

January Program: Traffic and Transportation Issues Facing County | Including the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study | **P. 3**

Council Elects Officers | County Council elected Sidney Katz as Prez, Tom Hucker as Veep | **P. 4**

Racial Equity Act | County Exec. signs Act: all residents are welcome, treated with respect, and will have opportunities to succeed | **P. 5**

County 2020 Priorities | Md. General Assembly released its priorities for 2020 | **P. 6**

MCCF Supports Vision Zero | More than 100 attend Pedestrian Safety Town Hall Dec. 13 | **P. 7**

Resolution on Bill 38-19 | Support for permits to obstruct rights-of-way on streets and roads | **P. 9**

Proposed Legislation | Maryland State legislation for Montgomery County only | **P. 10**

Committee for Montgomery | CfM's 30th Legislative Breakfast is attended by MCCF officers | **P. 13**

Planning and Land Use Report | Sign up for alerts, get 'meeting in a box' tool for General Plan | **P. 14**

The Wake Up Call That Science Sends to All | **P. 16**

Let the Children Play Outside | Kids need to get dirty | **P. 18**

of note

Next MCCF Meeting

Monday, January 13, 2020, 7:45 p.m.
@ the Executive Office Building in Rockville. "Traffic and Transportation Issues Facing Montgomery County"

AGENDA, P. 2 • PROGRAM, P. 3

Meeting Minutes

Dec. 9, 2019, Meeting #908 **P. 20**
Executive Committee Meeting December 19, 2019 **P. 23**

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Federation Meeting #909

Monday, January 13, 2020

7:45 p.m.

Lobby Level Auditorium

Executive Office Building

101 Monroe Street

Rockville, Maryland

AGENDA

- 7:00 *Social Time for Members*
- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:57 Approval of Minutes,
December 9 Meeting **P.20**
- 7:58 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 **Program: Traffic and
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 January meeting will be held in the **Lobby Level Auditorium of the Executive Office Building at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland.**

Walkers can enter by buzzing security at the door. You can park for free either in the lot at East 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. ■

mccf

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 24**



January Program: Traffic and Transportation Issues

By Jerry Garson, Transportation Committee Chair and Treasurer

The topic of the January meeting will be traffic and transportation issues facing Montgomery County, including the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study.

The scheduled speakers will be **Carol Rubin**, Special Project Manager, I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study for the Montgomery Planning Board, which is part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, and **Gary Erenrich** and **Robert Dorsey** from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

The mission of the Department of Transportation is to move people and connect places with the best transportation choices and services. They are also responsible for repair-

ing and maintaining the roads in the county. They also operate the RideOn Bus service.

The meeting will be held at the Montgomery County Executive Office Building Lobby Auditorium on Monday, January 13, 2020, beginning at 7:45 p.m. (Come at 7:00 p.m. to discuss issues and have a light nosh.)

The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) is undertaking the I-495 and I-270 Managed Lanes Study to address traffic congestion along the entire length of I-495 (Capital Beltway), as well as the entire length of I-270 (Dwight D. Eisenhower Memorial Highway) up to I-70 in Frederick County, Maryland, among the busiest routes in the region. ■

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 January 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 there.

Mont. County Council Elects Sidney Katz as President, Tom Hucker as Vice President

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

At a recent meeting, the Montgomery County Council unanimously elected Councilmember Sidney Katz as president and Councilmember Tom Hucker as vice president of the Council. They will serve one-year terms as officers of the Council. Katz just completed a one-year term as Council vice president.

Council President Katz's priorities for the year include: continuing to make Montgomery County more business friendly; generating employment opportunities that bring well-paying jobs to the County; continuing to support Montgomery County Public Schools, so that students receive the best education possible; and supporting efforts to expand multimodal transportation solutions. He also noted that



he wants to accomplish these goals while focusing on the need to reduce the County's debt.

"I will spend the next year continuing to work with businesses located here, and those that should locate here, so we can expand and strengthen our economy," said Katz. "A growing economy is the foundation upon which we can all prosper. As we work to increase our tax base, we must seize every opportunity to demonstrate that we are a great place to do business, that we are welcoming, that our regulations and requirements are no more onerous



than those in surrounding jurisdictions, and that we are responsive to the criticism we hear."

Katz serves as chair of the Council's Public Safety Committee and as a member of the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee. He represents District 3, which includes Derwood, Gaithersburg, Leisure World, North Potomac, Potomac, Rockville, Washington Grove, and parts of Aspen Hill.

Katz has served on the Mental Health Court Planning and Implementation Task Force, which led to the creation of a Mental Health Problem Solving Court in Montgomery County's District and Circuit Courts. Katz also has served as chair of the Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, whose mission is to

Council Officers, cont.

reduce domestic violence and create a safe community for families to live free of abuse.

