

Can Mass Transit Be Saved? | The June program covers this and other transportation issues | **P. 3**

An Award-Winning Evening | See pix from MCCF's annual awards banquet was held last month | **P. 5**

What's Trending | Performance goals predict both the quality of county roads and RideOn ridership will decline | **P. 8**

WSSC OIG | A new Office of the Inspector General has been established at Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission | **P. 9**

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Civic Fed Tonight | Get speakers for your CA meetings | **P. 11**

The \$100 Million I-270 Innovative Congestion Mgt. Project Starting in Montgomery County | The road work begins | **P. 11**

Something to Talk About? | Come @7:00 to the June 11 mtg. to socialize; light refreshments | **P. 12**

Costco Quits Battle for Wheaton Mega Gas Station | Community rejoices as giant retailer fails to appeal ruling by Maryland's second highest court | **P. 13**

Some Positions at MCCF Still Need to be Filled | Positions begin this month. Volunteer! | **P. 14**

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, June 11, 2018, 7:45 p.m. @ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. "Can Mass Transit Be Saved and Other Transportation Issues"

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Meeting Minutes

May 14 Meeting *Unavailable*
May 10 Executive Committee Meeting
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Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

Federation Meeting 896

Monday, June 11, 2018

7:45 p.m.

Cafeteria [Note Change!]

Executive Office Building

101 Monroe Street, Rockville

AGENDA

- 7:00 Social Time for Members
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:55 Treasurer's Report
- 7:56 Officers Election
- 8:00 Program: Can Mass Transit Be Saved? And Other Transportation Issues **P.3**
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 9:35 Old and New Business
- 9:45 Adjournment

About MCCF Meetings

All monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public. They are held on the second Monday of each month, September through June, at 7:45 p.m.

The June meeting will be held in the **CAFETERIA of the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.**

DIRECTIONS

Walkers can enter by buzzing security at the door. You can park for free either in the lot at E. Jefferson and Monroe Streets or in the lowest level of the EOB. Drive onto the ramp in the front of the building (ignore "permit parking only" sign), turn left at the second, lower level; use the intercom at the gate to the parking garage and at the door to the elevators to inform security you're attending the MCCF Meeting. ■



The **Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.**, is a county-wide nonprofit educational and advocacy organization founded in 1925 to serve the public interest. Monthly MCCF meetings are open to the public (agenda and details at left).

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except July and August. It is emailed to delegates, associate members, news media, and local, state, and federal officials. **Recipients are encouraged to forward the *Civic Federation News* to all association members, friends, and neighbors.** Permission is granted to reproduce any article, provided that proper credit is given to the "*Civic Federation News* of the Montgomery County (Md.) Civic Federation."

Civic Federation News

civicednews AT montgomerycivic.org

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, SEE PAGE 16

June Program: Solving the Transportation Dilemma

By J. Zepp, J. Garson, H. Quinn

Transportation problems seem endless and stuck in gridlock; news reports and complaints about traffic congestion are constant features and common subjects on political candidates' lists of promises to fix. Communities have fought new roads and widening projects since the 1950s and congestion pricing, HOVs, and other traffic management strategies have emerged as alternatives for maximizing the existing roadway capacities. Unfortunately, many transit agencies have been experiencing declining ridership numbers for the last 10 years and are facing financial death spirals as their expenses are expected to increase at much higher rates than their revenues. In 2015, WMATA projected that its expenses would increase by 6% annually and

its revenues would only grow by 1% a year to 2025. This was before the precipitous ridership drops of recent years and fare revenue is 56% of WMATA's operating budget.

Nationally, transit ridership has been declining for years despite billions being spent on massive improvements and new mass transit projects. Transit agencies and advocates have pointed to cheap gas prices, the proliferation of ride-sharing services like Uber/Lyft, and inadequate funding/maintenance problems as reasons for this trend. **A recent study of ridership declines in the Los Angeles area** has found that the primary factor is the growth in automobile ownership, which has grown particularly sharply among subgroups most likely to use transit, such as the low-income and the for-

eign born from Latin America. The steep rise in vehicle access among these groups occurred as transit ridership began to fall.

The one bright ray of hope for transit ridership is an approach developed by Houston's Reimagining Transit Project. Transit ridership in that Texas city had been declining for years; many buses were following 70-year-old former streetcar routes. Consequently, it was decided to redraw the entire bus route map based on current transportation needs of riders to make the system more useful to its users. It was found that 50% of its bus transit resources were being wasted on routes running in areas with almost no riders. By reallocating existing resources to actual demand, Houston was able to achieve these service improvements with no additional costs:

June Transit Program, cont.

