



Civic Federation News

March 2014

Serving the Public Interest since 1925

Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Civic
Federation

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March Program: State and County CIP Budgets

By Jerry Garson, Treasurer

Our program on Monday, March 10 will be presented by Glenn Orlin, Deputy Chief of Staff for the Montgomery County Council ; Jennifer Hughes, Director of Office of Management and Budget; and a representative from the Department of Finance.

Our guests will discuss the following budget and financial issues, including but not limited to:

- Proposed County Capital Projects.
- Other government and department requests.
- Bond authority and ratings.
- Commercial and residential property tax assessments

The following is a partial list of proposed county Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)

Roads, Highway Maintenance, and Traffic Improvements

- Include non-vehicular transportation elements whenever feasible in road improvements and new roads including sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bike lanes.
- Add funding for the design and land acquisition of a new project: Observation Drive Extended, which will support economic development and provide north-south access and needed congestion relief between Germantown and Clarksburg.
- Support the White Flint Sector Plan through continued funding for planning and design, land acquisition, and construction of roadway improvements in the White Flint District. Over \$170 million in funding is programmed in the FY15-20 CIP for White Flint redevelopment; another

Federation Meeting

Session 854

Monday, March 10, 2014
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
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:54 Approval of Minutes of February 10 meeting
- 7:55 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 Community Heroes:
Founders of Sligo Creek's
Water WatchDogs
- 8:15 Program: State & County CIP Budgets
- 9:2 Committee Reports
- 9:45 Adjournment

\$169 million is programmed in supporting projects, such as Montrose Parkway East, Chapman Avenue Extended, and the new White Flint Fire Station #23.

- Continue to provide funding for Montrose Parkway East, Goshen Road South, Snouffer School Road, and Burtonsville Access Road to alleviate congestion and improve safety. The County will continue to coordinate with the State Highway Administration to complete the construction of Montrose Parkway East, which will provide improved access to the White Flint area and to Interstate 270.
- Complete the construction of Chapman Avenue Extended, Wapakoneta Road Improvements, Century Boulevard, Platt Ridge Drive Extended, Ripley Street, and East Gude Drive Roadway Improvements.
- Continue funding for intersection and roadway improvements to enhance traffic flow and improve vehicular and pedestrian safety on Seminary Road, Snouffer School Road North (Webb Tract), East Gude Drive, and Redland Road.
- Maintain a public-private partnership to support the Clarksburg Transportation Connections project to fund roadway and intersection improvements at several Clarksburg area roads to increase capacity and reduce traffic congestion in this growing area of the County.
- Add \$20 million for residential and rural road resurfacing to address resident concerns and avoid more costly future repairs.
- Complete construction of a new, underground parking garage in Bethesda's Central Business District.
- Continue the modernization of the central traffic signal control system to provide additional capabilities and tools to optimize traffic flow.
- Continue efforts to provide additional guardrails and streetlights.
- Continue efforts to provide additional pedestrian and traffic safety improvements.

Capital Projects for the Montgomery County Public Schools

- Allocate over \$1.7 billion for school construction and technology enhancements. Local funding for school construction and technology is \$1.247 billion – a record high and \$128.5 million more than the previously approved budget.
- Assume success in leveraging an initial \$230.7 million in new state supported school financing to address overcrowding. At full implementation, the initiative will leverage \$600-700 million in new funding.
- Address capacity needs from higher enrollment by funding four new elementary schools and two new middle schools, and constructing additions in 18 elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools. Together, these projects will add 455 classrooms.
- Maintain the Board of Education (BOE) requested revitalizations/expansions schedule for 21 elementary schools, four middle schools, and five high schools.
- Address Countywide special education needs by adding new funding for one alternative center, Blair Ewing Center Improvements.
- Increase funding for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) project by \$37 million.
- Maintain requested funding for MCPS Countywide infrastructure projects including roof replacements, school security systems, indoor air quality, and life-cycle asset replacement.
- Fund \$5.0 million for “relocatables” to address overutilization of the schools.
- As part of the Smart Growth Initiative (transit-oriented economic development), MCPS will benefit from the \$35.3 million MCPS Food Distribution Facility Relocation project.
- MCPS will benefit from the \$69.0 million MCPS & M-NCPPC Maintenance Facility Relocation project funded as part of the Smart Growth Initiative.

