

March Program: Inspectors General—Government Oversight in Montgomery County

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Synthetic Turf Bills

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| Still no action for the Farm Road community | **P. 20**

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TO PRINT, USE **PRINT VERSION**

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, March 11, 2019, 7:45 p.m. @ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. "Inspectors General—Government Oversight in Montgomery County"

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Meeting Minutes

February Meeting #901 *Not available*
Executive Committee January

Meeting **P. 22**

It's time to get involved! MCCF needs a secretary (or two co-secretaries) to take meeting minutes. See Bailey.

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now

SEE FORM

Federation Meeting #902

Monday, March 11, 2019

7:45 p.m.

Lobby Level Auditorium

Executive Office Building

101 Monroe Street

Rockville, Maryland

AGENDA

- 7:00 Social Time for Members
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:55 Approval of Minutes, Jan. ExCom Meeting **P.22**
- 7:56 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 Program: Inspectors General in Mont. County **P.3**
- 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.

The March meeting will be held in the **Lobby Level Auditorium of the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.**

Walkers can enter by buzzing security at the door. You can park for free either in the lot at East Jefferson and Monroe Streets or in the lowest level of the EOB. Drive onto the ramp in the front of the building (ignore “permit parking only” sign), turn left at the second, lower level; use the intercom at the gate to the parking garage and at the door to the elevators to inform security you’re attending the MCCF Meeting. ■



The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.**, is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public (agenda and details at left).

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

civicednews AT montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, **SEE PAGE 23**

March Program: Inspectors General—Government Oversight in Montgomery County

By Jim Zepp, Immediate Past President

Government agencies have tremendous power. As we have seen with the Farm Road Community, they can deny owners their property rights and drive them from their homes and land. Individual public officials have access to millions that they can steal for themselves or direct to others. In the recent Peter Bang case, he was able to embezzle \$7 million over seven years without detection by the County.

Consequently, to expect performance and integrity from our County government requires multiple layers of accountability are essential—including audits, legislative oversight, and various appeal processes. Another key element is Inspector Generals. They can be

units of government that should be independent of political and administrative influence and have the technical knowledge and access to conduct investigations of agencies and officials.

The Office of the County Inspector General was established in 1997. A major problem is that a majority of the County's expenditures and public services are through independent agencies, which means that they are largely isolated from public scrutiny and accountability. For the last four years, the MCCF has advocated for the creation of Inspector Generals for the MNCPPC and WSSC. And to extend the County Inspector General's authority over the HOC and the Community College. The major remaining accountability issue is oversight for

the Public Schools that is the single largest expenditure for the County.

Inspector Generals are a major component in the MCCF's mission for improving government accountability and integrity. The MCCF has been generally successful in this quest. State Senator Ben Kramer has sponsored the legislation creating these offices.

The speakers for his month's program will be:

■ County Inspector General Edward L. Blansitt III;

■ MNCPPC Inspector General Renee M. Kenney; and

■ WSSC Inspector General Arthur A. Elkins, Jr.

They will discuss the current challenges for oversight and accountability and their offices' priorities. ■

Synthetic Turf Bills Introduced at the Maryland General Assembly

By Bailey Condrey, MCCF President

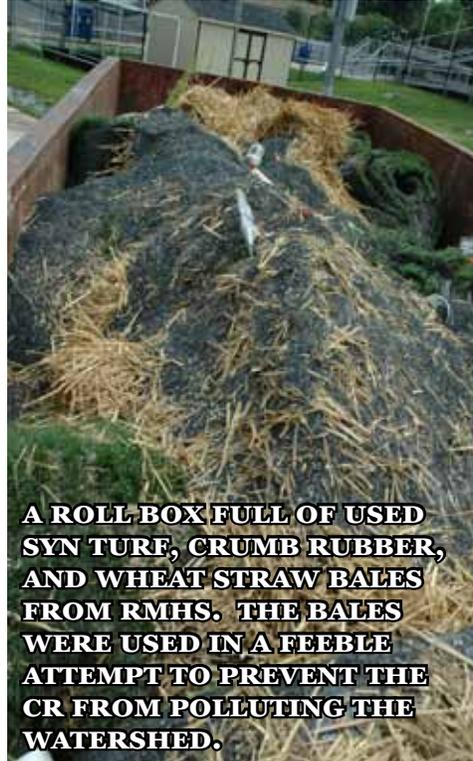
Following what may have been the most environmentally irresponsible replacement of a synthetic turf field in the history of Maryland at Richard Montgomery High School in Rockville in 2018, a number of legislative proposals have been introduced during the 2019 Maryland General Assembly to address the installation and disposal of synthetic turf.

