



Civic Federation News

March 2009

Serving the Public Interest since 1925

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the Montgomery
County Civic Federation
Session 805
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March Program on Maryland's Public Service Commission By Chuck Lapinski, Public Utilities Chair

Our program on March 9 will focus on the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC): what it does and how it does it; what its legal and political limitations are; and our role as citizen ratepayers in its deliberations and processes. The commission and its staff is severely constrained by federal law and regulations, state laws and political demands, and upset and angry customers with little patience and less understanding of the constraints on the PSC. Its regulatory proceedings ensure that all utilities operating in Maryland follow strict guidelines for the safe, reliable, timely and effective delivery of their services.

Our program will begin with a brief discussion of the primary purposes of the commission and its proceedings; its history, focusing particularly on major events of the last 10-15 years which have forced changes in the way it conducts its business; and the types of constraints, issues and problems that it confronts in accomplishing its mission. Its regulatory powers cover virtually all public utilities operating in and through our state: gas, electric, rail transportation, taxis, communications etc. Some utilities such as WSSC are not covered under the PSC powers, but are governed and regulated by bi-county state legislation. Our program will look at:

- The ratemaking/approval process, and the constraints that have led to the big spikes in our rates.
- Why competition has not worked and may never work well.
- What businesses our utilities are really in: production, transmission and distribution.
- How these businesses and the companies have changed over the last 10-15 years and their impacts on us.
- What constrains our current and future needs: capacity; environmental impacts; interrupted and diminished services; safety; and costs.
- And, some real global effects from foreign investment and competition that may not be in our best interests.

We also have a role and stake in the PSC's proceedings. But our role is limited by the legislative proceedings and the willingness of our political leaders to understand the business of the utilities and its legislative judgments. Yes, there is a lot to learn; a lot to be concerned with; and, perhaps even more to be thankful for. In reality, the PSC

April Meeting Date Changed

The date of the April Regular Meeting has been changed. Because the presenters for our program on the County's budget will not be available on April 13, our April Regular Meeting will be on **Monday, April 6**. Please mark your calendars now so you will not miss the meeting and this important program.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

presents

EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS

Learn more about the procedures and law involved in the special exception land use process and "how to" be make your participation more effective. This seminar is organized by the Montgomery County Civic Federation for members of civic, citizen and homeowner associations.

SATURDAY, MARCH 7, 2009 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon

COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING

101 Monroe Street, Rockville

First Floor Auditorium

SPEAKERS:

Francoise M. Carrier, Director, Montgomery County Office of Administrative Hearings

Martin Klauber, Montgomery County People's Counsel

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is much more than a buffer, and we will identify and explore its other roles.

Save the Humans by Carole Ann Barth, Parks Chairman

Natural Resources staff within the Montgomery County Department of Parks work to identify and preserve special natural areas. Conservation areas include unusual plant communities, large chunks of high quality habitat, sensitive areas, rare species habitat, areas of high biodiversity and areas of exceptional scenic beauty. Conservation priorities are defined with a science-based process utilizing maps, models, and field work.

One can see how preserving the “best of the best” addresses Parks’ mission to “protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources;. . .” It would indeed be dreadful to lose the wood thrush and the showy orchid. The problem comes when you look at what happens to the rest of the natural resources, those deemed “less than the best”.

Parts of the County that were developed early on have few natural areas left, and most of what remains has been seriously impacted by surrounding development. Small, remnant forest fragments or the early-succession meadows of previously-developed plots usually do not qualify as “the best examples of unique plant community types” or “habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered species.” These areas are, however, critical habitat for the human species.

To be healthy and happy, the human animal needs natural areas where we live, work and play. Increasingly, science is documenting how nature benefits people. Urban trees cleanse the air, generate oxygen and cool urban heat islands. Trees and landscaping have also been shown to reduce crime in public housing developments.

Even the view of trees outside a window has been shown to speed the healing of hospital patients and watchable wildlife around nursing home windows improves the residents’ mental health. An article in the Journal of Physical Anthropology showed reduced levels of the stress hormone cortisol and changes in brain activity in subjects either walking in or watching a forest.