▮ Ninety percent of routes are 10 to 20 minutes faster.

▮ In its core service area, where demand is highest, buses run every 15 minutes, seven days a week (which is significantly better service than the BRT, which is limited to only one or two major corridors with stops a mile or more apart and takes years to implement).

▮ Ninety-three percent of riders are using the same bus stops and 96% are within a ¼ mile from a stop, which is considered the maximum distance riders will travel for a bus.

▮ To improve rider access in areas with curvilinear street patterns, bus drivers are allowed to deviate from routes for on-demand pickups and drop-offs.

▮ The data analyses and route planning cost \$1.2 million.

PHONE CHARGERS—AND T-SHIRTS, BAGS, BUMPER STICKERS, AND OTHER GIVEAWAYS—AS WELL AS ADS HAVE BEEN BOUGHT WITH TAX FUNDS TO PROMOTE THE PROPOSED BRT.



▮ Since no additional funding was needed for these improvements, Houston was able to go from planning to implementation—even with extensive public participation—in 18 months.

Christof Spieler, a major leader in the Houston Reimagining Transit Project, was a speaker in the [MCCF's Future of Transportation April 2015 meeting](#).

In 2017, Houston and Seattle were the only major U.S. cities that had transit ridership increases; Seattle

copied Houston's innovative approach for redesigning its bus system.

June 11 speakers include **Mike Helta**, Chief Innovation Officer for the Maryland Transit Admin., who will discuss the results of BaltimoreLink, MTA's redesign of the Baltimore City bus system. BaltimoreLink was implemented during 2017, so it has been in effect for nearly a year.

The MCCF's 2015 Transportation Report recommended the adoption of the approach used in the Houston Reimagining Project for improving its transit services. So far there has been no interest expressed by the County government in in this type of transit improvement which involves the more effective use of existing resources. There seems to be a preference for alternatives that require years and far more funding to implement. For example, \$5.1 million is being spent on

June Transit Program, cont.

selling the BRT to County residents.

Other transportation issues will be discussed, such as potential impacts of an Amazon HQ2 decision and proposed improvements to the Beltway and I-270 by Gov. Hogan.

We will also hear from Executive Director **Kevin C. Reigrut** of the MTA, operator of the ICC. The MTA Board named Reigrut to lead the 1,700-employee agency that oversees the State's eight toll facilities and the E-ZPass Maryland system. Prior to that, Mr. Reigrut served as Assistant Secretary of Operations for the Md. Dept. of Transportation.

We will also have the District 3 Engineer—the lead person for Montgomery County in the State Highway Administration—**Andre Futrell**, as well as some District 3 staff members in attendance. ■

An Award-Winning Evening: MCCF's Annual Banquet

By Jim Zepp

Friday, May 18th, the MCCF held its Annual Awards Dinner. About 60 attendees gathered for an evening of good comradeship and sharing with old friends.

While civic activism often goes unappreciated, this year's award recipients were especially deserving of recognition for their hard work and significant contributions.

The dinner was a buffet featuring delicious Chinese appetizers and entrees at the New Fortune Restaurant in Gaithersburg. Our honorees are listed below.

**THE SENTINEL AWARD
 Term Limits Ballot Committee
 Recipients: Sharon Cohen and
 Ann Hingston**



All Banquet Photos by Alan Bowser



MORE

Awards Banquet, cont.

Presented by James Shalleck, President, Mont. Co. Board of Elections

The Committee was formed to advocate for the passage of the Term Limits Ballot Questions. This was a particularly difficult task in a jurisdiction not traditionally considered favorable towards this change. The MCCF recognizes the Committee for its extraordinary achievement of garnering a 68 percent vote for term limits.

Congratulations to the Term Limits Ballot Committee for making a fundamental change in the County's political landscape!

**THE WAYNE GOLDSTEIN AWARD
Friends of Capital Crescent Trail
Recipients: Christine Real de Azua and John Fitzgerald**

Presented by Maryland State Del-

egate Al Carr

The Wayne Goldstein Award recognizes and honors an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County. This year we honored the Friends of the Capital Crescent Trail (FCCT) for their work on the Trail and the major role they have played with the Purple Line, fighting for the public interest and for green space, transparency, and accountability.