Katz was elected to the Council in 2014 and started his career in public service on the Gaithersburg Planning Commission. He also served on the Gaithersburg City Council and as the mayor of Gaithersburg for 16 years.

As a lifelong resident of Gaithersburg, Katz is well known as the former owner of Wolfson's Department Store, which was a retail store started by his grandparents in 1918 in Olde Town. The store was continuously operated by the family until 2013.

Hucker was elected as Council vice president. He serves as chair of the Council's Transportation and Environment Committee and

as a member of the Public Safety Committee. Hucker was elected to the Council in 2014 and represents District 5, which includes the southeast and eastern portion of the County generally surrounding U.S. Route 29, including Briggs Chaney, Burnt Mills, Burtonsville, Calverton, Cloverly, Colesville, Fairland, Four Corners, Hillandale, Lyttonsville, Silver Spring, Takoma Park, and White Oak.

Hucker's career has focused on helping people make government more responsive and effective. Before his service on the Council, Hucker was a member of the Maryland General Assembly from 2006 to 2014. He also founded Progressive Maryland and currently serves as a board member of the Progressive States Network and as a consultant for the Natural Resources Defense Council. ■

County Exec. Signs Racial Equity, Social Justice Act

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich signed the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act on Tuesday, December 3, 2019. Montgomery County is the first jurisdiction in Maryland to sign racial equity legislation, which states that all residents are welcome, treated with respect, and will have opportunities to succeed. Elrich was joined by newly elected County Council President Sidney Katz and Vice President Tom Hucker (see [page 4](#)), councilmembers and community leaders.

The County Council recently approved the Act, which aims to establish the formal process to address racial equity and social

Racial Equity Act, cont.

justice issues in the County. The legislation requires the County to establish an Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice in the Executive Branch; establishes a racial equity and social justice action plan for the County; requires each Department and Office to develop a racial equity and social justice action plan; requires the Office of Legislative Oversight to submit a racial equity and social justice impact statement to the Council for each bill; establishes a Racial Equity and Social Justice Committee and sets forth the composition and duties of the committee; and requires the Planning Board to consider the racial equity and social justice impact when preparing a Master Plan. ■

Montgomery County's Priorities for the 2020 Session

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

The Office of Intergovernmental Relations has recently released Montgomery County's Priorities for the session of the Maryland General Assembly, which will convene on Wednesday, January 8, 2020.

Highlights include the Kirwan Commission recommendations, public school construction, I-495/I-270 traffic mitigation, and the state pre-emption of local authority.

KIRWAN COMMISSION

■ Ensure that the new formulas provide Montgomery County with its fair share of State funding and adequately address the needs of its students.

■ Carefully review new funding requirements placed on local jurisdictions and ensure that the new

formulas provide needed flexibility to counties while also recognizing the significant investments Montgomery County has made to date for its students.

PUBLIC SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION

■ Support all efforts to increase Statewide amounts available for public school construction.

■ Request the Interagency Commission on School Construction to revisit the State Aid for School Construction Eligibility Criteria to allow for greater State participation in school construction projects.

I-495/I-270 TRAFFIC MITIGATION

■ Work with the Administration to

MoCo 2020 Priorities, cont.

ensure that the first segment of the I-270/I-495 Traffic Relief Plan include I-270, the American Legion Bridge, and the section of I-495 between these facilities.

■ Secure a commitment from the Administration for an immediate, specific, and meaningful commitment to provide resources to affected Counties to meet local transportation needs as part of any P3 or tolling program.

■ Reinstate the Corridor Cities Transitway in the Consolidated Transportation Plan as part of or in addition to the Traffic Relief Plan.

■ Obtain a commitment from the Administration that fair consideration be given to the alternative of using the Intercounty Connector (ICC) rather than widening the Beltway between I-270 and I-95.

LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY, AVOIDING PREEMPTION

■ Retain the County's broad Home Rule Authority and ensure that the

County is not preempted from enacting or enforcing its own local laws (e.g., siting of small cell facilities, licensing of electricians, siting of large-scale solar farms). ■

MCCF Supports Vision Zero Pedestrian Safety Town Hall

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

On December 13, 2019, the Montgomery County Civic Federation was pleased to join with the Montgomery County Council of Parent Teacher Associations, Action Committee for Transit, the Montgomery County Sierra Club, the Coalition for Smarter Growth, and the Washington Area Bicycle Association as cosponsors of a Montgomery County Council Town Hall on Vision Zero and pedestrian safety issues.

The Town Hall, organized by

Montgomery County Councilmember-at-Large Evan Glass, attracted a large crowd of County residents concerned about the recent increase in pedestrian safety fatalities and injuries in the County.

After a deadly week on Montgomery County roads, more than 100 people packed the "Vision Zero" Town Hall and the Montgomery County Council Office on Saturday morning. Some told officials they are afraid "all the time" whether driving, walking or biking

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 Bailey Condrey at *president at montgomerycivic dot org*. Include topics/possible dates.