Sadly, at the same time we are learning so much more about the benefits of being in nature, fewer and fewer kids are spending time in natural areas. In fact, children today spend an average of 6 hours a day with the computer and TV but less than 4 minutes a day in outside unstructured play.

Richard Louv, in his book, “Last Child in the Woods, Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder” cites research showing that direct exposure to nature is essential for healthy childhood development. At the same

time, he recounts how nature pursuits benefit kids with obesity, depression, and ADHD.

For example, survey research suggests a relationship between children who regularly play in green spaces and reduced ADHD symptoms. In fact, one study found that a “dose of nature” had “effects the same size or even larger than the dose of medication.” This study involved an objective test of attention, not just children’s or parent’s impressions. One of the study’s authors says the evidence suggests that natural settings can benefit everyone. This might explain why environmental education measurably improves student performance in science, reading, math and social studies as well as reducing discipline problems.

Unfortunately, Parks Department planners place little to no value on unstructured outdoor play. They fret that open land in developed areas is too expensive not to be “improved.” To them, outside of the County’s special conservation parks, parks must be devoted to organized sports (so-called “active recreation”) or they are not being adequately used. Organized sports do have a lot to offer, but they cannot provide all the benefits of natural areas.

By pushing to develop more and more of the few remaining urban open areas into sports complexes, the Parks Department in effect sends the message that urban residents are second-class citizens, undeserving of easily-accessible beauty and peace close to home. In other words, if you are too little or too old or too handicapped to hike into the stream valley parks, you’ll just have to drive somewhere else to see or be in nature.

It’s time to add a new objective to Parks’ conservation program—“save the humans.” It’s an objective that’s critical to all our futures. In the words of Luther Standing Bear, “Man’s heart, away from nature, becomes hard; [the Lakota] knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon led to lack of respect for humans too.”

Civic Federation Leadership, 2009-2010

By Sandy Vogelgesang & Luella Mast, Nominations Committee Co-chairs

It’s YOUR turn to nominate a candidate for elected office in the Civic Federation or volunteer yourself for consideration! There could be no better way to help highlight shared County concerns and provide more clout for citizens and their civic associations. Just contact any of the five following members of the Nominating Committee:

- Chuck Lapinski (chair, Public Utilities) (301-384-0392) charlesslapinski@gmail.com
- Luella Mast (co-chair, Nominating) (301-384-4178) luellam@comcast.net
- Virginia Sheard (district VP) (301-949-3372) boots3303@aol.com

- Sandy Vogelgesang (co-chair, Nominating) (301-365-2347) everest.associates@erols.com
- Dan Wilhelm (chair, Legislation/Committee for Montgomery) (301-384-2698) djwilhelm@verizon.net

The Committee is looking primarily for those interested in serving on the **elected** Executive Committee for the Civic Federation. The elected officers range from President and First Vice President to Recording Secretary and Treasurer. The Committee would welcome as well hearing from those who would like to serve on the Executive Committee in order to focus on particular issues of special concern to many civic associations across the County.

The Committee is also interested in hearing from those interested in chairing or serving on the Federation's **non-elected** standing committees, ranging from education and the environment, to public finance and utilities. Volunteers would be especially welcome to fill vacancies in public safety and transportation.

The Nominating Committee will present its slate of nominees in the May 2009 issue of the Civic Federation News and at the May 11 meeting of Federation delegates. The election itself will take place at the June 8 meeting of the Federation.

President's Message by Arnie Gordon, President

In a continuing effort to train and support our civic association leaders and members I urge you to attend the third in our series of Saturday morning seminars scheduled for March 7th. [See the boxed announcement on the front page for details] Every neighborhood ought to have a resident trained in the Special Exceptions process and this is the best opportunity in some years for that to happen.

This month Dan Wilhelm, your Legislative Chair, and I have communicated with the County Council and our Montgomery County Delegation to the General Assembly on issues of concern to the membership.

MC 932-09 - A bill to empower the County Council to **exempt county employees** (including employees of WSSC, MNCPPC, MCPS and Montgomery College) and others **from a variety of important real estate taxes**. The membership voted unanimously to oppose this bill as unwarranted and an attempt to foist off on other taxpayers an additional burden which should rightly be borne by all fairly and equally. The bill presented in an earlier version was originally withdrawn but has again reared its ugly head.

