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of note

Next MCCF Meeting #916

October 12, 2020, 7:30 p.m. online via Zoom. Note time change! "MoCo's General Master Plan Draft"

Join the Zoom Meeting Here

[See further instructions on p. 2.]

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October's Community Hero

It's Elliot Levine of Silver Spring [P. 5](#)

September Meeting Minutes

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Membership Application

Join or Renew Now

[SEE FORM](#)

Federation Meeting #916

Monday, October 12, 2020

7:30 p.m.

Online Zoom Meeting

[Click Here to Enter](#)

AGENDA

- 7:30 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:35 Approval of Agenda
- 7:36 Announcements
- 7:44 Approval of Minutes, Sept. 14 Meeting #915 **P.18**
- 7:45 Treasurer's Report
- 7:50 Community Hero: Elliot Levine of Silver Spring **P.5**
- 8:00 Program: Montgomery County's General Master Plan Draft **P.3**
- 9:15 Committee Reports
- 9:25 Old and New Business
- 9:30 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, now at the earlier time of 7:30 p.m.

The October meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 3 for program) at 7:30 p.m.

■ To be part of the video conference, download the **Zoom Client for Meetings here.**

■ Meeting Name: "MCCF Monthly Meeting."

■ Date and Time: Monday, October 12, 2020, 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

■ To **join the Zoom meeting from your browser, use this link.**

■ To participate by phone (audio only), call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is 815 0128 5100. Password, if requested, is 082202.

We hope you will join us! ■



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 25

October 12th MCCF Meeting is on Montgomery County's General Master Plan Draft

By Harriet Quinn

The program for the October 12, 2020, MCCF meeting is an important and final opportunity for MCCF to provide feedback to the Planning Department on the ongoing process of developing revisions to the Countywide Comprehensive General Master Plan, which has been named "Thrive Montgomery 2050." The guest speaker for the October 12 meeting is Montgomery County Planning Director Gwen Wright.

The Planning Board **hearing on the Draft is scheduled for November 19** and is on schedule to be adopted by the County Council in April.

The General Plan is the foundation of all planning in Montgomery County and this vision has guided all plans and policies for more than five decades. The current **General**

Plan on Wedges and Corridors was adopted in 1964 and refined in 1969 and 1993. Its organization of "wedges and corridors" comes from the idea of channeling growth along major roads while preserving wedges of open space, farmland, and low-density residential uses.

A General Plan is a policy document that guides, over multiple decades, how a jurisdiction will develop and change over time, maintain its important assets, and respond to future opportunities and challenges.

The Plan is continually revised with amendments and through local master plans, sector plans, and countywide functional plans. Be sure to join us for this important opportunity to discuss this plan. ■



An Adopted MCCF Resolution on Montgomery County's General Plan

Whereas the Montgomery County Planning Department is undertaking a revision of the County's General Master Plan, called Thrive Montgomery 2050, which seeks to set a Comprehensive Plan for the County's land use, development, transportation, environmental, economic, and public facilities resources for the entire County for the next 30 years; and

Whereas the social and economic disruptions of the current global coronavirus pandemic have raised significant concerns about the future of the national and regional economies and the unpredictable and enduring impacts on transportation needs, job creation, environmental stewardship, and education; and

Whereas the implications of the global pandemic—and alternative

economic scenarios—must be taken into account for any comprehensive planning framework adopted by the County; and

Whereas the public health emergency in the State of Maryland and Montgomery County has imposed significant limitations on the ability of the County's residents to fully participate in this comprehensive planning project; and

Whereas the current announced timetable for the design, finalization, and approval of the proposed General Plan—without sufficient and meaningful public consultation and input—is not reasonable and not suitable for a legitimate community process in which residents can take ownership of the final Plan;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic

Federation, Inc., (MCCF) calls on the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council to defer further action by the Planning Board and the County Council on a new County General Master Plan for at least a year and until after the the coronavirus public health emergency has been rescinded; and

Further, be it resolved that the MCCF calls upon the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council to ensure that all public stakeholders, and especially the residents of Montgomery County, have adequate time to fully participate in the design of the proposed General Plan through a broad-based public process.

[Approved the 14th Day of September 2020.] ■

Elliot Levine is MCCF's Community Hero for October

By Alan Bowser, President

This month's MCCF community hero is Elliot Levine of Silver Spring, a member of the Park Hills Civic Association and the East Silver Spring Citizens Association.

Levine, a nationally known musician, is recognized by the Civic Federation for his innovative support of important community-based food security organizations in Montgomery County and the State of Maryland.

