

"Federation Corner" column
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2006-07 MCCF Planning and Land Use (PLU) Committee Activities Report

by Jim Humphrey
MCCF Planning & Land Use Chair

The Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) Planning and Land Use Committee is the most active of MCCF's committees. We have participated in many issues in the past year and look forward to being just as active in the next 12 months. We are always looking for new communities to help understand our county's planning and land use policies and for new committee members to help in our work.

PLU COMMITTEE MEMBERS - Sarah Gilligan; Max Bronstein; Eileen Finnegan; Sandy Vogelgesang; Kathie Hulley; Amy Presley; Wayne Goldstein; and Jim Humphrey, Chair. Committee conducted business through informal meetings, telephone discussions and email polling of members.

MCCF PROGRAMS - The PLU Committee hosted two programs at regular monthly delegate assemblies - on County Housing Programs (September 2006) and on the County Growth Policy (May 2007).

MCCF NEWSLETTER - The PLU Committee contributed articles to 7 newsletter issues - "County Housing Program," September 2006; "PLU Report," December 2006; "Growth Policy," January 2007; "County Attorney Fails to Defend Board of Appeals" and "PLU Report," February 2007; "Agricultural Policy Group Files Report," March 2007; "Legality of Development Districts," April 2007; "Resolution to Model Buildout" and "Program on Growth Policy," May 2007; "Proposed Changes to County Growth Plan" and "Growth Policy Resolution." June 2007.

FEDERATION CORNER COLUMNS - The PLU Committee Chair submitted 5 columns that were published in the Federation Corner column of The Montgomery Sentinel newspaper - "County Council Report Card," 9/7/06; "Real Plans for Slow Growth," 12/14/06; "Updating our Affordable Housing Programs," 12/21/06; "Recent Events Point Way for Affordable Housing in the County," 2/22/07; "Time to Revisit the Growth Policy," 5/3/07; "Making Dollars and Sense of Growth Policy," 6/28/07.

MCCF COMMUNITY HEROES - The PLU Committee nominated two recipients who were named MCCF Community Heroes - Bernie Fisker (April '07) and Eileen Finnegan (May '07).

PLANNING BOARD VACANCIES - The PLU Committee helped coordinate the MCCF Ad Hoc Committee that screened resumes of applicants to fill the Planning Board Chairman vacancy (June 2006) and screened resumes and interviewed finalists for two Commissioner vacancies (May 2007). The Ad Hoc Committee sent letters to Council identifying those candidates deemed highly qualified.

REZONING CASES BEFORE HEARING EXAMINER - The PLU Committee participated on behalf of MCCF in two cases before a Hearing Examiner - Battery Lane LLC Development Plan Amendment, began 1/29/07 (before Martin Grossman); Arlington Road Post Office, Bethesda rezoning, began 5/7/07 (before Francoise Carrier).

COMMITTEE STUDIES - The PLU Committee published its Site Plan Enforcement Study Summary on 4/6/07, following Planning Board action on last of known site plan violations.

CORRESPONDENCE - PLU Committee sent following letters - to Council proposing amendment to Bill 48-06 - Road Code standards, 2/5/07; to County Executive re: County Attorney's defense of Board of Appeals, 4/24/07; to County Executive, Planning Board Chair and Council President re: recommendation to model buildout, 5/29/07; to Residential Infill Task Force re: minimizing negative impact of mansionization 6/5/07; to certain

Councilmembers re: amending definition of "green area" June '07; to Council staffer Faden re: MCCF amendment to Bill 48-06, 6/26 & 27/07.

MEETINGS - PLU Committee representative(s) attended meetings as follows - with DPWT Deputy Director Gonzalez re green infrastructure & stream quality, Aug. '06; with Planning Board Chairman Hanson (along with other civic representatives), Sept. '06; of Planning Board's MD 355 Community Forum (formerly "Centers & Boulevards"), 9/27/06; with Office of Legislative Oversight, for Residential Infill Construction study, 10/3/06; with new DPS Director Joyner, 4/16/07; with Office of Legislative Oversight, for MPDU Program study, 3/7/07; of County Executive's Affordable Housing Working Group meetings; of Planning Board's Working Group on draft Development Approval Manual; sat in on Council interviews of County Executive appointees to head DHCA & DPS; with Councilmember Trachtenberg on growth policy, May and July 2007.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION REQUESTS - PLU Committee representative(s) attended meetings with seven neighborhood groups to discuss issues of importance to them, responded to dozens of telephone and email information requests, and Chair presented seminar on "Land Use, Zoning and Development Approval Process" to Town of Chevy Chase Long Range Planning Committee members on 2/15/07.

PARTICIPATED IN PLANNING BOARD GROWTH POLICY FORUM - PLU Committee Chair Humphrey participated as a panelist in the May 5, 2007 Growth Policy Forum hosted by the Planning Board.

TESTIMONY - PLU Committee testified on following issues (PB denotes Planning Board) - Council on ZTA 06-18, amending PRC Zone near airport - 7/18/06 (Goldstein); PB on Rugby Condo Site Plan review- 7/20/06 (Humphrey); PB on draft Rules of Procedure - 10/5/06 (Humphrey); Council on ZTA 06-24, home occupations - 10/24/06 (Humphrey - no written statement); PB on Hillmead resubdivision - 11/30/06 (Goldstein); Council on ZTA 06-26, amended Development Plan approval in Commercial & Industrial Zones - 1/16/07 (Humphrey); Council on SRA 06-03, suspend preliminary plan approvals - 1/16/07 (Humphrey); Council on Bill 48-06 - 1/23/07 (Goldstein); PB on Hillmead subdivision extension - 2/1/07 (Goldstein); PB on ZTA 07-03, allow voluntary provision of Workforce Housing - 3/22/07 (Humphrey); PB on Ashton Meeting Place project plan - 4/23/07 (Humphrey, via letter); PB on Rugby Condo Site Plan review (second time) - 5/3/07 (Humphrey); Council on ZTA 07-05, minor Site Plan amendment approvals - 6/12/07 (Goldstein); Council on Growth Policy - 6/19/07 (Humphrey).

Committee members regularly read the many plans sent to them by the Planning Board and the Board of Appeals and also observe, assist and advise others about Master Plan and Sector Plan processes.