SB 518 - Roadside tree protection. This bill underscores our desire to protect trees to a greater degree than state law presently allows, by delegating to the County Council the authority to set higher standards for the protection of trees in the public right-of-way. We

communicated support for this bill to the county delegation and to Senator Conway as head of the Committee that has jurisdiction for this subject.

SB 171 and 172 - Bills that **protect condominium owners and HOA members by restricting the ability to hold closed meetings of governing bodies** of these organizations without a proper reason. The present laws allow a two-thirds majority of these bodies to close a meeting for any reason they deem "compelling". We are indebted to Senator Lenett (D-19th L.D.) for co-authoring these bills and support the bills without reservation.

MC 920-09, SB 927-09 - **Bills to ban solicitation in the public roadways** except under a permit issued by the county. We and many of our member associations (most notably Greater Colesville C.A.) have long sought this legislation in the interest of public safety. Resistance from Fire and Rescue organizations and unions have prevented enactment despite provisions in these bills that would allow, by permit, campaigns like the annual Muscular Dystrophy "Fill the Boot" campaign. At deadline we learned that these bills have died in committee.

County Executive's Economic Stimulus Package - the County Executive has proposed a number of initiatives to stimulate or protect business' ability to react to the present recession. Led by our Planning and Land Use Chair, Jim Humphrey, we have been examining these closely to ensure that these laudable aims are not distorted to promote unnecessary or unwarranted privileges being extended to the development industry. Our areas of concern involve: developer impact fees; building permit fees, inspection deadlines; deadlines for the abandonment of permits; impact taxes (when payable); increases to the minimum validity period for adequate public facilities findings and more. We have expressed to appropriate county officials our concerns and will continue to do so.

Please let me know of your concerns, and your suggestions as to how the Civic Federation can be of greater service to you, by email at nmcaprexy@aol.com

Highway Solicitation Bills Fail By Dan Wilhelm, Legislation Chair

MCCF had supported the passage of state legislation to ban solicitation along highways except for situations where a permit was obtained from Montgomery County. The permit system would have placed restrictions on such solicitations. Two such public safety bills were introduced; one by Del Kaiser; another by Senator Raskin. The purpose of these bills was to keep people from walking out into traffic to solicit donations. The poster example of the need for these bills was the man in a wheelchair going back and forth on the two-foot wide median of six-lane New Hampshire Avenue and Randolph Road and the concern that he would fall into traffic.

Mark Your Calendar Now
for the
Montgomery County Civic Federation's
2009 ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET
Friday, May 15, 2009

Many of us would like to have had a complete ban on roadside solicitation, but we were willing to allow a permit system to accommodate the fire union "Fill the Boot" campaign. The union opposed the bills apparently because they would also have required County legislation to define and implement the permit system. The state legislation would have given the County the authority to pass such legislation. As a result of the union's opposition, the Council, the County Executive, Delegates and Senators were unwilling to support the thrust of the bills and adjust them to obtain something acceptable to both the public and the union. I hope all these elected officials revisit this chance to address an important public safety problem before accidents and injuries occur. It is not a matter of whether they will occur, but when and how often. Actually, elected officials, there is still time to address the issue this year, and I urge you to do so.

I would also call upon the union to move its collection points off the public roadways and into shopping centers and other places that are much safer. If they continue to solicit in the highways, they should take steps to have the fireman stay out of traffic. Based upon my experience, the firemen are some of the most aggressive about wading into traffic. We want everyone to be safe!

Minutes of the Regular Monthly Meeting, February 9, 2009
By Peggy Dennis, Acting Recording Secretary

Meeting called to order at 7:45 pm by President Arnie Gordon with attendees introducing themselves.

Announcements:

- Special primary election for Councilmanic District 4 set for April 21 with special general on May 19.
- Nominating and Awards Committees gave last call for volunteers to serve and request for nominations for recipients for the awards.
- Delegates were reminded that local issues can be aired and discussed on the Federation's Corner Column in the Sentinel newspaper, and contributors should coordinate with Wayne Goldstein.
- Delegates from homeowners associations were asked to look at two bills in Annapolis, SB 171 and SB 172 both introduced by Senator Mike

Lenett. Both bills should make meetings of the HOA boards of directors more open and transparent.