The work of the Friends of the Capital Crescent Trail have included bringing two lawsuits that highlighted the importance of realistic ridership estimates in calculating the cost-benefit of hugely expensive public

transit projects that can harm the environment, such as the Trail and the streams and forests surrounding it. The judge's ruling in the first lawsuit required the preparation of an additional formal assessment of ridership projections because usage projections failed to account for falling ridership trends.

We are honored to present the Wayne Goldstein Award to Friends of the Capital Crescent Trail. FCCT struck a blow for objective analyses

MORE



**ATTENDEES ENJOY A BUFFET OF
CHINESE FOOD AT THE NEW FORTUNE
RESTAURANT IN GAITHERSBURG**

Awards Banquet, cont.

over highly optimistic assumptions in the approval of mega-project public works.

THE STAR CUP

Jerry Garson, MCCF Treasurer and Transportation Committee Chair

Presented by Maryland State Senator Brian Feldman

The Star Cup has been presented by the Civic Federation since it began in 1925, to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of Mont. Co.

This year, we are pleased to award the Star Cup to Jerry Garson, our Treasurer and Chair of MCCF's Transportation Committee. Jerry saved the organization by stepping in after the sudden death of our previous Treasurer. He calmly rebuilt our

JERRY GARSON AND JAMES SHALLECK. BOTH HAVE SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS—ONE REPUBLICAN, ONE DEMOCRAT.



financial records so we could proceed with no interruptions or difficulties. Thank you for all your efforts and long service in many capacities for the Civic Federation—especially in the area of transportation—as well as the County, including service as

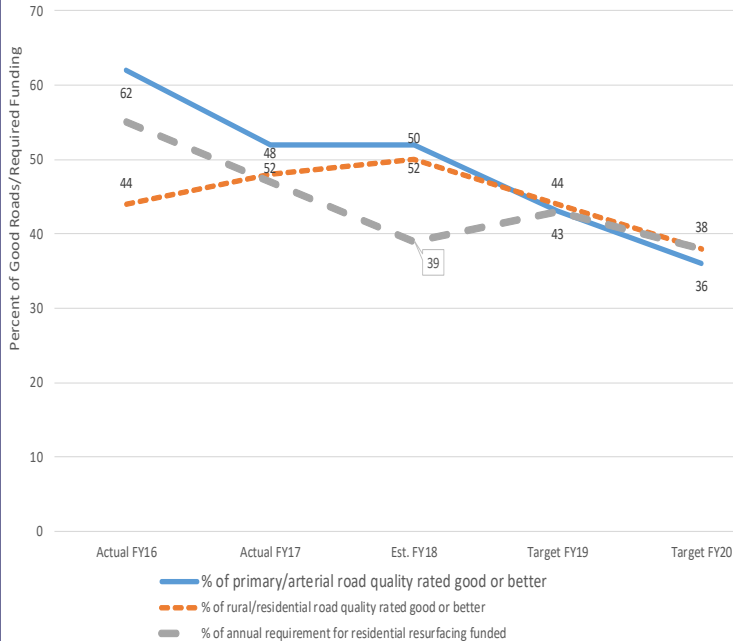
President of the County Elections Board. Congratulations on being awarded the Star Cup.

Thanks to Bailey Condrey, Jerry Garson, Danila Sheveiko, and Carole Barth. Their contributions and hard work made the evening possible. ■

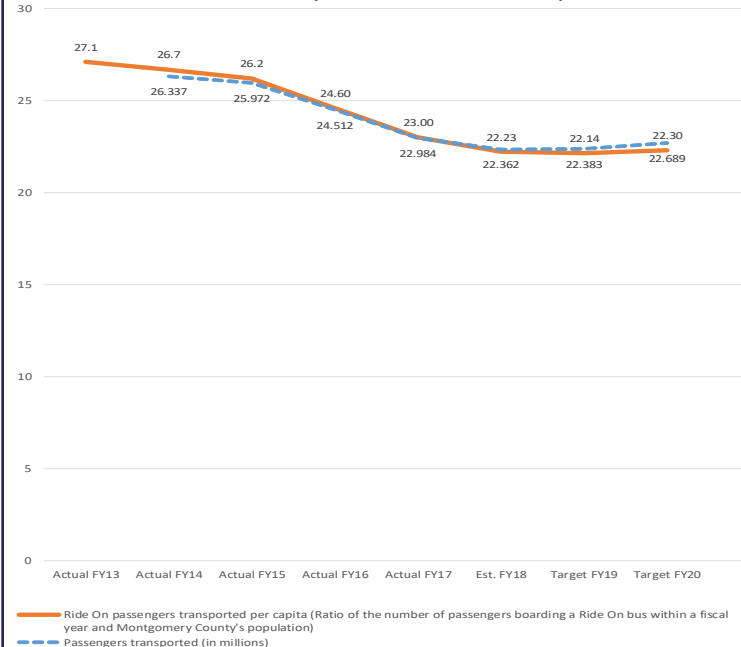
WHAT'S TRENDING IN THE COUNTY

An exploration of data trends in Montgomery County. Each month statistics for a different topic will be reported.

