

March Program: An Open Discussion on Open Data | At the meeting, we'll explore the information made available to the public through the County government's Open Data Websites | [MORE](#)



THE DATA MONTGOMERY WEBSITE INCLUDES A VIDEO ON HOW TO CREATE A MAP OF CRIME IN YOUR OWN NEIGHBORHOOD

Action Alert! | Two bills proposed last month in the County Council would change zoning and regulatory requirements for operating commercial short-term—weekly, daily, even hourly—transient lodging (i.e., bed and breakfasts) in residential neighborhoods. | [MORE](#)

It's Sunshine Week! | That means it's time to shed a little light. MCCF continues to press for more transparency in our County and State governments. Paula Bienenfeld lists local events held this month that will shed light on their workings. *All citizens have the right to know what their governing bodies are doing.* | [MORE](#)

TO PRINT, USE "PRINT VERSION"

of note

Next MCF Meeting

Monday, March 14, 2016, 7:45 p.m.
@ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. "An Open Discussion on Montgomery County Open Data" and "Sunshine Week"

[AGENDA](#) • [VENUE](#) • [PROGRAM](#)

March's Community Hero

Peter Murtha is recognized posthumously for his work on climate change.

[READ PROFILE](#)

Meeting Minutes

February 8 Meeting [SEE MINUTES](#)
Executive Cmte. Meeting [FEBRUARY](#)

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now [SEE FORM](#)

MARCH 2016 • 2

Federation Meeting 874

Monday, March 14, 2016

7:45 p.m. | Lobby Level Auditorium
Executive Office Building
101 Monroe Street
Rockville, Maryland

AGENDA

- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:55 Approval of Minutes, February 8 Meeting
- 7:56 Treasurer's Report
- 7:57 **Community Hero:**
Peter Murtha
- 8:00 **Program: Open Data and Sunshine Week**
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 9:35 Old and New Business
- 9:45 Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

All monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public. They are held on the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:45 p.m., *usually* in the First Floor Auditorium of the County Council Office Building in Rockville. That space is currently being remodeled.

Please note the change of venue for the March meeting! Same time as usual (7:45 p.m.), but it will be held in the **Lobby Level Auditorium of the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.** Park for free after 6:00 p.m. under the EOB, two levels down; buzz security for entrance at both garage gate and elevator access.

The March agenda is at left. Meetings are usually adjourned between 9:45 and 10:15 p.m. |

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.**, is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. All MCCF meetings are open to the public.

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except 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 (Md.) Civic Federation."

Civic Federation News

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SUBMIT ARTICLES BY MARCH 25.

March 14 Program: An Open Discussion on Montgomery County Open Data

By Jim Zepp, First Vice President

IT'S MY DATA AND I'LL CRY IF I WANT TO

This month's program will examine the information made available to the public through the County government's Open Data Websites. This is an effort to make government decisions and operations more transparent to the public and increase the opportunities for citizens to easily access information without having to make special requests of agencies.

The greater availability of these data sets can also contribute to the development of computer or smart phone applications by individuals and other nongovernmental sources that can readily provide users with information on transit schedules; nearby locations of reported crime incidents, health or building code

violations, or public facilities; or the relationship between political contributions and government contracts/subsidies.

Government agencies regularly collect large amounts of information about their citizens, businesses, and pretty much anything else (e.g., land, water, air, animals, etc.) within their jurisdictional boundaries, in addition to their own operations, such as revenues received, expenditures made, and services and facilities provided or actions taken. Often, access to this information required filing official information requests with an agency and/or dealing with the obstacles of fees, delays, and manually wading through piles of individual records to obtain the desired data as well as the resources needed to analyze these data files.

To address this situation, as part of its Open Government Initiatives, the Obama Administration ordered in 2008 that all Federal agencies would increasingly publish many of their data sets online in electronic files that anyone could download and readily search and analyze for any purpose. This was modeled after efforts previously done by the D.C. government for several years.

Consequently, many state and local governments created their own Open Data Websites to make agency data collections and data query functions readily available for public use. On Dec. 4, 2012, the County Council passed the Montgomery County Open Data Act to join this nationwide movement towards greater transparency.

MORE

March Program, cont.

March 13–19 is National Sunshine Week, which is a national initiative to promote a dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information. Therefore, it is appropriate to review what information resources have been made available for County citizens after three years of work building the County's Open Data Websites.