Pedestrian Safety, cont.

in the county, and called for immediate safety changes.

After a downward trend in recent years, police say this year saw an uptick in crashes. Nearly 600 people have been injured, and 14 killed in pedestrian crashes. Just recently, an 81-year-old woman was struck and killed in Silver Spring on Monday, and two students were struck at their school bus stops within 24 hours. One, a 9-year-old girl in Bethesda, died on Thursday. The other, a 17-year-old boy in Wheaton, is in critical condition.

People at the town hall came to advocate for more sidewalks, reduced speed limits, and activated crosswalk lights. Attendees heard presentations from representatives of Montgomery County

Public Schools, the Montgomery County Police Department, the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Maryland State Highway Administration, and several County Councilmembers, including Council President Sidney Katz.

The Montgomery County Civic Federation has identified county-wide pedestrian safety as one of its highest priorities. Civic Federation Secretary Karen Cordry has been named to the newly formed Advisory Group for the Montgomery County Planning Board's Pedestrian Master Plan. ■

Resolution on Bill 38-19: Streets and Roads—Permit to Obstruct Public Rights-of-Way

By Peggy Dennis, Transportation Committee Member

I propose the following resolution on Montgomery County Bill 38-19, which is designed to assure pedestrian safety, minimize inconvenience to the public related to sidewalk closures, and increase transparency about permits to close sidewalks. This bill will amend Section 49-11 (Streets and Roads) of the Montgomery County Code.

Councilmember Andrew Friedson is the lead sponsor with Councilmembers Katz, Hucker, Albornoz, Riemer, Jawando, and Glass cosponsoring. The bill will be before the council on January 14 at 1:30 p.m.

RESOLUTION ON BILL 38-19

Whereas, Bill 38-19, Streets and Roads—Permit to Obstruct Public Rights-of-Way, requires the County Executive to draft a regulation for permits to close a curb lane, sidewalk, or shared-use path in the public right-of-way limit the closure to the minimum time necessary; and

Whereas, this bill requires the Department of Permitting Services to regularly review right-of-way permits to determine if the permittee must immediately reopen the sidewalk or begin to provide a safe alternative path (such as a covered walkway or protected pathway in a parking lane or curb lane) on the same side of the street; and

Whereas, this bill specifies the standards a permittee must meet

to demonstrate that maintaining pedestrian access is an extreme hardship; and

Whereas, this bill requires the County to publish right-of-way permit applications and permits online; and

Whereas, the purpose of this bill is to increase pedestrian safety, and

Whereas, this bill will assure that public sidewalks and walkways may be closed only for the minimum time periods necessary with minimum disruption and inconvenience to the public; and

Whereas, sidewalks are an essential part of our transportation infrastructure;

Therefore, be it resolved that the MCCF supports Bill 38-19. ■

Proposed Maryland State Legislation for Montgomery County

By Sue Beth Schumacher, 2nd Vice President

The Maryland State Legislature starts its 90-day period on January 8, 2020, and ends April 6, 2020. The following Bills are proposed for Montgomery County only. Here are one or two line synopsis of the Bills and the Committees they to which they are assigned.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

I MC 9-20: For altering hours of consumption of certain alcoholic beverages licenses. Basically extending hours of sale of certain alcoholic beverages.

I MC 11-20: Establishing a consumption-only marketplace license for the developer of commercial shopping center if the commercial

shopping center to allow the consumption of beer, wine, and liquor in a designated outdoor area.

I MC 12-20: Stable Homes Act: Prohibiting evictions of a tenant holding over beyond the expiration of a lease without just cause. Spells out how to evict if there is just cause.

I MC 15-20: Town of Kensington *only:* Expanding the A-K licenses hours of sale for certain alcoholic licenses.

I MC 23-20: Property Tax Credit for Senior Citizen Volunteers: Authorizing the governing body of Montgomery County to grant, by law, a property tax credit against the County property tax of the person of at least a certain age who volunteers at a public school or a nonprofit organization located (must be located) in Montgomery County.

I MC 27-20: Alcoholic Beverages Licenses—Catering Extension: For Class D beer, wine, liquor, to provide alcoholic beverages off the premises under certain circumstances and during certain times and days.

EDUCATION, ELECTIONS, AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

I MC 1-20: Selection of Chair of the Housing Opportunities Commission: For the County Executive to select the chair from among the Commissioners.

I MC 2-20: Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Committee Alterations: HOC must prepare written minutes, live-stream open meetings, submit proposed budget to the Montgomery County Delegation, show on its website audits and

Proposed Legislation, cont.

budgets, and other requirements.

I MC 5-20: Montgomery County Housing Opportunities Commission Procurement: Adopt procurement provisions and regulations that conform to Montgomery County Code as well as Federal Code.