Funding The Budget

- Recommend a total of \$4.49 billion for the FY15-20 CIP for all agencies excluding WSSC, an increase of \$103.0 million or 2.3 percent from the previous CIP.

- Recommend \$4.10 billion for the tax-supported portion of the CIP which excludes stormwater management, HOC, and the Revenue Authority. This represents a \$51.7 million or 1.3 percent increase from the previous CIP.
- Recommend \$1,070.0 million for WSSC, a decrease of \$540.1 million or 33.5 percent from the FY14-19 Approved CIP. The recommended budget does not include funding for a proposed WSSC anaerobic digester to dispose of biosolids due to the uncertainty of Federal Aid assumed in the funding schedule and since a less costly option may soon exist at DC Water's Blue Plains facility.
- Increase general obligation borrowing by \$177.0 million over the six-year CIP.
- Assume an additional \$230.7 million in School Financing Bonds as a first step towards a \$600-700 million initiative to address school overcrowding. A collaborative effort with our State delegation, the County Council, the Board of Education, and Parent Teacher Associations has been initiated to secure the necessary State legislative support for this effort.
- Use all taxes levied on developers for projects that address needs generated by development.
- Keep tax-supported borrowing within prudent limits.
- Issue debt at levels necessary to ensure continuation of Montgomery County's AAA credit rating.
- Program Park and Planning bonds within the Spending Affordability Guidelines.

With this extensive list of topics to consider, we look forward to our usual, spirited Q&A session, so do your homework and come prepared to participate.

Community Heroes: "Water WatchDog" Founders

By Carole Ann Barth, President

This month the Civic Federation will recognize Clair Garman, Kathleen Samiy, and Anne Vorce, for creating the Friends of Sligo Creek's "Water WatchDog" system. If you see water pollution in Sligo Creek or one of its tributaries, just send an email to ReportSligoPollution@fosc.org. When a citizen sends an email, the email appears on the smartphone of Steve Martin (the Environmental Compliance Supervisor for Montgomery County's Department of Environmental Protection). Steve then sends an inspector to investigate.

Making a report is easy, just include the following information:

- The location. Do the best you can. If possible, use GPS coordinates. Next best information would be the nearest address, street intersection, or landmarks.
- Date and time
- Your name and contact information, if you want to know about follow up
- Send a picture, if you can. This can really help with quick identification and seeing patterns over time. Make the photo less than 1 megabyte in size.
- Describe problem briefly. What to look for: color, clarity, smell, debris including small pieces of paper, which can indicate sewage.
- Weather conditions

Citizen watchdogs are also encouraged to post a report on the Friends of Sligo Creek's website at : <http://www.fosc.org/WWDReport.htm>.

The Water WatchDog program is a great example of how citizens and government, working together, can do more than either could do alone.

Not Your Father's Civic Federation

By Carole Ann Barth, President

How much do you and your civic association members know about the MCCF? In writing testimony, "Civic Feders" often use the tagline, "Representing Montgomery County's Civic Associations and the Public Interest

since 1925” or note that we are one of the County's oldest community advocacy organizations. In fact, our March 10, 2014 membership meeting will be the 854th session of the Federation.

The Federation can be justifiably proud of the fact that it is a broad-based, all-volunteer organization that has worked so long to preserve and improve the quality of life for all current and future residents of Montgomery County, Maryland. Anyone who has organized a bake sale, creek cleanup, or grass roots campaign can appreciate what an impressive track record that is.

It's pretty dang amazing so many ordinary residents have committed themselves to providing an effective citizen voice to government policy makers, both elected and appointed, over so many years. I say “ordinary” because we are not paid to participate, nor are we beholden to any particular party or interest group. We all have lives (jobs, families, and passions) that demand our time, energy, and attention. Most of us are active in our local civic associations. Yet somehow, we make time for County-wide civic activism as well.

This continuity of commitment helps the MCCF monitor county and state policies and legislation affecting our communities, and it informs our in-depth studies of critical issues. Recognized as the primary voice of residents, the Federation is given representation on several county boards, commissions, advisory committees and working groups. But the Federation is more than our long history—we are evolving with the times and looking for new ways to pursue our mission.

