



## Civic Federation News

May, 2015

*Serving the Public Interest since 1925*

Official Publication of the  
Montgomery County Civic  
Federation

[www.montgomerycivic.org](http://www.montgomerycivic.org)  
[montgomerycivic@yahoo.com](mailto:montgomerycivic@yahoo.com)

twitter feed, @mccivicfed

**Please forward this e-newsletter to all association members,  
friends and neighbors. Share! Please.**

**Peggy Dennis, Editor - Phone: 301-983-9738 - Email: [mccfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mccfnewsletter@gmail.com)**

**Reserve Your Tickets Now (form on  
page 24) for the  
Montgomery County Civic Federation's  
2015 ANNUAL AWARDS  
BANQUET**

**Friday, June 5, 2015**

Honoring

**THE SENTINEL AWARD** - awarded to an individual or group who makes a significant contribution to good government at the local level:

**Friends of Ten Mile Creek & Little  
Seneca Reservoir**

**THE WAYNE GOLDSTEIN AWARD** - awarded to an individual or group for outstanding public service to the people of Montgomery County:

**Save Our Seminary at Forest Glen  
(SOS)**

**THE STAR CUP** - awarded to the MCCF delegate or committee for outstanding public service to Montgomery County:

**Planning & Land Use Committee**

**SPECIAL YOUTH CIVIC ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD**

**(Piney Branch) Young Activists Club**

Full write-up on the award recipients starts on page 13

### Federation Meeting

#### Session 866

Monday, May 11, 2015

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  
7:55 Approval of Minutes of April 13 meeting  
7:56 Treasurer's Report  
8:00 Program: Stormwater Management Issues  
9:15 Resolutions (see pages 5 and 9)  
9:20 Committee Reports  
9:40 Old & New Business  
9:45 Adjournment

## May Program: Water, Water Everywhere!

**By Peggy Dennis**

Our program on Monday, May 11 will show how our county deals with stormwater and stormwater runoff. The program will cover a variety of topics starting with the polluted runoff reduction requirements under the MDE stormwater permit issued to Montgomery County under the federal Clean Water Act. We will also learn how the work of our county government fits into that of other parts of the state; how we can leverage our investment in this program - which is approaching \$400 million in a cumulative capital investment - through applying the

County's Tree-Planting program; DOT's work with Drainage Assistance; various initiatives that use "green infrastructure" to restore and protect our streams; and the significance of Governor Hogan's repeal of the mandatory stormwater fee law, sometimes called the "Rain Tax".

Our speakers will be Lisa Feldt, Director of the County's Department of Environmental Protection; Brent Bolin, Chesapeake Regional Director of Clean Water Action; and Diane Cameron, Audubon Naturalist Society and organizer of Stormwater Partners.

This program will educate and inform us on something that effects each of us in fundamental ways. As the old saying goes, "If you're not part of the solution, you're part of the problem." So come prepared to learn, be amazed, and ask questions. As always, our program should provide time for questions and answers and plenty of dialogue with our program presenters.

**Community Hero: Ron Ely**  
**by Louis Wilen, Public Utilities Chair**

Virtually everyone who drives in any urban area of Maryland is aware of the speed cameras that are the most visible elements of the automated traffic enforcement systems in several counties. We are honored this month to present the Community Hero award to North Potomac resident Ron Ely for his tireless work in exposing deficiencies in speed camera programs not only in Montgomery County, but throughout the state of Maryland.

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.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly except in July and August. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media and local, state, and federal officials.

**Recipients are encouraged to forward the Civic Federation News to all association members, friends and neighbors.** Permission is granted to reproduce any article provided that proper credit is given to the "**Civic Federation News of the Montgomery County Civic Federation**".

**Table of Contents**

May Program: Water, Water Everywhere!.....	1
Community Hero: Ron Ely.....	2
Transportation Committee Report & Proposed Resolution.....	3
County Executive Studying Previous ITA Proposal.....	6
Perseverance, Politics, and Publicity Shut Down Costco Gas Proposal.....	6
MCCF Resolution on ZTA 15-07, Proximity of Mega Gas Stations to Neighborhoods.....	8
The Birth of the Montgomery County Civic Federation.....	10
Announcing the MCCF 2015 Annual Awards.....	13
MCCF Supports Bicycling for Everyone.....	18
Environment Committee Report.....	19
In Memory of Al Geske.....	19
Planning Board Hearing on Revised Subdivision Regulations Scheduled for April 30.....	20
Minutes of the April 13 Meeting.....	20
Minutes of the April 23 Executive Committee Meeting.....	22
Banquet Reservation Form.....	24

Back in 2008, Ron started looking into the speed camera programs. Although he had never received a speed camera citation, his software background and other factors gave him reason to look into the accuracy of the speed cameras. To share his concerns with the public, he started a blog called Stop Big Brother, writing articles about speed camera legislation, potential speed camera errors and other issues related to automated traffic enforcement.

The media eventually picked up stories from Ron's blog and started their own investigations. Ron's articles spurred the Baltimore Sun to publish over a dozen articles about speed camera programs, which eventually forced the City of Baltimore to shut down all of their speed cameras for over a year. TV stations and other media outlets also used Ron's material as the basis for their investigations of speed camera programs.

Ron continued investigating use of the speed cameras, and as public interest grew, he renamed his blog as mddriversalliance.org and used it as the focal point for a newly created organization, The Maryland Driver's Alliance.

A crucial tool in Ron's arsenal has been the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA). Ron has submitted dozens of MPIA requests to jurisdictions throughout Maryland, many of which led to exposure of internal problems in speed camera programs.

Many jurisdictions complied -- often reluctantly -- with Ron's MPIA requests, but two cities, Brentwood and Morningside, both in Prince George's County, failed to respond, even after repeated requests extending over more than a year. Instead of giving up, Ron sued the two cities for failure to comply with the MPIA. In the Circuit Court in Montgomery County, Ron filed suit against the City of Brentwood, and after a long court fight, Brentwood eventually released the documents that Ron sought. Ron also prevailed in his case against Morningside, which was heard in Circuit Court in Prince George's County.

Ron also persuaded Chief Judge John P. Morrissey of the District Court of Maryland to order a crucial change to the wording on speed camera citations. Formerly, the speed camera citations included misleading text that advised defendants that they had to reveal the name of the driver of the vehicle in certain situations. Ron organized a letter-writing campaign asking that the wording be changed to conform to state law. Judge Morrissey agreed that the text on the citations was misleading and ordered that it be modified statewide to conform to state law.

For his relentless pursuit and exposure of public information, his courage in taking two cities to court to force them to comply with the MPIA, and for leading the successful effort to persuade the Chief Judge of the District Courts to correct misleading language on citations, the Civic Federation is proud to present Ron Ely with our Community Hero Award.