For more than six months, keyboardist Elliot Levine has hosted weekly live performances on social media to raise money for two of the best nonprofit organizations supporting our neighbors during the coronavirus pandemic—Shepherd's Table in Silver Spring and the Maryland Food Bank, headquartered in

Baltimore, with offices in Salisbury and Hagerstown.

Elliot writes, "When nightclubs and concerts were closed in late March, I decided that this was not going to stop me from performing music and I saw this as an opportunity to help others. The news reported that many people were struggling to eat and pay for basic necessities, due to unemployment and business closures. I believed I could use my joy of playing music to help others during this crisis. For me, it was a weekly fun event and I received positive feedback from the community. I have strived to keep the concerts interesting by learning and performing many new songs each week. I have continued this weekly event for 28 weeks and have raised about \$2,000 for Shepherd's Table and \$1,000 for

the Maryland Food Bank."

Elliot Levine has toured with Heatwave (Boogie Nights/ Always and Forever) for over 20 years and has also toured with Wilson Pickett. His song, "Urban Groove," was the second song to have a million downloads in 1999. His music is played weekly on Sirius XM 142 HBCU Radio and has been featured in an award-winning movie, "Stay," available for streaming on Amazon.

The Mont. County Civic Federation is pleased to recognize Elliot Levine of Silver Spring for his creative contribution to strengthening food security in our community. ■



MCCF President's Testimony on Proposed 2020–2024 Subdivision Staging Policy; Bill 38-20: Taxation—Development Impact Tax—Transportation and Public School Improvements; and Expedited Bill 39-20: Taxation—Recordation Tax—Amendments

My name is Alan Bowser, and I'm the President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF). Members of the MCCF represent over 150,000 households from civic and homeowners associations across the County.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed changes to the Subdivision Staging Policy, the Bill to reduce and eliminate some Development Impact Taxes, and the proposed amendment to again increase the Recordation Tax on home sales and refinancings for the second time in four years.

While much of the testimony you will hear will be about transportation and school capacity, which of course are very important, this policy is

also supposed to address adequacy of public safety, water and sewer infrastructure, water and air quality, stormwater management, forest and urban tree canopy, and parks facilities. Unfortunately, this draft does not adequately address most of those.

As you know, policies and decisions about the adequacy of public facilities generate a lot of interest among residents. We had a lively discussion at our meeting last night and we appreciate the professionalism of the Planning Staff who fielded questions from residents on these complex issues.

Given the time constraints for testimony on these three items, I will summarize our overall position on

the proposals while providing more detailed testimony in writing at a future date.

We appreciate the efforts the Planning Department has made, but this proposed new policy is a major departure from the purpose of the Policy, which is to balance the infrastructure that is needed to support new development. This proposed Policy does not ensure adequate public facilities in transportation or in school capacity.

In addition, the recommendations for reductions of development impact taxes for some and additional exemptions from taxes for others will result in additional funding problems for school and transporta-

SSP Testimony, cont.

tion capacity projects that are needed to accommodate new growth. At a time of constrained resources during a global pandemic, this would exacerbate the budget problems that already exist.

With regard to removal of school moratorium from the Policy, we think it's essential to recognize that a so-called moratorium in an area where a school cluster is at 120% capacity has never equated to a ban on new housing in the County as some officials have asserted.

First of all, less than 15% of areas of the County have been subject to a moratorium due to school clusters at 120% of capacity.

Second the "moratorium" affects only approval of *new* applications at the Planning Board until a capacity solution has been programmed

by the Council in the CIP, which has taken a maximum of 2 years. Once programmed, additional new development projects can be approved while the cluster can continue at well above 120% of capacity before the school capacity project is finally built and operating.

Third, any development project that had already been approved by the Planning Board can still be constructed, whether it's in a moratorium area or not. This is known as the Development Pipeline. This Development Pipeline of approved projects has over 32,000 housing units already approved but not yet built. No moratorium is preventing them from being constructed and many have been proceeding through the permitting process. Many of these units are located in areas that are exempt from paying development impact taxes so those are not a

deterrent either.

There are also over 20 million square feet of approved and unbuilt commercial space waiting for construction that can be built whether in a "moratorium" area or not.

The purpose of the moratorium provision in the school capacity sections of the SSP is to call attention to the Council that a school capacity solution project must be addressed and programmed for a particular area. Without the moratorium, the County may not address the problem in a timely way.

For a real example, consider the situation of Northwood High School, one of the two high schools in Silver Spring. Northwood has needed renovation for decades and, like many other schools serving lower income families, it was left behind when it came to CIP programming while oth-

SSP Testimony, cont.

er schools in higher income areas had multiple renovations. Only when it reached 143% of capacity and sent the area into moratorium, did the Board of Education and Council finally address the Northwood situation in FY 19. While 4,100 residential units that were already approved could still be constructed in the area that was under moratorium, the moratorium on new applications ended after a year when the Council programmed a “solution project” for Northwood in the CIP in FY 20. Moving to Blair High School down the street was not a capacity solution because Blair, which is the largest public school in Maryland, is also overcrowded and already has 14 portables.