- The venue for the February ExComm meeting has been changed to Sandy Vogelgesang's house.
- Dick Kauffunger announced a change in date for the Saturday Seminar on Special Exceptions to March 7.
- Kathie Hulley announced the first ever Clarksburg Kite Festival on March 28 (rain date 3/29) to be held at the Ovid Hazen Wells Park on Skylark Road. For more info or a flyer email Kathie at clarksburgkites@gmail.com.

Approval of Agenda with modification by Dan Wilhelm to add one emergency resolution on Bills MC-920-09 and MC-927-09 concerning soliciting in the public right-of-way.

Minutes of the January 12 regular meeting were approved unanimously

Program: Caren Madsen, MCCF Environment Chairman led the program introducing Douglas Weisburger, manager of the County's Sustainability Program; Eric Coffman, Director of the County's energy program in the Department of Environmental Protection; and Diana Conway, a citizen activist. All three presenters had served on the Sustainability Working Group (SWG), a group of 26 members - 15 from government and 11 from the private sector - established by a law authored by Councilman Roger Berliner. The first task of the SWG was to create a "Climate Action Plan" with the goal of reducing the County's carbon output by 80% by 2050. Their first report is just out and is being reviewed by the T & E Committee. Important points include the need for standards and measurements for both goals and indicators of success or failure. The goal will be achieved if we can reduce carbon emissions by 10% every 5 years. Green house gas emissions are created almost evenly by (1) residential building energy use (2) commercial building energy use (3) transportation. SWG has cataloged 800 actions being used in other jurisdictions to combat green house gas emissions and divided into 7 committees to study and prioritize the efficacy of these measures. Based on this, the SGW has made 58 recommendations for immediate implementation. To review the full plan, please go to:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dep/Sustainability/2009mococlimprotplan.pdf>

Treasurer's Report: William Schrader reported we have two more new members and over \$11,000 in the bank, but that he hasn't yet made two of our larger payouts.

Public Finance Report: Marvin Weinman reported the Council's public hearings on how to achieve savings didn't yield much in terms of useful input. Big push is on for auditing, but if no enforcement follows, it will be a waste of effort. Need more accountability. Counti-Stat is not

yet showing signs of making government more effective or less costly. DOT routinely shows big cost overruns on their CIP projects. Our April program on the County's budget conflicts with the Council's public hearings on the budget, so ExComm may need to reschedule our April meeting date. Arnie Gordon noted our vote to oppose Bill MC-932-09 and will follow up on this with letters to the delegation voicing strong opposition.

Legislation Committee Report: Dan Wilhelm introduced the following resolution: "that MCCF supports the thrust of both MC920-09 and MC 927-09 to prohibit highway solicitation except for those who have obtained a permit." The primary reason for supporting these bills is public safety, both those collecting funds and for those driving. Ideally, we would like a complete ban but are willing to go with a permit system to accommodate the firefighters who want to hold its annual Fill-The-Boot campaign. Voting on the resolution: Yeas 36, Nays 0, Abstentions 0. The resolution passed unanimously.

Historic Preservation Report: Wayne Goldstein reported on the Council's vote on the Damascus/Goshen Historic Resources District which included a 5 to 3 vote to allow the church to exempt itself from historic preservation status. Councilman Knapp is expected to introduce changes that will weaken the historic preservation law and process. Council will conduct a hearing on the Falkland Apartments designation in March with a vote on this issue towards the end of March. A favorable outcome is not predicted.

Education Report: Wayne Goldstein reported that the Board of Education seeks to find savings by cutting programs. Cary Lamari mentioned that a court ruling now required most Board of Ed. Meetings must be open to the public.

Planning and Land Use: Chair Jim Humphrey reported revised Twinbrook Sector Plan was approved by Council in December, with Planning Board working on 3 other plans. White Flint Sector Plan revision would add 13,000 new dwelling units and 23,000 jobs, with building heights limits of 300-500 feet at Metro station to allow for MPDUs, workforce housing, and transferred density. The Germantown Town Center plan revision recommends adding 15,100 dwelling units and 34,000 jobs. And revised Gaithersburg West (Science City) master plan would add 5,000 dwelling units and 60,000 jobs to that area. Mr. Humphrey also updated members on Planning Department recommendations to change county growth policy, and stated 3 economic stimulus bills proposed by County Executive that relate to land use will be discussed in ExComm.