## **Transportation Committee Report & Proposed Resolution** **by Jerry Garson, Transportation Committee Chair**

In January, the County Executive requested new state legislation that would have allowed Montgomery County to overhaul the government structure for providing transit services by

creating an "Independent Transit Authority" (ITA). This would have amounted to an end-run around our County Charter and the County Charter's taxing limits. The bill, MC24-15 Montgomery County – Transit Authority, would have created a countywide special taxing district and the power to raise taxes above those allowed by our Charter. The ITA would have been an independent agency run by a five person board appointed by one person - the County Executive. According to the information we have seen, the ITA would not have any direct oversight of its operations, would have its own procurement process, would have the authority to enter into contracts with other governments and private parties, and would have the ability to take property through eminent domain. It would have been neither answerable to nor accountable to us – the taxpayers and residents.

The principal reason for this radical change in County government proposed by the Executive is to finance the construction and operations of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system, but the new ITA would have far-reaching powers that could have extended to the creation of subways, tunnels, and any other transit-related projects it so desired. The extent of the County government's control would be limited to the approval of ITA projects in the County CIP budget and provisions in relevant master plans.

For the planned BRT routes, the ITA could eliminate left turns into businesses and side streets by building a dedicated transitway lanes along the middle of the roadways. This is based on the studies commissioned by the County Executive. The ITA could also eliminate one or more traffic lanes along Route 355, Viers Mill Road, and US 29, which would increase traffic congestion on these routes and all surrounding roads and streets. One of the consultants ITDP estimated that only 750 riders would use the Rockville Pike Bus Rapid Transit System during the morning rush hour periods. This is compared with the over 25,000 vehicle drivers that use 355 each day in each direction. The Bus Transitway would add 7 additional stations along Rockville Pike south of Rockville that are not currently WMATA Metro stations.

The ITA would take on all Ride On bus system functions; all of our hardworking public transit employees would be transferred to the new ITA; all bus systems, including finance, maintenance, planning, and operations; the parking lot districts; any transit funded by the public would be run under the proposed ITA which would be completely independent from the county government, and hence, from the people who rely on a representative democracy to ensure the people's business is open and accountable to the public.

Here is the synopsis of the bill, according to the Montgomery County Delegation in Annapolis's website, bolding for emphasis only.

For the purpose of authorizing the governing body of Montgomery County to create, by local law, a Transit Authority to perform county transit functions as an instrumentality of the county and body corporate and politic and governed by a certain board; authorizing the governing body, by local law, **to create a special taxing district** to finance the cost of county transit functions, impose a certain special tax, specify the organization of the Transit Authority, specify certain powers of the Transit Authority, establish a certain budget process for the Transit Authority, and specify certain other matters related to the Transit Authority; providing

that **provisions of the Montgomery County Charter do not apply to the Transit Authority except under certain circumstances**; providing that **a certain tax limitation does not apply** to certain revenue raised for certain purposes; authorizing the Transit Authority to provide **for the issuance of certain revenue bonds** for certain purposes, subject to certain conditions and exempt from certain provisions of law.

The transportation committee has reviewed proposals by the consultants which cover the proposed BRT lines along Route 355/Rockville Pike, U.S. Route 29 and Viers Mill Road. The annual operating and maintenance costs for these three projects are estimated at \$89 million.

The capital costs for these three routes are **\$1.8 billion**. If correct, these costs will lead to about a \$145 million annual principal and interest repayment costs. The estimated annual cost to the Real Property Taxpayers could be \$ 234 million. The current projected Real Property Tax Revenue for Fiscal Year 2016 is \$16 billion. Adding BRT costs could result in a **15% increase in real estate taxes** for the residents and businesses. If other projects are added, such as costs for additional Bus Rapid transit lines; the Purple Line or for the Corridor Cities Transitway, **Real Estate tax increases of 30% or more could easily occur in the next few years.**

The Transportation Committee is recommending that Montgomery County look for cheaper and more immediate methods of increasing transit use to reduce traffic congestion in the county.

In addition to the measures the MCCF has advocated for many years to improve public transit (none of these measures has yet been put into effect) we are now suggesting that the county provide free Ride On bus service to county residents and other users. The amount of money Ride On passengers currently pay to the county are as follows.

The fare box revenue in Fiscal Year 2014 was \$21,655,986. The Current year estimated revenue is \$23,638,593 and next year estimated revenue to be \$23,534,593. According to Ride On there were over 25 million trips taken on the Ride On system last year. Under our proposal they would all be free. Currently seniors can use the Ride On system between 9:30 AM and 3:00 PM for free Mondays through Friday. Kids ride free with ID from 2:00 PM – 8:00 PM Monday-Friday.

The cost for free Ride On bus service, would be less than 10% of the cost of the three proposed BRT lines and would benefit the entire County, not just three roadway corridors. Some jurisdictions that have done this have had as much as a 60% increase in ridership without any other inducements or improvements.

By eliminating fare collection, the Ride On buses would be sped up and additional service could be provided at no significant cost. There would also be a reduction in the number of employees involved in fare collection which could result in having additional bus drivers to increase service to our residents. Therefore we are proposing the following resolution:

*Be it resolved* that the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. is concerned about the significant real property tax increases to our residents and businesses if an

Independent Transit Authority is created. We recommend that instead of creating an Independent Transit Authority, Montgomery County's Department of Transportation should try making the current Ride On bus system free to all riders, for a period of time to see if ridership increases and results in a significant reduction in traffic congestion.

## **County Executive Studying Previous ITA Proposal**

**by Harriet Quinn, Planning & Land Use Committee**

The County Executive recently asked his Transit Task Force to reconvene for the purpose of studying his proposed legislation to establish a separate Independent Transit Authority that would finance and build a new BRT system. This legislation was previously withdrawn after a Montgomery House Delegation public hearing. MCCF opposed this legislation for many reasons, including the intent to circumvent the Charter limit on property taxes. Please see our [February Newsletter](#) and article within this newsletter for more details.

The County Executive requested that the Task Force issue a report by September 30, 2015. Two committees for the Task Force have been created, a Finance Committee and a Transfer of Public Functions Committee.

A public forum is planned to receive feedback one Wednesday evening in late May although the exact date is unknown. They will be meeting every Wednesday evening at 6:00 P.M. from now until September in the Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street in Rockville.

For additional information on the Task Force please visit

<http://www6.montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/cex/transit2015/meeting.asp>

## **Perseverance, Politics, and Publicity Shut Down Costco Gas Proposal**

**By Karen Cordry, KHCA president, and Donna R. Savage, KHCA land use chair**

Costco's proposal to build a 16-pump, 12-million-gallon mega gas station at Westfield Wheaton Mall started a 5-year, David-and-Goliath struggle. The Opposition consisted of the Kensington Heights Civic Association (KHCA), the Kensington View Civic Association, the Stop Costco Gas Coalition, the Kenmont Swim & Tennis Club, parents from the Stephen Knolls School, and many other civic, environmental, and individual supporters from throughout the County. We fought the proposal head on – and won! Detailed in this article is what every neighborhood must be prepared to do, unfortunately, to protect and preserve the quality of life in our County.

**History.** It's been a long, strange trip for the Opposition – we kept winning, but Costco just kept coming back for more until they finally ran out of places to go. Here, in a nutshell, is what happened.

- Costco convinced the County Executive to propose a Zoning Text Amendment in 2010 (ZTA 10-04) to exempt them from the Special Exception (SE) process by threatening not to build the warehouse without the gas station. In the face of vehement opposition



after a lengthy public hearing and obvious Council opposition, this ZTA was withdrawn and Costco backed down and agreed to build the warehouse regardless. (It has been operating without a gas station for 2 years now.) WIN #1.