Three bills address synthetic turf from the following perspectives:

■ **House Bill 246** – General Assembly – Fiscal Notes – Environmental Impact Statements;

■ **House Bill 1118** – Use of Public Funds – Playground and Athletic Field Surfaces – Authorizations, Preferences and Prohibitions.; and

■ **House Bill 1142** – Environ-



ment – Hazardous Materials – Disposal of Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill; and

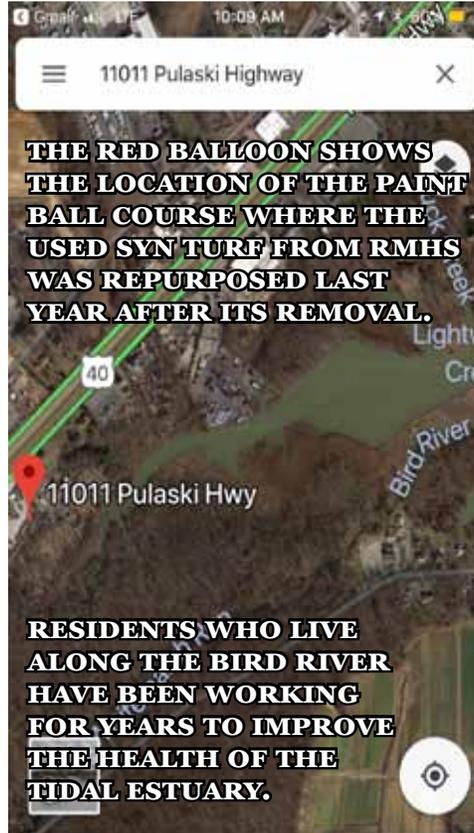
HOUSE BILL 246

HB 246 is an act for the purpose of requiring that a fiscal note for a bill include an environmental impact statement that indicates whether a bill may or will have an environmental impact and, if so, specifies the type and category of environmental impact; requiring the Department of Legislative Services to determine the type and category of environmental impact by completing a certain part of a certain form; and generally relating to environmental impacts in fiscal notes.

Synthetic Turf Bills, cont.

HOUSE BILL 1118

HB 1118 is an act for the purpose of authorizing certain funds under Program Open Space to be used for the maintenance and upkeep of certain grass athletic fields and drainage systems; authorizing a certain subdivision to request funds for the maintenance and upkeep of certain grass athletic fields and drainage systems as part of a certain annual program; establishing a preference for the use of certain natural surface materials in certain projects to construct playgrounds or athletic fields; prohibiting the use of State funds to finance any portion of a project to build a new or replace an existing playground or athletic field with a synthetic surface; defining a certain term; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to playground and



athletic field surfaces.

HOUSE BILL 1142

HB 1142 (see next two stories) is an act for the purpose of requiring a person to dispose of synthetic turf and turf infill only in certain facilities; prohibiting a person from incinerating synthetic turf and turf infill; requiring the Dept. of the Environment to establish a system for tracking the chain of custody of synthetic turf and turf infill; requiring the Department to publish the chain of custody on its website; requiring a person or controlled hazardous substance facility to dispose of synthetic turf and turf infill in a manner that prevents contamination to air, soil, or water; prohibiting the reuse of synthetic turf and turf infill unless it is processed and reused in a certain manner; defining certain terms; and generally relating to the disposal of syn turf and turf infill. ■

Ethylene, Synthetic Turf, and House Bill 1142 on 'Hazardous' Material Disposal

*By Bailey Condrey, MCCF President
House Bill 1142 – Environment –
Hazardous Materials – Disposal of
Synthetic Turf and Turf Infill*

Synthetic turf is a taxpayer rip-off. Synthetic turf harms both the environment and its users. Synthetic turf has been given a free pass by everyone in a position to at least regulate it responsibly. Now that the County and State are working to curb waste and reduce green house gas emissions, the policies ultimately adopted should pertain to everyone, including the government and the quasi-state organization, Montgomery County Public Schools—the organization that no one in government seems to control—and all of the private schools across the state where parents believe syn turf will turn their children into professional athletes.

The citizens of Montgomery County and the State of Maryland should not be expected to support or fund a product that is known to contribute handsomely to waste piles and have a significant GHG footprint.