For example:

MCCF Tweets Have you signed up for the MCCF twitter feed yet? Join the more than 70 news organizations, politicians, agencies, nonprofits, and just plain folks that follow the Federation (@MCCivicFed). This is your source for up-to-the-minute information on MCCF events and actions. The Federation also re-tweets items from other public interest groups of general interest to County residents. Does your civic association tweet? Do you want to publicize important events or hot issues in your community? Let us know--the Civic Federation is designed to promote cooperation, education and effectiveness of civic and community associations in Montgomery County. Tweeting is a convenient way for us to stay in touch with you!

Great Montgomery Hackathon What do you picture when you think of the Federation? Do you think of talented middle-schoolers enthusiastically engrossed in computer coding? Well you should! That was the scene at the Federation's first hackathon. This was a great event that applied young residents' computer skills to making government more transparent and public data more user-friendly. It is my hope that this is just the first of many inter-generational projects. After all, we want to have a vibrant and effective MCCF in 2025!

So how do we get to that future vision? We get there with your help. The Federation currently represents about 150,000 people. MCCF addresses a wide range of concerns in transportation, land use, environment, education, budget and finance, health and human services, public safety, and ethics. With its strength of numbers and the thoroughness of its deliberations, the Federation influences county policy and balances the activities of vested county pressure groups. We also partner with groups like the Montgomery County Taxpayer's League, the Coalition to Save 10 Mile Creek, the Parents' Coalition, and many others.

Still, we could be doing so much more. So how about it? Have you noticed that communities around the County face many of the same issues? Do you believe that citizens have a right to be heard? Do you think neighborhoods should have a say in projects and policies that affect their future? Do you want to work with dedicated, knowledgeable activists? Then consider becoming more involved in the Federation. You could contribute a newsletter article or Federation Corner column, organize a program for the monthly meeting, help with an event, join a committee or help MCCF build capacity. So tweet us, email us, or even give us a call with your great ideas for “Federation 2.0”.

Zoning Changes: Tales from the Front Lines

By Dan Wilhelm, Past President

The Council has tentatively accepted zoning code changes. The Council and Planning Staffs worked the last month making some organizational changes to the document. The Council is expected to formally approve this version shortly. The current version can be found at <http://montgomeryplanning.org/development/zoning>. While residential zones are unchanged, the Planning Staff has developed a set of procedures for applying the new zones to non-residential areas. I looked at the proposed changes for my area (Randolph Rd at New Hampshire Ave) which today is approximately 23 acres of C-1 and a little bit of CT zone. The new procedures apply three different zoning categories at two different density classifications. They are proposing that the 7-11 be in one zone, the McDonalds next door in a different zone and the strip mall offices next to that in yet a third zone. I have invited the Planning Staff to attend my local citizens association in April so we can understand the rationale for the hodge-podge of zones and densities. My preliminary assessment is that we will ask that changes be made so that the zoning is more consistent and uniform.

I urge all citizens to look at what is being proposed and how the new zones and densities may be applied to non-residential land in your neighborhood. If you cannot understand the reasoning behind the proposed changes, or if you don't like what is being proposed, I understand the Council will consider changes to the staff's recommendations before approving the map amendment. To ask for changes, I suggest sending your requests to the Council (PHED Committee) and copy the Planning Staff (see the above URL).

Concerns over Senate Bill 460

Paula Bienenfeld, First Vice President and Education Committee Chair

Senate Bill 460, recently introduced by Montgomery County Senators Jamie Raskin, Nancy King, and Jennie Forehand, was presented in an effort to close a loophole concerning sex between students and their teachers and coaches. The proposed bill can be found at <http://legiscan.com/MD/text/SB460/2014>. Unfortunately the bill contains a provision in Section 3-325(B) that would legalize sex between teenage students and their teachers, coaches, or school employees as long as the age difference between them is no more than seven years. The companion house bill does not contain the same language and avoids legalizing such a sexual relationship. It is worth noting the age of consent in Maryland is 16 years of age. As a result, while attempting to close a loophole that has been in the law since 2006, a new loophole would be created by our representatives in Annapolis.

The States Attorney's Association, the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Child Justice, Inc, The Maryland Association of Boards of Education, and other groups are opposed to the provision that creates an age gap between students and teachers that would allow such activities.