- Costco filed its first SE application in 2011; in response, the Opposition urged the County Council to pass a ZTA setting a minimum buffer for large gas stations (defined as selling at least 3.6 million gallons a year). After watering down the original proposal for a 1000-foot buffer from schools and outdoor recreational areas to 300 feet, the Council unanimously passed ZTA 12-07 in the summer of 2012. By then, we had connected with two wonderful experts, Dr. Hank Cole and Dr. Patrick Breysse, who provided us with letters and testimony dealing with the emissions and health effects, respectively, from gasoline stations. WIN #2.
- Costco refiled its application in the fall of 2012. The ZTA 12-07's 300-foot setback was small enough that Costco could move the proposed gas station to be 347 feet from the Kenmont Swimming & Tennis Club, but only 118 feet from the nearest homes, which were not covered by the ZTA. The new station location was now even closer (less than 1,000 feet) to the severely disabled children attending the Stephen Knolls School. The Opposition met with the County Planning staff and raised numerous issues, ranging from lack of need to traffic concerns to land use to the adverse health effects the station would create for nearby residents, the 400 Kenmont families, and the Stephen Knolls students. The staff report recommended DENIAL based on the health effects. WIN #3.
- After a hearing on February 28, 2013, the Planning Board majority voted to recommend DENIAL because the proposed gas station would be incompatible with Wheaton's Sector Plan, and its focus on Wheaton's future as a smart growth, transit-oriented hub. WIN #4.
- The Special Exception hearing then began. Lasting 37 days from April 2013 to September 2014, it became the longest in County history. The Hearing Examiner's report, issued December 12, recommended DENIAL, based on his finding that Costco had not met its burden of proving that the station would meet all of the SE requirements. His findings were based primarily on Costco's failure to prove that the station could operate without adverse health effects and be compatible with the neighborhood. He made clear he was only deciding "this particular proposal, at this particular location, at the level of usage planned (12,000,000 gallons...) with the proposed design, and the proximity of residences, a community swimming pool, and the Stephen Knolls School which serves many medically fragile children." (Report, p. 166) WIN #5.
- The final step was the Board of Appeals hearing. After carefully reviewing all of the recommendations, the Board voted unanimously on March 11, 2015, to DENY the application. WIN #6.

Although Costco can appeal the Board's decision, the standard of review for such decisions is highly deferential and we are confident this decision will stand up. We are even more hopeful that Costco will decide that six strikes are enough!

**How did we win?** Opposition groups are way out of their financial league when contesting zoning exceptions; although the applicant bears the burden of proof, that doesn't mean much if citizens can't afford to fight back. Costco, the third largest retailer in the world, outspent us by at least 10- or 20-to-1 for its experts and lawyers.

We relied on a vast quantity of volunteer time and fundraising and we thank everyone who contributed, with special thanks to Kenmont. We made the brilliant decision to hire Michele Rosenfeld as our lawyer, who worked hundreds of hours, at a fraction of her usual fee, to give us needed legal expertise; our experts too only charged us a small fraction of their usual fees. We were fortunate enough to have many "learned lay persons" in the Opposition communities who were able to counter Costco's paid experts. For example, we learned during the hearing that an "expert" doesn't necessarily know whether to multiply or divide to obtain critical data!

Many of our arguments were backed by years of community activism and local knowledge. That background was crucial to this case and far exceeded what Costco's hired "experts" supplied.

The publicity we generated helped us gather support for every aspect of our efforts. We forged alliances with others who understood that this struggle was important for everyone, not just the immediate neighborhood. We cemented relationships with County staff and County Councilmembers that led to their recommendations of denial and favorable ZTA results.

And most importantly, we "hung in there" during this seemingly never-ending struggle. We knew we had a winning case; it just took a long time for everyone to acknowledge the obvious.

**One last challenge!** On May 12 at 7:30 pm there will be a public hearing on [ZTA 15-07](#), which is written to increase the buffer zone from the current 300 feet to 500 feet and include residential properties and sensitive environmental areas in its coverage. Seven of nine Councilmembers are co-sponsoring this ZTA. (The Planning Board will consider ZTA 15-07 on the afternoon of May 7.) When enacted, this proposal will ensure that a mega gas station cannot be built in Montgomery County "in ANYone's back yard."

## **MCCF Resolution on ZTA 15-07, Proximity of Mega Gas Stations to Neighborhoods**

**by Karen Cordry, President Kensington Heights Civic Association**

After five years, Costco finally struck out on its Special Exception Request, losing 5-0 before the Planning Board. We still don't know if it plans to appeal that loss to the courts – but what we do know is that it hasn't given up on its desire to be able to plant its mega stations literally in the back yards of any neighborhood it fancies in Montgomery County. Seven members of the County Council, though, recently introduced [ZTA 15-07](#) in order to ensure that the lessons



learned from the hard work of the Opposition to Costco's Special Exception Request (S-2863) did not go to waste. This ZTA will close the glaring loopholes left in the original ZTA that was passed in 2012 after being watered down to ensure that the Costco application could go forward. It increases the setback requirements from 300 feet to 500 feet and adds dwelling units and certain environmental attributes to the list of sensitive land uses which must be protected by that buffer zone.

With the passage of this ZTA, the Council will be able to ensure that no community will have to face such a threat, and that none will have to beggar themselves in order to fight back against a Special Exception proposed by a huge retail enterprise. By setting a simple, objective, minimum standard, these overly intrusive proposals can be ruled out up front, without the need for an extended hearing process. We ask all MCCF members to read the following resolution and come to the May meeting to unite with us in support of this [ZTA 15-07](#) that will protect all neighborhoods in the County. The Council has scheduled a public hearing on this ZTA for Tuesday, May 12, at 7:30 pm in Rockville.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION:**

*Whereas* the Opposition in Special Exception case S-2863 provided substantial evidence that large gasoline stations can result in danger to the public health of those who live, play, work, or are educated nearby;

*Whereas* the Board of Appeals adopted the Hearing Examiner's finding in S-2863 that the fumes resulting from this proposed mega gas station would be a nuisance and that potential health impacts would be created, and that "the proposed use ... [would] adversely affect the health, safety, and general welfare of residents, visitors, or workers in the area...." (pp. 3-4);

*Whereas* large gas stations are categorically incompatible with sensitive land uses such as schools, hospitals, and residences; and

*Whereas* the addition of "the lot line of any land with a dwelling unit" (residential property) to the list of sensitive uses is a common-sense addition to the current regulations because individuals who are protected for part of their day should also be protected on their home property; and

*Whereas* the expansion of the buffer from 300 to 500 feet provides a more appropriate level of protection and assurance to the surrounding neighborhood,

*Therefore*, the Montgomery County Civic Federation supports Zoning Text Amendment 15-07 and urges the Council to vote in full support of this legislation as drafted.