Citizens concerned about the unbridled use of synthetic turf, its careless management, and recent haphazard disposal from Richard Montgomery High School went to the Maryland General Assembly on March 1st to inform state legislators of recent scientific research. They even got the scientist, Sarah-Jeanne Royer, Ph.D., who conducted the research and made the discovery to testify. The scientist conducts post doctoral research at the prestigious and world respected Scripps Institution of Oceanography. Dr. Royer informed the delegates on the

House Environment and Transportation Committee about how plastics breaking down in the environment off-gas both methane and ethylene. The off-gassing begins when plastics are exposed to sunlight. A synthetic turf field begins off-gassing methane and ethylene the moment it's laid out to cover the playing space. The off-gassing accelerates as the syn turf ages. Say what?

Dr. Royer's testimony before the committee is included in this edition of the *Civic Federation News* (see p. 8). One might think that such a revelation would spur an hour's worth of questions from state legislators. One might think that a room of progressive politicians would offer a modicum of engagement with the scientist. Not a single comment was

HB 1142, cont.

offered and no questions were asked of this woman, perhaps one of the world's most significant experts on the degradation of plastics and this pathway's contribution to GHGs.

A bunch of guys in suits, the paid lobbyists, were waiting to tell the committee how economic ruin would ensue for the tire industry, tire recyclers, syn turf installers, park and playground managers, etc., because the bill has the word "hazardous" in its title. Then the fairy tale that is syn turf became surreal with the talk of recycling, discounts for reusing crumb rubber infill on new fields, and the Synthetic Turf Council's guidelines for its members on how to properly handle, repurpose, and dispose of used syn turf. The suits were asked a number of direct questions and, remarkably, the guy with

the fewest answers was the CEO of the STC.

So the special interests that all get rich selling this *hazardous* product to unwitting consumers want to amend the bill to remove the word "hazardous" from its title. A scientist with newsworthy information wants to ban syn turf because of the findings of her research, but the hearing wasn't about delving into science. The hearing became another example of how a harmful product gets to float above the fray in a fairy tale of our own creation.

A lot of incendiary comments come to mind when one examines the protection afforded syn turf. When the next round of research is completed the quantification of the GHGs emitted from a syn turf athletic field will be known, but the thing is, they constantly increase as the plastic fields degrade, and Mont-

gomery County has a number of syn turf fields due for disposal.

We cannot have it both ways with climate change: we're either going to reduce emissions or we're going to pay a heavy price. In some places of the world, people already suffer and die from the choices that Americans make. One might argue that dozens of folks in Alabama just died over the weekend, victims of our inability to "Just Say No" to toxic products.

The plastics/petroleum industries are doubling down on the notion that Americans are addicted to plastics. *Inside Climate News* reports they are building and planning to build **ethane crackers in the Ohio River Valley** in three states to make the very plastic—ethylene—that Dr. Royer explains is off-gassing GHGs all over the world.

HB 1142, cont.

So a group of citizens with data and a scientist from a prestigious institution went to the Maryland legislature to inform them of a previously unknown hazard to curtailing GHG emissions: PLASTICS, a group of materials that we can all exercise more control over in our decision making. However, the people who laugh all the way to the bank when a new syn turf field gets installed got the delegates to focus on how hazardous the word hazard may be for the hazardous product they foisted on the American people by preventing syn turf from being regulated as a children's product. It's hard to determine if they charge extra for the LEAD. An unknown quantity of lead and other toxins now sit next to the Bird River in White Marsh, complements of MCPS administrators. ■

Plastics, Synthetic Turf are Greenhouse Gas Producers

*By Sarah-Jeanne Royer, Ph.D.
 [Royer is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the Marine Biology Research Division at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California-San Diego. This is her March 1st testimony before the*

Md. General Assembly House Environment and Transportation Cmte.]

I am here today to testify and support HB 1142. I have a doctorate in oceanography. I have now been working on plastics pollution and degradation for five years.

I oppose the over-use and over-consumption of plastics for its many negative effects on the environment such as ingestion by wildlife, entanglement of marine species, and the transportation of invasive species. We now understand that this list of negative effects is expanding. Plastics are everywhere in our daily life and are also found everywhere in the environment from the North Pole to South Pole and even at the deepest parts of our ocean. Sadly, there is not a single beach in the world today



Royer Testimony, cont.

that is plastics-free.

Our over-use of plastics is harming our health and the health of our children. This reveals the extent to which the material we created became a design failure because of its mismanagement and its harmful and toxic impacts. When I say design failure, let me give you an example: single-use plastics—the bags, the bottles, the straws—are on average used for 12 minutes; however, if they end up in the environment they last for months, years, and decades.