I MC 8-20: Montgomery County Public Campaign Financing—Board of Education: Authorizing the governing body of Montgomery County to establish by law a system of public financing for the elected members of the Board of Education.

I MC 13-20: Montgomery County Board of Education Compensation: Altering the compensation of the members of the Montgomery County Board of Education.

I MC 14-20: Authority of County Council Over Inspector General—Montgomery County Public Schools:

Authorizing to enact a local law that grants to the Inspector General certain authority over the Board of Education and public schools located in the county.

I MC 19-20: Montgomery County—Elections—Early Voting Centers: Requiring Montgomery County to have a certain number of Early Voting Centers. And making this Act an emergency measure.

I MC 21-20: Montgomery County—Housing Opportunities Commission—Contracting out Services Requirements: Prohibiting the Executive Director of the Montgomery County HOC from certifying that he has complied with certain laws.

THE LAND USE, TRANSPORTATION, AND PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

I MC 6-20: Montgomery County Agricultural Preserve Deer Man-

agement Program: Authorizing an individual who harvests deer under a Deer Management Permit in the county Agricultural Preserve to use certain firearms to harvest the deer throughout the year.

I MC 7-20: Montgomery County Agricultural Land Transfer Tax—Alterations: Providing that the tax derived from transfer tax be used for agricultural purposes, and making a technical correction.

I MC 16-20: Montgomery County—Country Clubs and Golf Courses—Annual Land Preservation Fee: Requiring certain golf courses and country clubs pay a certain fee and the county to use certain fees for land preservation programs.

I MC 20-20: Montgomery County—Residential Property Advertisements and Sales, School District Information: Prohibiting Real Es-

Proposed Legislation, cont.

tate Brokers, Associate Brokers, and Sales Agents for the advertisement of a certain school district for the sale or rental property. It does allow the agents to answer questions.

I MC 24-20: Montgomery County—Distracted Driving Monitoring Systems: Authorizing a law enforcement agency to place distracted driver monitoring systems on highways located in the County. Notification of being cited is spelled out in detail.

I MC 26-20: Public Safety—Buildings Used for Agritourism: Exempt from certain building performance standards.

I MC 104-20: Montgomery County—Land Use Documents Certification: That certain persons sign a certain certification under penalty of perjury of certain documents sub-

mitted to a certain planning board. [Acted on by the Montgomery County House Delegation first.]

METRO WASHINGTON AREA COMMITTEE

I PG/MC 101-20: Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission—Mandatory Referral Review: Submissions can only be approved if the submission is complete or explanation as to why it is not complete or addendums included. [Acted on by the Montgomery County House Delegation first.]

I PG/MC 102-20: Bi-County Commissions Annual Reports—Conflicts of Interest and Lobbying: Requiring certain bi-county commissions to publish on the website of the bi-county commission relating to conflicts of interest and lobbying by bi-county commissions.

I PG/MC 103-20: Washington

Suburban Sanitary Commission—Discrimination Prohibited: Prohibiting the WSSC from discriminating on the basis of genetic information or children or the presence of children.

I PG/MC 105-20: Income Tax Subtraction Modification—Maryland National Capital Park Police and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission Police Force: Altering for these police forces who reside in certain crime areas to be able to adjust their income tax subtractions.

I PG/MC 108-20: Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission—Summer Math, Reading, and Science Pilot program: Coordinate with Prince George's Schools these programs in summer school programs as part. [This bi-county bill will be acted on by Prince George's House Delegation first.]

Read [the proposed Acts here](#). ■

Committee for Montgomery's 30th Legislative Breakfast

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

Representatives of Montgomery County Civic Federation joined with more than 600 community representatives, business leaders, and elected officials at the 30th Legislative Breakfast of the Committee for Montgomery at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. MCCF is a founding member of the Committee for Montgomery. MCCF President Bailey Condrey, MCCF 1st Vice President Alan Bowser, and MCCF Treasurer Jerry Garson attended on behalf of the organization.

At the December program, the audience heard from number of elected officials from across the County and the State of Maryland. Incoming Maryland State Senate President Bill Ferguson offered welcoming remarks, noting that many MoCo legislators

would have key roles in the Maryland General Assembly. Other presentations from County Executive Marc Elrich, Council President Sidney Katz, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, State Senator Craig Zucker, and State Delegate Marc Korman rounded out the morning program.

CfM announced its 2020 Advocacy Priorities in three main areas: Transportation, Economic Development, and Education. Among its priorities were: reinstatement of funding and State support for the Corridor Cities Transitway; increased capacity on I-270, including consideration of express bus service and a study on the feasibility of reversible lanes; increased daytime capacity for MARC Rail service on the Brunswick Lane; a strategic, coordinated, regional approach to economic development

strategies and incentives; cultivation of "Opportunity Zones" to spur investment; increasing the supply of affordable housing; increased capital investment for educational institutions; and ensuring the new funding formulas do not negatively impact the County and that MoCo is not denied the necessary resources to educate and meet the needs of its children.