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics opposes the language in the bill, and Dr. Scott Krugman, its President, has written, "While it does expand the list of people in positions of authority, it creates a huge loophole that puts our teenagers at risk. The current wording of the bill requires a 7-year age difference between adult and teenager for the law to apply. This means that it will no longer be a crime for a 21, 22, or 23 year old teacher to have sex with a 16 year old student, nor will it be a crime for a 21-24 year old teacher to have sex with a 17 year old student."

Child Justice also opposes the bill, and its Executive Director, Eileen King, wrote in her testimony that the bill as written "...turns our 16, 17-year-old daughters and sons into legally available sexual prey for 21 to 24-year-old teachers or employees." She went on to say, "We all know teenagers. Kids make very poor judgments and really bad mistakes. We know this. Why would we set them up?"

Please read the bill, which is only four pages long, and write to our Montgomery Delegation to remove the offensive provision from the bill, and instead pass a 'clean' bill that will close the existing loophole without opening another one. The children of Maryland deserve our protection.

Burden of Proof Legislation in Special Education Due Process Cases – SB 779 and HB 1198

By Jeanne Taylor, MCCPTA Special Education Committee Chair,

Volunteer Parent Advocate & Mother of three special children. With thanks to Paula Bienenfeld, Education Chair for giving this to us.

For the second consecutive year, parents of special needs children and advocacy groups across the state will be testifying before the Maryland General Assembly in support of legislation that would shift the burden of proof in special education due process hearing cases. If passed, Senate Bill 779 and House Bill 1198 would assign the burden of proof in special education due process cases to the local school districts.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), public schools are required to provide a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities. Under the IDEA, each child who receives special education and related services must have an Individualized Education Program, or "IEP". The IEP is a legal document that is developed to describe the educational plan that has been designed to meet a child's unique needs. The IEP is developed by the school team and all activities related to it are owned, managed and directed by the local school districts. While parents/guardians are invited to the meeting, they have no authority, and cannot make changes to the document.

When parents and local school districts can't agree on those needs, resolution can lead to a due process hearing before an administrative law judge where the burden of proof is on the disputing party, most often the parents or legal guardians.

Unfortunately, special needs families are at a huge disadvantage in the special education process, and this is especially true of special education disputes. One of the biggest challenges is that a new IEP goes into effect every year, even if the parents/guardians disagree with it. So, for example, if the school decides to eliminate services during the annual IEP, or change the student's school placement, the only option for parents and guardians is to initiate a due process hearing, in which case the parents/guardians bear the burden of proof.

Because parents/guardians typically lack the resources, expertise, and legal skills needed to navigate a legal proceeding, advocates for children believe that schools are in a better position to demonstrate their compliance with special education law than parents and guardians are to disprove it.

Effectively challenging an IEP is extremely difficult. Rules of evidence, procedure, the entire legislative scheme of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Rehabilitation Act, civil rights law, state education law, state administrative law, legal ethics, state & federal rules of civil procedure, and appellate law all come into play. While attorneys for the school system fully understand all of this territory, the average parent (special needs or otherwise) has no training in these areas.

Proponents of the bills point to other reasons for shifting the burden of proof: school districts know what services, staffing, modifications, accommodations and placements are available, and how different children have fared with them. School districts also hold students' educational records and employ the people, such as teachers and principals, on whom the parents must rely for testimony in hearings.

Those who support the proposed change would like to see Maryland law follow other states like New York and New Jersey which have already shifted the burden of proof to the local school districts. Currently, our school districts can move (and have moved) for cases to be settled in their favor, without having to produce any evidence that the IEP provides the special education services that federal law requires.

Lastly, if the burden of proof is shifted to the school districts, the IEP process will become more collaborative and cooperative. As a result, the number of disputes between parents and schools will decrease. In the end, placing the burden of proof on schools will promote accountability and lead to more correct outcomes for special needs children. The ultimate goal is to improve educational results for children with disabilities.

For additional information go to: <http://www.burdenofproofmd.org>

Last Call to Nominate 2014 Awards Recipients

By Peggy Dennis, Editor

The 2014 Awards Committee – Paula Bienenfeld, Jim Humphrey and Peggy Dennis – is still accepting nominations for our upcoming award recipients. 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.

If you can think of an individual or group whom you believe we should honor, please send us your nominations as soon as possible at: montgomerycivic@yahoo.com.

