



Civic Federation News

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Federation

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June Program: Zoning Ordinance Re-Write

**by Jim Humphrey, Planning & Land Use
Committee Chairman**

Our program on Monday, June 11 will be on the Zoning Ordinance Re-Write project. Speakers for the program will include two members of the Planning Department staff--Rose Krasnow, Interim Director of the Department, who will explain standards and uses of the proposed zones; and Joshua Sloan, Planner Coordinator, who will address proposed changes to the administration and procedures sections of the ordinance. We also hope to have members of the Zoning Advisory Panel participate in the program to offer their comments on the re-write process. A question and answer session will follow the presentations.

A revision of the county's zoning laws was first considered in the 1990s, when the first of a pair of consultant studies was conducted. In 2001, Clarion Associates Inc. of Denver, Colorado was commissioned to recommend appropriate first steps for a zoning law revision, and advised that the revision should begin with the commercial zones.

The current Zoning Ordinance Re-Write project was initiated with funding in the county's FY2008 Operating Budget. The Planning Board in consultation with the County Council established the scope of the work, and ordered a process for collecting community input and setting the sequencing and tentative time line for the project.

In a July 2008 memo to the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee, then-Director of the Planning Department, Rollin Stanley, listed the

goals for the Zoning Ordinance Re-Write project as follows:

- streamline the ordinance--all aspects of the document from the number of districts (zones) to the number of processes outlined in the various sections;
- simplify all aspects of the document;
- improve the organization of the document;
- rationalize/update provisions to reflect the changing development climate with a greater emphasis on infill development;
- create predictability in the standards as well as the format; and,
- promote "green" land use policies.

In March 2009 the Zoning Advisory Panel (ZAP) was formed and a group of unpaid citizen volunteers was appointed to offer critical review and analysis of the Re-Write as it proceeded. The ZAP has met monthly since that time. Appointees are a mix of community representatives, those involved in development--architects, engineers, land use attorneys, and builders--and land use planners and consultants. A few months after the ZAP was formed, the Planning Department hired the Code Studio of Austin, Texas to help in drafting the language of the new zoning ordinance.

Although the Planning Department held a series of 6 Open Houses throughout the county last month to educate and update residents on the Re-Write project, each Open House educated residents only on the proposed new zones that will impact the master plans in the area of the county in which the event was held. The Federation's program will be an overview of the entire proposed Zoning Ordinance Re-Write so that rural residents can be informed of proposed zones for urbanized areas, and residents living downcounty can be educated on proposed rural and agricultural zones.

In addition, at the time the Open Houses were held the sections related to floating zones, overlay zones and agricultural zones were not yet drafted. We hope that Planning staff will provide us information on these sections during our June program, and share their ideas on how the new zoning ordinance might be implemented following Council approval.

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We also hope to confirm the schedule for the upcoming public process on the proposed Re-Write. The tentative schedule calls for the Planning Board to hold a public hearing this September, followed by 3 months of worksessions culminating in Board transmittal of their recommended Re-Write to Council by end of the year, and a public hearing before the Council in early 2013.

Plan to attend the Civic Federation June 11 meeting, and learn about this important subject, which has the potential to affect every property in the county.

Resolution to Support ZTA 12-07
by Virginia Sheard, Planning & Land Use Committee

ZTA 12-07 Special Exception – Automobile Filling Station - sponsored by five members of the County Council (Elrich, Ervin, Navarro, Rice, Riemer), will revise the special exception standards for the approval of an automobile filling Station by adding the following sections of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 59 of the Montgomery County Code Sec. 59-G-2.06: add a provision requiring that any gas station dispensing more than 3.6 million gallons per year must be located at least 1,000 feet from any public or private school, park, playground, or hospital, or other public use categorized as a cultural, entertainment, and recreation use. Petition for special exception must also satisfy all of the existing requirements for a special exception.

The proposal is in response to the concerns of a residential community abutting the site of a proposed mega station (for Costco). The community questioned many of applicant’s expert testimony on air, water, and environmental quality issues. They contacted other third party experts and researched documentation and found that many of applicant statements that there would be no adverse effects on abutting residences, outdoor recreation facilities, or in general from the operation of the proposed gas station to be false or misleading. The community has provided several specific reports and studies that contradict the applicant’s statements and support community opposition to the gas station based on these public health and environmental issues.

The proposed gas station, if allowed, would be the biggest gas station in the county with 16 bays with multiple lines of cars waiting to fill up. Applicant estimates about 1,000 people a day would go to this mall to the gas station.

ZTA 12-07 will not prohibit mega gas stations in Montgomery County. It simply sets higher standards for those that would be in close proximity to existing neighborhoods with backyards, outdoor swimming and tennis facilities, schools, parks and the like.

