



Civic Federation News

December 2011

Serving the Public Interest since 1925

Official Publication of the
Montgomery County Civic
Federation

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Recipients of the electronic version are encouraged to forward it widely

December Program: Public Transit By Peggy Dennis, President

Our program for our monthly meeting on **Monday, December 5** will cover Montgomery County's public transit systems. While most residents rely on private cars to move about, as the county grows, residents' age and roads become increasingly congested, the need for a more expansive, comprehensive and reliable public transit system will grow. What are WMATA and the county DOT's "Ride-On" bus programs doing now and planning to do in the future to meet our growing needs? How do the three systems – Metrorail, Metro Bus and Ride-On bus - interrelate? What can they do to improve the user experience and increase ridership?

Earlier this year, we are told, WMATA "introduced Metro Forward, an ambitious 6-year action plan for improving the customer experience by making service more reliable, more comfortable and more enjoyable. This \$5 billion rebuilding initiative is the largest capital campaign since the original construction of the system, but rebuilding doesn't come without some challenges for our customers. The Metro Forward campaign is designed to inform customers about needs, investments and benefits of our current and future work." Charlie Scott, WMATA's Government Relations Officer for Maryland, will explain the plan to us and field our usual salient and provocative questions.

Before joining Metro, Charlie was Director of Washington Area Transit Programs for the Maryland Department of Transportation. Prior to working in the transit arena, Charlie directed government relations for the Technology Council of Maryland and developed a 50-state government affairs program for a national trade association. A lifelong resident of Maryland, he resides with his wife and two children in Darnestown.

Carolyn Biggins, Director of the County's "Ride-On" program has also been invited to participate in the program. As we go to press, we are not sure if she will be able to be with us, but

we have our fingers crossed.

We hope to have a large attendance for this program. If you have questions, criticisms or constructive suggestions about the METRO system, WMATA's bus system and/or the county's "Ride-On" bus system, please plan on coming and participating.

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 5
OUR MONTHLY MEETING**

Community Hero: Marvin Weinman by President Peggy Dennis

In October we had planned to honor Marvin Weinman, long-time delegate to the MCCF, Public Finance Chairman, and purveyor of wisdom and common sense in all things relating to government spending and financial sanity. Marvin was unable to join us in October due to health considerations, so we will plan on honoring him in December. Please read the October *News* to refresh your memory on why Marvin is our Community Hero for the month.

Transit Task Force Update by Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chair

In the September newsletter, I provided an overview of the Transit Task Force created by County Executive Leggett and its work. I reported that the Task Force had identified the design attributes needed in the rapid transit system to make it a world class, gold standard system. The proposed system consists of 21 routes: 16 routes identified in the earlier MCDOT bus rapid transit (BRT) proposal, some of which the task force extended, plus 5 additional routes. The system would use sleek and stylish Rapid Transit Vehicles (RTVs) that are in the class of Metrorail; not local buses. The Planning Board's Master Plan of Highways and BRT effort started with the 16 routes and will be expanded to include the other routes.

Since September, the Task Force identified those routes that it recommends be built in each of three phases. The first phase includes MD355 from the Bethesda metro to Montgomery Village Ave and allows for connection to the Corridor Cities Transitway, Randolph Road/Cherry Hill Road, ICC/I-370, Veirs Mill Road, Georgia Avenue from Veirs Mill to Olney, and US 29 from University Blvd. to MD 198 which allows for connection to the Purple Line. In addition, the phasing was selected so that construction would occur only on one of several parallel roads at the same time to allow drivers to avoid the construction if desired. The thinking is that construction of the entire system will start in 5 years and be completed in 10 years.

The Task Force also obtained a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation to fund two studies. One study will address the economic benefits from the RTV system and the second will look at where dedicated RTV lanes can be built. This study

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will expand upon the MCDOT BRT study which limited the dedicated lanes to the existing right-of-way. The current study removes the right-of-way restriction, but dedicated routes would still be constrained by existing development. In some places, two dedicated lanes are possible, in others only one lane is possible, and in some places the RTVs will need to travel in existing traffic lanes. In terms of controlling cost, the design will frequently have one dedicated lane in the peak direction of travel and the use of existing travel lanes for the other direction. Two major considerations in this design are station locations and how to handle motor vehicle left-turn requirements (the idea being that the RTVs would often travel in what today is the median strip). Both of these studies are scheduled to be complete at the end of the year.

