



CIVIC FEDERATION NEWS

Official Publication of the Montgomery County Civic Federation
Serving the Public Interest Since 1925

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747TH SESSION

WWW.MONTGOMERYCIVIC.ORG

MAY 2003

MAY 12 PROGRAM DELEGATES MEETING

THREE SECTORS OF THE MCPS STUDENT BODY: DIFFERING NEEDS COMPETING FOR LIMITED RESOURCES?

By Marc R. Adelman, Education Chair

For our May Delegates Meeting the Education Committee will host a panel discussion of three different groups of MCPS students and whether they must compete for limited financial resources. We will be seeking consensus "answers" to some very thorny questions. Why? Because we expend an enormous amount of resources including money, time and energy on public education, and most of us are NOT happy with the results. Do we know what our goal is? "Success for Every Student" or the best education that can be achieved by each student given his/her abilities and our available resources"? Do we know what it is about the results that we don't like? Let's talk about elements of the problem and hope we can find elements of solutions.

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FEDERATION'S TRANSPORTATION FORUM APRIL 23 MEETING IN COUNTY COUNCIL'S CHAMBER A MAJOR SUCCESS



MCCF Transportation Chair Dan Wilhelm provides an overview of the long-term transportation funding shortfall at the county and state levels. The Forum was televised on Channel 6. (See page 5 - "A Summary of the Transportation Forum")

NOMINATING COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES SLATE

By I Dean Ahmad, Nominating Committee Chair

Nominees for 2003-2004 officers are:

President: Cary Lamari

First Vice-President: Dan Wilhelm

Second Vice-Presidents: John Warnock, Pat Cummings, Mark Adelman and Rosey Poole

Treasurer: Luella Mast

Recording Secretary: Richard Zierdt

District Vice-Presidents: District 2- Richard Strombotne; District 3- Tom DeGraba; District 4- Bob Abrams; District 5 - Dale Tibbitts.

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Nominating Committee Report (cont.)

The Nominating Committee (Dean Ahmad, Chair, Peggy Dennis, Dean Gibson, Jorge Ribas, Lois Sherman, Lee Shipman and Charles Wolff) is pleased to present the above slate of nominees for the 2003-2004 membership year of the Civic Federation.

The Committee met three times in person followed by e-mail and telephone follow-ups. All members of the Committee attended at least one meeting. (There were five, seven, and six members present at the three meetings and the seventh contributed comments by phone at the final meeting.

The Nominating Committee elected to make no recommendations for the positions of District 1 V.P. and Corresponding Secretary. Nominations for those positions may be made from the floor at the meeting on May 12.

A Forum on Education (cont.)

To help us, we have invited three panelists, each with extensive experience in the area of education advocacy; each associated with advocacy of a slightly different "sector" of the MCPS student body. At the risk of oversimplifying, we "identified" three sectors, spread across the so-called "achievement gap" and each of our three panelists can be thought of as advocating for one of those sectors.

Students at the low end of the achievement gap: Valerie Ervin is co-chair of the Montgomery County Education Forum (MCEF), a grass roots advocacy group based in the Silver Spring area. Based on its studies indicating that tracking has a pernicious effect on the education of various minority groups and that tracking is a major contributor to the achievement gap, MCEF is working to end the practice of tracking in Montgomery County Schools. Valerie Ervin is currently chief of staff for Montgomery County Councilman George Leventhal.

The average student: Abbey Schneider is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, an organization instrumental in the development of her vision for progressive, equitable education that reaches all children. She is also a member of the High School Task Force, established by the Montgomery County Board of Education to examine the current state of high schools and develop a vision for their future. Abbey is also the coordinator of the EXCEL Program, a new resource-rich program that utilizes small class sizes, a low student-counselor ratio, and an advisory component to provide average ninth grade students with the academic, social and emotional skills necessary to be successful in a rigorous college preparatory curriculum in a

large comprehensive high school. Abbey has taught elementary and middle school in San Francisco and is currently in her fourth year of teaching high school in Montgomery County Public Schools.

Students at the upper end of the achievement gap: John Hoven, GTA co-president since 1991, has championed GTA's vision that "All children, including those with outstanding abilities, deserve an appropriate education and the opportunity to achieve their potential." He helped write the 1995 revision of the MCPS Policy on Gifted Education, which requires MCPS to provide an accelerated and enriched curriculum to any student who wants the added challenge. He used that policy mandate to force open admissions into the honors pre-algebra course "Investigations in Mathematics", which led to a 50 percent increase in the number of students completing Algebra I by 8th grade. And he was instrumental in the formation of a new coalition of organizations representing gifted, special ed., Asian, and African-American parents and advocates for better curriculum. His current outrage is the new MCPS math curriculum, which he says is designed to prepare students to enter high school with math skills no better than 5th grade arithmetic.