Mark Your Calendars Now For The
Montgomery County Civic Federation's

2014 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
Friday, May 2, 2014

Reception 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Banquet Dinner Buffet 7:00
Awards Presentations 8:15 - 9:30 p.m.
Golden Bull Grand Cafe
7 Dalamar Street, Gaithersburg 20877

News You Can Use

Are Potholes Still Driving You Crazy?

The County's Division of Highway Services crews are conducting an intensive effort to fill the county's myriad potholes in county roads. Repair crews, who repair potholes every day of the year except during rain and snow, fill potholes reported by residents and those they encounter on their rounds.

Residents are encouraged to report potholes on county roads online or by calling 311 or 240-777-0311, Monday through Friday, 7 am-7 pm.

To report potholes in state roads (numbered roads, such as MD 355 and MD 97), contact the Maryland State Highway Administration online or call 301-513-7300.

The City of Rockville handles its own pothole repairs. To report a pothole there, send an email or make an online request for repair.

Filing for Earned Income Tax Credits

As the tax filing season begins, County Executive Isiah Leggett is urging eligible residents to file for earned income tax credits (EITC). These are federal, state and local tax credits aimed at helping low-to-moderate income working families earning less than \$52,000 a year.

Eligible low-to-moderate income taxpayers can get free help in filing their taxes from Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs, which has trained volunteers certified by the IRS. In addition, IRS and Maryland provide free filing software to eligible taxpayers. Free tax help is also available to VITA-eligible seniors requiring assistance through Montgomery County's RSVP/AARP tax aide program.

Residents qualified for earned income tax credits can get free assistance, by appointment only, at any of four county locations: Gaithersburg, Rockville, Silver Spring and Wheaton. These taxpayers can make an appointment by visiting the VITA website or calling 240-777-1123 or 240-314-8310 (for City of Rockville residents).

Free tax preparation for seniors needing assistance is offered at several locations (including two in Rockville), either by appointment or on a walk-in basis only. See the website for details.

Keeping Current on County Development

The [Montgomery County Planning Department](#) makes it easy to keep on top of what's happening in the county. From its [Living in MoCo](#) web page, you can *learn more about community plans, follow development applications and keep track of Planning Board decisions.*

At Living in MoCo, you also can find out about about environmental rules affecting property owners, historic preservation, browse the library of free maps and visit the GIS map store to cover Montgomery County from every angle, and access county demographic, housing economic, population, household, employment and housing data.

The Planning Board's *review of the Purple Line, Bethesda Metro Station South Entrance, Capital Crescent Trail, and Silver Spring Green Trail* is scheduled for March 20, 2014. The meeting will be located in the Planning Board auditorium at 8787 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD. Use the Planning Department [interactive map tool](#) to locate the projects. [Learn more.](#)

Ride On, Metrobus free for seniors during certain hours. Did you know that seniors 65 and older [ride free on Ride On](#) and some Metro buses in Montgomery County from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday, and pay half the usual fare most other times? To do so, seniors must have a valid [senior SmarTrip card](#) or Medicare card and photo ID. In addition, seniors pay just half the usual Metrorail fare when using a senior SmarTrip card.

Senior SmarTrip cards cost \$2 and can be purchased at any Montgomery County library, [TRiPS Commuter Store](#) (there's one in Friendship Heights) or at the Montgomery County Division of Treasury (255 Rockville Pike, Suite L, Rockville, MD 20850).

Submit a Federation Corner Column

By Jim Humphrey

MCCF continues to submit a Federation Corner column each week to be printed in The Montgomery Sentinel (named Best Newspaper of 2012 by the Maryland-Delaware-District of Columbia Press Association). The column is a way of informing our county government officials and other Sentinel readers about the activities of the Civic Federation and the issues of importance to our members.

If you have an issue, a problem or an activity of significance to your community that you want to receive wider exposure, consider writing a Federation Corner column on the topic. Columns must be between 800 and 1000 words in length, in Word document format, and sent as an attachment to an email to: montgomerycivic@yahoo.com. Please use the same email address if you wish to discuss a future submission.

Minutes of the February 10 Meeting

By Sue Schumacher, Co-Recording Secretary

Call to Order: President Carole Ann Barth called to meeting to order at 7:45 p.m. Introductions followed.