So now new development applications can be approved for the area, and overcrowding at Northwood

can continue to expand for the next 5 years while the school waits until 2025, when the new capacity solution is scheduled to be finished. In the meantime, students and parents will have to travel to North Bethesda/Rockville from 2023–2025 to attend a temporary school while their home school is renovated. The Council should consider this scenario, and ask who was more inconvenienced and what is the priority—the school community or the development community, which is also exempt from school and transportation taxes in this area? We are not aware of any new development applications that did not go forward for the area while the 1-year moratorium on new applications was in place.

Unfortunately, the Planning Board has removed the moratorium provision without providing an adequate replacement solution to the

capacity issues faced by the MCPS.

The removal of the moratorium raises an equity issue. How will the Council determine which schools will get priority in the CIP for capacity solutions if there is no trigger from a moratorium? We saw how it didn’t work for Northwood and others prior to the moratorium. We have not seen any equity analysis for this proposed SSP.

The reductions and additional exemptions from development impact taxes and the shifting of that lost funding for new infrastructure onto current residents through another countywide increase in the recordation tax will make the County even less affordable for residents.

Finally, with regard to sustainability, now is the time for the Council to have a more robust discussion of County sustainability efforts, and

SSP Testimony, cont.

how they can be incorporated into the SSP to improve our water and air quality, provide adequate green infrastructure, and incorporate Urban Environmental Guidelines. Please do not wait another four years to begin this important conversation.

We ask the Council to determine what problems are being solved by these new proposals. Based on our review and experience, many of the proposals appear to make the capacity and budget problems worse, not better. We ask you to proceed with caution and seek out balanced data to answer constituent questions about these proposals. We appreciate those of you who will be keeping an open mind.

Thank you very much for your attention and we look forward to working with you. ■

WSSC SAG Testimony, 9/29/20, by Taxpayers League

By Gordie Brenne, Treasurer, MoCo Taxpayers League

In 1998 the State stepped in to restructure WSSC. We ask that you step in now to avoid service interruptions and to keep our rates competitive. WSSC is again approaching insolvency, this time because of Covid 19 revenue impacts. Its cost structure remains unchanged, because the Council continues to approve above-market rate increases. Poor governance and mismanagement of this bloated cost-plus monopoly threatens service to our County residents. It's time for the Council to lead us out of the "significant fiscal challenges" that your briefing memo only partially addresses.

Unbelievably, the proposed rate increases are predicated on an assumption that telework will stop

and revenues will bounce back in FY'22. The latest Moody's rating approval came with two important caveats: that WSSC will successfully deal with the Covid revenue threat and the taxpayers will bail out WSSC if they can't manage costs. Is the County ready for a property tax bailout at the detriment of other programs?

The 6.6% and alternative 5.9% proposed rate increases should not be approved. A much lower rate increase to incentivize cost reductions is needed. Both proposals include above-market compensation increases while maintaining a bloated payroll of 1,776 employees whose productivity has declined over the years. A Benchmarking study found that WSSC has too many manag-

MCTL Testimony, cont.

ers, engineers, and IT staff. Capital projects are also bloated with Piscataway sewage treatment and AMI projects having rates-of-return below their cost of capital, adding to debt service that is perilously close to the underwriting limit of 40%.

This doesn't even account for the costs and service level risks that are imposed by WSSC's continued deferral of needed pipe replacement (now only 31 vs. 55 miles a year targeted) and delays in large-diameter water main inspections and repairs. Yes, there is a legacy of poorly controlled consent decree spending, but we cannot continue to layer new foolish spending on top of that and stay afloat.

Worse, WSSC cash on hand is insufficient to meet the current revenue crisis. We are at 80 Days



of reserves even with the generous redefinition to include other other current assets, compared to Fair-

fax Water's 1 year cash-on-hand reserve. All this while we've experienced a secular consumption decline over the last 20 years because of more efficient water appliances. Costs need to be adjusted to reflect this lower consumption. Rate payers have done their part.

Our water and sewer rates are the highest in the Metro area and impair our economic development competitiveness. WSSC consistently misrepresents this by cherry picking comparisons to rust bucket cities and using subsidized 2nd tier rates. This comparison is rigged to hide WSSC's profligate spending.