Committee for Montgomery is a coalition of leaders representing a broad cross-section of MoCo business, labor, education, civic, arts and humanities, and community-based organizations. Led by a 40-member Board of Directors, CfM supports policies, programs, and laws that promote development of the County economy and infrastructure, the education and health of its residents, and increased opportunities for the County's 1,000,000 diverse residents. ■

Planning and Land Use Committee Report

By Harriet Quinn, MCCF Planning and Land Use Committee Chair

SIGN UP FOR PLANNING ALERTS

Is your association registered with the Planning Department so that you receive public notices about public meetings and projects in your area? [Here is the update page that you should check](#) to see if your contact information is up to date.

Did you know you can receive e-newsletters from the Planning Department about any master plan they are working on as well as a weekly General e-newsletter from Planning and Parks? [Here is the signup page.](#)

PLANNING DEPARTMENT ‘MEETING IN A BOX’ TOOL FOR

COMMUNITY MEETINGS ON THE COMPREHENSIVE GENERAL PLAN

During the MCCF October Meeting, planners informed MCCF that the Update to the General Plan is moving quickly and they don't plan to have any advisory committee for this 30-year plan as they have for the SSP and other Master Plans. Instead, they have created a [“Meeting in a Box” Tool for Community Associations](#) to use to get feedback from their residents on Updating the General Plan. This Tool was just released in December but the Planning Department deadline for submission is February 1 so there is not much time to utilize the tool.

In February, they plan to finalize the list of issues for the General Plan to addresses. Currently their [Staff](#)

[Report](#) lists eight issues: Complete Communities; Connectedness; Diverse Economies; Safe and Efficient Travel; Affordability; Healthy and Sustainable Environment; Diverse and Adaptable Growth; and Culture and Design.

The Planning Department plans to deliver the final working draft of the General Plan to the Planning Board by September 2020.

PRESENTATIONS NOW AVAILABLE ON MCCF WEBSITE

Slide Presentations from the MCCF meetings in October (General Plan Update), November (Pedestrian Safety Plans) and December (Subdivision Staging Policy, School Capacity and Impact Taxes) are now available [on the MCCF website.](#)



PLU Cmte. Report, cont.

ZTA 19-07: CELL TOWERS IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES

PHED Committee work sessions are scheduled for January 23 and February 3. [MCCF testimony can be read here.](#)

COUNTY COUNCIL BILL 34-19, TAXATION—DEVELOPMENT IMPACT TAXES—AFFORDABLE HOUSING—HOUSING IMPACT FAIRNESS ACT

A public hearing was held on December 3rd on [Bill 34-19](#), which is sponsored by Councilmembers Glass and Jawando. The Bill would impose impact taxes and a demolition excise tax on “teardown” houses and would add ~\$50,000 to a project that replaces 50% or more of an existing house. Impact taxes were originally established on new devel-

opment to contribute to the cost of the new infrastructure that is needed to accommodate new development such as schools and transportation.

The MCCF Planning and Land Use Committee believes that, rather than propose a separate bill, this proposal should be reviewed as part of the comprehensive update to the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) which is currently underway and reviews all impact taxes and exemptions. The SSP is scheduled to be taken up by the Council next year and must be adopted by November 2020.

On December 5th, the Planning Board found no correlation between teardowns and increased number of students. The Board recommended the proposal be taken up during the review of the SSP rather than as a separate bill.

A Government Operations Com-

mittee worksession on the Bill is tentatively scheduled for January 16.

ZTA 19-09: ROOF SIGNS, EXEMPTIONS

On January 14 the County Council will hold a public hearing on ZTA 19-09 (sponsored by Councilmember Friedson) which amends the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance to allow rooftop signs in red policy areas. Red Policy areas are where Metro Stations are located. Currently, signs—including illuminated signs—are allowed on the sides of buildings. ■

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The Wake Up Call That Science Sends to All

By Bailey Condrey, MCCF President

Entering the third decade of the 21st Century, scientists from around the globe have issued reports about the dire situation that the climate emergency presents for mankind. U.S. States and Counties are taking much of the initiative to reduce emissions and implement sustainable practices. In the midst of the meetings being held by work groups that Montgomery County created to address its self-declared “Climate Emergency” in 2017, Fairfax County in Virginia has announced plans to place solar panels on 113 county buildings by 2025. The effort will generate an estimated 45 megawatts of electricity and save the county \$60 million in utility costs, according to *The Washington Post*. Have any of the MoCo work groups suggested the same? It’s time to make this a reality.

On November 5, **11,000 scientists from 153 countries signed a letter declaring a global climate emergency.** They have asked for the nations of the world to institute six goals that will help slow the devastation that climate change already creates.