At some level we all want every kid to succeed. And at some level we each care most about some smaller group of kids - my son, your grandchildren, the kids in our local school, etc. And many of us become advocates for that smaller group; which is good in a way because it gets us to focus on what is wrong and what needs to be done. But it is also bad because it tends to divide the student population (and us) into arbitrary groups and often seems to end up with the different groups competing with one another. Are they? Do they need to be? OK, so the questions are rhetorical and we all know that we want the best for every kid. But how do we accomplish that? The devil is in the details! Let's talk about it on May 12.

Delegate Meeting Minutes **April 14, 2003**

–by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

Delegate Meeting Minutes April 14, 2003 – by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

MCCF president Cary Lamari calls meeting to order at 7:46. Those present introduce themselves.

Agenda. Add: ZTA 03-06; MPDU Buyouts; Funding of the Office of the Inspector General; MC/ACLU, civil rights. Agenda is approved.

Community Hero Award. Dr. Adele McQueen, this month's recipient was not able to attend. Cary described her efforts for affordable housing and for those with disabilities, particularly mental health.

Approval of the March delegate meeting minutes. Approved on voice vote.

MC/ACLU. Steven Dyer, MC Civil Rights Coalition. The goal of the Coalition is to follow the lead that other communities have taken, namely, to call on our public officials to protect our civil rights. Our rights have been trimmed "considerably" since 9/11. There will be a meeting April 27th 7-9 PM at the Leland Center in Bethesda. MCCRC calls on the MCCF to help advertise the meeting. Bob Abrahms: What are some of the abuses? A: Invasion of privacy rights: monitoring religious and political activities. Rights to legal representation could be monitored. Monitoring of library usage. Search and seizure protections of our homes have been reduced. Patriot Act II, not yet passed, would be even more onerous. Motion is made and seconded to post the information on the MCCF website as long as a disclaimer is included that the MCCF has taken no position on this matter. Passes on voice vote.

Program. County Budget. Chuck Lapinski (MCCF) and Joe Beach (acting director of Montgomery County Office of Management and Budget). Mr. Beach distributes a booklet on the budget. Projected Operating budget gap of about \$320M for FY2004, over 10% of the County budget. Expenditures have increased considerably. Increased health costs and public school enrollment are but two examples. Investments have suffered. County looks at taxes, usage fees, fines, and commitment of public officials. Will not estimate labor contracts. Cost savings: Cancelled all supplemental appropriations. Reduced agency expenditures. Beach's office asked for reductions. Agencies have eliminated positions. Fee increases. Ambulance fees.

Q and A. Peggy Dennis: How active is your office in advocacy, vis-à-vis expanding housing projects, exploding schools, accelerating demands of services? A: Not a function of the executive branch; not much the branch can do. Jerry Garson: Why are we extending \$8M in long-term leases? Why hasn't debt management gone for lower interest rates? (Increase of \$8M in debt service) A: We do a good job in this area. County gets the best interest rates it can. There are demands for services – schools, roads, etc. It's the decision of County officials. Q: Is there a balance sheet every year? A: Yes. Q: Jorge Ribas: Debt service, \$200M in FY2004. How much does the County owe in total? Answers are hard to find. A: Mr. Beach can get the answer (total outstanding debt). Q: Dick Strombotne. Now is a good time to borrow, with low interest rates, to fund the County's needs? A: Increased debt would increase operating expenses. More bonds would increase debt service. Dick feels this increase is justified. Q: Mark

Adelman: Unfunded mandates from the Federal government? Security needs, etc. A: \$10M in requests, by County agencies, for homeland security were denied. No requests for services from the federal government have been received. Q: Fifa Northrop: Parking fines: where does it go? A: Parking fines in a particular district go to the district and to general transportation funding. Q: Jorge: What is difference in operating expenses between the old and new jails? A: Mr. Beach can get that information. Q: Luella Mast: What portion of County income is paid by businesses and the public? A: Mr. Beach can find that. Q: Stan Schiff: The MCCF had a symposium on growth, expenses, etc. Mr. Duncan feels new development funds the County, but the evidence suggests otherwise. Should the County take another look at this? A: Mr. Beach cannot comment on this. Charles Pritchard: Police helicopters? Why not funded? A: Costs are too high. Helicopters were not requested by the police.

Dan Wilhelm. A Transportation Policy Forum (on policy, not projects) will be held Wednesday April 23, 7:30 , sponsored by the MCCF.

Cut-and-Cover. Dan moves that the MCCF rescind its motion that opposed Cut-and-Cover that passed in March until we have a complete debate. Seconded. Dan distributes information he obtained as chair of the transportation committee. The project manager to whom Dan referred in his information is a state employee. Several MCCF delegates feel that another debate is only fair. Some feel the issue was decided last month. Charles Pritchard feels major environmental representatives have no problem with cut-and-cover. Motion to table fails 15-17. Dean reminds the body that to Rescind takes 2/3 to pass. Friendly amendment to change Rescind to Reverse is contested. Discussion ensues, but "rescind" is retained in the motion. Motion passes 24-5-1.