This session will be more interactive than the usual MCCF program of presentations by a panel of speakers followed by a question-and-answer period. To start the conversation about what can be found on the various County Open Data Websites, here are some questions that will be posed during the meeting. The first attendee who can provide the correct answer to each and where it was found will receive a prize.

■ What is the net revenue expected in the Department of Liquor Control's FY16 Approved Budget?

■ What is the number of sewer overflow incidents occurring in Sligo Creek reported in 2013?

■ What is the most recent reported mean (average) travel time to work (commute time) and what is the most recent percentage of commuters who use mass transit in the County?

■ What is the annual cost for the County's school crossing guards? (Hint: This is not found in the MCPS budget information.)

■ In what year was the Mandatory Referral for the FDA White Oak facility submitted to MNCPPC?

The County's Open Data Websites can be found at:

■ **Data Montgomery**. This is a data portal that contains links to the following Websites for specific infor-

mation categories:

■ Data Catalog—individual data files that County agencies have made available for viewing and downloading;

■ BudgetMontgomery—interactive access to County operating and capital budget information;

■ SpendingMontgomery—interactive access to actual expenditures made by County agencies; and

■ CountyStat—performance data reported by County agencies to assess their operations.

■ **OpenDataMCPS**. Provides access to school, enrollment, budget, and student performance data from the County school system.

■ **MNCPPC Interactive Maps**. Various maps and search tools for finding information collected or created by the Maryland-National

MORE

March Program, cont.

Capital Park and Planning Commission-Montgomery County Division staff.

MCCF members are encouraged to think about what information they would like to know and how should this be made easily accessible in terms of maps, graphs, or charts; query tools for finding individual records or those matching specific characteristics (e.g., largest, most frequent, or dates); or downloadable files. Please take the time to explore what information the County has already provided and come to the meeting with any suggestions for additional data sets or possible improvements.

There may be additional guests attending or prizes awarded, so please attend and be prepared to join the discussion. ■

March Community Hero (Awarded Posthumously): Peter Murtha, for His Work on Climate Change

By Danila Sheveiko, Co-Recording Secretary

The Civic Federation is honored to posthumously recognize **Peter Murtha** as a Community Hero. A co-founder of **350MoCo**, Murtha led the ongoing effort to divest the County's pension funds from fossil fuel companies that drive climate change.

As of December 31, 2014, pension funds overseen by the Montgomery County Employee Retirement Plans (MCERS) have more than \$65,000,000 invested in oil and gas corporations like BP, Chevron, and Exxon Mobil, as well as mountain-top coal mining companies ArcelorMittal and Arch Coal. An analysis conducted for the Associated Press showed that pensions would have been better off had they divested from these

companies 10 years ago, with pension funds doing five percent better if fossil fuels had been excluded.

Peter Murtha's untimely passing two months ago shook the local divestment movement and underscored his instrumental contribution to 350MoCo's efforts. A graduate of Bucknell University and George Washington University law school, Murtha was an environmental attorney before he retired. He prosecuted environmental and conservation cases at DOJ's Environmental and Natural Resources Division and led EPA's Office of Criminal Enforcement, Training and Forensics. All this experience was invaluable to 350MoCo, where Peter helped forge a divestment coalition of local and

MORE

Community Hero, cont.

regional environmental and climate groups, interfaith and political organizations, and the County's public service union, **UFCW MCGEO Local 1994**.

Highlighting both the urgent need to act on climate and the expected financial benefits of fossil fuel divestment, Murtha also brought a message of personal responsibility for our common fate:

"We are all responsible in some measure for risking the hospitable world our children deserve to have, and therefore obligated to do all that we can to limit the harm done."

This moral sentiment is resonating in Montgomery County, where energy use and greenhouse gas emissions **continue to increase** and where, last year, the County's own mandate to decrease emissions 10



percent compared to 2005 levels was not achieved.

350MoCo is reaching out to County Councilmembers to discuss the divestment legislation Peter drafted last Fall and continues to build a network of grassroots supporters and allied groups to bring pressure to bear on the Council once any divestment legislation is introduced.

As warnings from climate scientists grow more **apocalyptic** every year, it is incumbent upon us to support a comprehensive strategy to battle climate change—including **alternative energy generation, energy efficiency, a carbon tax**, and fossil fuel divestment—and heed the message and example of Peter Murtha.