Opportunities to fix this problem have been squandered. As a condition of a bailout, Taxpayers will insist WSSC be broken in two to achieve better economies of scale, and rate approval be shifted to politically independent PSC. ■

Tree Montgomery

By Alan Bowser, President

Creating a sustainable environment and increasing tree canopy in Montgomery County are priorities of the Civic Federation, particularly in those neighborhoods and areas where mature trees have been removed because of residential construction and commercial development.

We support the County's Tree Montgomery initiative, a *free* program to plant shade trees across Montgomery County, Maryland. The goal is simple: to plant shade trees and increase our tree canopy to provide a wide array of benefits for you and your community. All of us need to work hard to grow our tree canopy for the benefit of all who live and work in Montgomery County.

Applying for the program is

simple. Just go the website and sign up. While there is a backlog of applications for the program, the first and important step is to get on the list.

Tree Montgomery plants shade trees across Montgomery County. They plant in yards, parking lots, and almost everywhere in between. They especially target areas affected by development, and places with little tree canopy or a real need for shade.



Tree Montgomery staff will work closely with you to choose locations and species to plant on your property. They'll plant the shade trees for you and help you with caring for your new trees, all for free.

Tree Montgomery is a program of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection. Every step of this process is conducted by Montgomery County employees or employees of County-approved contractors. At any time, you can ask for identification.

There are no long-term requirements or legal restrictions on the shade trees planted through Tree Montgomery, and the program is entirely free. If you would like additional trees, you can sign up again and they will be happy to repeat the process. For more information on Tree Montgomery, visit the website at treemontgomery.org. ■

Opinion: Vote As If Our Lives Depend on It—Because They Do

By Bailey Condrey, Immediate Past President

The late summer of 2020 has been an environmental wrecking ball for many areas of our nation. Hurricane Laura, Hurricane Sally, tropical storms, and depressions drenched the south, midwest, and east repeatedly over the last 90-days. Kensington, Bethesda, the District, and their environs received torrential flooding from a simple thunderstorm that dropped nearly six-inches of rain in 90-minutes, the level of precipitation that a tropical system would deliver over a period of days.

The moisture-deprived west coast and western states were caught in a maelstrom of wildfire eruptions. They have re-erupted at this writing and damage to west-

ern forests and communities has become extreme with thousands of structures and homes destroyed and more than 4.6 million acres burned. This level of destruction dwarfs prior fire seasons in the nation's west. Historically, the fire season is typically at its worst only now.

Our national lack of action on climate change has turned the western states into a tinderbox and we're now witness to what dry lightning strikes do to forests of dead and dying trees and vegetation that has become dry and crispy. The magnitude of these wildfires came to the east coast in the days following our deluge when western wildfire smoke drifted east and settled into the treetops in Rock Creek Park across the street from my home. This was confirmed by numerous

meteorologists in the region.

The carbon specs from this smoke will continue to travel east on the prevailing winds and trillions of them will settle onto Greenland and the Arctic where they accelerate a phenomenon called cryoconite melting. Being dark in color, and resting on ice and snow, they absorb more radiant heat from the sun and accelerate melting. September also saw **Greenland lose another ice shelf**, this one twice the size of Manhattan.

With rapid deterioration of ice shelves, warming seawater is able to more quickly assail the terminus of tidewater glaciers, accelerating the calving of icebergs and increasing sea level rise. Cryoconite melting has the same effect on the

Vote, cont.

Arctic's sea ice. The science of the climate disaster reveals that our nation's wildfires are feeding the sea level rise that is drowning our own coastal towns and cities.

Reporting by *Inside Climate News* on September 24 revealed that the threat from the intensifying energy of **climate change has compromised and will increasingly compromise our nation's Superfund sites.**

The joint investigation by ICN, The Texas Observer, and NBC News titled, *Battered, Flooded, and Submerged: Many Superfund Sites are Dangerously Threatened by Climate Change*, goes on to state "that the Obama administration directed the EPA to focus on climate-related threats. Now, the Trump administration refuses to even use the

word."

Among the investigations findings:

■ More than 700 of the 945 sites vulnerable to climate change are in 100-year flood plains, meaning they have a 1 percent or more chance of flooding in any given year, and over 80 regularly flood at high tide or are already permanently submerged. Forty-nine of the sites face triple threats—they are in 100-year flood plains, regularly flood, and are vulnerable to hurricanes, according to EPA and GAO data. The San Jacinto Waste Pits site is on the triple threat list, as is the LCP Chemical site on coastal marshlands in Glynn County, Georgia, which is contaminated by mercury and PCBs.

■ Seventy-four sites threatened by climate change nationwide contain toxic wastes that remain uncontrolled and could damage human

health, according to the EPA's own risk assessments. Nine of those sites are in New Jersey, including the Diamond Alkali site in Newark, a shuttered chemical plant that pumped the herbicide Agent Orange into the Passaic River.