At the University of Hawaii, at the Center for Microbial Oceanography, Research and Education, we studied the degradation of plastics in the environment. Our research findings show that the impact of plastics in the environment is even worse than what we thought.

Let me share with you what we discovered: My colleagues were measuring the biological production of methane from seawater. They realized that the concentrations of methane were much higher than expected. In fact, most of the methane was not coming from biological sources, but from the bottles in which they were incubating the seawater. The bottles were made out of a specific polyethylene plastic and, when exposed to sunlight, degrade and emit methane.

Plastics emit methane. Methane is a greenhouse gas.

Methane is 21 times more powerful than CO₂, which is one of the reasons why many scientists nowadays are studying methane production in the environment such as methane coming from the permafrost and from agricultural practices. This is without saying that GHGs are the

contributors to climate change.

This unexpected discovery was the start of my two-year postdoctoral studies in Hawaii where I continued focusing on methane, CO₂, and other GHGs emitted from plastics.

We tested the most commonly used type of plastic in the world and discovered that it releases methane (CH₄), ethylene (C₂H₄), ethane, and propylene at the highest concentrations. Bad news: polyethylene (PE) is also the most prevalent plastic produced, consumed, and discarded in the environment today. It also degrades quickly due to its weak chemical structure and eventually contributes to the pool of microplastics.

Our study also demonstrated that, as the surface area of the plastic increases due to weathering and break-down in the ocean, there is

Royer Testimony, cont.

a tremendous increase in methane and ethylene off-gassing. For example, *PE powders off-gas methane 488 times more than when the same weight of PE is in pellet form.* A given weight of plastic in the environment, therefore, will create an ever-increasing level of GHGs over time.

As an Oceanographer, my main focus is the sea but, in order to understand our study further, we created a comparison of plastics on land not submerged in water. This is when things got really scary. Plastics produce GHGs not only in water, but when exposed—on beaches, in your backyard, or on your child’s synthetic turf field—it produces two times more methane and 76-times more ethylene than when in the ocean.

This indicates that, while the negative effects of plastics in the

oceans are significant, the GHGs emitted from plastics exposed to air in the terrestrial environment are even greater. Results revealed that, once initiated by sunlight, the production of hydrocarbon gases continues in the dark.

Most synthetic turf athletic fields use polyethylene for the fake grass blades, the very plastic that emits the highest level of GHGs, but the surface area of the blades far exceeds the surface area of the field space. A huge carpet of fake grass has hundreds of millions of individual grass blades woven into the plastic backing. Each blade has its own surface area. Therefore, the amount of GHGs emitted from turf is much higher than a flat sheet of polyethylene and all of this surface area also degrades at a higher rate. This degradation begins the moment the plastic grass is placed in the sun.

Additional research must be conducted to determine what levels of GHGs synthetic turf fields produce.

Overall, this means that *the degradation and breakdown of plastics represent a previously unrecognized source of GHGs that are expected to increase, especially as more plastics are produced and accumulated in the environment.*

I hope the facts presented are enough to convince you that choosing synthetic turf is choosing to *increase* GHG emissions, just as we are working so hard to *reverse* this. I am really hoping that, in a near future, synthetic turf will be banned from our lives. But, at a bare minimum, I am asking the Committee to help make sure that used synthetic turf doesn’t go on releasing GHGs in unregulated dumpsites, by approving HB 1142 to require a tracking system for safe disposal. ■

Ongoing Efforts to Increase Composting in Montgomery County: How You Can Engage

By Bailey Condrey, President MCCF

Those who study the complex biome of soil feel that all of us can do more to improve its health as this living, breathing ecosystem supports life globally and constitutes a huge carbon sink. The healthier the soil, the greater amount of carbon it can store. This carbon storage will have an effect on reducing the impacts of climate change.

We can all pay more attention to the issue of food waste and engage with promoting composting in communities as a way to improve soil health across the region. There are numerous relevant initiatives already underway in Montgomery County that serve as valuable resources and support networks as local efforts are pursued. In order for the County to achieve food waste

reduction goals, collaborative strategies and sharing best practices are essential to successful and efficient programs and advocacy.

The Montgomery County Food Council's **Environmental Impact Working Group** (EIWG) convenes community advocates, providers of residential and municipal composting services and programs, and local agency partners to promote opportunities for various composting expansion efforts (commercial, curbside, backyard, community, on-farm, etc.) within Montgomery County, as well as expand the local market for compost, and research and establish appropriate strategies to address the reduction of wasted food in the County. Meetings are held monthly, open to the public, and usually held from 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. at

Bethesda Green (4825 Cordell Avenue, 2nd Floor). Susan Eisendrath and Susan Kornacki are the EIWG co-chairs; they are eager to bring in more people to help them achieve our County's common goals.

