boe-candidates.html> (Parts 1 and 2), and

http://parentscoalitionmc.blogspot.com/2012/10/2012-civic-federation-boe-candidates_23.html (Part 3).

The candidates for BOE are:

- At-Large Seat: Phil Kauffman, Morris Panner
- District 2 Seat: Fred Evans, Rebecca Smondrowski
- District 4 Seat: Chris Barclay, Annita Seckinger

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.

New Report Card Format

The Pearson curriculum continues its rollout, and is now underway in all kindergarten through third grade classes. Report card grades have been changed in these grades, and are the subject of much discussion. MCPS has replaced the traditional letter grading system with the new system, in which students receive markings of ES (exceptional), P (demonstrating proficiency), I (in progress), or N (not yet making progress). Please let me know your thoughts on the change from the traditional 'A-F' letter grading system to the new system.

New Group Forms to Improve Food in Montgomery County Schools

Paula Bienenfeld, Education Chair

A new parent advocacy group has been formed to work on the school food issue in Montgomery County. They are using an already-existing yahoo group as a base for communication: MCPS_Better_Food@yahoo.com. So far the new group has parents representing 17 different elementary, middle, and high schools.

They are looking for at least one parent from each of the 202 schools in the county to share their expertise and passion for this issue, and who would be willing to post emails from the advocacy group to their school's listserv about a variety of topics, including but not limited to: opting out of school snacks; teachers rewarding children with food; free water in the cafeteria; sugar in the schools; vending machines; and processed food. If you are part of a wellness committee or wellness group in your school, or just a lone crusader, please consider joining and supporting this new group. For more information, contact Karen Devitt at kmdevitt@yahoo.com.

Property Tax Credit?

Peggy Dennis, Editor

Have you applied for the homestead credit against property tax that you are entitled to for your primary residence? I certainly hadn't a clue! Bureaucratic formalities are the bane of my life! But this one matters—you only have until **December 31, 2012** to continue to get the credit. You have probably

received a letter from the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation (DAT) on this issue.

What is the Maryland homestead credit?

To help homeowners deal with large assessment increases on their principal residence, state law has established the Homestead Property Tax Credit. The Homestead Credit has the effect of offsetting any property tax increase due to an increase in assessed value from one year to the next that exceeds 10%. In other words, the homeowner pays no property tax on the assessed value increase which is above 10%. Note that this credit, unlike the similarly-named Maryland Homeowners' Property Tax Credit (and two Montgomery County credits—see below) has no restriction by income or age.

More detailed information is at:

<http://www.dat.state.md.us/sdatweb/homestead.html>.

What do you have to do?

To prevent improper granting of this credit on rented or multiple properties of a single owner, the law **requires all homeowners to submit a one-time application** to establish eligibility for the credit. The letter from the DAT states:

"The Department of Assessments and Taxation wants to provide an important reminder to all homeowners that they only have until December 31, 2012 to file the Application for Homestead Tax Credit Eligibility to continue to be qualified for this property tax credit that limits the amount of assessment on which a homeowner actually pays taxes on his or her principal residence. Over the past five years, the Department has mailed the Homestead application on two separate occasions to every homeowner in the State either in their new Assessment Notice or by a separate mailing. To date, over 850,000 homeowners statewide have filed their Homestead application.

To find out if you have already filed the one-time application in the past five years, you should go to the Department's website at www.dat.state.md.us and click on "Real Property Data Search". You will click on the County name where your property is located and enter the Street address. A page on your property will be displayed, and you look across the bottom of the page to see if you submitted the Homestead

application. [editor's note: I did this, and it really works! DAT's homepage is a mess of text, but go the middle column under "Online Services" and you will find the "Real Property Data Search". The Homestead Application Information is at the very bottom of the page, and yes, we did file our application 4 years ago. No wonder I remembered nothing about it!]

"If you have not submitted the application, the form will be mailed to you if you send an e-mail to hcredit@dat.state.md.us requesting it. Be sure to include in your e-mail your street address for the property and the specific County where the property is located. The application form will include your Property Account Number and special "Access Number" that will enable you to file the form electronically and receive back an e-mail confirmation receipt. If you mail the form to the Department, you will not receive a confirmation receipt.

For those homeowners who do not have access to a computer or to a nearby public library to assist you with looking up this information, you may call the Homestead Tax Credit Program at (410) 767-2165 or 1-866-650-8783 (toll-free. Because of the volume of telephone calls the Homestead Program receives, we urge all homeowners with their own computers not to call with questions they can get answers to online so that persons without a computer can get through on the telephone line. More information about the Homestead application can be obtained by going to the Department's website at www.dat.state.md.us and clicking on "Homestead Eligibility Application" in the center column of the home page." Bureaucratic gobbledygook and obfuscation aside [someone in DAT should take a course in writing plain English] this is useful information.

Are there other property tax credit programs?