The current application is by Costco which will be opening a big box store in the Wheaton Mall next year. There is great community support for the retail store but substantial opposition to the mega gas station for the reasons stated above.

By unanimous vote the PLU Committee recommends MCCF support ZTA 12-07 to amend existing special exception standards to provide greater protection for the quality of life of residential neighborhoods and public recreational facilities within 1,000 feet of any proposed mega gas station to be located anywhere in the county. A resolution to this affect will be presented at the June meeting.

Proposed Resolution on the TTF Report

By Paula Bienenfeld

Whereas the County Executive’s Transit Task Force conveyed its final report, Report and Recommendations of the County Executive’s Transit Task Force (Report) to County Executive Isiah Leggett, on May 10, 2012; and

Whereas the report states that the estimated cost of implementing the entire RTV system is approximately \$1.83 Billion in current year dollars with annual maintenance costs of approximately \$1.1Million per year; and

Whereas, the proposed special real property taxing districts are located so as to place an undue burden on underserved and minority populations; and

Whereas use of such a taxing district would require a change to state law; and

Whereas the Report makes a false dichotomy between ‘smart growth’ and ‘no growth,’ and makes a slur on people by referring to certain views as ‘those who prefer to see our County remain a relatively idyllic suburban community, as they believe it has been..’ and continues this false dichotomy on page 22, in the section, “No Growth or Smart Growth: What We Really Need is New Transit Capacity to Foster More Sustainable Economic Growth; and

Whereas the exaggerated tone of the Report, stating, for example, “...the Task Force’s proposed RTV network is entirely new and transformational. No other

community in the United States has the magnitude and scope of the proposed RTV system.” And the system will be a “game changer – that attracts a completely new universe of riders.” does not instill confidence in the Report, which should be fact-based; and

Whereas the Report deliberately divides the County into the “Urban Ring” and the “Agricultural Reserves,” rather than seeing the county as a whole; and

Whereas whole swaths of the County are not subject to either the RTV paths or the taxes required; and

Whereas there was no Draft Report available for public comment and input;

Be it resolved that the Montgomery County Civic Federation urges the County Executive and the County Council consider the Report to be a Draft Version, and open a 45-day public comment period after which all comments will be addressed on paper in a comment response matrix; that the Report be rewritten to remove name-calling, red herrings, and false dichotomies and instead be a fact-based document; that RTV routes include more of the entire county; and that the County Executive and the County Council reject the idea of limited taxing districts and instead require that taxes be raised throughout the entire county, as the purpose of the RTV is to benefit the entire county.

Slate of Officials for 2012-2013
By Paula Bienenfeld, Nominating Committee Chair

Election of the executive committee will take place at the June meeting. The following slate is proposed:

- President Carole Ann Barth
- First Vice President Paula Bienenfeld
- Recording Secretary Sue Schumacher
- Treasurer Bill Schrader
- Members-at-Large Ann McDonald
- Judy Higgins
- Jesse Cantrill
- Virginia Sheard
- Max Bronstein

Transit Task Force Report
by Dan Wilhelm, Transportation Chair

I provided status reports in September and December 2011 on the Transit Task Force (TTF) that was created by County Executive Leggett. On May 22 the TTF sent its report to the Executive. The report is lengthy and addresses many issues which citizens have been urging action on for decades. I urge everyone to read it on the

County’s web site:

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/cex/transit/reportfinal.asp.

Let me put this report into context and point you to a few highlights (and page numbers).

We are all painfully aware of the traffic problems in the D.C. area. We hear reports that we are the most congested major metropolitan area in the country. In 2000 the Planning Board formed a task force known as the Transportation Policy Report (TPR) to research what could be done to lessen traffic congestion. TPR looked at over a hundred road projects (those that could increase capacity) and several transitway projects that together would have cost over \$10 billion in 2002. The study concluded that even if all the projects were built in a timely manner, traffic congestion would continue to get worse and that by 2030 the rush period would be some 14 to 15 hours long each workday and only somewhat shorter on weekends.

The TPR report contained a recommendation to substantially improve and restructure bus service to form a network of rapid transit routes along most major 4 and 6 lane roads in the county and use local buses as feeders to collect people from employment, retail, and residential areas and take them to the rapid transit routes. The rapid transit routes have been described as “Bus Rapid Transit” or BRT.

Since the 2002 TPR report, the ICC, half of the Montrose Parkway and several smaller projects have been built. Work has progressed on planning for a number of road projects and the Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). Councilmember Marc Elrich continued to think about the BRT concept. He spent the last four years studying jurisdictions where similar facilities have been implemented and talking with many groups in the county where the idea was widely accepted. As he said on May 22, 2012, he has come to believe that the BRT he best and most affordable solution for moving people and addressing congestion. Mark’s effort is undoubtedly the reason the Executive formed the TTF.