County Road Quality Expected to Decline



RideOn Ridership Expected to Decline



New Inspector General Office Created at Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

By Carole Ann Barth

Earlier this year, the legislature passed bill PG/MC 101–18 which created an Inspector General Office within the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC). You may be wondering, “What exactly is an Inspector General and why do we need them?” An Inspector General audits the operations of an agency (and its consultants, contractors and vendors) to uncover misconduct, waste, fraud or abuse.

This is especially important for bicounty agencies like WSSC and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC), because they are not directly overseen by either the State or County. If residents are dissatisfied with these independent agencies, there is no one voters can hold account-

able. For many years, MCCF has documented a pattern of lack of transparency, dubious spending, and mismanagement of public resources which is common to all the independent agencies.

For these reasons, MCCF asked the Montgomery County Delegation to create an oversight mechanism for these agencies. Last year, Delegate Ben Kramer sponsored legislation which created an Inspector General Office in MNCPPC, and this year

he sponsored PG/MC 101–18. The WSSC legislation will take effect October 1, 2018.

The WSSC Inspector General will create a workplan and make it available to the public; the resulting reports and audits will be available on WSSC’s website. The annual audit will also be submitted to both County Executives. The Inspector General has the authority to issue subpoenas, administer oaths, and take depositions.

So, citizen activists will soon have a source of additional information on agency operations as well as the opportunity to suggest items that should be added to the annual workplan.

Here is a [link to the legislation](#) and here is a link to the [MNCPPC Inspector General’s webpage](#). ■

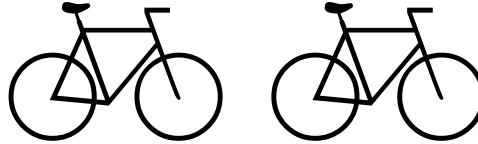


Transportation Update: Bicycle Master Plan, Dealing with Deer

By Peggy Dennis, Past President and Transportation Committee Member

The Planning Commission has completed its work on the new Bicycle Master Plan. The Plan is projected to be taken up by the County Council on Tuesday, July 10, in the evening. If you have issues or suggestions for improvements, plan on signing up to testify.

In advance of the Master Plan, bicycle infrastructure improvements are continuing to move forward. Work is progressing on bicycle loops in both Silver Spring and Bethesda. On Bike to Work Day, MCDOT created a “pop-up” two-way protected bike lane along Woodmont Avenue in Bethesda. Despite the rain, a number of cyclists turned out to use it and, as there were no complaints about the missing parking places



along one side of the road, it was considered a great success.

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association continues to provide advocacy, adult learn-to-ride classes, and organized rides for those who lack confidence in solo riding and would prefer to ride with a group. For instance, on June 9 they will lead a “Silver Spring Sweet Ride,” stopping at a variety of local bakeries and sweet shops in Silver Spring and Takoma Park. [Get more details and sign up on their website.](#)

DEER ARE HAZARDOUS

Deer are a chronic hazard for

bicyclists and drivers in addition to being a public health and environmental problem. Dr. Mark Eakin, director of the county’s Animal Connection Deer Management Team, and I were [published in the Local Opinions section of the Sunday, May 13, 2018, Washington Post](#). Our piece explained how the deer overpopulation problem may become even worse in Montgomery County because of a proposed new hunting regulation.

Then, if your neighborhood is plagued by too many deer, become an activist and start lobbying the governor, the head of DNR, and our own County Council and state delegates and senators for a return to the Suburban Deer Archery Zone with unlimited bag limits for antlerless deer. ■

CIVIC FED TONIGHT!

SEEKING POSSIBLE SPEAKERS FOR YOUR CIVIC ASSOCIATION MEETINGS?

Members of the MCCF Executive Committee have extensive experience in issues such as transportation, land use and zoning, schools, parks, environmental concerns, taxes, and public spending. Plus, they have a community-oriented perspective on these matters. If you would like an executive committee member to speak at a meeting, contact President Jim Zepp at *president at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

The \$100 Million I-270 ICM Project Starting in Mont. Co.