ZTA 03-06 (because of LCOR Development). Metro station traffic policy is affected. LCOR wants to avoid a traffic study. Dan moves that the MCCF oppose ZTA 03-06 (which changes the methods by which rezoning is granted). Seconded. Passes 23-1-1.

9:38 PM. *Electoral Reform sub-committee.* Dale Tibbits. Distributes a handout of Options and asks for comments. Richard: were 7 local council members considered? A: Yes. Luella: Would a straw vote tonight be considered? A: Yes. Dan: wants to keep 9 councilmembers, even if all were local. Peggy: should public financing be separate? Stan: retain current system of Council districts, but also favors campaign finance reform. Q: were school board elections considered? A: No, nor were state representatives (only Council offices and campaign reform). Dick: Campaigns give too much weight to large contributors under the current system. Q: What about slates of candidates? Deborah Volmer: supports campaign finance reform. Chuck

Lapinski: We did not do enough in the last election. Neal Potter (a previous County Executive) won on less money. Tom DeGraba: Campaign finance reform may not be effective. Option 2 may be best. Pat: these options are not mutually exclusive. Q: Were Non-partisan elections considered? A: No. Straw votes are taken. Option 1: 6 votes. Option 2: 16 votes. Option 3: 3 votes. Option 4: 20 votes.

Affordable Housing Sub-Committee. Sarah Gilligan. Wants to change its name to Committee on Housing. No objection. Sarah moves that the Montgomery Housing Initiative take no actions until the MCCF and the citizens of Montgomery County have been given sufficient time to consider their proposals. Seconded. Groups are solicited, but not individuals. Motion passes 25-0-0.

A motion is made that the MCCF request the County Council to place an immediate moratorium on DHCA/HOC approval of buyouts of MPDUs, which are required by law in new residential projects of 35 units or greater in size. Seconded. Passed unanimously.

Funding of the Office of the Inspector General. A motion is made that the MCCF support the office of the inspector general. Seconded. Passes unanimously.

Dean moves that Jorge Ribas chair a subcommittee to interview Park and Planning candidates. Seconded (five). Passes without opposition.

Meeting is adjourned at approximately 10:10 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Richard Zierdt

ExComm Meeting Minutes April 24, 2003

—by Richard Zierdt, Recording Secretary

ExCom Meeting Minutes April 24, 2003 by Richard Zierdt

Dan Wilhelm calls the meeting to order at 7:52 PM.

Previous ExComm Minutes approved. Richard Zierdt announces he will be unable to take minutes at the next ExComm meeting, May 22.

Treasurer's Report. Luella Mast distributes her reports; one two pages, the other four. Bank balance as of March 31, 2003 was about \$7708.

Transportation. MCCF sponsored a Transportation Forum yesterday that went very well. Lack of funding is a big issue. Approving growth without understanding its cost is a problem.

CFM – Committee for Montgomery. Luella Mast. Distributes handout. MCCF is a member (dues: \$50/year). CFM is the only group to which MCCF is a member. CFM meets on 1st Mondays. It has an executive director who is paid. It has a very stringent approval process. Luella moves that the MCCF sitting president or her/his designee shall be the representative to the CFM. Seconded. Passes with one abstention. Dick Kaufunger moves that a letter be sent to CFM asking that organization to adjust their bylaws so that a representative designated by a member organization's president be given voting rights. Seconded. Passes with one abstention.

Historic Preservation. Wayne Goldstein. Montgomery County commissioned a study of Silver Spring business district buildings that might be identified as historic. About 20 properties have been listed. A group of (MCCF) individuals could filter through the list and make recommendations.

Discussion on the Office of the Inspector General. Dick Kaufunger. County should de-fund Go Montgomery! and keep the Office. Council member Phil Andrews will hold a press conference supporting the Office on Monday, 12:45 PM.

Coalition to Build the Inner Purple Line. Luella Mast. Distributes a handout. Bob Abrahms moves that the Excomm recommend to MCCF delegates that the MCCF join the Coalition to Build the Inner Purple Line. Seconded. Some discussion. Some feel the term "Inner Purple Line" is too imprecise. Others feel the MCCF should support the project since so many other groups are members. Stan Schiff moves to table. Seconded. Motion to table passes on voice vote.

Housing Committee. Dick Kaufunger and Wayne Goldstein spoke on the Rock Creek Master Plan and low-income housing. They testified before the Planning Board. Both feel that housing is being pitted against land planning. Wayne submitted a list of 20 questions to a Park and Planning staff person, and is waiting for a response.