The financing investigation is just getting underway. Part of the purpose of the above lane study is to refine the cost estimate. The thinking at this point is that the RTV system will largely be financed by a new special taxing district within the county, but some funds would be provided by the state. There are many ways the special taxing district could be set up and that will be the focus of our meetings through the middle of January.

The Task Force expects to complete its work and provide a report to the County Executive by the end of February. At that point, I expect the Executive will make a recommendation to the Council for its action. The Council is well aware of the Task Force work, since two councilmember – Marc Elrich and Roger Berliner - regularly attend and have been active participants.

The MCCF March program will present the results of the Task Force. Please plan to attend. In the meantime, a summary of meetings and copies of presentations given at the meetings can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/transitsumm>.

The RTV system is designed to address existing traffic congestion and provide capacity for future development. Even if Montgomery County decided to stop all development in the county, development will occur in neighboring jurisdictions and cars would travel through the county, adding to our congestion. It is better to have and manage development in Montgomery County, and the RTV system will provide the capacity to move people. Since development will also occur in neighboring jurisdictions, the RTV system is designed to connect with them, if those governments decide to extend the system.

Not everyone can or will be willing to use the RTV system. Only a small percentage of people need to use it to reduce congestion. Consider the effect on congestion in August when there is 10%-15% reduction in vehicle trips. I think the number of people who will decide to use the RTV and accompanying revamped local bus system will be much higher than 15%. I believe the RTV system has the highest chance of being financed and constructed and within a reasonable time frame than any other major project proposed in my 30 years of civic involvement. Next year will be a key year in determining what actually happens.

Stormwater Still a Cloudy Subject for Most Citizens

By Carole Ann Barth, Parks & Recreation Chair

Montgomery County citizens have the reputation of being environmentally savvy, but I wonder if we would have done any better than our Baltimore neighbors did on Upstream, Downstream, a study of public attitudes about stormwater. The study was conducted in 2007 by an opinion research firm (OpinionWorks) at the behest of the Baltimore Stormwater Action Coalition. Although the study was specific to Baltimore, I think it also holds valuable information for us.

Here are some of the key findings, quoted from the report:

- Only one resident in six knows for sure that stormwater is not treated before it re-enters our waterways. Most people see no connection between a spilled garbage can in Towson and floating trash in the Inner Harbor. They are more apt to think the trash comes from thoughtless tourists in paddleboats.
- Twice as many Baltimore area residents see the health of local waters getting worse (34%), rather than better (16%). The rest said the condition of the waters is not changing, or they were not sure.
- Nearly three quarters (72%) believe that trash is having a negative economic impact on the City of Baltimore—a number nearly as high as the 82% who said crime was hurting the city economically.
- Almost one quarter (22%) of the residents interviewed were not able to picture a storm drain near their home.
- In the focus groups, very few people could define a watershed, let alone name the watershed in which they live.
- A total of 83% agree with the statement “*If I knew what to do to help clean up local waters, I would do a lot more.*” A solid majority of 52% strongly agree with that statement.
- Once people feel personally connected to their local storm drain, they will be ready to hear a more complex message about nutrients and contaminants.
- We tested both print and electronic media to evaluate how effective different approaches might be in the greater Baltimore area. The research tested both wellknown and lesser known campaigns and materials that have been used elsewhere in the Bay region, as well as other parts of the country. Respondents were clear that they found the ads most effective when they:
 - Asked them to take one, simple action.
 - Told them why the action was important.
 - Gave them local contact information or a Web address if they wanted to know more.
- In general, the most visual concepts drew the strongest response. The most effective campaigns used uncomplicated messages, colorful graphics, and focused chiefly on the core health concerns of residents.