The goal of this article is to motivate *Civic Federation News* readers to engage with politicians, school board members, and neighbors to get Montgomery County to embrace bold ideas, now, to begin making a difference and show school children that we support a more stable world for their future. We are losing valuable time.

In 2020, this column will focus more on the solutions that are being implemented within the United States and globally to reduce emissions and help stabilize the climate. As 2019 closes, however, it’s necessary to share

how precarious our collective situation has become. This tiny list of links provides just a glimpse into the climate unraveling that’s taking place in anthropomorphic time that previously occurred geologically:

■ **World’s Oceans Are Losing Oxygen Rapidly**

■ **Texas Permian Basin Super Methane Emitters**

■ **Climate Change is Ravaging the Arctic**

■ **Tipping Points Closer Than Predicted**

■ **Greenland Loses 197 Gigatonnes Ice in July**

■ **Earth’s Glaciers Disappearing**

■ **Sea Level Rise Will Inundate More Cities by 2050**

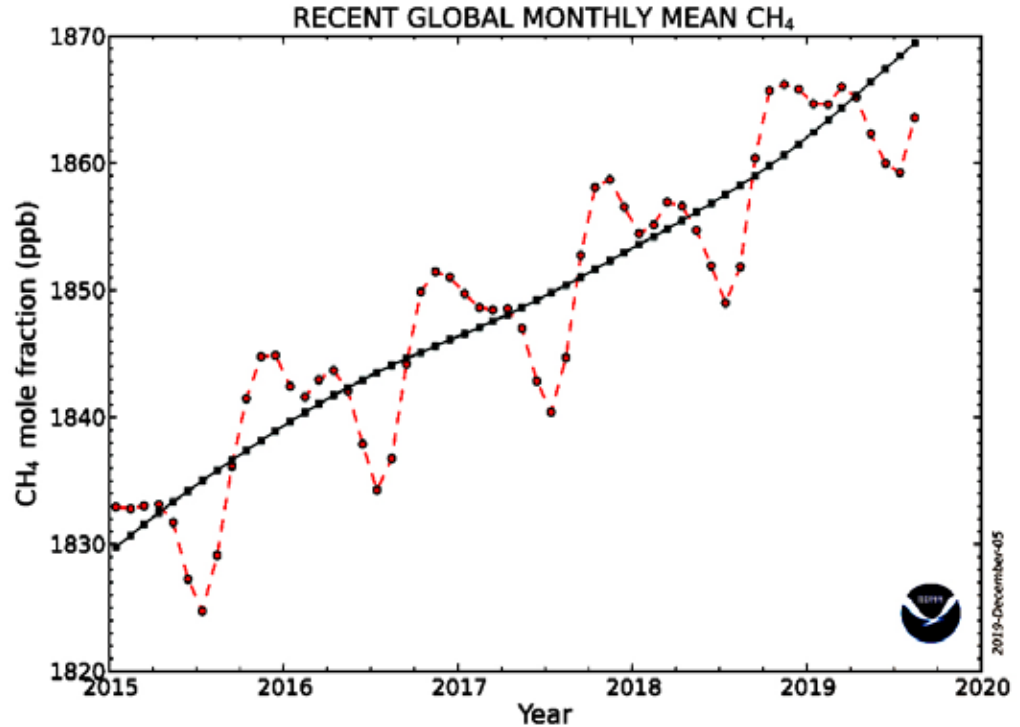
■ **Atmospheric Concentrations of Methane at Mauna Loa, NOAA**

Wake Up Call, cont.

■ **Earth's Hottest Decade on Record Marked by Extreme Storms, Deadly Wildfires**

■ **Waters Off California Acidifying Faster Than Rest of Oceans, Study Shows**

The graph at right illustrates one of those issues that Maryland citizens can address with their members of Congress. It relates to the article on "Texas Permian Basin Super Methane Emitters." The graph shows that methane emissions in the atmosphere are increasing at the worst possible time. History and the evidence reveal that allowing an industry such as oil and gas to self-regulate their methane emissions is a fool's errand. In a state, such as Texas, with incredibly lax regulations already, self-reporting of fugitive methane emissions is a bad joke. We



should all be asking our members of Congress to reinstate the regulations

on fugitive emissions enacted by the Obama Administration. ■

Let the Children Play — Outside

By Bailey Condrey, MCCF President

I recently attended the **Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping Council**'s biennial conference and had the pleasure of listening to Nancy Striniste, author of *Nature Play at Home: Creating Outdoor Spaces that Connect Children with the Natural World*.

Ms. Striniste teaches at Antioch University New England in its Nature-based Early Childhood Graduate Certificate program, and serves on the Nature Play Workgroup of the Maryland Partnership for Children and Nature and on the leadership team of NoVA Outside.

She and others were instrumental in designing and building the **Constitution Gardens Park** in Gaithersburg, Md., where children get to play, get dirty, and construct

all manner of things with materials from the natural world.