Community Hero Award. Upon recommendation by many, Rosie Poole will be recognized on May 12.

Pat Cummings distributes a three-page handout on Robert's Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure.

Delegate Meeting Program: May 12: Education (Adelman). June: Awards meeting. Dick Kaufunger chairs the Awards Committee, which has met twice. July and August: summer break.

Education Committee. Mark Adelman. June meeting to discuss school management of closed schools. George Sauer

is monitoring progress of charter school state legislation before the Governor.

Environment Committee. Charles Pritchard. Thanks Dick and Wayne for their testimony.

9:22 pm.

Land Use and Planning Committee. Tom DeGraba. Bill 03-06. There seems to be an over-emphasize on affordable housing at the cost of many other concerns.

Membership Committee. Charles Wolfe mentions that the MCCF has about 65 paid member organizations.

Electoral Process. Dale Tibbitts. Wants to bring two motions before the Delegates. One would recommend that the County have nine council districts, all elected locally, with no more than 100,000 residents per district, and that there be an odd number of districts. Dick moves this motion, and Dean seconds. Motion passes 8-1-3. Peggy Dennis moves that the MCCF join the group “Maryland Network for Publicly Funded Campaigns” that is studying the public finance of elections. Seconded. Dick offers that the MCCF “work with” rather than “join.” Peggy would accept “consider joining.” Concept: “Clean Money, Clean Elections.” Pat: this may favor the major political parties at the expense of the minor ones. Dean moves that the motion be tabled. Seconded. Peggy suggests a program on public finance. Motion to table passes 9-1-1.

Charles Pritchard speaks on the fine work that Dale Tibbitts and his committee has done, with general concurrence by the other ExComm committee members.

Committee to Interview Planning Board candidates. The committee is asked to make its recommendation to the May delegates meeting.

Dale Tibbitts. Charter Commission is also looking at Council elections.

Stan Schiff. What about the procedure for emergency motions? Dean: an ad-hoc committee could be formed, or brought before the next ExComm meeting.
Meeting adjourns 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Zierdt, recording secretary

A NOTE OF SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE EDITOR

A big, BIG note of thanks to Jorge Ribas for taking over my duties as wordsmith while I was off playing in the Chihuahuan desert. And thanks to Fifa Northrup for volunteering to do the production job normally carried out by Charlie Pritchard while he was recovering from surgery. Get well fast and thoroughly, Charlie!

PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR MAY 12

COUNTY COUNCIL AT-LARGE ELECTIONS

By Dale Tibbitts, Chair, Ad Hoc Committee on Election Reforms

Based on the straw poll taken at the last Delegates Meeting, I will be proposing the following Resolution at the May 12 Delegates Meeting. Please go to the MCCF Website for the full text of the background and justification.

Whereas the 2000 census population of Montgomery County is 873,341 and;

Whereas the average 2000 census population of a County Council district is 174,668 and;

Whereas the County Council is comprised of 4 at-large members and 5 members elected from districts and;
Whereas a Montgomery County Council at-large seat is the second largest legislative jurisdiction in the state behind US Senate and;

Whereas the cost of countywide political campaigns has escalated and;

Whereas large donors with special interests dominate political contributions for these seats and;

Whereas direct personal voter contact and grassroots organizing have been overwhelmed by impersonal and excessively expensive campaign financial expenditures and;

Whereas those large special interest contributors are perceived to exert undue influence on County policies and actions

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montgomery County Civic Federation supports changing the County Council representation to 9 single-member districts and 0 at-large members. The legal redistricting population of each district shall not exceed 100,000. The number of districts shall be an odd number. Smaller, neighborhood districts in which a candidate can effectively organize, be personally known and campaign with fewer financial resources will compensate for the trend towards increasingly large political contributions by special interests resulting in a better and more representative county government.

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US AT OUR NEXT DELEGATES MEETING EDUCATION FORUM

Monday, May 12, 2003, 7:45 p.m.

First Floor Auditorium

County Council Office Building, Rockville, MD

TRANSPORTATION POLICY FORUM REPORT

—by Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chair

The Civic Federation held an evening forum on Transportation Policies on April 23 that was televised on Channel 6. We hope you were able to watch it or that you will catch it when it is rebroadcast.

MCCF President, Cary Lamari, gave the introductory remarks. He reminded the audience of the Transportation Policy Report (TPR) conclusion that we can't build our way out of congestion. To manage the level of congestion requires a three-tiered approach: identify projects, provide funding and identify policies to be implemented. Past efforts by the county have focused on projects, with very little about policies and little said about how much we can afford.