## **The Birth of the Montgomery County Civic Federation**

### **by Charles Wolff, Past MCCF Historian**

By the 1920s, the rapid growth of Washington's suburban bedroom communities had created dozens of locally-focused civic groups. But a single event in 1925 galvanized the inner suburbs and led to the urgent birth of the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) to focus on broader issues.

This story involves the dominant Washington newspaper of the day, The Evening Star, and a landowner from a famous family who was a major figure in Montgomery County and the State. Many civic groups near Friendship Heights, Bethesda, and Silver Spring sprang into action because of a secretive deal that gave a private company the power of eminent domain (i. e., the right to seize large amounts of land of its own choosing and pay for it later).

This report is based on my research at the Library of Congress. It is preceded by some personal comments on the 1920's. Square brackets enclose references to The Evening Star newspaper.

----- The Times -----

There was a great lifting of spirits after the end of World War I, whose demoralizing trench warfare was prolonged and especially deadly. Optimism and investment soared, especially in the stock market, which came to resemble a casino. The Dow Jones Industrial Average nearly quadrupled from 1920 until the 1929 crash.

It was appropriately called "The Roaring Twenties". President Coolidge famously answered, "The business of America is business". In such an atmosphere, proposals to build something were greeted with a presumption that whatever it was, it was probably a good thing.

Socially, the 1920's saw young adults further abandoning Victorian customs. In this respect the decade was a short-lived, mini-prelude to the more consequential 1960's. Youthful exploration of freedom spurred one of the most energy-intensive dances, the Charleston, whose female participants were called "flappers". Not everyone was pleased.

In more traditional circles, "Women's Leagues" were a big part of civic activity. They financed ongoing charity programs for people in severe need and broadly advocated for community betterment. Their work was frequently reported in Washington's citywide newspapers---an attention that we would covet in vain today. Many neighborhood civic associations also existed. Often they were created by the developer of a housing tract to use as a bragging point when selling the houses.

In sum, the times were optimistic and economically vigorous, except on the farms. It was harder to prevent someone's flawed idea of "progress" than it is today. In 1925 Montgomery County had no zoning laws or Planning Board. Unwelcome proposals were addressed in far-off Baltimore or Annapolis, or just tolerated.

----- The Belt Line -----

In Virginia, a new company had managed to extract a tremendous benefit from the Corporation Commission of Virginia while remaining completely out of public view. They obtained the right of eminent domain to lay out a right-of-way for a freight railroad called "The Belt Line". It would start north from Alexandria then cross the Potomac River south of Glen Echo near the D. C. border. It would then proceed through Maryland inside today's Capital Beltway to surround 2/3 of the District of Columbia.

The "Washington and Loughborough Belt Line and Terminal Co." had no timid plan. They wanted nothing less than to change the Washington area's overwhelming dependence on the federal government. They hoped to make this region a "national transportation center and a self-sustaining commercial city" that could survive even without the existing federal activities [19 Jul 1925, p. 6]. The initial node of activity in Maryland was to be located roughly between the Potomac River and River Road within one mile of the D. C. boundary.

Specific goals for this location were to:

- 1) Build a new rail bridge over the Potomac south of Glen Echo in Maryland.
- 2) Relieve alleged rail congestion with a huge switching yard near the Potomac and a new bypass of D. C.
- 3) Create a commercial center with warehouses, freight depots, and refrigeration plants.
- 4) Vigorously induce "light manufacturing plants and other industrial projects to locate there".

The freight line in Maryland would pass near Bradley Hills, Somerset, and between Chevy Chase and Kensington. Then it would run by Silver Spring (between Forest Glen and Woodside) and into Takoma Park and Prince Georges County. The entire route hugged close to the D. C. line but never inside because D. C. zoning banned its uses.

-----Belt Line issues-----

The main issue, of course, was that Maryland suburbs close to Washington were then residential with almost no commercial activity. Quiet bedroom communities were horrified at the thought of frequent freight trains rumbling by and feared their property values would plummet. The Belt Line company argued that its line would not "tend in any way to destroy or harm outlying residential property" [26 Jul 1925, p. 16]. The company added that they were the largest landowner (2000 acres) along the affected route and most of their land was slated for fine residential development. Why would they degrade their own property?

There were other issues. Was there really a rail congestion problem in Washington that needed solving? The Pennsylvania and B & O railroads would later say that there was no current or foreseeable need. Also, many houses and land parcels would have to be condemned because a rail line could not make sharp turns around obstacles. Finally, did citizens want to convert the suburbs to a more commercial or industrial character? Additional development was anticipated along the line in Virginia and Maryland after the full belt line was completed.

# INDUSTRIAL CITY IN SUBURBS SEEN

Backers of New Rail Line  
Believe Many Small Fac-  
tories May Come.

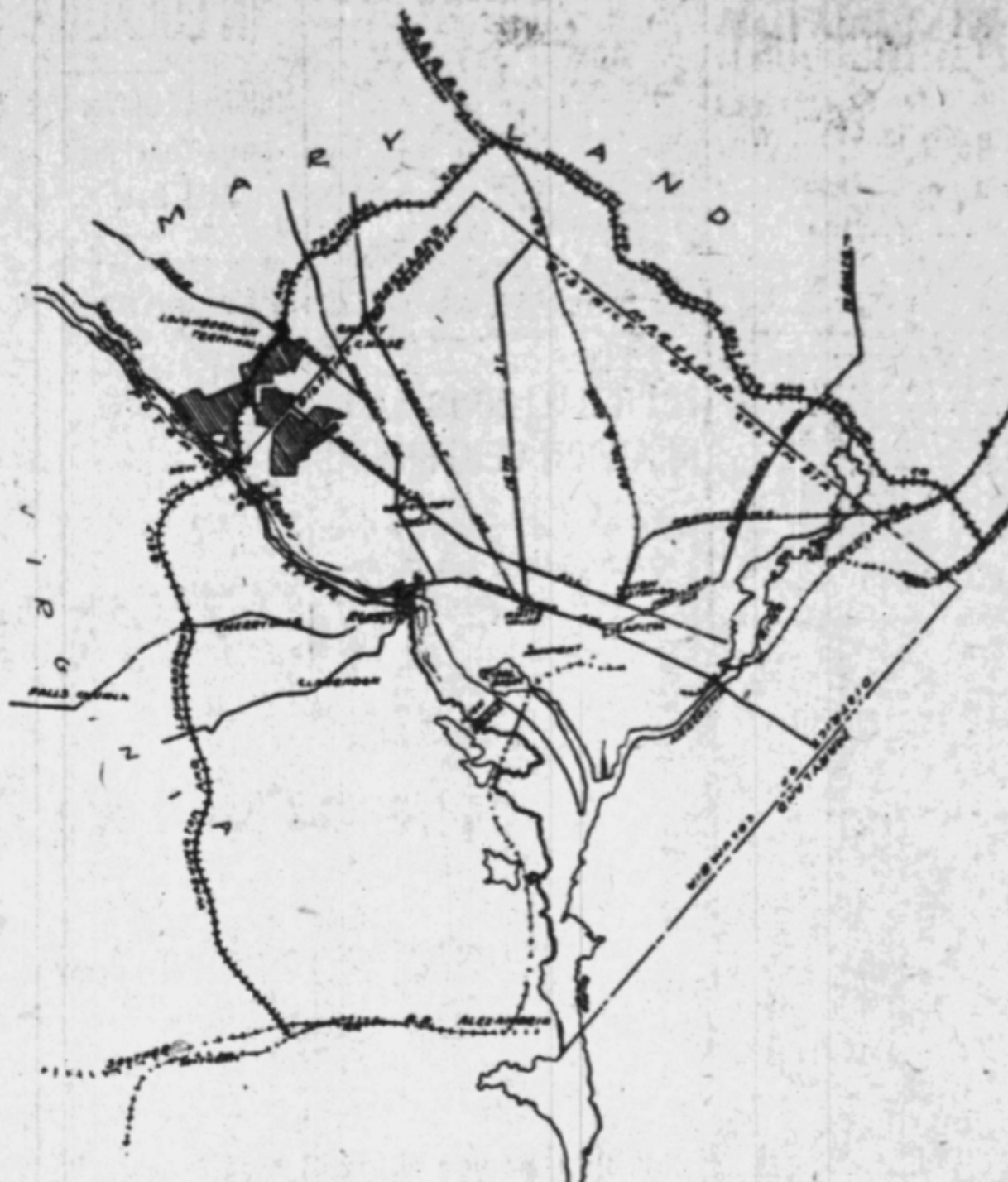
Eleven miles of railroad and a new railroad bridge across the Potomac will change the entire status of the National Capital from a community depending largely upon Government activities to a national transportation center and a self-sustaining commercial city, if the hope of those interested in the new branch line and bridge to be built from Cameron yards in Alexandria, Va., to the Dalecarlia reservoir section of Washington by the new Washington and Loughborough Belt Line and Terminal Co. come to pass.