350MoCo's petition asking our local elected representatives to divest the MCERS from fossil fuel companies can be accessed and signed **here**. ■

Action Alert! County Council Proposes Changes to Zoning Requirements For Commercial Short-Term Transient Lodging Facilities in Residential Zones

By Harriet Quinn, Planning and Land Use Committee

At the February MCCF meeting, we discussed two bills proposed in February by County Councilmembers Riemer and Rice that would drastically change the zoning regulations and standards for permitting commercial short-term (hourly, daily, weekly) lodging rentals in residential neighborhoods. The legislative proposals are **Zoning Text Amendment 16-03, Land Use, Bed and Breakfast**, and **Bill 2-16, Transient Housing Licensing and Registration**.

On February 2, County Councilmember Hans Riemer introduced two bills to change zoning and regulatory standards for operating commercial short-term transient lodging

hotels in residential neighborhoods.

Most neighborhoods are not aware of these stealth bills because usually significant changes to residential zones are brought up through the Planning Department and discussed with stakeholders. Unfortunately, no outreach to communities was done by the Councilmembers proposing this, and the public hearing is scheduled to take place on March 8, a month after introduction, with no discussion. None of the surrounding jurisdictions have proposed such drastic changes to their zoning ordinances with regard to commercial short-term lodging in residential neighborhoods. In fact, Montgomery County already has the most permissive standards.

Currently short-term lodging

facilities (Bed and Breakfast) are already permitted in larger lot residential zones if the application meets health, safety and parking standards and obtains licensing. They are also allowed in smaller lot zones (R-60/R-90) after public notice and hearing examiner review. A Bed and Breakfast is currently defined in the code as “a detached house that is owner-occupied with no more than five guest rooms for rent and customarily serves breakfasts to guests.”

The two bills proposed would not only remove the public notice and process for the R-60 and R-90 zones, but would also remove current standards for: lot size, parking, inspections, number of guests, proximity to other similar uses, requirement

MORE

Transient Lodging, cont.

that the owner occupy the house, as well as other licensing standards. The bills also propose to expand the use to all residential zones, including townhouses, condominiums, and apartments.

In summary, it would be easier to obtain approval for a house to become a commercial transient lodging hotel in a residential neighborhood than it would be to obtain approval for an accessory apartment. Accessory apartment approvals require public notice, have a hearing examiner process, as well as standards for inspections and parking, and number of similar uses in the surrounding area.

By removing current standards for commercial short-term lodging, this legislation provides more of an incentive to rent out accessory



apartments on a short-term basis (less than 30 days) than to rent to tenants long-term. Replacing accessory apartments with daily rentals is contrary to the County’s affordable

housing goals.

It was not long ago that the entire Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance was completely rewritten during a four-year process that involved significant input from various communities as well as a diverse Countywide Advisory Panel that included various community representatives. The MCCF and many neighborhood associations around the County participated and provided input in that review process.

During the rewrite process, all of the “lodging” categories were reviewed, considered, and decided upon. These included hotel, motel, and bed and breakfast. The County Council adopted this new Ordinance and it became effective less than 16 months ago. It is unfortunate that apparently some have decided to disregard the public and try to overturn

MORE

Transient Lodging, cont.

what was already decided less than two years ago during an extensive public outreach and review process.

RESOLUTION APPROVED FEB. 8

The following resolution was approved unanimously by the MCCF at the February 8 General Meeting.

Whereas the entire Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance was recently comprehensively reviewed and rewritten over a four-year period that culminated in adoption of a new Zoning Ordinance that was effective October 30, 2014, and

Whereas members of the community, a stakeholders group known as the Zoning Advisory Panel, and members of the Montgomery County Civic Federation followed and participated in the comprehensive four-year process of the Zoning Code

Rewrite and,

Whereas the Zoning Code Rewrite discussions of the Planning Board and County Council included all lodging categories including short-term lodging, and

Whereas operating a Bed and Breakfast in residential zones R-60, R-90, R-200, RE-1, RE-2C, RE-2 is already a legal use and Montgomery County has a regulatory process in place for approval,

Therefore be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation opposes efforts to overturn decisions that were already made by the full Council with regard to short term lodging in residential neighborhoods, and

Therefore be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation opposes the lack of notice and lack of stakeholder discussion regarding proposed Zoning Text

Amendment 16-03 and Bill 2-16, Transient Lodging, which would change the locations, process, and standards for approval of short term transient lodging in residential neighborhoods, and

Therefore be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation opposes Zoning Text Amendment 16-03 and Bill 2-16.