These findings suggest that we probably have a lot of public education to do in order to meet the new water quality requirements of the county’s stormwater management permit

and the new Chesapeake Bay pollution diet (Bay TMDL or total maximum daily load.) See the complete Upstream, Downstream study at <http://tinyurl.com/upstreamdown> .

Deer Policy Meeting Scheduled

The County Council’s Public Safety Committee (PSC) has agreed to hold a work session on the County’s management of the deer population. The PSC is tentatively scheduled to take up this topic on Thursday, January 26, at 9:30am. County, state and federal officials will be invited to participate. Work sessions do not usually allow for direct public input, but residents with concerns about the excessive deer population would do well to attend this meeting. Residents are also encouraged to write in advance of the meeting to pose questions they would like to see the committee address. Submit questions via email to councilmember.andrews@montgomerycountymd.gov or by regular mail to Councilmember Phil Andrews, Chairman, Public Safety Committee, Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850. Please check the Council’s website closer to the date to make sure this item is still on the PSC’s agenda, or call Councilmember Andrews’ Chief of Staff, Lisa Mandel-Trupp at 240-777-7812.

Membership Renewals

As of November 22, the following groups and individual members have yet to renew their memberships for the 2011-2012 year which began on July 1. For those not renewing, the December newsletter will be the last one delivered and dropped from periodic news distributed via email. Delegates, because association treasurers rarely receive the newsletter, please print out the Membership Form from the MCCF website or cut out the form from a previous hard copy of the *News*, fill in the information needed and mail it to MCCF Treasurer William Schrader with a check for the dues.

Groups Yet to Renew

- Bradley Boulevard Citizen Association
- Burnt Mills Hill Civic Association
- Edgemoor Citizens Association
- Fox Hills West Citizens Association
- Greenwich Forest Citizens Assn
- Kensington View Civic Association
- Kenwood Park Citizens Association, Inc.
- Luxmanor Citizens Association
- McKenney Hills Carroll Knolls Civic Assn
- Parkview Citizens Association
- Parkwood Residents Association
- Snowdens Mill Homeowners Association
- South Tuckerman-Inverness Citizens Association
- Southeast Rural Olney Civic Association
- Twinbrook Citizens Association

Individuals.

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------|
| Timothy J French | Agnes Jones Trower |
| Norman Knopf | Caren Madsen |
| Helen A. "Andy" Reed | Beverly Sobel |
| Maria Stephens | Evan Stephens |

Education Committee Report

By Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee Chair

Superintendent Listen and Learn Sessions Completed

Superintendent Josh Starr completed his ‘Listen and Learn’ sessions. The last session was held on November 21st at Sherwood High School. If you could not attend, videos of the events have been posted for viewing online, although the September 6th and 12th events were not recorded.

Superintendent’s Book Club

The first of three book clubs will be held on November 29th at Carver. The book to be discussed is *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* by Dr. Carol Dweck. The discussion will be available live on MCPS TV and online. The event is from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Staff, parents and the community are invited to participate. The event will be a panel discussion including the author (live via Skype) and audience questions and comments. If you do not want to buy the book, you can go to Dr. Dweck’s website and her articles are available free online. Here is the link: <http://tinyurl.com/dweckweb> . Two other book clubs are scheduled for January 31 and April 24, 2012 but locations and titles have not yet been chosen.

Redistricting of Education Districts

The Board of Education (BOE) voted to recommend a redistricting plan that realigns the voting districts for the BOE. The proposed plan was approved in Annapolis as well. Unfortunately for the citizens of the county, there was no public testimony or public hearing before the BOE voted. The law says that the districts ‘shall be substantially equal in population.’ However, the new districts, which are supposed to be based on the 2010 Census, are not ‘equal in population.’