One would assume incorrectly that Maryland has little to fear from this situation. On the contrary, our state has at least six Superfund sites located in Baltimore, Elkton, Abingdon, Dundalk, and Harmans. You can look them up in the interactive maps included in the article. Baltimore resides at sea level.

"Following flooding from Hurricane Harvey in 2017, the San Jacinto River near Houston jumped its banks and an ominous cluster of four hazardous waste Superfund sites near Barrett, Texas, were smashed by 16 feet of water that

Vote, cont.

undermined a concrete cap covering the site's toxic contents, washing dioxin downriver to the Gulf of Mexico. A dive team from the Environmental Protection Agency later found the potent human carcinogen in river sediment at 2,300 times the agency's standard for cleanup." Barrett, Texas, is a historically black small town.

The Maryland map reveals that most of the Superfund sites located in the state are within the flood plain of the Chesapeake Bay and the resulting damage from a large hurricane could release large amounts of toxic waste into the Bay. This could essentially shut down numerous fisheries that add millions of dollars annually to the economic vitality of the state. Can we really afford to turn our backs on yet

another looming public health and environmental disaster in Maryland's front yard?

We have decades of work to do to return our nation and world to a semblance of the natural balance we have enjoyed for centuries and to the economic vitality of past years. It will not happen by clinging to the status quo, nor will it happen by casting a vote to re-elect the administration of Donald Trump. Elections have consequences. If the United States is going to work its way out of the quagmire in which it finds itself, new leadership in the White House is a necessity. The registered voters of Maryland and its 49 sister states cannot afford to waste four more years with a president and administration that don't believe that the climate crisis is real. It's bleeding our nation's economic engines dry. ■

Strombotne Passes Away

*By Peggy Dennis, MCCF
Past President*



We note the passing on August 25, 2020, of Dick Strombotne; he was 87. Back in the day, Dick was an active member of the Civic Federation. But he was better and more widely known as an active member of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE). He also served as the President and Treasurer of the Maryland chapter of NARFE.

With a doctorate in physics in radio frequency spectroscopy, Dick also worked at NIST, USDOT, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, where he was responsible for fuel economy standards. In lieu of donations or flowers, Dick and his family urge everyone to exercise their right to *vote*. ■

A Citizens Guide to Safe Bow-and-Arrow Hunting for Suburban Neighborhoods

By Peggy Dennis, Past President,
Mont. County Civic Federation

As deer populations have increased, suburban and urban areas in Montgomery County face too many deer. In some suburbs, the deer population exceeds 400 animals per square mile, while the carrying capacity of the land is about 40 animals per square mile. Although pleasing to watch, large numbers of free-roaming deer increase the risk of human injury from deer-vehicle collisions (DVC). Montgomery County has more than 2,000 reported DVCs per year, and this statistic does not include the thousands of deer which are injured or killed but are not reported.

From the public health standpoint, most people know that deer and deer ticks spread Lyme disease.

How many are aware that they are also associated with debilitating and costly diseases such as *Babesiosis*, *Bartonella*, *Ehrlichia Chaffensis*, and *Powassan encephalitis*?

Deer cause great damage to the environment. They have destroyed the understory of many of our regional, community, and stream valley parks, denuded hillsides of native plants, destroyed habitat for other species, accelerated soil erosion, and promoted the takeover of invasive species. Some naturalists now consider overabundant deer as significant a threat to the bird population as climate change because they destroy the forest understory in our parks needed by ground-nesting birds. And too many young deer make your neighborhood very attractive for predators such as coyotes

to move in, a situation we are beginning to experience in Montgomery County. And if you have too many deer, forget about your landscaping or trying to grow your own fruits and vegetables in your back yard!

THE BOWHUNTING OPTION

You can help change this situation for the better. Other options for deer management—such as feeding, exclusionary fencing, and chemical “birth control”—are impractical, counterproductive, or prohibitively expensive. Regulated hunting, specifically bowhunting, is a safe, ethical, humane, and efficient method for decreasing the number of deer in residential neighborhoods. It provides deer population control at the least cost to taxpayers

Bowhunting Deer, cont.

because volunteer bowhunters do the “work” of removing deer as a public service.

Hundreds of metro areas—including Fairfax County, Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; the Pittsburgh suburbs; and many cities in Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Canada—allow bowhunting. Few problems and no accidents have been reported. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports the use of bowhunting to curb deer populations in the suburbs.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Archery is one of the safest sports in the United States. Most accidents involve the bowhunter falling out of a tree stand. In Maryland and Virginia, there have been no recorded incidents involving

injury to persons, pets, or property caused by a bowhunter.