PUBLIC HEARING, MORE INFO

A public hearing on the proposed bills is scheduled for March 8 at 7:30 p.m. If you would like to speak at the hearing, you may sign up by calling 240.777.7803 or [online](#).

You may also [send an email to the County Council](#).

Here are links to the two bills:

■ [Bill 2-16, Transient Housing—Licensing and Registration](#).

■ [Zoning Text Amendment 16-03, Land Use—Bed and Breakfast](#). ■

It's Sunshine Week! Time to Shed a Little Light on Our Governments

By Paula Bienenfeld, President

The Civic Federation has been pushing for more transparency in our County and State government for many years now, including working with the [Sunlight Foundation](#). We were instrumental in moving the County to set up the Open Data websites, and pushing for a checkbook online, similar to those in large places like [New York City](#) and small areas like [Goochland County, Virginia](#).

How does our County effort match up? Jim Zepp's article on Open Data has links ([page 4](#)) so you can see for yourself.

As the next step in County government transparency, we would like to see our County Council members' calendars as well, but so far have been told, by some council members, "No." They have refused to put their

calendars online so the public can see with whom they have been meeting. We would appreciate it if, next time you see your County Council representative, you tell them the public wants their calendars online.

[Sunshine Week](#) is March 13–19 and there are events all over town and all over the country. For example, on March 11 at the Newseum, the 2016 National Freedom of Information Day Conference will be held at the First Amendment Center, Newseum Institute, in Washington. The daylong conference, which begins at 8 a.m., will include remarks from U.S. Rep. Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah) and OGIS Director James Holzer, as well as a panel on ASNE's Sunshine Week project, the American Library Association's James Madison Award, and induction of a new class into the

FOIA Hall of Fame. The event is free, but registration is required.

On March 14, the U.S. Department of Justice will present agency professionals with Sunshine Week FOIA Awards and celebrate the 50th anniversary of FOIA during a public ceremony from 10 a.m. to noon at the Robert F. Kennedy Building in Washington. The keynote speaker is Acting Associate Attorney General Stuart Delery, DOJ Chief FOIA Officer.

Also on March 14, the Office of Government Information Services, National Archives, and Records Administration in Washington will hold a special Sunshine Week event in the McGowan Theater at the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington from 1–4:30 p.m. Archivist of the United

Sunshine Week, cont.

States David Ferriero and others will discuss law, policy, and tools for government transparency. For more information, go to the [OGIS blog](#).

And, on the same day, the National Press Club (NPC) Freedom of Information Committee will present foreign journalists and policy experts who will discuss government transparency laws around the world at an event from 6:30–8 p.m. at the NPC in Washington. The event costs \$5 for NPC members and \$10 for non-members. More information about the program and ticket purchases can be found on the [NPC website](#).

Other events later that week include an FOIA Experts Panel Discussion at the National Press Club, from 6:30–8pm on March 16, and all-day public workshops on March 16–17, sponsored by the Census Bureau, de-

scribing its Open Government Plan.

Perhaps of the most interest, but being held in New Mexico, the New Mexico State University Library is holding an event, *Sunshine in the Shade: Uncovering Outside Influence on Local Elections*, on March 23.

To see all the events celebrating #opengov, go to the [Sunshine Week website](#).

website.

We are proud that in Montgomery County—and, seemingly, the entire state of Maryland—the Civic Federation is the only public organization that is holding an event celebrating Sunshine Week. As Justice Louis Brandeis said, “Sunlight is said to be the best of disinfectants.” ■



Minutes of the February 8, 2016, Meeting #873

By *Danila Sheveiko, Co-Recording Secretary*

Call to Order: President Paula Bienenfeld called the 873rd session to order at 7:50 p.m. Introductions followed.

Agenda: It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Treasurer Jerry Garson reported that the County Council [briefing on snow response](#) is postponed until March 8, due to snow in the forecast.

■ Co-Recording Secretary Danila Sheveiko said the Council is to appropriate [more CIP funds](#) for Wheaton Town Center project on Feb. 9 at 1:30 p.m.

■ Former President Cary Lamari asked MCCF to take a position on [Department of Liquor Control reform](#).