AGENDA: It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The new appointee to the County Council to represent District 5 is Cherri Branson. Peggy Dennis announced that the Awards Banquet is May 2, nominations for the award recipients are needed. Paula Bienenfeld announced that the BudgetPalooza was taped and thanked everyone for their assistance. She also announced that the Hackathon had a good turnout, and the next step is a drop-in Hackathon once a month. It was suggested that there be an overlay of the county showing the various civic associations.

MINUTES: It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the January 13 meeting as they appeared in the Newsletter. The minutes were approved.

Community Heroes: Paula Bienenfeld introduced Abbe Milstein of PowerUp Montco and Eric Hensal of Public Power for Montgomery County. Abbe Millstein said she started PowerUP MoCo as a result of the "derecho" when she started looking into state rate cases and discovered that the problems start at the top of government. Eric Hensell, an advocate for public utilities, labeled PEPCO the "slumlord" of utilities. He said that PEPCO has a perpetual franchise in Montgomery County.

Program: Roger Berliner, County Council member for District 1, was introduced. Mr. Berliner reviewed a number of bills currently before the County Council related to energy, renewable energy and energy conservation. (see February News for a complete list) He said that the county needs a reliable electric grid and the current grid needs to be modernized. In addition, he said that the county should be aspiring to "micro" grids. He touched on a number of the proposed bills such as 2-14, which would require building owners to report their energy usage annually. This is done in several large cities. Bill 3-14 on "Leeds Buildings" will help create green jobs. Another bill will seek to require that county government buildings use 50% renewable energy by 2015. Another proposal is that all new buildings must be wired to enable recharging electric vehicles. He also said there is a need for the establishment of an Office of Sustainability. Questions from the audience were asked throughout Councilmember Berliner's talk.

Vote to Confirm Nominations Committee: It was moved and seconded to approve the Nominations Committee as it appears on page 11 of the Newsletter. The motion passed.

Committee Reports

Education: Paula Bienenfeld, Chair announced that 15 victims in the Larry Joynes' pedophilia case have so far come forward. Mr. Joynes was a music teacher at New Hampshire Estates Elementary School. Jim Zepp passed out a cost break out by county concerning the Maintenance of Effort (MOE) law. Montgomery County currently spends \$10,000 per child.

Environment: Alan Bowser, 2nd Vice President, reported on the work of the Save 10-Mile Creek Coalition. There are about 30 members in the Coalition including MCCF. He announced there would be a meeting on February 11 regarding impervious surfaces, and a major Coalition goal is to limit development to about 8% impervious surface in the three developments around the headwaters of the creek. The Coalition is not satisfied with the plan coming from the County Council calling for a Pulte home development, plus two outlet malls.

Legislation: Peggy Dennis announced that there were three bills before the State Legislature addressing Artificial Turf (AT) fields. HB123 would restrict Program Open Space funds for building AT fields. HB763 would require public health warning signs at the entrances to AT fields. Lastly, HB809 takes away some of the shield of the government for legal liability. This bill raises the financial caps, but doesn't end them.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:30pm.

Minutes of the February 20 Executive Committee Meeting By Co-Recording Secretary, Sandy Vogelgesang

The Executive Committee (ExComm) met at the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center.

Call to Order. President Carole Ann Barth called the meeting to order at 7:55 PM. Present for the meeting: Carole Ann Barth, Paula Bienenfeld, Peggy Dennis, Jerry Garson, Sandy Vogelgesang, Dan Wilhelm, and Jim Zepp.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda. Carole Ann called for and received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda.

Approval of Minutes for January 23, 2014 ExComm Meeting. Carole Ann called for and received unanimous approval of the minutes as published in the February 2014 newsletter.

Treasurer's Report. Jerry Garson, Treasurer, circulated updated report. The current bank balance for the Federation is \$14,928.57.

Announcements. President Carole Ann Barth called for announcements.

- Carole reported that Four Corners civic associations will hold a debate on May 7 for candidates running for District 5 seat on the County Council.

Programs. Carole Ann introduced discussion of future programs.

- **March:** County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) budget. Jerry Garson is organizing the program.
- **April:** County Operating Budget. Jerry Garson and Dan Wilhelm are working on this program.
- **May:** Disaster preparedness. Jerry Garson is organizing this program.