Delegates queue up behind the microphone during the Q&A period

Council President Mike Subin provided opening remarks primarily focusing on the current budget shortfall at both the state and county levels. He indicated that action taken by the state legislature means less funds for Montgomery County and that the Governor may veto the measure that allows Montgomery County to raise the vehicle registration fee to fund County transportation projects

I followed by reminding everyone that MCCF is looking at the long-term; this includes not only priorities during periods of budget deficits but also priorities for the future when the economy may be better. I provided an overview of the long-term funding shortfall at both the county and state levels. The County Executive's "Go Montgomery" program calls for \$1B spending from the county's revenues and almost \$10B from the state's resources. The projects in "Go Montgomery" are sometimes over and above those contained in the County Operating Budget plus Capital Improvements Program (CIP) and State Capital

Transportation Program (CTP). At other times "Go Montgomery" accelerates CIP/CTP projects. The overall relationship of projects and the funding is confusing at best. Assuming the projects from CIP/CTP and "Go Montgomery" are combined, the shortfall based upon prior funding levels is about \$425M for the county and \$8.9B for the state by 2015. If the increased funding sources identified by Mr. Duncan are enacted but split between the county and state, the county's shortfall is overcome by the impact taxes, the three-cent property tax increase and a transit fare increase. The state (and federal) shortfall is reduced with the vehicle registration increase and gas tax, but the shortfall is still \$8.5B.

I next provided the project priority list by type of improvement that MCCF had voted for last June. The prioritization of projects included buses, interchanges, transitways, local roads, and lastly freeways/major roads. I reminded everyone that the Council of Governments (COG) is working toward a January 2004 deadline for proposing a way to reduce air pollution to satisfy Federal EPA requirements, or risk losing federal funding for transportation projects. About half of the funding from the state is actually federal funds. I provided time estimates for building different types of facilities – 20 years for major freeways, 10-12 years for transitways and major roads, and 2 years to purchase more buses. Lastly, I suggested modifications to the "Go Montgomery" program to account for the funding shortfall and MCCF priorities.



MCCF President Cary Lamari listens pensively to the ongoing discussions

Stan Schiff made a presentation on policies. He indicated that growth is adding more traffic to our roads and that residential growth is driven by job creation. He reminded us that the county recognized the importance of balancing growth with transportation capabilities years ago with the enactment of the Annual Growth Policy (AGP). The Council realizes that the AGP is flawed and has asked the

Planning Board to study the problem and report back this fall. In addition, growth from outside the county contributes to county congestion but is outside the control of the AGP. What we need is a regional organization to address growth regionally. Mr. Schiff proposed a roundtable discussion to share ideas and to determine whether there is agreement that a new regional organization is needed. Stan envisions an organization that covers parts of Maryland, and maybe Washington, D.C.

Stan next talked about MD 355, which he called the county's "Main Street", and the need for a new, coherent vision for that road that includes transportation, economic development, land use, housing, parks and open space. Grade separated interchanges and improved bus service are part of the solution, but we also need to have transit-oriented development (TOD) so that more residents have less need to drive. The Planning staff is currently working on a vision that will find its way into various master plans. Stan called for the Planning Board to move swiftly with this project and to assure that there will be a full measure of citizen involvement.

Mr. Steve Caflish of the Sierra Club made the presentation on land use for Pam Lindstrom. The Balanced Land Use proposal is based upon three principles:

Improve balance between jobs and housing within the main regions of the County.

Use transit as the backbone to organize growth.

Reduce growth in rural and outer low-density suburban areas.

The first principle would make better use of existing roads by distributing growth so that more people who need to drive will travel in the non-peak direction of travel. The second principle goes along with TOD to encourage more people to use transit. The Planning Board has accepted the first two principles with Council endorsement as guidance as they update master plans. The endorsement of the third principle by the Planning Board is not clear.

Mr. Caflish next talked about the concept of transportation demand management (TDM). He identified several existing programs where employers can provide funds to employees to use transit or share rides and recover much of the cost via tax breaks. He encouraged the county and state to increase funding for these programs and to promote them with employers, many of whom are unaware of the programs. Mr. Caflish encouraged the county to implement a number of additional efforts: provide real-time information for buses and Metrorail; open more commuter stores; install more bus shelters; add/improve sidewalks; and put greater emphasis on outreach efforts. Mr. Caflish also suggested a study to determine the feasibility of establishing parking impact taxes in the county.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

First, I wish to thank Council President Mike Subin for his gracious and enlightening participation in the Civic Federation's recent forum on Transportation Policy. (Please see Dan Wilhelm's summary.) Mr. Subin offered many helpful insights with respect to the Council's overview. I also found Mike to be sincere in his concern and frustration with the direction in which Montgomery County is headed and our inability to build our way out of traffic congestion at any time in the foreseeable future.