■ Environment Committee Co-Chair Carole Ann Barth will run [rain garden workshops](#) in Greenbelt on Feb. 27 and March 19.

■ 1st Vice President Jim Zepp reported on the snow removal survey.

■ President Paula Bienenfeld reported on last week’s *Budgetpalooza!* sponsored by MCCF together with the [Taxpayers League](#) and the [Parents’ Coalition of Montgomery County](#). The event uncovered many interesting data patterns, like the fact that 42% of MCPS budget is overhead.

■ National [Sunshine Week](#) is March 13–19 in celebration of access to public information and what it

means for you and your community.

Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the January meeting as they appeared in the newsletter. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report: Jerry Garson reported net expenditures over income of \$92.40 for the period.

PROGRAM

Local grassroots environmentalists who have successfully launched small-scale, practical initiatives that help protect our watersheds, preserve our trees, and beautify our streets.

■ Elaine Lamirande spoke on behalf of the [Woodmoor Green Tream](#),

February Minutes, cont.

a group of neighbors interested in greening the Woodmoor community in Four Corners (Silver Spring) by encouraging an environmentally friendly lifestyle that is easy on the wallet, family, and eyes.

■ Kathy Michels talked about the **American Elm Park Project**, an ambitious citizen-built rain garden and conservation landscape project in the neighborhood west of upper Sligo Creek Park.

■ Anne Vorce of the **Water Watch Dogs** explained how they developed a simple system for reporting water pollution and getting a quick response from County investigators.

■ Carole Ann Barth gave a presentation on Prince George's County composting initiatives. **Cheverly Backyard Composting** and **ECO City Farms** in Hyattsville promote back-



ANNE VORCE TELLS ATTENDEES AT THE FEBRUARY MEETING HOW 'WATER WATCH DOGS' REPORT WATER POLLUTION IN SLIGO CREEK. PHOTO BY JIM ZEPP.

yard composting as an easy, cost-effective way to divert residential organic waste from landfills and create healthy soils that can absorb more rainfall. Research shows that \$1 invested by taxpayers into composting programs returns \$14 in benefits. Montgomery County collects trash for only about 90,000 residents.

■ Geoffrey Wolfe spoke about conservation initiatives by the **Potomac District**, National Capital Area Council, Boy Scouts of America.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation

■ Committee Report in response to County Executive proposals for new ITA/BRT structures is completed.

Education

■ Maryland's interim state superintendent of schools, **Jack R. Smith**,

MORE

February Minutes, cont.

hired by Montgomery County Board of Education to lead MCPS.

Planning and Land Use

■ Upcoming new plans: **Westbard Sector Plan**, Greater Lyttonsville Plan, Bethesda Downtown Plan. The **Subdivision Regulations Rewrite** was introduced as **Subdivision Regulation Amendment 16-01**, public hearing scheduled for Feb. 23 at 1:30 p.m.; [sign up to testify here](#).

■ **Emergency Resolution:** The membership unanimously approved a resolution to oppose proposed **Zoning Text Amendment 16-03** and **Bill 2-16 Transient Housing-Licensing and Registration**, which would change the locations, process, and standards for approval of short-term (less than 30 days) transient lodging hotels in residential neighborhoods.

The resolution opposes the efforts to overturn decisions already made by the full Council with regard to short-term lodging in residential neighborhoods, as well as the lack of notice and lack of stakeholder discussion regarding these bills. Public hearing scheduled for March 8, 7:30 p.m.; to testify, [sign up here](#).

Environment

■ Delegate Steve Lafferty (D) introduced **House Bill 178** to strengthen rules for removal of roadside trees on State roads (cosponsored by Delegates Frush, Lam, Lierman, Robinson, and Washington).

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m. ■

Minutes of the February 18, 2016, MCCF Exec. Committee Meeting

By Danila Sheveiko, Co-Recording Secretary

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 7:48 p.m. Present were: Carole Ann Barth, Jacquie Bokow, Jean Cavanaugh, Jerry Garson, Harriet Quinn, Virginia Sheard, Danila Sheveiko, Sandy Vogelgesang, and Jim Zepp.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: Paula Bienenfeld called for and received unanimous approval of the

MORE

Feb. ExComm Mtg., cont.

proposed agenda.