Parks Committee Report: Carole Ann Barth reported that the Office of Legislative Oversight has issued their report on the MNC/PPC's Parks Department and the county's Recreation Department showing areas of duplication and overlap. Also, because the Sligo Creek

Gold Course isn't bringing in enough revenue, the Revenue Authority wants to give it back to the Parks Department. Neighbors of Northwest Branch are talking about the balance between recreational uses and "natural uses".

Public Utilities: Chuck Lapinski is working on a program on the Public Service Commission and our transmission system for the March regular meeting.

With no old or new business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:07.

Minutes of the February 18 Executive Committee Meeting By Luella Mast, Recording Secretary

Attendance: President Arnie Gordon, Peggy Dennis, Carole Ann Barth, Wayne Goldstein, Jim Humphrey, Chuck Lapinski, Luella Mast, Bill Schrader, Virginia Sheard, Sandy Vogelgesang, Dan Wilhelm, Charles Wolff. Guest and coffee maker extraordinary: Geoff Wolfe.

Call to Order, Secretary and Treasurer's Reports: Mr. Gordon called the meeting to order at 7:45 PM at Ms. Vogelgesang's home. The January 21 meeting minutes were approved as printed. Mr. Schrader presented the mid-February Treasurer's Report and an updated list of MCCF memberships. February 18 balance: \$11,180.68.

President's Report

Special Exceptions Seminar Saturday, March 7: Response has been slow. An announcement will be in the newsletter. Email reminders will be sent to those who have attended the previous seminars. The change in dates has been a problem.

SBs 170 and 171: Senator Mike Lennet (District 19) has asked MCCF to support legislation which would eliminate current loopholes in the laws governing condominium and home owner associations (HOAs). The existing laws make it easy for these boards to hold closed (board members only) meetings. Proposed legislation would close these loopholes. Ms. Dennis moved, seconded by Ms. Vogelgesang, that the MCCF Executive Committee support the legislation. Passed, unanimously. Mr. Gordon will send a letter to the delegation.

Dues increase: Ms. Dennis reminded members that it has been many years since we have increased dues. She moved, seconded by Mr. Wilhelm, that MCCF increase dues by \$5.00 for each MCCF dues category. After discussion the Executive Committee agreed to table the motion at this time.

Correspondence: Letters have been sent to the delegation opposing county bill MC 932-09, Tax Exemptions for County Employees, and supporting county bills MC 920-09 (HB 287) and MC 927-09 (HB 384) - Solicitation by Adults of Money or Donations from Occupants of Vehicles.

Committee /Officer Reports

Nominating Committee: Ms. Vogelgesang reported that Ms. Sheard has joined the committee. Committee members have contacted current position holders and will begin contacting potential nominees for open positions. Mr. Gordon announced that, due to increasing work loads and a potential increase in assignments requiring foreign travel he will be unable to serve a second term as MCCF President.

First Vice President (Programs): Ms. Dennis expects no changes in program topics for the remaining four months in this year. Mr. Weinman has asked that the date of the April 13 meeting which will focus on the FY10 Operating Budget be moved up a week to Monday, April 6 as April 13 is the starting date for the Council's budget public hearings. Mr. Gordon moved that the date be changed to April 6, seconded by Ms. Dennis. Critical speakers for our meeting include county government staff members who may be scheduled to attend the hearing. Some of our members may plan to testify that night. After further discussion it was agreed to keep the April 13 date but to table the motion and re-examine this decision at the March Executive Committee meeting. Mr. Schrader will check on the availability of the first floor auditorium for April 6 and the availability of the speakers for both dates will be determined.

Second Vice President (Membership): Ms. Vogelgesang confirmed Mr. Schrader's report of 53 organizational and 18 individual members.

Planning and Land Use Committee

County Executive's Economic Stimulus Legislation: Mr. Humphrey reviewed the draft of the talking points for his testimony at the March 3 (1:30 pm) [and March 17] Council hearing(s). Mr. Humphrey plans to raise "points of concern." Currently the minimum validity period for the Adequate Public Facilities (APF) findings is five years. The proposed legislation would increase this to seven years even though, as Mr. Wilhelm also pointed out, we have been trying for years to get the length of time that the APF approval is valid reduced.