I am troubled that a number of members of the County Council still, apparently, do not seem to "get it". Several members of the Council were elected on the promise they would address traffic congestion and end gridlock. In a recent hearing on Bill 03-06, however, the Council appeared to support the proposal to not count or study the impact of additional vehicle trips when applications are made to rezone land around Metro stations. This seems a very unrealistic and irresponsible approach to a fundamental aspect of land use and planning. Some members of the County Council don't seem to understand the difference between SMART GROWTH and the OVERDENSIFICATION of certain master plan areas. In the past, standard procedure has been to prepare a *local area review* to determine the impact of a rezoning project on local roads and intersections and a *policy area review* when the cumulative effect on the entire Master Planning area is considered. Surely, if the Council stops requiring these studies and the traffic mitigation plans which should logically follow them, the congestion and gridlock around Metro stations will only increase more!

Next, I would like to address the issue of our budgetary shortfall. This year our costs will exceed our income, both at the county and state levels. The Council, therefore, has a very difficult task ahead of it. They are now doing what must be done: looking at county programs, agencies and offices that might reasonably be cut back or closed.

Many experienced economists warned the County Council that the county's fiscal situation was shaky and would only get worse. The Council ignored these warnings and entered into untenably costly contracts with county employees. Now the Council has the distressing job of reducing expenditures, possibly at the cost of county workers and its own reputation as an honorable negotiating partner. I support Montgomery County's employees and believe we should honor any legitimate and fairly negotiated contract with them, unless all other opportunities for budget reduction have been exercised and no other options are available.

There are other agencies that, in all fairness, should be put on the table and subjected to intense scrutiny during this budget crisis. These are offices that have not and cannot provide the government and taxpayers any reasonable benefit during this and coming years. One is the office of “Go Montgomery”, the political creation of the County Executive. The “Go Montgomery” office was created to promote the Executive’s personal (never approved by our elected officials) and political agenda. During the election campaign it helped obscure the fact that Duncan’s administration had really been the “Slow Montgomery” administration, spending the smallest share of CIP money towards transportation than any county executive in the last twenty years. In creating the “Go Montgomery” Office, Mr. Duncan has created two additional budget categories dealing with transportation; the “Go Montgomery” CIP and the “Go Montgomery” Operating Budget categories. There is large overlap and duplication between these (now) four budget entities, thus more opportunity for confusing, conflicting and duplicative budget decisions. Moreover, the “Go Montgomery” Office duplicates, to some extent, the function of the Transportation Office within the Department of Public Works and Transportation. But the “Go Montgomery” Office, (director and staff) has only been funded for the current year. As it is unclear whether there will be any funds available this year and the next for any transportation projects, the rationale for continuing to fund this office is highly questionable. Moreover, it costs about the same amount to fund this office as it does to fund the office of the Inspector General. Perhaps this is why some politicians are advocating eliminating the IG. One would think the “Go Montgomery” office would be a prime candidate for review for governmental waste in the near future!

Another likely candidate for closure is the County’s Office of Economic Development (OED). It was clear to the

members of the Transportation Policy Review Task Force that congestion and gridlock are the result of residential growth that is permitted before the infrastructure and services required by the growth itself have been funded and built. And everyone seems to agree that residential growth is spurred on by the growth of jobs and employment opportunities. Since it is the task of the OED to stimulate job creation and since they seem to have been doing too well, perhaps this office should be eliminated, or at least severely cut back, until such time as our growth can slow down to a financially sustainable level.

In this budget climate, the last thing the Council should do is to eliminate the office of the Inspector General (OIG). This is the independent office that ferrets out waste, fraud and abuse in the county’s various agencies and programs. The Inspector General has found significant areas of waste, potential frauds and most certainly abuses that have cost taxpayers many dollars. Here are only a few examples: unauthorized procurement and use of government credit cards by county personnel; procurement of police consultant services through non-competitive, sole source awards; investigation of the former director of the department of liquor control; review of the take home car policy and; most egregiously, the purchase of over 100 new police cars that were allowed to sit unused for more than a year while their tires rotted, their batteries died, and some vehicles were cannibalized for parts. Montgomery County has a budget of approximately 3.4 billion dollars. The office of Inspector General costs less than \$500,000 a year to run. Time and again the OIG has saved the county more than its annual cost of operation while concomitantly providing the independent oversight of county personnel, both elected and appointed.



ARE WE MISUSING EMAIL SERVICES?

Many of us are becoming increasingly concerned that we are not observing proper email etiquette when addressing the group. Sometimes, trivial things that should be restricted to a few people are broadcast to the entire executive board. Occasionally, we use inflammatory language that is not conducive to effective and polite public discourse.

Email is a rapid mass communication system, but it can be abused very easily. Sometimes it is not what you say, but how you say it. Please think carefully what you are trying to accomplish before you hit the “send” button. Just as spoken words, an email message once sent can not be retrieved.

Mark Your Calendars

Please mark your calendars with the dates of the Civic Federation General Delegates meetings for the remainder of the 2002-2003 season. All meetings will be held in the COB Auditorium, beginning at 7:45 p.m.