New District Populations			
District	Population	Deviation from Average Population	Deviation Percentage
1	186,735	-7.620	-3.92
2	186,762	-7.593	-3.91
3	202,229	+7.874	+4.05
4	200,068	+5.713	+2.94
5	195,983	+1.628	+0.84

Source: MCPS Division of Long Range Planning

Regional Survey and Meetings for Next State Superintendent

The State Board of Education has begun their search for the next state superintendent. They have hired Hazard, Young, Attea, and Associates (HYA), the same search firm used here in Montgomery County, to assist with the search. Regional meetings were held, and there was also an online survey. The firm also developed the survey, which can be found at www.ecragroup.com/mdss . The deadline for completing the survey was Nov. 18th, and one public forum was held in Montgomery County, at Seneca Valley High School, on Nov. 3rd. The State Board will be discussing the input at their December 6th, 2011 meeting.

Comments Requested for Two Board of Education Policies

The BOE is asking for comments on two education policies that were tentatively approved by the BOE on October 11th, 2011. These are:

- Policy ECM, *Joint Occupancy of Montgomery County Public Schools Facilities*, which sets forth the criteria for joint occupancy of Montgomery County Public Schools facilities;
- and Policy KGC, *Child Care*, which affirms the importance of high quality child care and education settings for all children of Montgomery County. It establishes the scope of Montgomery County Public Schools' role in partnering with the child care community in addressing child care needs.

Comments are due by December 29th, 2011. You can get copies of the policies either online at <http://tinyurl.com/mcboepolicy> or by calling 301-279-3853. All responses should be sent to the Office of the Superintendent of Schools, 850 Hungerford Drive, Room 122, Rockville, Maryland 20850.

FY2013 Operating Budget Available on December 7th

The Superintendent will release the proposed MCPS Operating Budget on December 7th. The budget is well over half of our entire county budget, and runs into billions of dollars each year. Please read the budget carefully and let us know if you have questions. We will be taking a close look at the budget as well. If you want to testify on the Operating Budget, sign-up begins on December 21st.

Timeline for the Operating Budget	
Board of Education Community Conversation	October 12, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.
Board of Education Community Conversation	October 27, 2011, at 7:00 p.m.
Superintendent presents Recommended Operating Budget	December 7, 2011
Sign-up begins for BOE Operating Budget Hearings	December 21, 2011
BOE Operating Budget Hearings	January 11 & 18, 2012 at 7:00 p.m.
BOE Operating Budget Worksessions	January 25 & 26, 2012 at 6:00 p.m.
BOE Operating Budget Action/Adoption	February 14, 2012
BOE FY 2012 Operating Budget Request presented to County Executive and County Council	March 6, 2012
County Executive issues Operating Budget	March 20, 2012
County Council holds Operating Budget Hearings and Worksessions	April – May 2012
Council approves Operating Budget	May 17, 2012
Final Board of Education Action to approve FY 2012 Operating Budget	June 14, 2012

Websites

Community forums: <http://tinyurl.com/mcboeforum>
 Signup for budget hearings: <http://tinyurl.com/mcboesign>
 BoE Calendar: <http://tinyurl.com/mcboecal>

Special Education

On November 15th the Superintendent attended a meeting of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC). This was the first time in 12 years that a sitting superintendent came to the meeting. This is a great start for the new superintendent to get to know the parents, guardians, and children who attend our schools, and Lyda Astrove, who attended the meeting offered the following observations which are strictly her own and do not represent any group:

1. How refreshing to have the superintendent actually come to a meeting to talk specifically about special education! As you may know, the previous superintendent refused for 12 years to do so. So big bonus points to Josh.
2. He gave us his personal history of how he got into special education. Like many of us, it wasn't a specific career choice from the outset. He knew he wanted to do "something in education." That "something" included working at a Residential Treatment Center in California and as a crisis intervention teacher in New York. He then got his Masters in Special Education.
3. He believes that "high quality instruction" is the best behavior management for kids with emotional disabilities. He wants to create "levers" of accountability and support so that kids don't end up with the behavior specialist. He digressed a little to tell us that in the past, there were a whole series of choices that adults made that could do a disservice to kids, where they wound up in the "basement." He said more kids are being served better now than ever before. Just because we're not allowed to put kids in the basement anymore doesn't mean that what we're doing is good enough. (**Note to Josh: take a visit to the Gaithersburg Bridge program)
4. He noted that one of the issues in special education is the adjustment that the parents have to make in terms of their expectations for their child. (**Note to Josh: how does this fit with the "one size fits all" "everyone's going to college" mantra within MCPS?)
5. He says that special education should be "providing access to the core curriculum with appropriate supports, in the most efficient way possible. (** note to Josh: when we heard you speak at other "listen and learn" events, you didn't mention "efficiency" in the context of general education.)
6. He says that it is not ok to refer children to special education unless you've done a whole bunch of things first. We need clear expectations for how we do business.
7. He says the most important 21st century skills are social/emotional competencies. He agreed that some kids need a separate and distinct environment.