MC government released its **Food Waste Composting and Compost Use Strategic Plan** in 2017. The plan addresses the need for multi-level composting programs (residential, community, commercial, municipal). The County's **Zero Waste Task Force** (which is working on updating the County 10-Year Solid Waste Plan) and the **Solid Waste Advisory Committee** are also actively discussing this issue and their regular meetings are open to the public. Ms. Eisendrath says, "Resident awareness and engagement in these

Local Composting, cont.

efforts are important to inform their process and implementation, and are essential in connecting these efforts to community-level initiatives.”

The Institute for Local Self-Reliance (ILSR) convenes a **national network of community-oriented composters** and provides support for this growing movement through webinars, forums, and policy resources. Brenda Platt is the Director of the Composting for Community Initiative and a Montgomery County resident who has been working on expanding composting for dozens of years. The next ILSR report, to be released in early 2019, will be a guide to best management practices for community composters. **Master Gardeners** have also been working to expand composting in the county



Local Composting, cont.

for many years, providing training and composting demonstrations. According to Ms. Platt, “An excellent local model, the **D.C. Community Compost Cooperative Network**—which already has 50 community composting sites, a formal training program, and a tool with a map and information on the sites—can be reviewed by anyone seeking relevant information.” The **Montgomery County Sierra Club** is also supporting County composting education efforts and advocating for the County to ramp up their work in this area.

ILSR has been working to advance composting in the county, region, and state. “Healthy soil has many benefits that include acting as a carbon sink. Increasing the level of organic matter in soil is critical and compost is the best way to add



organic matter to soil,” says Ms. Platt. This ILSR **compost infographics** visually articulates this concept. A great way to drive participation in community composting lies in getting more youth involved and more composting at MCPS schools. Ms. Platt co-led a Young Activist Club in Montgomery County for almost a decade that succeeded in removing polystyrene food service plastic from MCPS and county buildings, so she’s optimistic about increasing student engagement in composting.

Ms. Platt says, “I’m dialoguing with a local Boy Scout troop who could have some Eagle Scouts build some small-scale composting systems as their Eagle projects.” Ms. Eisendrath helped facilitate **the first county project like this at Blair High School** in Silver Spring.

Locally based composting—such as through home composting, composting at K-12 schools, churches, and at other community sites—holds great interest for ILSR and has been advancing it at the local level and statewide in Maryland and the region for some time. ILSR has a **Neighborhood Soil Rebuilders Composter Training Program** and advocates for a **distributed and diverse infrastructure for food waste recovery and composting** in Montgomery County. See **this article** to understand how training becomes the key

Local Composting, cont.

to launching successful community-oriented sites; [this article showcases training sessions with youth leaders](#).

ILSR helped bring the [farmers market food scrap drop-off program](#) to D.C. It is modeled from the GrowNYC program in New York City ([map here](#)). (See the [NYC Community Composting Report](#).) Ms. Platt also co-manages one of the compost cooperative sites for the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation's cooperative compost network ([map of the sites here](#)). ILSR led passage of [D.C.'s Home Composting Incentives Act](#) earlier this year and has been actively working with the D.C. Department of Public Works to implement it. ILSR's May 2018 report, [Yes! In My Backyard: A Home Composting Guide for Local Government](#), features many programs that Mont-

gomery County could replicate to successfully grow home composting and build a culture of composting know-how. More recently it published [this short guide to composting in a two- to three-bin system for K-12 schools](#).

The following represents additional tactics for Montgomery County to implement:

- Appropriate funds to support pilot projects, training, equipment/supplies, and home composting programs;
- A master composter training program;
- Create a robust home composting program (see the [ILSR report on how other local governments are doing this](#));
- Pilot food scrap collection at farmers markets (weekend) and set up permanent drop-off site;
- Pilot/support onsite compost-

ing at K-12 schools as well as other venues that can compost onsite and utilize finished compost (Brookside Gardens is already doing this and other sites could be included);

■ Fix archaic laws that hamper food scrap composting at home and elsewhere (see pages 21, 41–42 of the [County's Strategic Plan](#)). The plan recommends that the County conduct a coordinated inter-agency review of existing requirements and restrictions pertaining to backyard/community-scale composting and make regulatory changes to County zoning and applicable County codes to clarify and support activities to include food scraps.