The TTF report points out a number of reasons for implementing the proposed transit system, which builds upon and greatly refines the BRT concept laid out in the TPR report. As a result of the recession, there has been a widespread call to improve the economy by creating more well-paying jobs. The TTF report (p. 3) indicates that over one million new jobs are projected to be added to the metro area between 2010 and 2030, with Montgomery’s share being 163,000. This growth is

projected to add 3.9 million daily vehicle trips and 250,000 daily transit trips (p. 3). If better transit is not available, these trips will just add to road congestion.

At least half of the forecast in new county jobs is in areas where development and redevelopment has been approved but where development can't proceed until transit is available. In FY11 and FY12 Montgomery County lost 6000 jobs while Fairfax County gained 36,000 jobs. There are surely multiple reasons for this, but one of them has to do with our inability to proceed with approved development because of road congestion. This loss of future jobs will surely continue unless we proceed with the BRT system.

A number of citizens make the argument that development should just not be permitted, thinking that that will prevent congestion from getting worse. The report (p. 12-15) addresses this no-growth scenario by pointing out that jobs will then be located in neighboring jurisdictions, and people will drive through Montgomery County to get to those jobs and County residents will drive further to take those jobs. The result will be worse road congestion. In addition, there will be fewer taxes from businesses to pay for the services that county residents demand. As a result, taxes on residents will surely increase and there will also be a slow, long-term decline in our quality of life.

The TPR report showed that building more roads is not the answer to congestion. Believe it or not, the need for good transit is not a new conclusion. The 1964, 1969 and 1993 General Plans reached the same conclusion (p. 28-30). The only way to address road congestion and have a strong economy with related new jobs is to have a greatly improved transit system

Let's turn to what the TTF report does recommend. You surely have seen some articles in the newspaper about BRT. Because many people have negative perceptions about buses, the TTF chose to rename the BRT system "Rapid Transit Vehicles" or RTV. The envisioned system is at least as good as a light rail and, I think, closer to that of an improved Metrorail. Rather than running on steel wheels it will run on tires. The key attributes identified in the report for the RTV system are the following (p. 39-44):

- Dedicated lanes to the maximum extent possible. The TTF wants travel time to be similar to or better than driving autos, especially during peak periods.
- Stations must be safe, wide and weather-protected.
- RTVs must be sleek and stylish with Wifi access.

- RTVs can be "articulated" to carry about 120 people.
- RTVs must have doors on both sides with access at elevated platforms to allow quick access
- RTVs will operate frequently: 3-5 minutes during peak periods and 5-7 minutes at non-peak times.
- RTVs will operate late into the night and on weekends, with no more 15 minutes between vehicles
- RTV routes will be integrated with local bus routes and schedules so that the entire transit system is improved to facilitate access to and from employment, shopping, recreation, entertainment and residential areas.

The TTF proposed a 160 mile network of 25 routes (p. 54-58) that will operate largely along state and county four- and six-lane roads. The network of routes and accompanying local bus redesign will provide transit service to urban and suburban areas of the county and provide a better alternative to driving, with shorter travel time being the primary incentive. No other metro area in the country has such a system – they have at most only a few routes. The actual design of the routes requires substantial engineering analysis and creativity to work within constraints that include already congested roads and limited or no space to widen the road. Five basic configurations and other criteria were identified (p. 47-53).

One of the possibilities is to reconfigure one existing travel lane on a six-lane road. Even using pessimistic assumptions, RTVs can move the same number of people as a lane of traffic when the frequency is 3 minutes and 45 seconds. If more RTVs are added, then the actual outcome (people moved faster than in cars) could be even better than the pessimistic assumptions. Thus, the RTV system has the ability to add substantial people moving capacity (p. 16-22)

One of the first RTV routes will be the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). Over the last year, the Executive and Council have changed their recommendation for the CCT from light rail to RTV, an approach the Governor recently approved. The change is justified by both the much lower cost of RTV and the ability to implement it at least a decade sooner than light rail. The first segment of the CCT should be built as part of the RTV Phase 1 and the second segment in RTV Phase 2. Developers in the Gaithersburg area paid the Kittleson Company (private consultants) to look for ways to reduce the cost of the first segment. They were able to reduce the projected capital cost by over \$300 million,

and the TTF reflects this reduced cost. That report is found in Appendix D1 to the TTF report.

The TTF estimated the cost of the complete RTV system to be \$1.8 billion in today's dollars. This includes lane and station construction, purchase of the RTVs (over \$1 million each), and construction of maintenance facilities. The TTF concluded that no, or at the best limited, federal funding would be available (we should seek it anyway), and only some state funding would be available. The state has had no construction funding for any new projects anywhere in the state for the last 3-4 years. They are hard-pressed to maintain what we have and undertake studies for future projects. State funding would be dependent on the state increasing the gasoline tax or raising taxes or fees in some other way. Thus there will be limited state funding. The report makes the case that the state should at least pay for the CCT portion of the overall RTV project.