By Jerry Garson, Transportation Chair

For the next step of the \$100 million I-270 Innovative Congestion Management (ICM), the State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) will mill (i.e., remove the top layer of asphalt), pave, and re-stripe an eighth of a mile section of southbound I-270 approaching the dual exit lanes to I-370 to improve access to the exit lanes. All of the work is anticipated to be complete by the beginning of 2019.

The current lane configuration of I-270 at I-370 includes four through lanes and two dedicated right exit lanes to I-370. Upon completion of this part of the I-270 ICM project, four through lanes on southbound I-270 will be preserved, but the innermost



dedicated turn lane to I-370 will be converted to a ramp lane/through lane option, providing drivers with improved access to the exit to I-370.

Single lane closures on southbound I-270 at MD 109 in Montgomery County will take place

I-270 ICM, cont.

between 10 a.m. and 5 a.m. Mondays through Sundays. Double and triple lane closures will take place on southbound I-270 at I-370 in Montgomery County between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m.; occasional single lane closures will be necessary Mondays through Sundays between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Approximately 225,000 vehicles use this section of I-270 each day.

“These projects are part of the overall I-270 ICM project that will deliver significant travel time savings for thousands of I-270 commuters,” said MDOT SHA Administrator Greg Slater. “I am happy we can break the bottleneck and offer this advanced solution that, when complete, will improve the morning commute from Frederick to I-495.”

Last fall, MDOT SHA started

the I-270 ICM project by resurfacing and restriping the southbound I-270 west spur which connects the main line of I-270 with the outer loop of I-495 (Capital Beltway). This provides three through lanes Southbound on I-270 connecting onto I-495 towards the American Legion Bridge. This is slightly reducing the congestion south of Montrose Road.

The overall project—which includes roadway improvements and the operational approaches of adaptive ramp metering and active traffic management—will combine to deliver traffic benefits and dynamic traffic management along the entire I-270 corridor. Currently, the I-270 corridor carries a range of 79,400 to 261,200 vehicles each day. By 2030, daily volumes are expected to increase to 107,000 to 290,000 vehicles. ■

SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT?

*Need to share
a community concern?*

*Want to know how to do
something for your own
civic association?*

*Would like to meet
your fellow civic activists?*

Come early to the June 11 meeting. From 7:00 to 7:45 p.m., members of the MCCF Executive Committee will be available to talk in the EOB Auditorium. Light refreshments will keep you from going hungry. Be social, be a part of the civic movement, and be here.

Costco Quits Battle for Wheaton Mega Gas Station

Community Rejoices as Giant Retailer Fails to Appeal Ruling by Maryland's Second Highest Court

By Danila Sheveiko, 2nd Vice President

Staff at Maryland's top court confirmed Monday that Costco Wholesale, Inc., missed the deadline to appeal a ruling by the Maryland Court of Special Appeals that dashed the big-box retailer's dream of building a large gas station in Wheaton, Md. Projected to be the busiest in Montgomery County, the "mega" gas station would have been located just 118 feet from single family residences, in immediate proximity of an outdoor community swimming pool and the Down-County school for medically fragile children with special needs, including oxygen tanks and mechanical respirators.

A rare loss for the world's second largest retailer, Costco's decision to



drop the lawsuit against Montgomery County government for denying them a special zoning exception for the gas station signals a final victory for affected Kensington Heights residents and activists from around the region that fought against the ill-conceived plan since February of 2010. The special exception was

denied after a hearing at the County Office of Zoning and Administrative Hearings lasted an unprecedented 37 days (with breaks for lunch) and generated nearly 10,000 pages of transcript, caused in large part by **numerous glaring mistakes** the opposition discovered in Costco's filings and testimony.

Costco applied for the special exception after a bill to allow the gas station "by right" died in the County Council following a vigorous **people-powered advocacy campaign** that went on to pass a law requiring any future large gas stations to maintain **reasonable setbacks** from schools, residences, and playgrounds.

Stay tuned for upcoming party details on the **Kensington Heights Civic Association Facebook page**. ■

Volunteer—Some Positions at MCCF Still Need to be Filled Starting This Month

By *Jacquie Bokow, Editor, CFN*

At the June 11 meeting, MCCF Officers will be elected for the next fiscal year; their terms will begin immediately following the meeting.