While it is not the intention of those back of this ambitious project to advocate Washington as a smoke-begrimed factory and manufacturing center, they feel that the vision of the late Allan E. Walker of the National Capital as a self-sustaining community with many light manufacturing houses and gateway of railroad transportation to the South can be effected in a manner that will in no way mar the development of the city into the most beautiful capital in the world.

## Lone Bridge at Present.

While many persons in the city have long held this view, little has been done toward the realization of this aim until the announcement yesterday by Albert W. Walker, who has taken up his father's project, that the company with which he is associated will eliminate a circuitous 40-mile freight route around Washington, through tunnels and congested freight yards, by an 11-mile railroad from Cameron yards, skirting Clarendon, Ballston, Cherrydale and crossing the Potomac just above the Dalecarlia reservoir, continuing parallel to the Baltimore and Ohio tracks and possibly joining them. At Loughborough, a tract just outside the District Line at Massachusetts avenue extended, will be erected warehouses, freight depots,

Map Showing Route of Proposed Belt Railway and Terminals.



-----Secretive Process-----

Permission for the Belt Line was a done deal in Virginia when its citizens eventually heard of it. Later, the Washington Chamber of Commerce would be told "how the project was railroaded through the Corporation Commission of Virginia and left citizens of the latter state no redress except an appeal to a body of a sister state" [2 Sep 1925, page 1].

The audacious plan came to light on 17 Jul 1925 when the Evening Star reported that the company had petitioned the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) for permission to exercise its charter rights as granted by Virginia. Would interstate reciprocity encourage Maryland to ratify the Belt Line's right of eminent domain?

The precedent of the Virginia Corporation Commission was not encouraging. Virginia had approved the belt line quietly, even though they must have known the populace would be angry when finally aware. [ "Virginians Join Fight on Belt Line", 22 Aug 1925, p. 2]

The same secretive rush job seemed set up for Maryland. Our PSC had scheduled a public hearing (and maybe immediate approval of the project) only six days after their perfunctory notice in the Montgomery Advocate (Rockville). That notice was the very first time the public learned that this freight line around Washington had been proposed. [23 Jul 1925, p. 1]

People back then knew they had a lot to fear. In their not-too-distant past, railroads could seize land from mid-continent to the Pacific Ocean. They had seen belt lines built around a several eastern cities. Montgomery County residents knew they would need widespread protests and need some powerful or very influential supporters. Fortunately, two remarkably well located individuals stood up and took action.

To be concluded next month:

-----MAJOR SUPPORTERS-----

-----MASS MEETINGS-----

-----CIVIC GROUPS UNITE-----

-----MFFC OFFICERS & EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS-----

## Announcing the MCCF 2015 Annual Awards

**The Sentinel Award** is sponsored by the Montgomery Sentinel newspaper and awarded to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level. Our 2015 awardee, nominated by Danila Sheveiko, is **Friends of Ten Mile Creek & Little Seneca Reservoir**. Danila's nomination remarks follow:

To the guardians of Ten Mile Creek watershed – forests, farms and rare geology that provide clean drinking water to Little Seneca Reservoir – emergency drinking water supply for the region's 4.3 million people.

Residents of the D.C. metropolitan area should not take their drinking water for granted – both the region's sole source and the only proximal emergency backup supply are under long-term threat by short-term commercial interests. Our main source for drinking water – the scenic



Potomac River winding its way down from the Appalachian Mountains – is threatened by hydraulic fracturing for natural gas. [Efforts to frack the river's upper reaches](#) – the vast George Washington National Forest – got a major boost when the [Cove Point gas export facility received a green light](#) from Maryland courts. Our only emergency drinking water supply is Little Seneca Reservoir, and the fate of Ten Mile Creek – its last pristine source and Montgomery County's sole remaining biological benchmark stream – is still undecided. The creek's health is weighed against the interests of three powerful developers hungry to replace Clarksburg's farmland and woodland around the County's bucolic Agricultural Reserve with massive commercial and residential projects that will require sewer extensions and pumping stations to run across and along the creek. Undermining DC's emergency drinking water supply is no laughing matter – our second, and last, option is the Randolph Jennings Reservoir in West Virginia – a nail-biting nine days away in case of emergency. Little Seneca has so far been used only in times of severe drought, but the 4.5 billion gallons it stores could also be a measure of last resort to dilute Potomac's flow in case of fracking chemicals or other industrial accidents like [last year's chemical spill](#) that gripped 300,000 West Virginians in fear of their drinking water.

[Friends of Ten Mile Creek & Little Seneca Reservoir](#) was established under the auspices of the Montgomery Countryside Alliance and strives to follow the path to the creek's protection set forth by the historic Ten Mile Creek Coalition and the County Council. The organization is currently focused on developing alternative sewer extension plans that would be less of a threat and detriment to the creek's benthic health and the region's drinking water supply and security.

**The Wayne Goldstein Award** (formerly known as the Gazette Award) recognizes and honors an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County. This year we will honor **Save Our Seminary at Forest Glen (SOS)** nominated by Harriet Quinn for their 25 years of perseverance and success at saving this national treasure from neglect, vandalism, and demolition.

### *History of the Campus*

The site that is now the National Park Seminary Historic District was originally a wooded glen and tobacco plantation. It was developed in 1887 as a resort hotel designed by the noted Washington architect T. F. Schneider and known as Ye Forest Inne.