Therefore, all or most of the funds must come from the county. The county doesn't currently have this level of funds available; thus, there must be a new source of funds.

The TTF considered different funding sources and concluded that the only one now available that would provide the needed funding level is the property tax. The TTF recommended to the County Executive the creation of one or more special taxing districts. The financial section (p. 82-112) lays out 10 different alternatives that have two different amounts of state funding (zero or \$45M annually), two different implementation time frames (9 and 20 years), three different taxing districts (properties within a half mile of RTV routes, 90% of the county, and 100% of the county), different rates for capital and operating costs, and different rates for residential and non-residential properties. The resulting rates are phased in starting as early as 2014 but would not peak until 2022 to 2028 depending upon the alternative chosen. For a resident with a property valued at the county average of \$400,000, the annual tax increase would range from \$232 to \$385 depending upon the alternative. To some this sounds like a lot but if one thinks of it on a per day basis this amount is around one dollar a day. Many of us spend much more on junk food. Non-residential owners would also be taxed. For a 2000 square foot retail or office space that annually costs \$250 per square foot, the annual tax at the peak would range from \$425 to \$2175 depending upon the alternative chosen.

County Executive Leggett indicated on May 22 that he would consider the many alternatives identified in the TTF report and then present his recommendation to the Council for their consideration and action. I expect the Council will be taking this subject up over several months this fall. Depending upon what approach is finally selected, state legislation may be required to authorize implementation. This would likely happen during the 2013 session.

MCCF has been active in promoting this effort for the last 14 years, and it will be at least another 9 years before it can be fully implemented. MCCF voted in 2002 for \$8 billion to fund transportation projects and we voted for public transit as our top priority. At that time, we voted to support an increase in the gasoline tax to help pay for it. Also, many Montgomery County citizens complain that we send a lot of our taxes to Annapolis but receive only a small fraction back. With the county paying for the transit system, 100% of the funds raised will be used for our benefit. The TTF also recommended strongly that the law to increase property taxes be set up in such a way that the increases can be used only for transit.

There will surely be many opportunities for public comment on the TTF report, and the Council will certainly hold public hearings. The County is now paying the state to study RTV on Veirs Mill Road and Georgia Ave from Glenmont to Olney. There will be open houses and public comment periods on these two routes. Except for the ICC which will be used "as is" by RTVs, I expect similar opportunity for public comment on the other proposed RTV routes.

On a personal note, in my 32 years of being involved in a citizens association, this is the first proposal I have seen that I think will address road congestion and at the same time start to address a number of other issues including air quality and global warming. I recommend that citizens support the general direction as identified in the TTF report and participate in the public forums, work sessions and hearings. I again urge everyone to read the TTF report. The TTF is calling for a transformational change. Understanding such a change takes time, thought and discussion.

Planning and Land Use Report by Jim Humphrey, Chairman

The County Council will hold a hearing on June 19 at 7:30 pm on ZTA 12-07, requiring gas stations that dispense more than 3.6 million gallons of fuel a year to be at least 1000 feet from schools, parks, playgrounds,

hospitals or other public uses, or uses categorized as recreational, entertainment, or cultural. (See proposed Resolution on p 2)

By the end of June, County Executive Leggett expects to announce the date for a public hearing on the Transit Task Force Report and Recommendations on creation of a county-wide rapid transit vehicle (RTV) system.

We expect the Council to introduce a ZTA on accessory apartments on June 26 and to hold a public hearing on the legislation on July 31. The Planning Board may hold a hearing on this ZTA sometime in July, too.

The Planning Board could submit their recommended 2012 Subdivision Staging Policy (formerly the Growth Policy) to Council before the August break. The Council public hearing will likely take place in September.

The staff draft of the Zoning Ordinance rewrite could be submitted to the Planning Board any time now. We expect their public hearing to be scheduled for September, with a series of worksessions to take place over the following 3 months. The Board's recommended Zoning Ordinance could be sent to Council by year's end, with the Council's public hearing taking place in early 2013.

The Planning Board's master plan work program calls for them to transmit 3 master plans to Council by end of year. The Council's public hearings could take place on the Burtonsville Community Plan in early September, on the Chevy Chase Lake Sector Plan in early November, and on the Long Branch Sector Plan in early 2013.

And we are still awaiting a Council public hearing to be scheduled on the draft revision of the county Housing Policy that the Executive Branch transmitted to Council earlier this year.

Transportation Committee Annual Report

By Dan Wilhelm, Chairman

I have been active throughout the year participating in the County Executive's Transit Task Force (TTF). (See the article on page 2.) The BRT/RTV concept was proposed by MCCF in the 2000-2002 Transportation Policy Report and approved by MCCF at that time. The coming year will focus on the contents of the TTF report at meetings within MCCF and at public hearings.