Mr. Leggett's original transmittal memo has been changed to indicate that the county is in the process of doing an economic and fiscal analysis of the proposed legislation. No one knows what the fiscal impact will be so the limit on testimony will be to again raise "points of concern." MCCF will suggest a new requirement that residential teardown/rebuild sites must be enclosed by a fence, especially necessary when a project is stopped following demolition at a point where it is an unsafe, yet attractive, hazard for neighborhood children.

Master Plan Revision: Planning Department staff is recommending an increase in the amount of land in the Gaithersburg West master plan area, as has happened in other planning areas. The acreage in the revised

Twinbrook Sector Plan, approved by Council last December, was doubled, and Planning staff has recommended separating a Town Center policy area from the rest of the Germantown master plan area. The Gaithersburg West and Germantown Town Center areas are proposed as "policy areas" targeted for increased density of development based on proximity to transit, although the Corridor Cities Transitway stations in those communities may not be built for 15-20 years. Residents in both areas are concerned about allowing transit-dependent levels of growth in areas without transit currently available, but feel their issues area being ignored by Planning staff and the Board.

In Montgomery County we have 12 Metro stations -- ten with surrounding land available for high density transit-oriented development under County approval, plus one at Medical Center and one in Rockville. Legislation proposed by Councilmember Berliner and passed by the Council expands the definition of "transit center" to areas where three or more bus routes converge with a minimum daily ridership of 75 households, allowing greater density there.

SB 581: Street tree legislation: Senator Brian Frosh (District 16) has proposed legislation that would allow counties to pass more stringent tree protection regulations than exist at the state level.

Mr. Humphrey sent members of the Executive Committee a link to the Zoning Ordinance Re-write update book. A review of the update was held by the Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee January 23 and another is scheduled in mid-May. Council staff does not expect this Council to act on the revisions.

Education: Mr. Goldstein attended a meeting of the Parents Coalition discussing deficiencies in the MCPS math curriculum. They are looking at best practices worldwide.

Historic Preservation: Mr. Goldstein reported that Councilmember Knapp has introduced a resolution that would increase the standards, which are based on national standards in place for over 30 years, that properties would need to meet to be declared historic thereby making it easier for property owners to fight historic designations for properties. The legislation threatens many properties.

The Grosvenor mansion, "Wild Acres", has been nominated as an historic resource. Currently under negotiation is the extent of the environmental setting required for the house and its several outbuildings. The entire property is about 32 acres. The developer/owner wishes to set aside only 1.6 acres. The Historic Preservation Commission is recommending 16 acres. Although everyone agrees the environmental site is important, the Council has signaled that they don't trust the Historic Preservation Commission to balance the needs of the site with those of the developer.

Public Finance - Municipal receipts of state income tax: Mr. Lapinski gave Mr. Weinman's report in his absence.

Legislation has been proposed to clarify the financial relationship between municipalities and local governments. The legislation would provide that a yet undetermined share of state income taxes which would go to the municipality be shared with the local county government. Mr. Wilhelm agreed to find the relevant bill(s) and circulate it (them) to the Executive Committee.

Parks: Ms. Barth is putting together examples of Parks Department staff's inability or unwillingness to handle new construction or repairs to existing park properties without serious destruction of plants, trees and the environment. She has examples of environmental degradation as a result of construction of a wall on Sligo Creek located between University Boulevard and Wayne Avenue as well as many examples of the impact on trees as a result of site grading and other landscape activities. Ms. Barth will organize a meeting of potential committee members to begin concerted action to stop these environmentally destructive practices. Ms. Barth noted that the Parks Foundation Board is dissolving.

Sligo Creek Golf Course/MCRA: Ms. Barth reviewed the Sligo Creek Golf Course status. Mr. Lapinski said that all the county golf courses need to be renovated. They have been allowed to deteriorate so far that major rebuilding will be necessary. The City of Rockville which owns Redgate Golf Course (18 holes), is negotiating to turn that course over to the county. The Revenue Authority wants to give Sligo Creek (9 holes) back to Park and Planning. The Planning Board will consider the consultant's latest recommendation for the Sligo course on March 26. Ms. Barth has reviewed the 189 page Sligo Creek report. Although Sligo is losing money, the Little Bennett course is losing more. Sligo would require more money to upgrade to recognized golf course standards. Mr. Lapinski will also review the report.