He said lots more, maybe others can chime in. The takeaway: Cautious optimism. Relief that we selected a superintendent who presents as a thoughtful intellectual, as opposed to a self-promoting salesman.

Volunteers Needed for Committees

By Peggy Dennis, President

The Civic Fed is starting to look for members to serve on two short-term but very important committees. Unlike our standing committees which do the lion's share of our work, year in and year out, these committees meet for just a few months during the winter and spring, often by email and phone.

The Nominating Committee will put together the slate of nominees for elective office in 2012-2013: the president, vice president, secretary and treasurer.

The Awards Committee will nominate recipients for the awards to be presented at our Annual Awards Banquet in May: the Star Cup, the Gazette Award and the Sentinel Award.

We can't do the great job we want to do without your active participation, so please volunteer to help with one or another of these important committees. Please contact me at 301-983-9738 or hotyakker@gmail.com if you are willing to help.

Minutes of the November 14 Meeting

By Sue Schumacher, Secretary

Call to Order: President Peggy Dennis called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm with introductions all around.

Agenda was approved with the addition of one item under new business.

Announcements: It was announced that the ICC opens next week on November 22. Jim Humphrey reminded everyone that there is column space available to MCCF in the Sentinel.

Minutes: it was moved and seconded to approve the October 10 meeting minutes as printed in the November newsletter. The motion was duly approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader reported that to date 42 local associations, 3 "other" associations and 16 individuals have paid their 2011 dues.

Community Hero: Ann McDonald introduced Meredith Wellington, who accepted the award on behalf of all the members of Neighborhood Montgomery. Meredith along with Julie Davis and several other members of the group were present to accept the award. Meredith, Julie, Jenny Sue Dunner and Pat Baptiste, were the core founders of the group with the initial purpose of informing the citizens of the county about the Zoning Text Amendments that were being proposed for the new Commercial Residential Zones (CRs). The group through its Website, visiting county citizen groups, and emails to interested parties was able to empower citizens to send their views on this zoning issue to the Council and have input in the final version that was adopted.

Program: The Regional Service Centers. Peggy Dennis introduced 3 regional center directors: Ken Hartman of the Western Montgomery County (Bethesda, Chevy Chase) Center acted as the moderator; Miti Figueredo of the East County RSC, Ana Lopez van Balen of the Mid-County RSC,

and Victor Salazar representing the Up County RSC was unable to send a representative). The panel included and Victor Salazar representing Silver Spring RSC. Ken Hartman led the presentation explaining what the service centers do: oversee regional services; act as a satellite post for county government; act as liaison to the County Executive; coordinate Citizens Advisory Boards, and operate their facilities. Each described the unique problems facing their area of the county. For example, BCC has the largest over -60 population in the county, East County has been hit hard by the recession, foreclosures and hot spots of crime. All explained how budget cuts have impacted their services. Ken Hartman said that each director is the only paid employee now and they must rely on volunteers to assist with helping in his or her region. They all concurred that they can no longer offer all the services they used to, and that their constituents expect, although they try.

Resolutions

Bill 35-11 Loitering and Prowling. County Councilman Philip Andrews came to summarize Bill 35-11 Offenses-Loitering or Prowling-Established. He has introduced this bill to be used as a replacement for the proposed Youth Curfew Bill 25-11. The Loitering Prowling Bill would provide the police with a more focused tool to respond to the situations described by the Executive as the target of the curfew without being limited to minors or certain times of the day. Andrews stressed that similar laws have been upheld by courts in Georgia, Florida and Wisconsin. Discussion ensued.