Peggy Dennis, MCCF President, has been active on bicycling issues. A year ago, she organized the first Montgomery County Bicycle Conference and now finds that interest in and support for improving bicycle

infrastructure and facilities seems to be picking up. She also serves as liaison for the BCC/CAB to the Pedestrian & Bicycle Traffic Safety Advisory Committee. She has also taken the lead on the "orphaned roads" issue, with her own road – a test case - now on track to be brought up to standards by the county by 2013. We believe this to be a "first" since development requirements were changed in 1950.

Legislative Committee Annual Report

By Dan Wilhelm, Chairman

This Legislation Committee evaluates state legislation and proposes MCCF positions. Counting bills cross-filed in both the house and senate as one, MCCF took positions on 24 bills this last session. Of these 24 bills, we opposed 8, supported 14 and in the other two cases we supported some parts and opposed others. Four of these were tied to the revenue package, which were completed during the May special session. None of the bills we opposed were approved. My co-chair, Jay Harding, is active in the Leisure World Democratic Club. Since seniors represent a significant voting bloc, delegates and senators also listen to their views. One of the major items expected next year is increasing funding for transportation.

The most effective way to have our voice heard is to work with other organizations. To that end, the Committee Co-Chair, Dan Wilhelm, represents MCCF on the Committee for Montgomery (CfM) as one of 40 directors from civic, education, labor, non-profit, and other organizations. In order to take a position, CfM requires that 85% of the directors vote to support it. Because of the high approval level and the fact that CfM represents a broad cross-section of the county, Montgomery County Senators and Delegates view its positions as important. CfM provides MCCF a venue for sharing its position and also to learn from others to help understand what is behind the bills. I have been on the CfM Executive Committee for several years and will serve as chair during the coming year.

Again, working with another group allows MCCF to share its views with others and to increase the effectiveness of our views.

Parsing the PROS Plan:

What's New, What's Missing, and What's Coming Later

By Carole Ann Barth, Parks & Recreation Chairman

The 2012 *Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan Update* will estimate future parks and recreation needs and present strategies for meeting those needs. On April 12, the Planning Board approved the staff draft of the 2012 PROS plan, and voted to submit that draft to the state. The Board also held a public hearing on the plan on Thursday, May 24th.

The PROS plan is an important step in the facility-development process. PROS plan parks and recreation needs *estimates* are cited as *indisputable needs* in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) process. So knowing what is in the PROS plan gives you a preview of how your tax money will be spent over the next ten years. Thus, it's important to look very closely at what's included in the plan and how the estimates are derived, especially for those estimation methods that are not based on actual facility use data.

We also need to look beyond the individual facility types and consider the plan's totality. In these tough financial times it's important to develop consensus on what we really need and what we can afford. Do we need state-of-the-art facilities for every conceivable sport and hobby? Is it more important to have convenient, nearby facilities or is it more important to have regulation-sized facilities? Should we be building new facilities when many existing facilities are not being adequately maintained?

Each community also needs to assess how the PROS plan will impact nearby parks and recreation facilities. The PROS plan is essentially a "top-down" planning process meant to guide the type and distribution of facilities in the County. Communities, however, may have very different ideas about what park and recreation priorities should be when seen from a local ("bottom-up") perspective.

What's New:

The draft 2012 PROS plan contains a new definition of urban parks which calls for "more green space than paved surface" (including urban wooded areas). The new urban park definition also incorporates the concept of a "civic green", "Predominantly flexible space for community gatherings and festivals, as well as active and passive recreation activities, that may include Frisbee, pickup sports, picnicking, skateboarding, community gardens, etc."

This is good because it recognizes the need for natural areas in high-density communities as well as the multiple benefits of such areas. This is something residents in highly-developed portions of the County

have been advocating for years. (In fact, in all recent statistically valid countywide surveys citizens countywide have given natural areas a high priority.) For Four Corners residents, however, this is a bittersweet victory. The rationales for the new definition are the same arguments we have been making for ten years in support of saving Rachel Carson Meadow in North Four Corners Park. The Meadow already functions as a civic green, community open space, and urban wooded area. Now Parks is finally embracing these concepts, yet Parks still plans to spend almost \$6 million dollars to destroy this valuable urban resource and replace it with a soccer field and 50 car parking lot.

What's Missing:

Guidance from the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan recommends the co-location of facilities of two or more public agencies, yet the PROS envisions no co-located facilities. Like the concept of residential co-housing communities, sharing common areas between agencies allows for smaller individual building footprints and thus saves both capital and maintenance expenses. Also, when facilities don't need to be as massive, they are easier to site in developed areas where land is scarce.

Most of Prince George's County recreational facilities are co-located. For example, community recreation centers are often co-located with schools. Prince George's County Parks and Recreation (part of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission) and Prince George's County Public Schools have an agreement which governs management of the joint facilities. Surely Montgomery County could do as well.