Monday, May 12 – Education Forum
Monday, June 9 – Elections and Annual Awards

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR AD HOC COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

By Wayne Goldstein, Delegate – Kensington Heights CA

The Civic Federation has a history with historic preservation. In the last five years, the MCCF has written about and testified in favor of saving the Silver Spring Armory and historic designation for the Canada Dry Bottling Plant.

Last year, the County hired a consultant to identify all properties in the Silver Spring Central Business District 50 years old or older and then determine which ones were eligible for listing on the National Register. You may check the MCCF website for the list of properties.

The staff of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) is now preparing reports on the 22 properties that make up the three historic districts as well as the 11 individual sites. On or after May 28, these properties will be presented to the HPC, with a staff recommendation, so that the commissioners can decide if they want to provide protection to some or all of these properties by placing them on the County's Locational Atlas.

Once the HPC has made its own recommendation, the properties will be reviewed by the Planning Board which will make the final determination as to which ones to place on the Locational Atlas. It is expected that this process will continue through June and July.

Because there are too many properties for the delegates to review for themselves, the Executive Committee has created this ad hoc committee. Its duties will be to review the HPC staff reports and recommendations and to decide which properties to testify in support of protection before the HPC and the Planning Board.

As chairman of the Committee on Historic Preservation and as an officer of a historic preservation advocacy group, I will do all of the heavy lifting in terms of gathering,

reading, and condensing reports, preparing testimony, explaining the process and answering specific questions. However, I would like to be assisted by interested delegates who can help provide depth to the committee and can be available to read testimony from time to time.

Please contact Wayne at 301-942-8079 or at waynemgoldstein@hotmail.com

CAN MONTGOMERY COUNTY AFFORD “AFFORDABLE HOUSING”?

By Wayne Goldstein, Delegate – Kensington Heights CA

The Civic Federation's Housing Committee is brand new, but on Thursday, April 10, one day after the committee's first meeting, Dick Kauffunger and I had a spellbound audience before the Planning Board as we did a tag team testimony on the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. We delivered what may be the first of many blows against the dangers of an affordable housing concept that is instantaneously morphing from an idea to official policy with almost no public comment or debate.

Thanks to the research of Rosey Poole, this month's Community Hero, I was able to quickly study 47 years worth of land use history on the Upper Rock Creek. I began my testimony this way: "Awareness of the Upper Rock Creek was first dramatically forced upon our county almost 47 years ago. It began on July 20, 1956 when 2.25 inches of rain fell on the Upper Rock Creek, unleashing flooding that killed six people and causing \$500,000 in property damage."

I told how this carnage sparked a drive to prevent further killer floods by causing the building of Lakes Needwood and Bernard Frank and by creating tough limits on housing density to prevent too much runoff in order to protect the area's Class III streams. I recounted the various schemes of developers over the last 44 years to try to increase density in the Upper Rock Creek, including a proposal for a city of 10,000 that was labeled "Dream City" by the local press.

I pointed out how a succession of Planning Boards and County Councils had resisted previous calls for affordable housing because they were convinced that the greater density required for affordable housing was inappropriate for such an area that was so environmentally sensitive and had such a tragic history borne of too much runoff.

However, this Planning Board and County Council are poised to embrace, after 44 years, this generation of developers and their schemes to get the greater density, the cluster developments and the sewers, all in exchange for what are, in effect, a handful of temporarily affordable housing units also known as Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs). I say “temporarily” because there are time limits, 10-15 years, on how long such MPDUs must remain “affordable”, and it may be that thousands of such units have been lost over the years because of governmental inability to hold onto them.

The County and the developers claim that new Best Management Practices (BMPs) for stormwater management (SWM) will make it work. Although more is known about SWM today than even a decade ago, it is still a work-in-progress. So, in our testimony, we concluded that the Upper Rock Creek should not be a guinea pig for these new and as yet unproven BMPs, all for the sake of a few dozen MPDUs.

The Civic Federation made new friends that night as we proved that the concerns of local residents could no longer be dismissed as the whining of NIMBYs. Even the developers were impressed by our (Rosey's) historic scholarship.

Since then, I have learned that a property identified in the Master Plan as the best site for affordable housing in all of the Upper Rock Creek will be developed as market rate townhouses, but there will only be 33 in the first phase, meaning there will be no affordable housing/MPDUs built on this site. The preliminary plan for this property was approved by the Planning Board, despite its newfound concern with affordable housing, just last November.

As a member of the Civic Federation's Housing Committee, I will be working closely with Dick, Sarah Gilligan, Jim Humphrey and others as we gather the facts about housing, affordable and otherwise, write a report, and make our own recommendations to the delegates and then to the county about what the problem really is and what are the most effective, but also least disruptive and least destructive, ways to solve the perennial problem of “affordable housing”.