OLO Recreation Services Report (2009-7) We are getting responses to the issues raised in the report. The Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development Committee will continue their worksession review of the report on March 2. Consolidating recreation programs within the County's Department of Recreation would permit much better oversight. Then the problem comes, what to do with the parks themselves. The Department of Parks does do a good job with the preservation of ecologically significant lands, witness the River Road Shale Barrens Conservation Park.

Sentinel Column: Mr. Goldstein has finished the three part series on the WSSC. He provided a brief history of WSSC and M-NPPC as bi-county State agencies as background and explained the use of prestressed concrete pipes for water delivery. WSSC is proposing a 9% increase in sewer and water bills. Ms. Barth asked if MCCF should investigate the possible split of these two bi-county agencies. After discussion it was agreed we might establish a committee to look at this but informally and with no set time limit.

Public Utilities Mr. Lapinski reported he is waiting for final word on available speakers from the State Public Utilities Commission for the March program

Legislation and Committee for Montgomery (CfM): Mr. Wilhelm attended CfM's February 10 Day in Annapolis with about 30 others. A major issue is Senator Miller's push to transfer all or part of public school teachers' pension costs, presently paid by the State, back to the counties. Local associations are encouraged to send support for the bills placing limits on roadside solicitation to members of our delegation, County Executive Leggett and the Council. Several bills limiting the ability of the State Police to investigate individuals and organizations without court oversight are before the Legislature. SB 256 and companion HB 182 and/or SB 266 and companion HB 311 would limit State Police activity. Ms. Mast moved, seconded by Ms. Sheard, the MCCF Executive Committee take no position on the bills. After discussion, the Executive Committee voted: 5 yes; 4 no; 2 abstain. The motion passed.

Mr. Wilhelm moved that the MCCF Executive Committee support HB 130 which would allow the State Highway Administration (SHA) to charge the owners of signs placed on state highway rights-of-way the costs for removing said signs. Although such signs are illegal, and the SHA has the authority to remove them, there is currently no way for the SHA to recover their costs. This bill would allow SHA to do so. Seconded by Mr. Lapinski; after discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Goldstein moved support for proposed state legislation (HB 998), which would require new single family dwellings of three or fewer units to meet accessibility standards currently in effect for larger residential complexes. Mr. Wilhelm seconded. After discussion, the Executive Committee voted: 3 yes; 6 no; 2 abstain. The motion was defeated.

Newsletter assignments: Ms. Dennis reviewed articles for the March newsletter. Mr. Gordon nominated Ms. Lisa Stansick of Olney who is the producer and on-air talent for a show called "Olney Loop" on public access Channel 16 as a Community Hero. Ms. Stansick will be named the Greater Olney Civic Association's 2009 Citizen of the Year. The Executive Committee concurred with Mr. Gordon's recommendation.

Old and New Business Ms. Mast requested that the Executive Committee discuss in the future the possible use of voting cards at MCCF regular meetings.

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm. The Nominating Committee met following the meeting.

Federation Meeting

Monday, March 9, 2009
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building.
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

- 7:45 Call to Order
- 7:46 Introductions and Announcements
- 7:50 Adoption of Meeting Agenda
- 7:55 Treasurer's Report
- 7:58 Approval of January 12 Minutes
- 8:00 Program on MD Public Services Commission
- 9:20 Committee Reports
- 9:45 Old Business
- 9:55 New Business
- 10:00 Adjournment

The **Montgomery County Civic Federation** is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization. It was founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Its monthly Federation meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Monday of each month September through June 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.**"

Submit contributions for the next issue by: **Midnight, Saturday, March 21**. Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to an e-mail, and send it to:

hotyakker@comcast.net

Please send all **address corrections** to Dan Wilhelm, 904 Cannon Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904, 301-384-2698, or djwilhelm@verizon.net.

NEXT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, March 18, 7:45 p.m.

At the home of Arnie Gordon

7 Minuteman Court
Rockville (almost Olney) 20853



**Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Civic Federation**

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First Class Mail

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