Bowhunters typically hunt from elevated positions or tree stands. This means that an arrow is shot at a downward angle. If it misses the deer, it goes harmlessly into the ground. An arrow, under most conditions, cannot travel any appreciable distance once it hits even a twig or small limb. National surveys show that most deer harvested with a bow are shot at distances of 20 yards or less, which makes it ideal for hunting in and around suburban and urban areas.

Deer taken by reputable hunters are never “wasted.” All the meat (venison) is used, either by the hunter or by donation to local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. In Montgomery County, this is done by an organization called Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry.

Property owners who wish to obtain venison may do so through arrangement with their hunter.

GETTING STARTED

Many individuals know little about hunting, particularly bowhunting. Bowhunting in residential neighborhoods should never be undertaken by amateurs, but left to licensed, well-trained, skilled sportsmen.

HOW TO FIND A SAFE, RELIABLE HUNTER

In Montgomery County, several groups can link you to an expert bowhunter. The Animal Connection Deer Management Team (ACDMT) is an organization of skilled, veteran bowhunters with strict rules and enforcement to ensure the safety of hunters and the public. Most

Bowhunting Deer, cont.

members of ACDMT are members of the Maryland Bowhunters Society, an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting safe and responsible bowhunting; educating the non-hunting public about the role of the bowhunter in wildlife management and conservation; and educating bowhunters in safety, shooting skills, hunting techniques, and landowner relations. Both groups strongly advocate ethical bowhunting within the laws of the jurisdiction hunted. A third organization is the Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland. (See below for contacts.)

Not every suburban yard is appropriate for bowhunting. The bowhunter will first tell you if your property has a suitable location for hunting. If it does, the bowhunter

should provide you with copies of his/her hunting license, safety certificate, a release of liability form, and a copy of the permission form for you to sign, plus copies of the permission form for your neighbors to sign, if needed. Your contract or agreement with the bowhunter may stipulate what days and times hunting may take place, how you will know that the hunter is at work, where the hunter will be shooting from, where bait will be located, whether the hunter may field dress the animal and leave remains on your property or not, and whether you wish to be gifted with venison for your own consumption.

GET SUPPORT FROM YOUR NEIGHBORS

Under current law, owners of inhabited dwellings within 50 yards of the hunting location must give

permission before hunting takes place. In seeking permission from your neighbors, you should draw the distinction between the shooting that will take place on your property and the permission that the hunter may need to enter neighboring properties should a wounded deer stray onto their property. Hunters are required to make every attempt to track, euthanize, and remove a wounded deer, even if it is no longer on the property where the shooting has occurred. Most homeowners do not want to return home to find a dead or dying deer in their yard, and will be willing give the permission to the hunter to “track and retrieve.” If your neighbors have questions or express anxiety or reluctance, it will help if you hold a meeting with them and the bowhunter. The bowhunter can then

Bowhunting Deer, cont.

explain how, where, and when the hunting will take place. It is crucial that your neighbors understand that this form of hunting is safe, humane, and presents no risk to people, pets, or property.

The 2020–2021 season for archery hunting has already begun and runs through the end of January. It is not too late to discuss archery hunting with your neighbors and local civic association and line up one or more hunters to work in your neighborhood.

To find an experienced, licensed archery hunter, contact one or several of these organizations:

■ [Animal Connection Deer Management Team](#);

■ [Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland](#); or

■ [Maryland Bowhunters Society](#). ■

Minutes of September 14, 2020, MCCF Meeting #915

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the General Meeting was held via Zoom as a virtual meeting. The time of the meeting was revised to 7:30 p.m.

Call to Order: President Alan Bowser called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm.

Approval of Agenda: It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved; so approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson reported that for July we received a total of \$854 in dues and had \$396 in expenses, for a net surplus of \$458. The expenses were basically

for the website and for our dues to the Committee for Montgomery. Our current bank balance is \$9,707, which has been increased due to our receiving the refund of meeting room rentals paid to the County for months we did not use this year.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

Topic: Proposed Changes to County's 2021-24 Subdivision Staging Policy

The Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) is a complex but critical policy that attempts to determine how to balance new growth with completion of (and partial payment for) necessary supporting infrastructure, such as schools. The SSP is intended to ensure compliance with the County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance

September Minutes, cont.

(APFO) which requires such facilities be sufficient to support the new development. The Policy is updated every four years and that process is currently going on. This meeting focused on the changes proposed by the Planning Board; the Council will hold hearings and take public comment and must act by 11/15. A link to the entire proposal [can be viewed here](#).