In addition to saving money, co-location with schools means facilities are conveniently distributed within neighborhoods around the County, thus promoting walking over driving. Users also benefit from "one-stop shopping" when (for example) a parent can work out while their child attends team practice or rehearses the school play.

What's Coming Later:

The draft 2012 PROS plan does not contain updated needs estimates for ballfields. Instead, it contains the estimates from the 2005 plan. These old estimates are highly flawed. The way the estimates were derived led to an overestimate of ballfield needs for most areas of the County.

That is why the Vision 2030 Strategic Plan, using a more sophisticated method, concluded that most areas of the County have sufficient fields to meet demand. Of course, if fields are not well constructed and maintained, their usefulness is marginal, and having lots of fields becomes meaningless. Parks needs to demonstrate the capability to manage its existing field inventory before asking taxpayers to fund the construction of yet more new fields.

In addition, much has changed since the 2005 plan. New fields have been built. Permitting is now centralized instead of being scattered between three agencies. In addition, ballfields are permitted by the hour. These changes have reduced the practice of booking multiple fields. (Groups would often book multiple fields to increase their chance of getting a playable field come game day.) In addition, these changes should make it easier to generate accurate use statistics.

Parks does intend to generate new estimates, but they may not be completed before the PROS plan is finalized. Parks plans to conduct an Athletic Field Study to be completed sometime in FY 2013. Aspects of the study that would be an improvement over the 2005 methodology include:

- Conduct extensive outreach efforts to athletic field user groups and various governmental partners, e.g., Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF), Montgomery County Public Schools, and Montgomery Department of Recreation
- Identify athletic field issues and associated solutions unique to each of the seven athletic field areas
- Consider the contributions of alternative providers(e.g., Olney Boys and Girls Club) to meeting countywide athletic field needs
- Compare and contrast M-NCPPC Department of Parks current method of predicting future athletic field needs with methods used by other jurisdictions throughout Maryland and elsewhere

Of course it is not possible to discuss all the issues associated with the draft 2012 PROS plan in a short article such as this. Readers are encouraged to review the plan themselves:

http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkPlanning/Projects/pros_2012/documents/pros2012-05.24.12.public.hearing.draft.pdf.

Here is a link to the PROS update web page:

http://www.montgomeryparks.org/PPSD/ParkPlanning/Projects/pros_2012/pros_2012.shtm

Schedule for finalizing the PROS plan:

June - Planning Board Work session(s)

June/July - Request Planning Board Approval of Plan

July - Submit Approved Plan to Maryland Departments of State Planning and Natural Resources.

President's (last) Message

By Peggy Dennis

This June will mark the end of my tenure as president, and I will be sorry to step down. Most people seem to think of the presidency as something to be avoided, but I have found it both an honor and a pleasure to represent the Civic Fed. It has given me the opportunity to do exciting things like organizing the first ever Montgomery County Bicycling Conference and later going with my husband on a "VIP" bike tour from Bethesda to Silver Spring. When we were debating the proposal to merge the Park Police with the regular MCPD I spent a day on a "ride-along" with a Montgomery County Park Police officer and learned so much about the particular public safety issues facing the Parks Department. I spent an afternoon in our Circuit Court attending a session of "drug court" to see how this area of law enforcement is creatively handled. And I sat in on a session of the Zoning Advisory Panel to observe how they are contributing to the process of rewriting our zoning code. Just a few highlights!

The Civic Federation is, like every voluntary organization, dependent on the work of its members, and it is only as strong and productive as it is through their efforts. So, I want to recognize and thank those who have helped make the last year so good. First, my fellow elected officers: Carole Ann Barth, 1st V.P. who has stood in for me on several occasions and who has kept us current on issues concerning our Parks and Recreation Departments; Sue Schumacher who, as Secretary, has taken exemplary minutes; and Bill Schrader, Treasurer, who continues to handle our finances despite my tardiness in depositing reimbursement checks. Our Members-at-Large, Virginia Sheard, Ann McDonald and Max Bronstein pitch in to do whatever we ask of them, and they do it very well.

Our appointed officials also deserve our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Our Public Relations Officer, Sandy Vogelgesang, gets the word to the press about our meetings and programs. Dan Wilhelm keeps the Data Base correct and current with information on all

our members, and he chairs the Transportation and Legislation Committee and serves as our representative to Committee for Montgomery. How he has time to hold down a professional job, I'll never know! Jim Humphrey does double duty as liaison and chief writer of the Civic Fed's weekly column in the *Montgomery Sentinel* newspaper, and he heads the Planning and Land Use Committee ably assisted by Virginia Sheard, Max Bronstein, Eileen Finnegan, Natalie Goldberg and Kathie Hulley. With the rewrite of our zoning code, annual growth policy, and never-ending revisions of our master plans, their work never ends! Education Chairman, Paula Bienenfeld covers everything having to do with our schools and their humongous budget. Ginny Barnes keeps us informed on Conservation issues, Carole Ann Barth on Parks & Recreation, Jim Zepp on Public Safety, and Chuck Lapinski does double duty on Public Finance and Public Utilities. And for helping with the Annual Awards Banquet: Luella Mast who always makes set-up a party; Bill Schrader for handling the money; and former president Cary Lamari for a top flight job of organizing the President's Table. We owe all of these folks an immense debt of gratitude.