Both women concur. “We don’t want poorly operated sites that give community scale composting a bad name. Training and demonstration sites are pivotal and should be among the first steps considered.” ■

Bus Drivers Blinded by Their Own Vehicles

By Jim Zepp, MCCF Immediate Past President

At the February regular meeting MCCF members learned how bus drivers can have their left side field of view obscured by a vertical framing strip (the “A pillar”) along a bus’ front window and the large side mirrors attached to the A pillars (see attached photos). This combination can result in an area as much as 14 inches wide and as tall as the mirror



blocking the drivers’ left side view. Drivers may be negotiating busy intersections or terminals where pedestrians or other vehicles may be coming from all directions.

Brian Sherlock, International Safety Specialist with the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), gave a short presentation at the meeting. This included some short videos that demonstrated how pedestrians and even entire cars can “disappear” in the bus blind spot. More information on this issue is available on [ATU’s Website](#).

To avoid accidents in these situations, drivers are taught to do a “bob and weave” maneuver in their chairs to see around the bus blind spot while also looking for potential victims coming from other directions.

The blind spot can be easily



fixed by narrowing the A pillars and moving and reducing the size of the left side mirrors so drivers can readily see approaching pedestrians and vehicles from all angles without moving like a boxer in a fight. The correction can cost as little as \$300 per bus.

Despite the increased potential for accidents caused by the blind

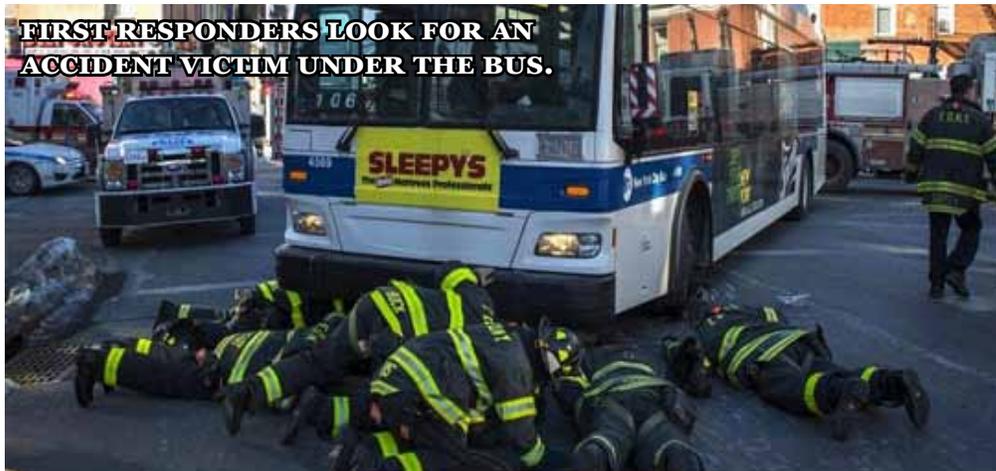
Bus Drivers Blinded, cont.

spots, psychological traumas to drivers involved, and the increased liabilities to respective local governments, transit agencies nationally have been strangely resistant to implementing the correction.

Montgomery County receives local bus service by the County's Ride

On 387 buses and regional bus service by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) Metrobus' 1,784 buses.

The MCCF will send letters to the County government and WMATA asking that the bus blind spot problem be corrected on their vehicles as a serious and unnecessary threat to pedestrian safety. ■



SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT?

*Need to share
a community concern?*

*Want to know how to do
something for your own
civic association?*

*Would like to meet
your fellow civic activists?*

Come early to the March 11 meeting. From 7:00 to 7:45 p.m., members of the MCCF Executive Committee will be available to talk in the EOB Auditorium. Light refreshments will keep you from going hungry. Be social, be a part of the civic movement, and be here.

Will U.S. Schools Give Civics Credit Hours for Missed School Days?

Greta Thunberg Addresses European Decision Makers with Strong Message

Last Thursday, Swedish 16-year-old climate activist, Greta Thunberg, spoke to European leaders and demonstrated alongside roughly 12,000 youths in the Brussels, Belgium, climate march.

The idea and actions have taken hold here in the United States and around the world that students of all ages are not going to allow adults in positions of influence to soft-peddle, tread water, make excuses, or promote willful ignorance about the drastic measures that must be adopted if the human race is going to survive the worst downside risks that climate change and sea level rise pose.

Thunberg's speech in the European Social and Economic Committee (EESC) was received with

standing ovations. "Some people say we are fighting for our future, but that is not true, we are not fighting for our future, we are fighting for everyone's future," Thunberg said. The planet is caught in the throes of a "Sixth Mass Extinction," scientists have called the Anthropocene, being driven in large part by climate change.