In addition, ExComm added to the list of future program possibilities:

- The future of transportation (emerging technology for driverless cars)
- Performance measures (to help assess impact of Montgomery County's CountyStat program)

Community Hero for March 2014. Carole Ann nominated Kathleen Samiy and the Friends of Sligo Creek for their Water WatchDog system. There was additional discussion of nominations for the future but no decisions were made.

Issues to Discuss. Carole Ann led discussion of the following:

- Forum for Candidates for County Executive. Work is underway for a forum sponsored by the Civic Federation in collaboration with the County Taxpayers' League and the Parents' Coalition. It will be held in Silver Spring in late April.
- MCCF Promotion Ideas.
 - Jim Zepp shared a copy of a brochure ("An Introduction to Our Community") produced by the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association. He suggested that such a brochure could be produced for other MCCF member organizations and offered as an additional incentive for membership in the Federation. ExComm authorized Jim to explore the idea with a consultant and report back to ExComm.
 - Carole Ann suggested producing a video or a power point about key MCCF activities and achievements for use at the annual Awards Banquet in May. ExComm approved her suggestion to preview the concept in the upcoming newsletter. The videos could also be uploaded to YouTube and/or the MCCF website.
 - Jim Zepp suggested producing videos of monthly program presentations which could be accessed on the Federation website and elsewhere. ExComm authorized Jim to try out this

- idea at upcoming budget meetings (assuming permission from speakers) and to provide an article in the newsletter summarizing highlights of the programs.
- Peggy Dennis suggested presenting a program to help rejuvenate dying civic associations. ExComm approved her suggestion of exploring arrangements for such a program – perhaps to be done at the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center this coming autumn. Jerry Garson noted the possibility of providing some funding to help associations with rental of meeting space or printing of brochures.
- Paula reported on increased use of new Federation twitter feed –now up to 70 followers.
- Insurance. Jerry Garson raised the issue of liability insurance for the Federation. ExComm authorized Jerry to explore the issue and report back to ExComm.

Committee Reports

Transportation. Dan Wilhelm, Chair, and Peggy Dennis raised issues. Peggy updated ExComm on the proposal to get PEPCO's agreement to a shared use path in their corridor from Westlake Drive to Piney Meetinghouse Road. She also agreed to pursue several issues of pedestrian safety and reported on Kirk Road, the second "orphaned road to undertake County improvement. Dan noted the importance of maintaining local roads as an issue for the CIP budget. He will prepare a letter to that effect for the County Council. Aside from transportation, Dan cautioned all associations to be alert to Park and Planning zoning proposals for non-residential zones and to register their concerns with the PHED Committee of the County Council before September. Dan will prepared short article for newsletter.

Education. Paula Bienenfeld, Chair, reported that she is following relevant bills in the Maryland General Assembly. These include SB-460, which has language legalizing sex between a teenage student and a teacher/coach/employee as long as the teacher or coach or employee is no more than seven years older than the student. There was preliminary discussion on that and related bills.

Parks and Recreation/Environment. Carole Ann provided update on implementation of the Forest Conservation Law. She stressed that it is just as important to protect current tree canopy as to plant new trees. She also noted the need to work more effectively with the State of Maryland to deal with trees along state roads.

Legislation. Dan Wilhelm, Chair, suggested convening a teleconference to discuss legislation before the Maryland General Assembly. Bills include some of particular interest -- noted during ExComm meeting such as deer management, artificial turf, and Delegate Carr's participant compensation legislation. ExComm agreed to confer by phone, February 26, to determine MCCF positions on proposed bills.

Old Business. None raised.

New Business

- Selection of new Planning Board Chair. Dan Wilhelm recommended that the Federation begin preparations for interviews of candidates, to be held mid-late April. ExComm agreed to check with the Federation's Planning and Land Use Committee on who will take the lead in organizing the MCCF interview committee.
- Newsletter. Peggy reviewed articles to be submitted for March 2014 newsletter.
- Next ExComm Meetings. The next meeting will be on March 20 at the Bethesda Chevy Chase Regional Services Center pending availability. The following meeting will be held on April 17 at the home of Sandy Vogelgesang.

Adjournment. Carole Ann called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:55 PM.

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. Free parking in garage accessed from Monroe St. or from Jefferson St. heading east from I-270.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly, except in July and August. It is mailed or 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, March 23** . Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text 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

Thursday March 20, 7:45 p.m.

2nd Floor Meeting Room

BCC Regional Services Center

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