Approval of Minutes for January ExComm Meeting: Paula Bienenfeld called for and received unanimous approval of the minutes.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson, Treasurer, reported net expenditures over income of \$57.40 for the period.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Sandy Vogelgesang, Public Relations Officer, reported that the Montgomery County GreenFest will take place on April 30 at 11:00 a.m. at the Takoma Park Community Center and will feature U.S. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, County Executive Ike Leggett, and Montgomery County Department of

Environmental Protection Director Lisa Feldt.

■ Jean Cavanaugh, Environment Co-Chair, reported that the County's **H₂O Summit**, a community-focused event on clean water, is back on Saturday, March 5, 10:00 a.m., at the Rockville Senior Center.

■ The Planning Board takes up **Memorandum of Agreement** between MTA and Montgomery Parks and Planning for the Purple Line at its **Thursday, Feb. 25, session**. The Planning Department staff recommends approval.

■ Jim Zepp, 1st Vice President, arranged a tour of **RITIS**, the Regional Integrated Transportation Information System, part of the **Center for Advanced Transportation Technology Laboratory** at the University of Maryland at College Park next Tuesday.

PROGRAMS

Paula introduced discussion of future programs.

■ **March:** **County OpenData resources** and **Sunshine Week**—Open government is good government.

■ **April:** County Operating and CIP Budgets.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

■ Event planning for this year's annual awards tentatively scheduled for May 5 at McGinty's in Silver Spring.

■ Discussion of Maryland General Assembly bills submitted for this year's session, planning for ExComm teleconference call to review.

■ MCCF newsletter layout feedback.

■ Snow removal survey: 80% of respondents thought the County should not wait for the snow to end

MORE

Feb. ExComm Mtg., cont.

before plowing non-emergency streets and instead begin to plow them after four- or five-inch accumulation. The majority of residents who called 311 were not satisfied with the response.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education

■ **Budgetpalooza!** was well-attended and produced interesting discoveries, like Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) running a 42% overhead.

Planning and Land Use

■ Public hearing for **Zoning Text Amendment 16-03** is on March 8th, 7:30pm – to testify, [sign up here](#). This ZTA would change the locations, process, and standards for

approval of short-term (less than 30 days) transient lodging hotels in residential neighborhoods. MCCF opposes the efforts to overturn decisions already made by the full Council with regard to short-term lodging in residential neighborhoods, as well as the lack of notice and lack of stakeholder discussion regarding this bill.

■ Councilmember Berliner supports reducing density for the new **Westbard Sector Plan**.

■ Planning Board to hear draft recommendations for “**update and refinement**” of the Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) procedures for the new **Subdivision Staging Policy** next Thursday, Feb. 25, Item No.3 on the agenda.

■ County Council to hold public hearing on **Subdivision Regulations Rewrite** draft February 23, 1:30 p.m.

Public Finance

■ County's General Obligation Bonds are at an all-time high and GO Bond debt service will grow by \$133 million/year from FY16 to FY22. This is on top of \$348 million in tax-supported debt service in FY16. Debt service is the County's second-highest operating expense after MCPS. The growth of GO Bond debt service has been more than double the rate of growth in general fund revenues. Dollars spent on debt service crowd out other operating budget expenditures.

■ According to latest **Office of Legislative Oversight report**, salaries for high-level managers employed by Montgomery County's executive branch are some of the highest in the nation, holding top spots for Directors of Procurement, Public Information, Housing and Community

MORE

Feb. ExComm Mtg., cont.

Affairs, Environmental Protection, Management and Budget, and Corrections; Director of Transportation has the second highest salary in the country after Los Angeles; and the remaining Directors are in the top five in their respective fields.

Transportation

■ MCPS transportation fuel costs have remained unchanged despite the major drop in oil prices.

■ Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) has **more than 3,000 leaks** in the Metro tunnels.

Environment

■ **House Bill 178**, State roadside tree removal bill, was introduced with support from Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

NEW BUSINESS

■ Newsletter deadline and articles by February 27 at 6 p.m. to Peggy Dennis at mccfnewsletter@gmail.com.

■ Date and location of next two ExComm meetings:

| **March 17** at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Regional Services Center.

| **April**—TBD.

Adjournment: Paula called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:58 p.m. ■

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Submit contributions for the next issue by *Sunday, March 27, 2016*.

Prepare each submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect, or text document; attach it to an e-mail; and send to Peggy Dennis, Co-Editor, at mccfnewsletter@gmail.com. Please send all address corrections to mcciviefed@gmail.com.

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