While the Green New Deal being promoted by Congressional Democrats needs some fleshing out and deep analysis, in true fashion Congressional Republicans have begun flailing about the rise of Socialism in response. When you embrace the lie for 20 years that scientists invented the theory of climate change, being forced "suddenly" to commit to meaningful solutions can only

be met with more lies. Meanwhile, *The Economist* reports that "all of the major oil and gas producers are planning to expand output, and they are all lobbying directly and through trade groups against measures that would limit emissions." The children have their work cut out for them. Perhaps a lot less class time and a lot more activism sit on the horizon. Will they be given credit hours for civics?

Thunberg was accompanied by the organizers for the ongoing school strikes in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany who all marched together in the streets of Brussels after the conference at the European Commission.

Thunberg said that the new

Greta Thunberg, cont.

target set by the EU for 2030 “is still not enough to keep global warming below 1.5°C” [2.7°F] and that the target is “not sufficient to protect the future for children growing up today.” The EU targets demand the EU cut its emissions by 40% by 2030. The president of the European Commission who was also speaking at the conference, Jean-Claude Juncker, suggested raising the cut to 45%. However, Thunberg demanded that the EU cut its emissions by 80% if the climate goals set out in the Paris Agreement are to be fulfilled.

“Our political leaders have wasted decades in denial and inaction and, because our time is running out, we have decided to take action to clean up your mess,” Thunberg said. “If you think we should be in school instead, then I suggest that



you take our place in the streets striking for new work or, better yet, join us in speeding up the process,” she continued.

“This is incredible,” Thunberg said from the stage after thanking the participants for joining the march. “For way too long the people in power have gotten away with not caring about the climate crisis, but we will make sure they will not do that anymore.”

Thursday’s strike was the sev-

enth Thursday in a row where Belgian youth have gone on school strike to march against climate change. The climate strikes have spread to multiple cities in Europe, such as London, Berlin, and Paris. Several strikes have also been organized in Australia, Canada, the United States, and Japan.

[Source: Content for this article was obtained at the United Nations Regional Information Center for Western Europe.] ■

CIVIC FED TONIGHT!

SEEKING POSSIBLE SPEAKERS FOR YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETINGS?

Members of the MCCF Executive Committee have extensive experience in issues such as transportation, land use and zoning, schools, parks, environmental concerns, taxes, and public spending. Plus, they have a community-oriented perspective on these matters. If you would like an executive committee member to speak at a meeting, contact President Bailey Condrey at *president at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

Jerry Garson Testifies on HB 304 and 344 on IGs in Feb.

On February 19, Jerry Garson, MCCF Treasurer and Chair of MCCF's Transportation Committee, testified on behalf of MCCF before the members of the Environment and Transportation Committee on House Bills 304 and 344.

For the former, MCCF recommended that the Environment and Transportation Committee report favorably HB 304, which is a bill for the purpose of authorizing the County Council of Mont. Co. to enact a local law that grants to the Mont. Co. Inspector General certain authority over Montgomery College.

In his testimony on HB 344, Garson stated that MCCF recommended that the Environment and Transportation Committee report favorably HB 344, a bill for the purpose of authorizing the County Council of

Mont. Co. to enact a local law that grants to the Montgomery County Inspector General certain authority over the Housing Opportunities Commission of Mont. Co.

Garson noted that the Montgomery College operating budget is over \$316 million and the Capital budget is over \$947 million, while the Housing Opportunities operating budget is over \$6.5 million and the Capital budget is \$91 million. For both bills, Garson said that these amounts of expenditures require oversight for the taxpayers of the County.

For both bills, the Fiscal and Policy Notes indicate that the State and Local Effect is "None."

"It is important for all public agencies to have oversight, as we have seen with problems this past year," Garson testified. ■

World Social Justice Day Letter Highlighted Ongoing Racism by State, County Gov'ts.

By Jim Zepp, Immediate Past President

The United Nations marks February 20th of each year as World Social Justice Day. The Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., joined with the Montgomery Conference of Black Ministers to call the attention of State and County officials to racially discriminatory decisions and policies against an African-American community in the County since 2006.

While Virginians are outraged by the possibility of elected officials wearing Blackface or Klansmen hoods in misspent youths, Maryland public officials and agencies can drive Black property owners from their land with impunity. In 2006, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission MNCPPC

(also known as “the Commission”) removed the road bordering the properties of 11 Sandy Spring area Black elderly and families (known as the Farm Road Community) from government maps. This action denied the residents from having street addresses, which means they cannot



receive mail, have access to public services such as water and sewer, and the properties are rendered as worthless because they are considered as landlocked.