Ms. Striniste and others are stolid advocates for encouraging children to get dirty, outside, on a regular basis. The reasons for this lie in the scientific connections between the natural world and beneficial childhood development.

During her presentation at the conference she listed a number of scientific reasons for getting children dirty in the outdoors. Some of the most striking include the following:

- Regular play outdoors doubles the attention span of children.
- Child test scores improve with exposure to trees.
- Playing outside regularly makes children happier. Exposing them to soil also exposes them to a bacterium known as *mycobacterium vac-*



cae, which releases serotonin in the brain to beneficial effect. (The photo above shows why it's also called the golden bacillus.)

The information she provided shows that the most rudimentary activities for children can have profound effects on their development. For instance:

- Exposure to the full spectrum of sunlight and the three-dimensional environment relieves myopia, which

Children Outside, cont.

is a lack of imagination and intellectual insight.

■ Playing barefoot in grass stimulates nerve endings in the feet, which in turn stimulate neural pathways in the brain. The skin is the largest organ in the human body and constantly feeds stimuli to the nervous system.

■ Exposure to nature relieves stress and anxiety, reduces obesity, and can be considered ecotherapy for healthy development.

■ Stimulating the five senses, especially that of smell, “is a big deal for kids,” according to Striniste. The September 2019 issue of *National Geographic Magazine* contains **an article that reveals the surfaces of aromatic herbs captured with a scanning electron microscope**. The microscopic worlds on the plant leaf surfaces make connections with the brains of numerous species, attracting some while repelling others. The smell of rain, a creek bed, fertile soil, a marine estuary at low tide—all implant lasting connections within

the human brain and help to form memories of an individual’s connection to nature.

While she outlined findings from her book, Striniste also emphasized that there are risks in play, such as allowing children to climb trees, and that “risks should be as safe as necessary, but not as safe as possible.” Risk in play develops sensory motor integration and vestibular sense for children.

As we launch into the third decade of the 21st Century, it’s time to let the children get dirty again. Let them wander from home in groups for exploration and adventure or create them in the backyard, but encourage them to leave their phones at home. For great ideas on how and where to start, you can visit the Constitution Gardens Park in Gaithersburg or reach out to Nancy Striniste at www.earlyspace.com. ■



EarlySpace.com

Minutes of the December 9, 2019, MCCF General Meeting #908, Held in Rockville

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary (with assistance from Sue Schumacher, 2nd Vice President)

The General Meeting convened at the Executive Office Building.

Call to Order: President Bailey Condrey called the meeting to order at 7:50 and attendees provided introductions.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: It was moved and seconded that the agenda as printed in the newsletter be adopted. The agenda was unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ The Committee for Montgomery will be having a breakfast meeting at 7:30 a.m. on Dec. 13.

Approval of November Minutes: It was moved and seconded that minutes of the November meeting, as published in the newsletter be approved. The minutes were unanimously approved.

DECEMBER PROGRAM

The topic for November was the County's quadrennial process for establishing and updating the Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP), the guidelines for determining the adequacy of public facilities and infrastructure with respect to proposed new developments and how the guidelines interact with the review process for approving developments. The speakers were Jason Satori, Chief, Functional Planning and Policy (FPP), MoCo Planning Dept.; Eric Graye, Senior Transportation Planner, FPP;

and Brian Krantz, Civic Federation representative on Schools Technical Advisory Team to the Planning Dept.

The County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) requires adequate infrastructure be in place before new subdivisions are approved. Such facilities include road, schools, utility services, and more. The County's population is over 1 million now and is expected to gain 7.2% between 2018 and 2030. Overall, the county has a net domestic migration loss, but that is more than made up for by international population inflows and natural birth rates. If an area does not have adequate school facilities, it is placed in moratorium status, with exceptions for nonresidential projects, senior housing or de minimis projects, and

December Minutes, cont.

certain projects that provide large quantities of highly affordable housing.

Brian Krantz discussed issues relating to the MoCo Public Schools process for making 1 and 6-year enrollment forecasts. Those forecasts provide the basis for the operating and capital improvement plan (CIP) budget process. A major problem, though, is there is no current process to go back and review the forecasts later to see how accurate they were in practice and, specifically, how large variations were and whether they were random or concentrated in the same schools.

He described the MCPS CIP Super Tool he had developed as a way to allow community parties to obtain information and generate charts on any given school as a way

to check on the school forecasts. The Super Tool has a dataset of all available data since the 2005 school year to the present and includes a set of templates that can be used to analyze the data. The analysis does appear to show that the errors are not random, but tend to focus on underestimates in general and in the same schools in particular. That suggests errors in the student generation rates models.