Speakers were: Jason Sartori, Chief of Functional Planning and Policy, Planning Dept.; Lisa Govoni, Senior Housing Planner; and Brian Krantz and Katya Marin, MCCF and MCCPTA representatives, respectively, on the SSP Schools Technical Advisory Team.

The discussion noted concerns by planners and developers that the current APFO (and SSP) may

increase costs and slow development, thereby making housing less affordable and pushing new units outward, increasing sprawl. Under the current SSP, if the APFO tests fail (e.g., school cluster at 120% of capacity), new approvals for that area are paused until the Council programs funding for new capacity project solution within 1-2 years. Projects that have already been approved can proceed whether they are in a moratorium area or not. Less than 13% of the County has been in a moratorium area. There are 32,000 residential units and 21 million square feet of nonresidential development already approved but not yet completed. [These projects can move forward](#).

The Draft SSP proposes three new types of development areas—“Greenfields” (with new growth, such as around Clarksburg); Infill

(areas with significant redevelopment growth but typically in multi-family units); and Turnover (existing developed areas with little new growth). To reduce sprawl and keep open spaces, the goal was to encourage new growth in the latter two areas. This Draft proposes eliminating moratoriums in all areas except those designated as “Greenfields,” even if an area has schools over 120% of capacity.

Currently, the purpose of the moratorium designation is to alert the Council that additional capacity funding is needed for an area. Historically, without the moratorium designation, certain areas were overlooked when it came to CIP funding.

The Draft also proposes decreasing development impact tax collection, while increasing recordation taxes on homeowners who sell or

September Minutes, cont.

refinance. A new Utilization Premium Payment (“UPP”) (ranging between 15-25% of the standard impact tax) is proposed on developments where a school is projected to have a utilization rate of 120% within three years. Exemptions for areas designated as Opportunity Zones are also proposed.

Eric and Lisa noted, with regard to the Transportation adequacy tests, that they were working to incorporate Vision Zero issues for pedestrian safety. Areas around Metro stations (and the Purple Line) would be given substantial leeway for development and local motor vehicle adequacy review and asserted that increasing driving hinders transit and Vision Zero goals.

Katya noted the MCCPTA’s concerns that the Draft does not provide

for adequate school capacity or funding. Sue noted that the breakdown in progress on the Purple Line would need to be taken into account. Jean asked if there was any evidence that reduced taxes resulted in reduced housing costs/rents and Ms. Govoni promised to send some studies. The planners also indicated they would send some information on the total amount of impact fees paid over the last 10 years or so.

MCCF’s testimony on the proposed SSP is within this newsletter. Residents may send comments to County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov through the month of October.

BALLOT INITIATIVES

There was a report on the two State initiatives—the first, to allow the legislature to revise the budget submitted by the Governor within

the overall dollar number proposed, and the second, to allow sports betting to raise revenues for educational purposes.

Four county initiatives are also on the ballot—they come in two sets, each of which has a citizen petition initiative and a competing County Council proposed alternative. The first set deals with proposed changes to how property taxes are set. The current structure looks to the total revenue produced and allows it to increase from the prior year by the rate of inflation plus any growth from new construction and several other factors and then requires that the rate be set to generate that amount of revenue. That limit can be overridden by a unanimous vote of the Council. The Question B petition initiative, by Robin Ficker, would bar that limit from ever being

September Minutes, cont.

overridden regardless of the reason even with a unanimous vote. The Question A proposed by the County Council would result in an automatic annual increase in the property tax rate at the rate of inflation. The Council would also be able to increase the rate above the rate of inflation if unanimous vote.

The other two initiatives deal with the make-up of the Council. The petition initiative proposed to eliminate all at-large seats and go to nine districts; the Council proposed an alternative at the last minute that would create two additional districts (for seven total) and keep the existing four at-large seats. Adding the two additional seats would require funding for them.

The discussion suggested an MCCF recommendation on the bal-

lot questions would be useful. A vote was left to the next meeting after people had time to consider the issues.

MCCF RESOLUTIONS

It was moved by Alan and seconded by Bailey that the MCCF should adopt resolutions stating that the deadlines for commenting on both the General Plan and the draft Env. Impact Statement for the I-495/270 project were too short in general and particularly in light of the impact of the COVID virus and should be extended. The discussion was generally supportive of both resolutions. The General Plan resolution was adopted unanimously with one abstention. On the I-495 resolution, there was a friendly amendment to note the need to also add analysis of the effect of the problems on the Purple Line and then it

was also adopted unanimously with one abstention.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation

■ Jerry noted the impending withdrawal of the contractor for the Purple Line project.

■ Metro volumes continue to be drastically lower, running at only about 10% of capacity.