When the hotel proved to be unsuccessful, John and Vesta Cassedy rented and later purchased the property to create, in 1894, National Park Seminary, a finishing school for young women. The Cassedys believed that art and culture should be integral to the new school's curriculum and they used architecture, landscaping, sculpture, painting, and stained glass to create a uniquely beautiful educational environment.

The Seminary was purchased in 1916 by Dr. James E. Ament, who expanded the campus, added and enlarged buildings, created a network of walkways to connect and unify the campus, and, in 1927, built Ament Hall with its imposing grand ballroom. Dr. Roy Tasco Davis



bought the school in 1937 and, when the Great Depression caused a sharp decline in students, he introduced a business-oriented curriculum and renamed the school National Park College.

Following the outbreak of World War II, Dr. Davis was required by the War Powers Act to sell the Seminary to the U. S. Army. The Seminary became an annex to the Walter Reed Army Hospital and it served as a rehabilitation and convalescent center for soldiers wounded in World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Viet Nam War. After patient care was discontinued at the Seminary, the property continued to be used for medical research, military housing, and administrative purposes. Over the years, the buildings and grounds declined from inadequate maintenance, the army tore down or altered several Seminary buildings, and painted or covered over much of the decorative woodwork that graced the original interiors. When army officials began to discuss tearing down more of the historic buildings to make room for modern structures, the Maryland Historic Trust sought to protect the most historic part of the site by securing its listing in 1972 on the National Register of Historic Places as the National Park Seminary Historic District.

### *Save Our Seminary Formed*

Founded in 1988 and incorporated in 1989 by a group of local volunteers and preservationists, SOS was established to combat the neglect of the unique, beautiful and historic buildings and landscape of the National Park Seminary in Silver Spring. Wayne Goldstein, whose passion for historic preservation has left a wonderful legacy for Montgomery County, offered his advice and assistance to the volunteers of SOS about the steps that needed to be taken to save the site.

As a result of the efforts of SOS and its supporters, the army decided in 2001 that the historic district and an adjacent tract were excess to its needs. In October 2004, the excess property was transferred through Montgomery County to a partnership of The Alexander Company, a development company with an excellent record of adapting historic properties to new uses, and EYA. It was this transfer agreement that made the rebirth and renewal of the site possible. The historic buildings have been saved and the Seminary has been transformed into a unique residential community. A permanent preservation easement protects the historic district and assures public access to it. The site is now listed in the National Trust of Historic Places by the US Department of Interior for its architectural significance and its role in women's education and the history of U.S. Army medicine.

SOS volunteers created the organization that educated the public and brought attention to this nearly forgotten gem. They conduct monthly tours and have published a book to share the story and bring life to the campus history. Enchanted Forest Glen is the award-winning photographic history of the National Park Seminary and the successful effort to save it from demolition by neglect. Throughout the years, with their passion and perseverance, SOS has advocated on behalf of the site's significant past, dealt with daily on-site maintenance, assisted throughout the rehabilitation by storing and cataloguing artifacts and sculpture, supplied historic photos to aid in the restoration of historic buildings and raised funds for professional

conservation. More information on SOS and the history of the campus can be found at [www.saveourseminary.org](http://www.saveourseminary.org)

SOS now has about 300 members, including historic preservationists, Seminary alumnae, local residents, and civic leaders. It is directed and managed by a volunteer board of directors. Its mission is:

- Preserving, protecting, and restoring the buildings, structures, objects, and landscape of the Seminary and its surroundings.
- Communicating the Seminary's history, beauty, and unique character through research, documentation, interpretation, instruction, and promotion to increase public awareness and support.
- Guiding the Seminary's future by determining its appropriate use and treatment and ensuring public support and access.

We are sure that Wayne Goldstein would be delighted to see this organization honored with the award that bears his name.

**The Star Cup** is awarded to the Federation delegate or committee performing the most outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County. This year we once again honor the **Planning and Land Use Committee**. For years, the "PLU" was chaired most capably by Jim Humphrey, and we wanted very much to honor him. But Jim has retired and moved to Venice, Florida, and he swears that not even the Star Cup will induce him to return north. In his absence, the PLU has been co-chaired by Virginia Sheard and Harriet Quinn, and it has made the transition very well. Over the last several years, members of the PLU Committee have faithfully attended countless meetings, listened to and reported on the County's zoning rewrite process, and diligently kept us informed on this very complex but important process. We thank them for their continued exemplary service.

**Special Youth Civic Achievement Award.** This award is not listed in the MCCF Bylaws. On rare occasions the Civic Federation presents the Special Youth Achievement Award, so rare in fact that this is only the second time in our 90-year history that it has been awarded. This year the **Young Activists Club** (YAC) has been nominated by our President, Paula Bienenfeld, to receive this honor, an award richly deserved.

The first objective of the Piney Branch Young Activists Club (the original name) was to ban the use of disposable foam polystyrene trays in the school cafeteria at Piney Branch Elementary School (PBES). What is polystyrene and why did the children seek to ban it? We know it by its commercial name, "Styrofoam", and we see it used most often in beverage cups and food take-away containers. Generically, polystyrene is a petroleum-based plastic made from the styrene monomer. What is so bad about polystyrene?

According to the Earth Research Foundation, "A 1986 EPA report on solid waste named the polystyrene manufacturing process as the 5th largest creator of hazardous waste. The National Bureau of Standards Center for Fire Research identified 57 chemical byproducts

released during the combustion of polystyrene foam. The process of making polystyrene pollutes the air and creates large amounts of liquid and solid waste.”

In their push to replace polystyrene trays with reusable, washable plastic trays, the YAC did their research. They researched the cost of dishwashers and found that disposable polystyrene trays cost Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), and we taxpayers, thousands of dollars a year at PBES alone. Based on the six cases a week used, they calculated that the County spends \$3,497 to supply PBES with disposable trays and another \$1,522 to provide the school with disposable plastic cutlery each year.

While their initial objective was to ban polystyrene trays in their own school cafeteria, they did not stop there. As students graduated from PBES and moved into middle school, the group changed its name to the simpler “Young Activists Club” (YAC). Through hard work, perseverance and learned understanding of the inner workings of the Board of Education, and the Takoma Park and County governments, this past year the YAC has had three remarkable successes.

First, after years of YAC advocacy, MCPS agreed to end the use of polystyrene trays in cafeterias and instead, use paper trays. The YAC continues to push MCPS to move to reusable trays and dishwashers rather than disposal paper trays, so the battle is not quite won.

Second, as a result of their persistence, on November 10, 2014, the Takoma Park City Council passed the “Young Activist Act of 2014”. This law - Ordinance 2014-62 - prevents food service facilities in the City of Takoma Park from using polystyrene packaging or foodservice wares when providing foods for on-site or take-away consumption. It also prevents the City of Takoma Park from purchasing these materials nor any City-sponsored event from using them. With that vote, Takoma Park joined Washington, D.C., Seattle, New York City, Portland, OR, Taiwan, and other municipalities in banning this harmful substance.

Third! Not to be outdone, Bill 41-14 sponsored by Councilmembers Leventhal and Riemer was introduced before the Montgomery County Council in September, 2014. On October 14 members of the YAC testified before the Council in support of Bill 41-14, and the bill was passed by all eight voting councilmembers on January 20, 2015.