It was moved and seconded to support Bill 35-11. The motion passed. Jim Zepp, Chair of the MCCF Public Safety Committee will present testimony at the hearing on the 16th of November.

It was moved and seconded to support *Bill 25-11 Youth Curfew*. This position was defeated. The vote was 5 for the Bill and 10 opposed.

It then was moved and seconded to oppose Bill 25-11. This position was approved. The vote was 9 for opposition and 6 against.

Roadside Solicitation. It was moved and seconded to approve the MCCF's resolution as it appears on Page 4 of the November newsletter. It passed with one abstention.

Committee Reports

Education: Paula Bienenfeld reported that the Farquhar Middle School land swap is still "up in the air". She is still awaiting a response to her Open Meetings complaint. She mentioned that Dr. Starr, the new School Superintendent, is holding "listen and learn" sessions around the county.

Planning and Land Use: Jim Humphrey reported that work continues on master plans revisions - three awaiting Council action, and five more in drafting stage at the Planning Department.

Parks and Recreation: Jim Zepp reported for Carole Ann Barth that the Recreation Facility Development Plan 2010-2030 calls for aggressive capital investment in spite of massive structural budget deficits and contracting agency resources. Moreover, all the indoor recreation facilities called

for in the plan would be stand-alone Recreation Department facilities. In contrast, most Prince George's County indoor recreation facilities are co-located with schools or other entities. By locating a community recreation center within an elementary school, for example, two facilities can share a gymnasium and parking lot and thus save on construction & maintenance costs.

Old Business/New Business: Arnie Gordon introduced a resolution concerning political promotion materials. It was not seconded. It will be addressed again by the Executive Committee.

Meeting Adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Minutes of the November 17th Executive Committee

By Paula Bienenfeld, Acting Secretary

Call to Order: Meeting was held via teleconference and began at 7:45pm. Attending were Dan Wilhelm, Paula Bienenfeld, Ann McDonald, Virginia Sheard, Jim Humphrey and Peggy Dennis with Dan chairing the meeting.

The minutes from the October Executive Committee meeting were adopted.

Treasurers Report, Bill Schrader: One new member renewed membership.

Peggy Dennis announced that after looking into the details, the Civic Federation cannot support the request of the Hollywood Ballroom to sponsor the December 31st New Year's Eve event as the Civic Fed is not a 501-C-3 organization.

Programs:

- The Program for December (Peggy organizing) will be on the County's public transit system(s): Metrorail, WMATA's buses and the County's Ride-On bus service.
- January: Paula Bienenfeld and Jim Humphrey will work on a program concerning the process of cell tower approvals. There have been questions by communities across the county as to how cell towers receive approval.
- February: Peggy has contacted the Inspector General to be program presenter and he has agreed.
- March: Dan Wilhelm gave a report on the Transit Task Force stating that the County Executive may implement a special taxing district to fund construction of the RTV system. Task Force meetings are continuing and a lot of work will be coming together by the end of February. March should be appropriate for a program on the final recommendations of the TTF and the roll-out of the future RTV program.

It was suggested that future newsletters include a block with future programs laid out. Future programs were discussed and the issue of financial growth and jobs in the county was identified as a possible program. Jim Humphrey suggested inviting Michael Shuman who has written a book on local businesses (Preparer's Note: the title of one of Shuman's

books is *Going Local: Creating Self-Reliant Communities in a Global Age*).

Community Heroes: Janis Sartucci was suggested for the December general meeting (Preparer's Note: As per the ExComm agenda, Marvin Weinman will be the Community Hero for December and Ms. Sartucci will be honored at the January 2012 meeting).

There was a discussion regarding Arnie Gordon's concern that the Civic Fed should not be partisan and there should be a prohibition on this. The suggestion is that should emails be sent out, including only to the Executive Board, that it be prefaced with a statement that the email is 'for information purposes only,' to clarify that the Civic Fed and its members are not being partisan.