The State of Maryland has a program that gives a credit against the homeowner's property tax bill if the property taxes exceed a fixed percentage of the household income. In other words, it sets a limit on the amount of property taxes any homeowner must pay, based on his or her income. Montgomery County offers two supplemental tax credit programs. You can apply for all three programs with one application each year. The three programs are:

- Maryland Homeowners' Property Tax Credit Program (for people with limited income and net worth)
- Montgomery County Supplemental Property Tax Credit (similar eligibility)
- Montgomery County Senior Property Tax Credit (for people over age 70 who qualify for either of the other credits)

The deadline to apply for these programs for this year is 31 October, but it may be possible for taxpayers at least 70 years of age to submit retroactive applications for the previous 3 years. For more information see

http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/home/pdf/propertytax_web.pdf and

http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/mcgtmpl.asp?url=/content/finance/tax_credit_exempt.asp#p3.

Minutes of the October 8, Meeting

Sue Schumacher, Secretary

Call to Order: President Carole Ann Barth called the meeting to order at 7:47 pm. Introductions followed.

Agenda: Peggy Dennis asked that the agenda be amended to include an emergency resolution on the Brickyard Coalition and the Board of Education. The amendment to the agenda was moved, seconded and passed.

Announcements: It was announced that the county-wide volunteer day is Saturday, October 27.

Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the September 10 minutes. The motion was approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader handed out copies of his report.

Program: Dan Wilhelm, Chair Legislation Committee introduced State Senator Jamie Raskin, District 20 and chair of the Montgomery County Senate Delegation. Senator Raskin explained the **7 state questions** on the ballot for the November 6 elections.

Questions 1 and 2 give qualifications for judges to be appointed to the Prince Georges County Orphans Court and the Baltimore City Orphans Court.

Question 3 requires that elected officials resign when they plead guilty to a crime.

Question 4 is the Maryland Dream Act, which would allow some non-documented students to attend

Maryland state colleges and universities and pay in-state tuition. There are a number of restrictions to this including that the parents must file tax forms for three years before and during the period the students are attending college. The first two years must be at a community college and the last two years at a 4-year college. The student must apply for citizenship as soon as he/she can.

Question 5 requires the legislature to readdress the Congressional District Plan; many people think the approved plan is gerrymandered.

Question 6 is the Civil Marriage Protection Act, which allows gays and lesbians marry in the state of Maryland. It doesn't place any requirements on religious institutions.

Question 7 is on expanding gambling to Prince Georges County and adding table games statewide. For the expansion to Prince Georges County to be effective both the voters of that county and the entire state must approve it.

There was an extensive question and answer session on these issues.

Mike Faden, County Council Attorney, explained the **3 County questions** on the November 6 ballot.

Question A deals with the County Charter to change the merit hiring system so that qualified disabled people can be competitive in hiring. Councilman Phil Andrews was present to encourage people to support this charter amendment.

Question B concerns effects bargaining for the Montgomery County Police Department. It would remove the union's right to bargain on management issues. It does not affect traditional issues such as wages, benefits, hours of work and working conditions.

Question C only affects Damascus Maryland, which is a dry (no liquor) area. If this question is approved it will allow certain restaurants to serve alcoholic beverages.

Again there was an extensive question and answer period on these proposed changes to the County.

Emergency Resolution:

An emergency resolution was introduced by Peggy Dennis concerning the Brickyard Coalition and the Montgomery County Board of Education. There were

5 seconds from 5 different member organizations. During discussion there was a motion to table discussion on this. The vote on tabling the resolution was 3 for, 11 opposed, and 2 abstentions. The emergency resolution: Be it resolved that the MCCF supports the formal proposal offered to the Board of Education by the Brickyard Coalition and urges the Board of Education, as owners of the Brickyard Road School Site, to agree to the following three conditions:

1. The BOE, pursuant to its lease with Montgomery County, ask for and receive the land back.
2. Upon reclamation, the BOE agrees that any future use of the site will be determined by an open process with citizen comment.
3. That the BOE consider an agricultural/environmental educational use of the site which would involve maintaining the certified organic status of the land.

The vote on the resolution was 14 for, 3 against and 4 abstentions. The resolution was adopted.

Committee Reports

Public Utilities: Chuck Lapinski, mentioned the electric grid for the county and the need for back-up power for WSSC.

Public Finance: Chuck Lapinski announced that the Education Fund is back in the general fund.

Education: Paula Bienenfeld, Chair reminded everyone that the BOE candidates' forum is Wednesday, October 17 at the Rockville Public Library. She also announced that the BOE Town Hall with students is October 10. Lastly she indicated that Crossway Charter School had run its lottery.

New Business. President Carole Ann Barth cautioned everyone to pay attention to their utility bills. It appears that those houses that had gotten "smart meters" in the Four Corners area of the county were receiving utility bills with up to 400% increases over their previous bills.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:48pm.

Minutes of October 18 Executive Committee Meeting

Sue Schumacher, Recording Secretary

Call to order at 7:50 by President Barth at the home of Sandy Vogelgesang. Attendees: President Carole Ann Barth, Bill Schrader, Sue Schumacher, Dan Wilhelm, Chuck Lapinski, Paula Bienenfeld, Jesse Cantrill, and Sandy Vogelgesand. The agenda for the October ExComm meeting was approved.