But I can't resist the chance to put in final quick promo: we can always use more new blood, expertise, interest and help with any/all of our issue areas. So please, those of you whose names were not listed above, join us by volunteering to do a bit yourselves. Following what our local government does, how our taxes are spent, and getting to know the players is endlessly challenging and rewarding. Expand your horizons and give us a bit of yourselves!

Minutes of the May 14 Meeting

By Sue Schumacher, Secretary

Call to Order: President Peggy Dennis called the meeting to order at 7:45 pm and asked permission to dispense with introductions, due to the lengthy agenda.

Agenda: The agenda was approved with the addition of an Emergency Resolution on the PROS Plan.

Minutes: It was moved and seconded to approve the April 9 meeting minutes. Motion approved.

Treasurer's Report: Bill Schrader reported that funds were a little low, and that the Civic Federation did not break even on the Awards Dinner. In addition, he reported that there were 58 associations as members and 19 associate members. These numbers are lower than last year.

Community Hero Award: President Peggy Dennis introduced Maria Fusco of the Brickyard Coalition and Sarah Shor of Nick's Organic Farm. Both groups were getting the award for the work they have been doing in trying to save the farm and keep the school site from being turned into a soccer complex. The farm is on property owned by MCPS, which has decided to lease the property to the Executive for development as 4 soccer fields. The Brickyard Coalition is composed of 750 families that has done extensive work on trying to stop MCPS from disposing of the property. Nick's Organic Farm is an iconic farm in the county that is one of the few sources for organic seeds hereabouts. In addition, there are many educational opportunities for school children to visit the farm and learn about organic farming.

Program: President Dennis introduced the presenters of the evening's program on artificial turf (AT) versus natural turf playing fields. The group - Dr. Kathy Michels, a neuroscientist at NIH; Bailey Condrey, a plastics expert and adult soccer player from Kensington; and Amy Stephan of Great Falls, Va - had recently presented a program in Great Falls on the same subject.

Bailey Condrey began by noting that natural grass fields are not well taken care of and just turn to dirt, whereas the synthetic fields look nice. However, the synthetic fields cost \$500,000 to \$ 1 million to install, and there are no life-cycle comparisons between artificial and natural turf fields. He showed a slide that showed the change in color of a soccer ball after one game on a synthetic field. It was severely discolored. This discoloration comes from the carbon black, which makes up the crumb filler on the artificial turf which is made from ground up tires, a toxic substance. In addition, on hot days the temperature on the AT fields can be over 140 degrees. He posed the question: why play on a hot petrochemical rug over compacted rock if we do not consider it safe to microwave food in plastic containers? Mr. Condrey said that there is great need for a quantitative risk analysis of artificial turf fields, especially given the probable carcinogens in the carbon black coming from the tires that could lead to deep lung exposure. To date, he said there have been no such analyses. Nor are there regulations on the construction and use of artificial fields. He noted that there are no filters around the artificial turf fields to catch stormwater run-off, thus -thus AT fields add additional toxic pollutants to our streams, the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay.

The group showed a short movie that had been put together for the citizens of Connecticut. In the film Dr.

David Brown, a Public Health Toxicologist from Harvard Univ., stressed that the AT with its crumb rubber filler gives off toxins that are inhaled into the lungs, and there are no studies that show what effects this will have over both children and adults over time. In addition, playing on these fields in hot weather only makes it worse. Play on the hot AT fields leads to “off gases” which could contribute to endocrine disruptions. He noted the danger due to the combination of off gases and particles with heavy metals such as lead, zinc and mercury that stay forever in a child. A spirited question and answer period followed.

Resolutions:

Emergency Transport Reimbursement as presented on page 3 of the May newsletter was introduced by Arnold Gordon, a supporter. County Councilman Phil Anderson came to speak in opposition to the resolution. The Councilman noted that it would send a bad message to the public who voted against a similar measure 18 months ago. The resolution was moved and seconded. The vote was 3 for, 10 against, 1 abstention. Resolution failed.

Accessory Apartments ZTA: Recommended MCCF position on proposed Accessory Apartments ZTA, as presented on page 4 of the May newsletter, was introduced by Jim Humphrey. A friendly amendment was accepted to add a provision supporting retention of the existing minimum lot size for detached AAs. The

vote was 12 for, 0 opposed, 1 abstention. Resolution passed.