This is a racist action because an affected White property owner requested and promptly received a street address from the Commission. However, the Commission's staff were filmed in a [WUSA9 news segment denying Black residents the same privilege of receiving addresses](#). They were told to apply through an address process which the Commission's officials later admitted does not exist.

Further racial discrimination of the Black residents was committed when their lack of water and sewer service was used to justify a recom-

Social Justice Day, cont.

mentation for extending these services to the area in the local Master Plan. However, when these services were made available to the White developers and property owners received them, but the Black residents did not.

On World Social Justice Day, a letter was sent to the County Executive, Council Members, the Governor, and the members of the County State Delegation calling attention to the unresolved situation of this Black community being driven from their property by government action for the benefit of a White developer and their neighbors. Except for an inquiry from the Governor's Office through the State Civil Rights Commission, there were no responses or indications of concern expressed by any of the other elected officials.

So, on World Social Justice Day, in Black History Month, racism is alive and strong in Montgomery County as our public officials look the other way when discrimination is

found. If the symbolism of Blackface and Klan regalia is reprehensible for many, why is actual racial discrimination acceptable in Montgomery County? ■

Volunteers Needed for June 10th MCCF Awards Event

The Civic Federation's Annual Awards event will be held on Monday, June 10, 2019, in lieu of our June meeting. More details on the event will follow in future newsletters.

We need volunteers to help coordinate the event as well as volunteers to serve on the Awards Selection Committee [Wayne Goldstein and Sentinel Awards and Star Cup]. The work of the Awards Selection Committee includes accepting

nominations for award recipients, evaluating those nominations, and making final recommendations on the awardees. The work should be of short duration and may be done largely by phone.

If you can help with the Event or Selection Committee or have a award nomination, contact Bailey Condrey, *president AT montgomerycivic.org*. We cannot do this without your help!

Minutes of the January 24, 2019, Executive Committee Meeting in DTSS

By Bailey Condrey, MCCF President

The MCCF Executive Committee convened at the American Legion Post in downtown Silver Spring.

Call to Order: Bailey Condrey, President, called the meeting to order at 7:55 p.m. Present: Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Carole Ann Barth, Jim Zepp, Harriet Quinn, Karen Cordry, and Jacquie Bokow.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: Bailey called for/received unanimous approval of the proposed agenda.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson reported additional membership checks were received and deposited.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Charlie Koiner of Silver Spring

has died. He had managed Koiner's Farm for generations and will be missed.

■ Carole provided a demonstration of the Constant Contact tool.

■ A column will be written for *The Sentinel* newspaper to coincide with the meeting on March 11.

■ February Program: Pedestrian Safety and Vision Zero will again be the program and Corinne Hart will be presented with Community Hero award as the January program was cancelled due to snow.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Legislation

■ Several bills are moving in Annapolis regarding Inspector Generals (see testimony on [page 14](#)).

■ February 20th will be World Social Justice Day. A letter will be pre-

pared for sending to various officials regarding the situation with Farm Road ([see p. 15](#)). The County Council has proposed a Remembrance and Reconciliation Commission.

Land Use

■ Recent developments with small cell legislation and litigation were discussed. Litigation is proceeding in the Ninth Circuit regarding recent FCC Order. Also standards for radio frequency emissions not updated since mid-1990.

■ Councilmember Riemer has proposed more deregulation of Accessory Apartment licensing process in ZTA 19-01. This is the 4th ZTA on Accessory Apartment deregulation since the streamlining in 2014.

ExComm Jan. Minutes, cont.

Transportation

■ Proposed I-495/I-270 projects were discussed. Bills are pending in Annapolis regarding the process for review of the Governor's I-495/I-270 expansion proposal. County officials see a need to widen the American Legion Bridge first. AM/PM peaks increased during government shutdown.

■ Montgomery County is still constructing BRTs even though ridership is still decreasing.

■ Delegate Frazer-Hidalgo is the new Chair of the Transportation Subcommittee.

Public Safety

■ Councilmember Jawando introduced a County Bill that would require independent investigation of officer-involved deaths.

Environment

■ Tree Protection Bill public hearing held in Annapolis on Jan. 22.

■ Adam Ortiz is the County's new DEP Director. He previously served as Prince George's Environment Director.

OLD BUSINESS

■ Additional locations were briefly discussed for the Awards Dinner. Detailed discussions for the Nominations Committee and Awards Dinner were tabled.

Adjournment: Bailey called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:52 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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