The County's presentation on the rates by Mr. Satori contained a detailed discussion of how those rates were arrived at and what factors were incorporated, including house size, lot size, income levels, rent and/or mortgage levels, etc. Overall, the upcounty and outcounty areas have the highest growth rates for school populations.

Mr. Graye then discussed the planning process the county used for

dealing with transportation issues and needs. They have identified 38 policy areas that are grouped into four areas (ranging from the highly urban areas such as Bethesda, Silver Spring, etc., to the highly rural area around the perimeter of the County), identified by their land use patterns, current transportation modes, and their plans.

The SSP provides Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) tools to determine adequacy of facilities based on existing and projected developments and current and projected traffic facilities. Among the new issues in recent years was the focus on micromobility methods—i.e., bike shares, scooters, etc.—whose use has expanded dramatically. They also want to make sure that Vision Zero principles are incorporated into that process and to ensure that a fair bal-

December Minutes, cont.

ance is struck between capacity and proposed developments in ongoing master/sector plans.

Mr. Satori also discussed the current impact taxes the County charges that are meant to fairly share the costs of new facilities across the developments that require those facilities. The amounts of the taxes vary based on the type of new development and the location of the project with the taxes generally being lowest in the most developed areas (where their cost can be spread more widely). Projects with moderately priced dwelling units are exempted, however, as well as projects in current or former enterprise zones (which has resulted in some \$45 million in taxes being waived in Silver Spring, which has not been such a zone since 2005).

OTHER BUSINESS

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson reported on recent transactions and the account balance for the year. As of now, MCCF has received \$1,115 in dues. Expenses to date totaled \$1,522.30, which includes advance payments for all meeting space through the end of the fiscal year, for a net total of \$407.30. Ending bank balance is \$10,003.37.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation

■ Jerry Garson reported that State Transportation Secretary Peter Rahn will be resigning, as of January 1. He will be replaced by Greg Slater, currently head of the State Highway Administration.

Planning and Land Use

■ Harriet Quinn reported that she

testified at the November 19 hearing on cell towers, ZTA 19-07, and basically urged that the Council step back and take a more detailed and comprehensive look at creating a more appropriate process since there seems to be no pressing need at the moment.

■ She also noted that Council Members Glass and Jawando had proposed Bill 34-19, to impose impact taxes and a demolition impact tax on proposals to tear down 50% or more of an existing house, a result that could impose as much as \$50,000 on the project. MCCF has not taken a position yet but there is a suggestion that the proposal should be made part of the SSP discussions.

Environment

■ Bailey Condrey testified on a pending bill that would require that

December Minutes, cont.

applications for tree removal, plantings, etc., as part of a new project be made under penalty of perjury to ensure the promises were actually carried out.

■ There was also further discussion about the growing evidence of problems with the uses of artificial turf.

RESOLUTIONS

■ *Nine Council Districts resolution:* There was a short amount of additional discussion on this proposal and a revised set of language that was suggested for approval by the MCCF. The language was intended to support putting the efforts to put the proposal on the ballot without taking a position at this time on whether the proposal should be approved or not. The final version

of that language still needs to go into the newsletter and it can be voted on at the next meeting.

Adjournment: Bailey called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:45 p.m. ■

Executive Committee December Meeting Minutes

By Harriet Quinn

The meeting was called to order at 7:47 p.m. on Thursday, December 19, 2019, via Teleconference.

Present: Bailey Condrey, Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Sue Schumacher, Qui Bokow, Harriet Quinn, and Tim Willard.

Agenda: The proposed agenda was unanimously adopted.

Treasurer's Report: No change from December General Meeting report. There are expenses still to be processed.

January Program Topic will be on Transportation Issues with a discussion on the proposed I-270/I-495 expansion project with Carol Rubin of M-NCPPC. Jerry is coordinating.

ISSUES DISCUSSED

■ Online Registration Page is now set up for members to renew and pay online. Membership year runs from July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020. Reminder notices will be sent to those not yet renewed.

■ MCCF was a co-sponsor of the Pedestrian Safety Town Hall held this month in Rockville. It was very

Dec. ExCom Minutes, cont.

well attended. Karen Cordry will be the MCCF delegate to the Pedestrian Master Plan Advisory Committee which was recently formed by Planning Department.

■ Qui has uploaded to the website the slide presentations from MCCF October, November, and December 2019 Meetings. She also asked for any missing text for the Resolutions page.

■ Additional Discussion of Nine Districts Resolution: A new Draft Resolution recommended by the Executive Committee was in the December newsletter.

■ MCCF Awards: Committee forming. Bailey will coordinate with members. Alan will check on booking venue.

■ State Legislation, Local Bills and Kirwan Commission: Sue and Alan

will write future articles and Exec Committee will review proposed bills in February.

OLD BUSINESS

■ Alan proposed a lawn sign campaign for pedestrian safety and is researching costs and methods for distribution for member associations.

Newsletter Deadline: December 29th due to Christmas holiday.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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