Emergency Resolution:

Carole Ann Barth introduced an emergency resolution dealing with the PROS plan, it was moved and there were seconds from 5 different member organizations. The vote was 12 for, 0 opposed and 1 abstention, passing. The motion contained the following concerns on the draft PROS plan:

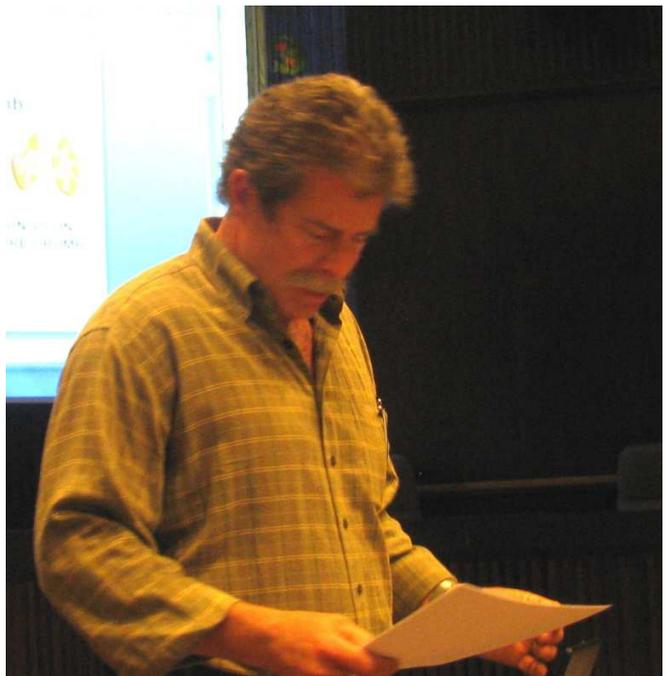
- Urge co-location of recreation centers with other County facilities such as schools and regional service centers
- Ask Parks to suspend construction of new ball fields until the new ball field needs study is completed and new needs estimates have been thoroughly vetted in a public process
- Replace the arbitrary athletic field areas with demographically-based areas that have some utility such as council districts or service-delivery areas. The vote was 12 for 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

The meeting adjourned at 9:55pm.

May’s ExComm minutes and Award Banquet Photos should be on the website later in June.



Amy Stephan outlined issues with artificial turf fields



Bailey Condrey hates playing on artificial turf fields

MONTGOMERY COUNTY CIVIC FEDERATION

Serving the County since 1925

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION OR RENEWAL

July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013

Mail To: William H. Schrader (Treasurer)
12824 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20906
301-946-6545; schraderw@erols.com

Inquiries Dan Wilhelm (Database)
904 Cannon Road, Colesville, MD 20904
301-384-2698 djwilhelm@verizon.net

Name of Organization/Individual _____ Date _____

Number of Households (Approx) _____ Annual Dues (see below) \$ _____

(Make checks payable to **Montgomery County Civic Federation**)

Membership Type	Number of Households	PLEASE CHECK	DUES	Max Number of Members	Voting Privileges
Local Association (civic, community, homeowner or municipality. Must represent at least 10 households - not paid members. Can not be a single local issue group.)	10 to 50		\$25*	1	Yes
	51 to 300		\$45*	2	
	301 to 600		\$65*	3	
	601+		\$85*	4	
Umbrella Association (Two or more local associations. Cannot be single local issue group.)	60 to 500		\$45*	2	Yes
	501 to 1000		\$65*	3	
	1001+		\$85*	4	
Regional or County-Wide Organization (environmental, transportation, or other civic/community).	50+ memberships, not households		\$45*	2	Yes
Individual Associate	(not applicable)		\$20*	1	No
Associate Group (Gov't agency, business, or other organization)	(not applicable)		\$85*	2	No

***A \$5 discount may be taken for each person who elects to receive the newsletter via email.** Organizations can also select less than the allowed number of members and pay according to that number. Please provide all the information below no matter the newsletter delivery method.

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2.	Name		(H)	
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			Put email address in directory: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
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Federation Meeting

Session 838

Monday, June 11, 2012
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 May 14 meeting
7:55 Treasurer's Report
8:00 Program: Zoning Code Re-Write Project
9:15 Vote on Resolution to Support ZTA 12-07
9:20 Vote on Resolution on TTF recommendations
9:30 Vote on Candidates for Coming Year
9:31 Committee Reports
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. 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: **Sunday, August 26** .
Prepare submission as an MS Word, Word Perfect or text-only document, **attach** it to an e-mail, and send 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, JUNE 21, 7:45 P.M.

At the home of Dan Wilhelm

904 Cannon Road, Colesville, MD 20904



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

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