Peggy Dennis will contact Arnie Gordon and request something for the newsletter.

The next full delegates meeting will be held December 5th, and the next Executive Committee meeting will be held December 15th, at Paula Bienenfeld's home.

Committee Reports

Jim Humphrey, Planning and Land Use Committee, discussed the 'Big Box' bill at the County Council, which if passed would require community amenities and require a developer of a 'big box' store to meet with at least three community associations to negotiate appropriate amenities. There was discussion about who would enforce the amenities provisions. Would it be the Planning Department? Permitting Services? This is still unclear. In addition, the group in discussions with a potential developer should be based on stakeholders and not only community associations. The consensus was that the Civic Federation should be part of discussions as larger areas could include stakeholders. The bill is in committee now. Jim Humphrey could draft a letter to send with these questions.

The Chevy Chase Lake Master Plan process is underway and is being developed using a different, 'form based' plan process for the Sector Plan. There is some concern that the Planning Board keeps changing the Master Plan format.

Paula Bienenfeld, Education Committee: The MCPS Operating Budget comes out in December. Paula Bienenfeld raised the issue that Montgomery County only has seven Board of Education members. State law calls for nine board members when the student population exceeds 100,000 pupils, except in Montgomery County. She is advocating for Montgomery County to line up with the rest of the state and have the same number of representatives: i.e., nine members. She asked what the next step is to get Civic Fed support for this. The suggestion was that she look at what the state law requires, and ask, why is Montgomery County treated differently from the other counties in the state. She will follow up.

Dan Wilhelm, Legislation, reported that the roadside solicitation hearing is on December 5th and reminded people that the Committee for Montgomery Breakfast is December 16th. Dan Wilhelm also reported on the Transportation Transit Task Force; he said the consultant is looking at where

we can put more lanes. The Task Force is making a study of available rights-of-way.

Paula Bienenfeld reported on the **Montgomery Delegation Priorities meeting**. County Executive Ike Leggett and Council President Valerie Ervin were there, advocating in favor of the state gas tax. The mayors of Gaithersburg, Takoma Park, and Rockville also testified in favor of the gas tax. They were also advocating for reform of the ethics rules for candidates, which they feel are burdensome and may prevent people from running for office. Board of Education Vice President Shirley Brandman also testified, stating that the priorities of the Board are the Maintenance of Effort

(MOE); pensions; and funding for school construction and renovation. Other people testifying included staff from the Universities and Montgomery College, all concerned about funding; the chambers of commerce; individuals concerned about disability services funding and the burden of proof issues for special education parents with the Schaffer v. Weast ruling. The hearing was televised.

Newsletter Assignments: Paula Bienenfeld: Education Committee and Draft Minutes; Peggy: December program; Dan Wilhelm: Transit. Deadline for submittal is Sunday November 20th at midnight.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Spread the Word – Share the Newsletter

Share the newsletter! We ask our delegates and associate members to forward the electronic newsletter to all their members and others who might want to know more about what's going on in the county, the issues we're covering, and the actions we're hoping many residents will take. Please – be proactive and take a few clicks to help spread the word

Federation Meeting

Session 832

Monday, **December 5**, 2011
7:45 1st Floor Auditorium
County Council Office Building,
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD

Agenda:

7:45 Call to Order & Introductions
7:50 Approval of Agenda
7:52 Announcements
7:53 Approval of Minutes of November 8 meeting
7:55 Treasurer's Report
7:55 Community Hero: Marvin Weinman
8:00 **Program: County Transit Systems**
9:15 Committee Reports
9:40: Old Business / New Business
9:45 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 Council Office Building, 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD.

The **Civic Federation News** is published monthly, except in July and August. 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, Sunday, December 18, 2011.** Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to an e-mail, and send it to: **hotyakker@gmail.com**

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

DATE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15

7:45 P.M.

At the home of Paula Bienenfeld
6018 Tilden Lane, North Bethesda, 20852



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

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First Class Mail

Address service requested