These individuals have been nominated for elected positions:

- President: Bailey Condrey
- 1st Vice President: Danila Sheveiko
- Treasurer: Jerry Garson

A 2nd Vice President and a Secretary, both of whom serve on the Executive Committee, are still needed. Nominees must be Delegates from MCCF member civic associations.

Below are lists of both appointed positions and chairs of standing committees. A few vacancies remain there, too; some because those serving have decided to run for

public office and had to withdraw. (MCCF Bylaws don't allow both.)

APPOINTED POSITIONS

- Member at Large: Jonathan Halpern
- Member at Large: Harriet Quinn
- Member at Large: Linda Schade
- Member at Large: *Vacant*
- Newsletter Editor: Jacquie Bokow
- Database Manager: Harriet Quinn
- Immediate Past President: Jim Zepp (after June 11 meeting)

STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

- Education: *Vacant*
- Environment: Carole Ann Barth
- Legislation: *Vacant*
- Committee for Montgomery:

Vacant

- Parks and Recreation: Carole Ann Barth
- Planning and Land Use: Harriet Quinn
- Public Finance: *Vacant*
- Public Safety: Jim Zepp
- Transportation: Jerry Garson
- Utilities: Louis Wilen

Please consider stepping up to participate in the MCCF. If you have a predilection for one of the topics covered by the standing committees, we urge you to get involved, especially if you're already keeping your thumb on the pulse of that issue. Share what you know with the rest of us!

For more information, contact Jim Zepp at *president AT montgomerycivic.org*. ■

Minutes of the May 10th, 2018, MCCF Executive Committee Meeting

By Bailey Condrey, First Vice President

Present: Jim Zepp, Carole Barth, Danila Sheveiko, Bailey Condrey, Jacquie Bokow, and Linda Schade.

PROGRAM TOPICS

I May: Economic Development with Lily Qi (with Leggett's Dept. of Econ. Development) and Greg Larye (Executive Director of Good Jobs First).

I June: Transportation. Jerry Garson will organize. Include Governor's I-270/I-495 Plan in June newsletter.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

I Bicycle Master Plan is going to the County Council. Need to see a fiscal impact statement; it's a 30-

year plan. Peggy Dennis was on the Advisory Committee and submitted an article for our newsletter.

AWARDS EVENT

I Discussion of logistics, etc.

OFFICER ELECTIONS

I Discussion. Still in need of 2nd VP and Recording Secretary. Nominations from the floor at meeting next week.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education

I Synthetic Turf. Clinoptilolite Zeolite chosen as new infill for new syn turf fields at Whitman and Einstein HS. Unilateral decision made by Andrew Zuckerman.

I MPIA. Follow-up was sent on April 6th, Information from MCPS

has not been forthcoming. No response on requests for information from 2008.

Utilities

I WSSC Rate Increase. County Council approved another 4.5% WSSC rate increase. Taxpayers League will have meeting with WSSC CFO Joe Beach, Wed., May 16th. \$1 million spent on hotel bills for out of town consultants.

I WSSC Inspector General. The Inspector General Bill, which MCCF requested, passed this legislative session. Thanks to Delegate Ben Kramer for his work on this.

Planning and Land Use

I Small Cell Tower ZTA. Council voted to make changes in the

May ExComm Minutes, cont.

commercial mixed use zones only making these limited use. No changes to ZTA in residential zones for now.

Environment

■ County stormwater program still in flux. Consent Decree has been signed. County Executive proposes one major contractor to do all phases of research and design.

■ Climate Emergency Office. County Council proposed \$70K for the reconciliation list.

■ Clock is ticking on COSTCO appeal. The decision deadline is 10 days away; COSTCO has spent probably close to \$20 million on the effort. Still waiting for improvements from the \$4 million tax breaks given to them by County.

OLD BUSINESS

■ Bailey requesting website metrics from 2015; breakdown for visits, top 10 entry pages and exit pages.

■ Jim was looking at other Civics around the region. He would like MCCF to create an article archives for other newsletters around the area to repurpose content, provide to other civic associations.

NEW BUSINESS

■ For the June newsletter, Jim will send a list of ideas, 10 principles.

■ Newsletter story deadline is May 26. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org
info AT montgomerycivic.org
Twitter Feed @mcciviefed
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Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month. Send to CFN at [civicfednews AT montgomerycivic.org](mailto:civicfednews@montgomerycivic.org).

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

VIEW PAST ISSUES ONLINE [HERE](#)