[ leave space for photo and caption: “Members of the Young Activists Club and parent club co-leaders Brenda and Nadine with Council Council members Nancy Floreen, Roger Berliner, and Hans Riemer at the Council hearing on the bill, October 14, 2014” ]

Bill 41-14 was signed into law on January 28, 2015. It restricts the use of foam polystyrene at food service businesses. Restaurants, supermarkets, food trucks, and institutional cafeterias including those operated by County departments and MCPS schools and other places that serve food are covered by the new law. The prohibition on the use and sale of expanded polystyrene food service products takes effect January 1, 2016. County facilities, agencies, departments, and contractors are required to use compostable or recyclable products starting

on January 1, 2016, although they're allowed to use up existing supplies until January 1, 2017. Businesses are not required to use recyclable or compostable products until January 1, 2017.

Paula goes on to say, "as civic activists ourselves we know the hundreds of hours that go into the push for maintaining and improving our quality of life here in Montgomery County. These students organized, and advocated to ban polystyrene. They testified before county and city government boards; created and circulated petitions; and wrote letters. Persistence is key and the YAC is incredibly persistent."

The Young Activist Club (YAC), based in Takoma Park, Maryland, began with just 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders at PBES, but now includes 6th and 7th graders from Takoma and Eastern Middle Schools. The Club meets once a week during the school year with parent volunteers helping out. To learn more about this amazingly dedicated group of kids, visit their website at [youngactivistclub.org](http://youngactivistclub.org)

At a time when alarm bells are ringing loudly about climate change and the future of our planet, the YAC is front and center in working towards a healthier world. This award, on June 5th comes at an opportune time; the November 2014 Takoma Park bill gave restaurants six months to replace their polystyrene with other materials. This June is the beginning of the non-polystyrene future for Takoma Park.

## **MCCF Supports Bicycling for Everyone** **by Peggy Dennis, Transportation Committee member**

The Montgomery County Civic Federation has been advocating for better and safer conditions and infrastructures for bicyclists since we held the first ever "Bicycling for Everyone Conference". Since then, Rockville and Bethesda have earned "Bronze" status as "Bicycle Friendly Communities" from the League of American Bicyclists. Have you noticed the "sharrows" and bike lane markings, the "way finding" signs showing bike routes and the distances to bikeable destinations, and the bike racks? Have you noticed the growing number of bicyclists of all ages? Bicycling, a great and legitimate mode of transportation, is taking off!

Spring is a wonderful time to try out a bike. Haven't been on a bike for years? Drive down to the Old Tavern at Great Falls (the end of MacArthur Blvd. west of Potomac Village) and borrow a bike to ride along the canal towpath. The "**C & O Canal Bike Loaner Program**" runs on weekends and holidays from the building that used to have the restrooms. There is no sign for the program, but chances are that you'll spot it by looking for the squadron of 175 bikes, all donated, for all ages and sizes of riders. As Rick Jackson, the coordinator of the program says, "you leave us your driver's license, your keys or your first born, and you can use our bikes for 2 hours, no charge." The program also has 24 volunteers who check over, repair and maintain the bikes. They'll even check out and repair your personal bike if you bring it with you. Rick's motto is, "Bikes go out, and smiles come back." This a perfect destination and activity for the whole family including grandkids. And grandparents.

If you would like a more thorough and in-depth introduction to bicycling, the Washington Area Bicyclists Association (WABA) runs classes that teach bicycling for transportation, fun, and fitness. They offer sessions for adults of all skill levels throughout the Washington area and Montgomery County. The classes are a great way to become more confident with riding on trails or city streets at an affordable price.

### **Upcoming Classes & Rides in Montgomery County**

Sun, May 3 City Cycling Class in Friendship Heights -- [More Info](#)

Wed, May 6 Choose Your Own Bethesda Ride in Bethesda -- [More Info](#)

Sat, May 9 City Cycling Class in Silver Spring -- [More Info](#)

Questions? Contact Garrett Hennigan with WABA Email: [garrett.hennigan@waba.org](mailto:garrett.hennigan@waba.org)

Phone: [202-518-0524](tel:202-518-0524) x210 Mobile: [202-656-3078](tel:202-656-3078)

## **Environment Committee Report**

**by Jean Cavanaugh, Environment Committee Co-Chair**

"Tree Montgomery" is a new program from Montgomery County Government to plant shade trees, increase canopy cover, and generally raise the awareness of the benefits of trees. Using funds from the Tree Canopy Law, this initiative is planting large shade trees throughout the County. On April 27, County Executive Leggett planted the first tree to launch the program at the Round Hill Apartments in Chevy Chase.

Testifying before the Planning Board on the Parks Department's 2017-2022 CIP, members of the Stormwater Partners Network advocated for an increase in the Parks Department's funds for its Stream Protection and Pollution Prevention programs to at least \$1.6 million for FY16 and beyond. The Parks Department has a long list of stormwater retrofit and restoration projects on County park lands. They also advocated to protect Legacy Open Space funds.

The County Executive has recommended suspending DOT's \$500K tree stump removal program from the FY2016 budget. There is a backlog of 8,500 stumps, with 3,000 additional trees taken down in County right of way annually, according to Council staff report. New trees or other flora cannot be planted where there are stumps.

On April 21, Councilmembers introduced Bill 18-15 authorizing the County to designate a "County Green Bank" to promote the investment in clean energy technologies. The public hearing will be on June 9.

## **In Memory of Al Geske**

**by Donna Savage, Kensington Heights C.A.**

Al Geske, longtime MCCF delegate from Rock Creek Palisades C.A. in Kensington, passed away on March 15, 2015, after a long illness.

Al toiled in pursuit of just outcomes and solutions, and he was dedicated and principled – and quite passionate – about issues that were important to him and that he perceived were important to the quality of life of others. He worked largely without seeking glory for himself, preferring to work by consensus and coalition, considering the betterment of life for individuals in the community as his reward. He often ruffled the feathers of elected officeholders, reminding them for whom they worked, and he did so in service of improving the quality of life for County residents.

Al was a kind and empathic person. We will miss him greatly.

## **Planning Board Hearing on Revised Subdivision Regulations Scheduled for April 30**

**by Harriet Quinn, Planning & Land Use Committee**

Communities are invited to give feedback on a comprehensive rewrite of Chapter 50 of the Montgomery County Code.

The changes being proposed to Chapter 50 of the Montgomery County Code that govern the subdivision of County land, will be the subject of a public hearing before the [Montgomery County Planning Board](#) Thursday, April 30 at 7:00 P.M. Board members previously discussed the draft on March 19 and approved its release with refinements for public comment. This draft represents the most comprehensive rewrite of the Subdivision Regulations in 50 years and was undertaken at the direction of the Montgomery County Council. The Subdivision Regulations include the application requirements for subdividing property, as well as requirements for adequate public facilities and improvements to lots based on the impact of subdivision.