Join the Civic Federation

Download a membership application form today!

<http://www.montgomerycivic.org/MEMBERSH.pdf>

Community Hero for May

ROSEY POOLE

--by Cary Lamari, MCCF President

This month the Civic Federation recognizes a Community Hero known for her energy and “can do” attitude. You might even call Rosey Poole a “feisty” activist.

Rosey is not a novice when it comes to civic activism. She was active in grassroots politics in Baltimore County from 1991 through 1997 before moving to New Jersey where she focused her attention on crime prevention and the preservation and revitalization of older communities.

Rosey became involved in civic issues in Montgomery County when she learned that the Master Plan Advisory Group for the Upper Rock Creek area was composed mainly of developers with local citizens being poorly represented. Like most of us, Rosey believes that the residents of Upper Rock Creek should have a big say in the formulation of their Master Plan.

For the last three years Rosey has been working (and fighting) to get her community a “seat at the table” in the revision of the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan by educating people on the issues and showing them how to participate in the process. Rosey and her neighbors have formed the Upper Rock Creek Coalition (URCC), an umbrella organization consisting of 15 communities.

Based on numerous meetings and a comprehensive survey, the objectives of the URCC are to:

- insure that the flood control dams do not become so filled with silt that they can no longer prevent flooding in areas to the south as happened in the 1950's;
- preserve the environmental integrity of the Use III streams in the headwaters of Rock Creek;
- maintain the area's residential wedge character as depicted in the General Plan Refinement;
- protect the aquifers that supply the local drinking water; and to keep the already overcapacity schools and roads from becoming even worse.

We are very fortunate to have such talented, hard working and feisty individuals like Rosey in Montgomery County and we are honored to recognize her as our Community hero for the month of May.

The Federation's Comprehensive County Transportation Plan can be found at

<http://www.montgomerycivic.org/TPR7-03.pdf>

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Volunteers needed for Planning Board Applicants Interview Committee

--by Jorge Ribas, Planning Board Interviews Chair

The Montgomery County Council has advertised two positions in the Planning Board, one for a Democrat and the other for a Republican. The incumbents are Meredith K. Wellington (R) and Wendy C. Purdue (D).

Five other county resident had applied also. They are Spencer K. Stephens (D), Mitchell J. Roberts (D), Neville T. Levi (D), and Robert J. Smith (R). Gayle Libby Curtis has applied as not being affiliated to a political party

Justina Farber of the Council staff has indicated that the Council would interview candidates sometime in June 2003. We would like to interview the applicants before June, but we need to have a broader geographic representation in the committee. Please call Jorge Ribas at 301-258-1910 or by email at jribas@ribasconsulting.com if you would to volunteer.

Think about it...

You have just read one of the most thorough, independent, and accurate newsletters in the County. For over 78 years, elected officials, community leaders, citizens and journalists have relied on the *Civic Federation News* as an authoritative source of citizen's concerns and expectations.

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www.montgomerycivic.org/membersh.pdf

Delegates Meetings **Monday, May 12 – 7:45 p.m.**

**First Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Bldg.,
100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville**

AGENDA:

- 7:45 - Call to order, Cary Lamari presiding
- 7:50 - Announcements and Introductions
- 7:55 - Adoption of Agenda
- 8:00 - Approval of minutes (p. 2)
- 8:05 - Community Hero Award – Rosey Poole (p. 10)
- 8:10 – Program: Education Forum – Mark Adelman (p. 1)
- 8:50 – Afterthoughts on Transportation Policy Forum (p. 6)
- 8:55 – Nominating Committee – Slate of Officers (p. 1)
- 9:00 – Elections Reform Resolution – Dale Tibbitts (p. 6)
- 9:05 – Housing Committee – Sarah Gilligan
- 9:10 – Old Business – Officers Reports
- 9:25 – New Business
- 9:45 - Adjournment

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation** is a nonprofit, educational, and advocacy countywide organization. It was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Its monthly Delegates meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Monday of each month (except for holidays, July, August and December) at 7:45 p.m. in the First Floor Auditorium, County Office Building, Rockville, MD.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly. It is mailed to Delegates; associate members; news media, and local, state, and federal officials. Permission is granted to reprint any article provided proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County Civic Federation." Deadline for submissions for the next issue: Midnight Monday, May 26. Prepare submission in fully justified 11-point Times Roman font, preferably as a Word document, attach it to e-mail, and send it to Hotyakker@aol.com.

Please send all address corrections to Steve Howie,
P.O.Box 325, Clarksburg, MD 20871, 301-972-2736,
stevehowie@aol.com.

Next Executive Committee Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2003, 7:45 p.m.

Red Brick Courthouse

29 Courthouse Square, Rockville

(Note: there is free parking in front of the courthouse.)

**Montgomery County Civic Federation
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