Environment

■ Ken Bawer from the Stream Restoration group noted concerns with how the county was reworking streams and banks to control storm water. The Stormwater Partners Network was also working on the issues but with a somewhat different view. The two group will sit down together and try to reach a common approach, focused on reducing

September Minutes, cont.

runoff rather than just controlling it when it gets to streams. Alan will do a newsletter article on this.

■ Diana Conway noted that the developer redoing Ellsworth Drive wants to cover much of it with artificial turf. There was a hearing with about 50 people with numerous concerns, including the adverse environmental effects of such turn and the adverse effects on those with disabilities. The record remains open before the Hearing Examiner for another 14 days for anyone who wishes to submit additional comments.

OLD BUSINESS

■ Alan noted that one of his priorities has been and is to broaden and increase the membership and to make it more diverse both geo-

graphically and otherwise. He urged everyone to reach out to other associations and urge them to join.

Adjournment: It was moved, second, and unanimously approved to adjourn at 9:30 pm. ■



**REMEMBER
TO VOTE !**

MCCF ExCom Minutes for September 24, 2020

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Attendees (by Zoom call): Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Bailey Con-drey, Karen Cordry, Harriet Quinn (part), Jacquie Bokow (part), Sue Schumacher

Meeting convened at 7:02 p.m.
Motion to approve agenda made,
seconded, and approved.

Treasurer's Report by Jerry Garson: MCCF received \$60 in dues since July 1 and has spent \$515, for a net deficit of \$445. The payments were for \$215 for the website and \$300 for Committee for Montgomery. The account balance is \$9,673.

ExCom Minutes, cont.

OLD BUSINESS

Discussion about ballot initiatives. It was noted that the MCCF had previously taken a position on the Council nine districts and collected signatures to place the initiative on the 2004 ballot. Alan will present the pending initiatives again, noting the prior position and asking whether anyone wanted to propose a motion with respect to action by the Civic Fed.

UPCOMING MEETING

The October meeting will be a discussion of the Draft General Master Plan with Gwen Wright, Director of the County Planning Department ([see article on page 3](#)). The plan is proceeding under the name of “Thrive Montgomery 2050.” The first working draft will go to the



Planning Board on October 1, and the public hearing is scheduled for November 19. There will be a relatively short presentation, with most of the time for questions and discussion so please send any thoughts to Harriet for her to compile. We will also have time for further discussion of the ballot questions along the lines noted above.

MEMBERSHIP EFFORTS

There have been a number of associations that have joined recently;

Jerry will circulate the current list of members to the ExCom so we can all look at who we know that *aren't* members and make contact with them.

COMMUNICATIONS

MCCF testified at the Council hearing on the Subdivision Staging Policy ([see testimony on page 6](#)) and resolutions were adopted at the September meeting on the Beltway EIS and the SSP.

Alan noted that he was looking to energize and publicize our communications with the Council and other governmental entities. He will send the September resolutions to the appropriate recipients, and get our testimony to the Council President, the County Executive, and the Planning Board Chair.

It was also noted that *The Sen-*

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 Alan Bowser at *president at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

ExCom Minutes, cont.

tinell is back on line and will likely welcome content. It was agreed that any actions at the October meeting on resolutions should be publicized ASAP in light of the large amount of early voting going on this year.

Alan also noted that he was re-starting the Community Hero feature in the newsletter. This month will feature Elliott Levine, who had been carrying out Sunday afternoon concerts throughout the COVID period to raise money for the Capital Area Food Bank and Shepherd's Table. Future nominations are welcome.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Planning/Land Use

Alan reported, noting that the Council is considering Planning Board's SSP recommendations.

There are concerns including whether the moratoria concept should be dropped and the reduction and elimination of impact fees. The County Executive is not currently supporting some of the proposals. (See MCCF testimony [on page 6](#).)

Transportation

Jerry is working on the November and December meetings. Delegate Marc Korman may talk about the P3 process generally, and the failure on the Purple Line, and how that would affect current thinking about the future of the I-495/270 project. Kevin Quinn, the head of the Mass Transit Admin., may also be invited. He noted that the DEIS for the latter project is still under review and will likely need to be rewritten.

ExCom Minutes, cont.

Environmental

■ Alan noted that the Sierra Club is promoting federal legislation to bar certain single-use plastics and/or to ensure that all plastics are recyclable and we might want to support that. The pending bill is HR 5845; California is working on a simpler version.

■ He also noted that he has successfully worked with the two stream water organizations referred to at the September meeting to ensure cooperation and a united approach on stormwater issues.

■ Finally, it was noted that the developer at Ellsworth has dropped (!) the proposal to use artificial turf on the street there.

Adjournment: It was moved, seconded, and unanimously approved to adjourn at 8:20. ■



Montgomery County Civic Federation

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Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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