Minutes: The September Excomm minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader reported that MCCF is behind this year in membership renewals. It was decided that when the list of non-payers is published in the newsletter, those ExComm members living near should call those organizations and ask them to please renew. In addition, Bill stated that there has been one donation to MCCF by an individual.

Programs: The November program is tentatively scheduled to be a balanced presentation on the Brickyard Coalition and how the Board of Education handles surplus property. There is a speaker representing the Brickyard Coalition, but we're waiting replies on speakers from the BOE and the County Executive's Office. Must have this firmed up by Wednesday, October 24. Plan B is to invite Steve Silverman to discuss development in the county. Plan C if Mr. Silverman is not available is to have a session in which members speak about what we care about, and Mr. Silverman will definitely be the January program presenter. Other suggestions included: the Parks ball field study for December; a panel of other civic federations from surrounding counties; checkbook on line and transparency, and Montgomery College.

Community Hero: Louis Wilen was suggested. He made it possible for school principals' discretionary monies (Independent Activity Funds) to be made public. There was discussion on how this would not be appropriate.

Discussion Topics:

- The PHED Committee vote on the subdivision staging report regarding transportation. Carole Ann reported that Colesville Road (Rt 29) would be exempt from TARP. In terms of what was passed it appears to be all of Route 29. (It has since been learned that it is 29 from NH Ave to the Howard County line, which is a 4-6 lane limited access highway). Studies have been presented over the years that 80% of the traffic

on this portion is commuters from Howard County. Other items out of the PHED Committee included that no area would be allowed to have a \$0 payment for development, except Damascus, every community will require a payment of \$282,500. It was moved and seconded that President Barth would draft a letter on these items.

- Jesse Cantrill announced that he and Peggy Dennis will be lunching at the Golden Bull in Gaithersburg this Monday to check it out for the awards dinner. Jesse also brought up the awards and it was decided that an announcement would be placed in the newsletter asking for nominees.
- PEPCO It was strongly urged that everyone review their PEPCO bills. The excuse given by the PEPCO executive does not make sense. It was decided that something concerning this will be put on the MCCF website.

Date For Next Excomm Meeting: Thursday, November 15 at Bill Schrader's home.

Committee Reports

Education: Paula Bienenfeld reported on the BOE Candidates Forum held the night before the Excomm meeting. She said that it was well attended, with approximately 50 people. The press was there as well. She also mentioned the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) that will greatly impact the county schools.

Committee on Montgomery: Dan Wilhelm reported that the breakfast will be on Friday, December 14. The Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates will be on the program.

Legislation: Dan Wilhelm indicated that County Council President Roger Berliner wants a tax to use for state projects done in the county. This would take an act by the state legislature to be implemented. In addition, Dan said that the Governor has raided the Education Trust Fund as well as the Transportation Trust Fund.

Public Utilities: Chuck Lapinski indicated that there is a need of decentralization of the electrical power grid. He also stated that there is a major shift from coal to natural gas, because of the low price of natural gas today.

Finance: Chuck Lapinski gave a brief overview of the state's financial picture. He stated under-

employment within the state is 15-20%; there have been very few small businesses founded within the state and that 300-400 small businesses have left the state, the Department of Legislative Services reports that unemployment with-in the state is 7.1%. In addition, Chuck indicated that the unfunded liabilities in the state are staggering. He gave the example that health care for police and other county employees is being funded at 3%.

Old Business/New Business: None

Newsletter Assignments: PEPCO bills – Carole Ann Barth. Committee for Montgomery, list of non-paid members, and the proposed Gas Tax-- Dan Wilhelm Nominations for Awards – Jesse Cantrill Education – Paula Bienenfeld

Adjournment: 10:02 pm.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

Serving the County since 1925
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL
 July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013

Mail To: William H. Schrader (Treasurer)
 12824 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, MD
 20906
 301-946-6545; schraderw@erols.com

Inquiries Dan Wilhelm (Database)
 904 Cannon Road, Colesville, MD 20904
 301-384-2698 djwilhelm@verizon.net

Name of Organization/Individual _____ Date _____

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

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

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

***A \$5 discount may be taken for each person who elects to receive the newsletter via email.** Organizations can also select less than the allowed number of members and pay according to that number. Please provide all the information below no matter the newsletter delivery method.

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

Federation Meeting

Session 841

Monday, November 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
- 7:56 Approval of Minutes of October 8 meeting
- 7:58 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 Program: Member Issues and Concerns
- 9:15 Resolution on County Transportation Tax (pg.3)
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 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. 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/emailed 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, November 18.** 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, NOVEMBER 15, 7:45 P.M.

At the home of Bill Schrader

12824 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, 20906



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

Dan Wilhelm, Database Manager

904 Cannon Road

Silver Spring, MD 20904

DJWILHELM@VERIZON.NET

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