At the April 30 meeting, they will receive public testimony about the newly revised Subdivision Regulations Amendment from interested stakeholders. Here is the web page with link to the current Planning Board Draft:

[http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/subdivision\\_regulations/](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/development/subdivision_regulations/)

## **Minutes of the April 13 Meeting**

**By Danila Sheveiko, Recording Secretary**

Call to Order: President Paula Bienenfeld called the 864st session to order at 7:47pm. Introductions followed.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Immediate Past President Carole Ann Barth announced the [Turning A New Leaf](#) conference: learn how to create landscapes that work with our natural resources; talks about native plants, maintenance, design, soils, hydrology & stormwater on Nov. 13th 2015.



- Karen Cordry, President, Kensington Heights Civic Association announced the [Board of Appeals denied Costco's bid](#) for a special zoning exception to build a mega gas station in Wheaton.
- Direct input on the new MCCF Web site should go to Virginia Sheard.
- Paula announced that the MCCF Annual Awards Banquet will be held on June 5th.

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

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jerry Garson reported net income of \$796.33 for the period and purchase of insurance.

PROGRAM: Ongoing discussion and revolution in transportation thinking and planning. Adrian Guan, senior technical programs specialist for [Intelligent Transportation Systems-America](#) (ITSA), and Vinn White, Senior Policy Advisory for Transportation Policy at US DOT's [Beyond Traffic Project](#) spoke about implications for planning and preparing for the future. In addition, Christof Spieler, a Houston, TX Metro board member, professional planner, and transit user offered insights via telephone into the data-driven transformation of Houston's transit services resulting in dramatically improved local bus service at [no additional cost to taxpayers](#). The US Highway Trust Fund is maintained via stopgap measures with Congress recently approving [the 33rd extension in six years](#).

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Environment: [Design proposal](#) for new Park & Planning and Department of Environmental Protection headquarters in Wheaton is proceeding ahead [despite concerns](#) of civic and environmental groups.
- Education: "Free Range" parents are [under investigation again](#). Search for new Board of Education Superintendent [continues](#).
- Planning & Land Use: The Montgomery County Planning Department invites community members and developers to review the [newly released draft](#) of Chapter 50 of the Montgomery County Code that governs the subdivision of land in the county. This draft represents the most comprehensive rewrite of the Subdivision Regulations in 50 years and was undertaken at the direction of the Montgomery County Council. It responds to the county's newly released Zoning Ordinance and seeks to clarify and streamline the review and approvals process for new subdivisions. Planning Board public hearing on April 30th.
- Public Safety: Comments from outside experts on the "Free Range" kids issue cite lack of legal authority for arrest and unsubstantiated charges of neglect.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:53pm.

## Minutes of the April 23 Executive Committee Meeting

### By Recording Secretary, Danila Sheveiko

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

CALL TO ORDER: Paula Bienenfeld, President, called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM. Present: Jerry Garson, Peggy Dennis, Jim Zepp, Carole Ann Barth, Danila Sheveiko, Virginia Sheard, Alan Bowser, Jean Cavanaugh, Louis Wilen, and Harriet Quinn.

ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA: Paula called for and received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda as amended to include Costco gas update and discussion of a potential regional civic summit.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for March 19th ExComm Meeting: Paula called for and received unanimous approval of the minutes as amended to correct upcoming meeting dates.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jerry Garson, Treasurer, reported net income of \$337.33 for the period.

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- Planning Board public hearing on the [Subdivision Regulations Rewrite](#) is scheduled for the April 30th evening session – sign up to testify [here](#).
- “Free Range” advocates Empower Kids Maryland are [urging parents](#) to let children walk home alone on May 9th.
- County [Transit Task Force](#) met yesterday to discuss expansion of taxing authority beyond County Charter limits. A public forum is scheduled for May 6th in Rockville.
- County Council [seeks candidates](#) for Planning Board – apply by 5pm, April 29th.

PROGRAMS: Paula introduced discussion of future programs.

**May:** Stormwater management issues including but not limited to the [Water Quality Protection Charge](#) (AKA-“rain tax”). Speakers: Lisa Feldt, Director, Department of Environmental Protection; Diane Cameron, Director, Audubon Naturalist Society Conservation Program; and Brent Bolin, Chesapeake Regional Director, Clean Water Action. Peggy Dennis has organized.

**June:** [Development Review Process, Part II](#) including the APFO – Harriet Quinn & Virginia Sheard organizing.

#### ISSUES DISCUSSED

- Annual Awards Banquet, report from the Awards Committee.
- MCCF Web site refresh and milestones – report and presentation from Member at Large Virginia Sheard and Utilities Committee Chair Louis Wilen.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Transportation:**

Jerry reported that a proposal for an independent transit authority is still coming with virtually unlimited taxing authority & eminent domain powers.

**Environment:**

DEP is launching the TreeMontgomery program – free shade trees for County residents – sign up for more information [here](#).

Tree stump removal funds have been eliminated from the DOT budget – the agency takes down about 3,000 trees per year and the backlog of stumps is now at 8,500.

[Climate Action Plan](#) to stop increasing Countywide greenhouse gas emissions by 2010 and achieve a 10% reduction every five years through 2050 has so far failed according to DEP report that documents significant increase in emissions since enactment of the [Climate Protection Bill 32-07](#) in 2008.

**Public Utilities:**

Chair Louis Wilen reported that the State Highway Administration head [resigned](#) following departure of Maryland Transit Administration chief earlier this week.

## OLD BUSINESS

- Costco gas update: Costco has until May 3rd to appeal the Board of Appeals decision to [unanimously reject](#) the special zoning exception. In the meantime, seven of the nine County Councilmembers are sponsoring [Zoning Text Amendment 15-07](#) to strengthen protections when siting very large gas stations adjacent to sensitive land uses – the public hearing is scheduled for 7:30pm May 12th – sign up to testify [here](#).
- Committee for Montgomery update: Paula reported next CfM breakfast on May 1st.
- Paula renewed call for authors for the Sentinel's weekly Federation Corner column.

## NEW BUSINESS

- Regional Civic Summit (Jim Zepp)
- Newsletter deadline and articles – Saturday, April 25th 6pm to Peggy Dennis at [mccfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:mccfnewsletter@gmail.com)
- Date and location of next two ExComm meetings:
  - o May 21st, 7:30pm, Mid-County Regional Services Center.
  - o June 18 - TBD.

ADJOURNMENT: Paula called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 10:09 PM.

Banquet Reservation Form

Reserve Your Tickets Now For The  
 Montgomery County Civic Federation's  
**2015 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET**

**Friday, June 5, 2015**

**Reception 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.**

**Dinner 7:00**

**Awards Presentations 8:15 - 9:30 p.m.**

**Tony Lin's Restaurant**

12015 Rockville Pike, Ste. G

Questions? Call Paula Bienenfeld 240-899-2335

Please print or cut off and fill in this stub. Mail with a **check** payable to the **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.** and mail to:

**Jerry Garson, MCCF Banquet, 8308 Raymond Lane, Potomac MD 20854-3729**

I/We will attend the Reception and Dinner, \$35 per person \_\_\_\_\_

Reception only from 6:00 – 7:00 \$15 per person \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print name(s) as you wish them to be on your name badge at the banquet)

Association or Organization (as applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Contact information \_\_\_\_\_  
(Telephone) (Email)