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of note

Next MCCF Meeting #920

Monday, February 8, 2021, 7:30 p.m. online via Zoom. Topic: “Police Reform and Accountability”

■ [Join the Zoom Meeting Here](#)
[See further instructions on page 2. Password is 281797.]

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Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

Federation Meeting #920

Monday, February 8, 2021
7:30 p.m.
Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: January 11, 2021, General Meeting #919 **P.23**
4. Treasurer’s Report
5. Announcements
6. February Program: *Police Reform and Accountability* **P.3**
7. Committee Reports
8. Old Business
9. New Business
10. 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, online now at 7:30 p.m.

The February 8 meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 3 for program) at 7:30 p.m.:

■ To be part of the video conference, download the Zoom **Zoom Client for Meetings here.**

■ Meeting Name: “MCCF Monthly Meeting.”

■ Date and Time: Monday, February 8, 2021, 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

■ To **join the Zoom meeting from your browser, use this link.**

■ To participate by phone (audio only), call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is 834 7700 9589. Password, if requested, is 281797.

We hope you will join us! ■

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 28**

February Program: Police Reform and Accountability—A Conversation with Montgomery County Police Chief Marcus Jones and County Councilmember Will Jawando

By Alan Bowser, MCCF President

Our February 2021 program is on Police Reform and Accountability with our special guests, Montgomery County Police Chief Marcus Jones and Montgomery County Councilmember at Large Will Jawando. They will discuss recent developments related to police reform in the County and answer your questions.

Over the last few years, there has been considerable community interest in the issues surrounding police reform at the neighborhood, County, State and Federal levels. Events locally—the death of Robert White in Silver Spring and of Finan Berhe in White Oak and, nationally, the death of George Floyd in Minnesota and Breonna Taylor in Kentucky—among many others, have focused the com-

munity’s attention on the relationships between the community and law enforcement.

In Montgomery County, the County Council, the County Executive, and the Montgomery County Police Department have taken important steps to engage the community in police reform and to implement positive changes.

In June 2020, Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich announced his plan to create a “Reimagine Public Safety” Task Force to do an independent review of the county’s current policies and police training and recruitment. He called for a top-to-bottom review of the Montgomery County police, including the hiring process, how officers are recruited, training, promotions,

and how officers are evaluated.

The Reimagining Public Safety Task Force was charged with:

- Developing recommendations that reimagine the Montgomery County Police Department and all public safety programs by January 18, 2021;

- Discussing institutional racism in public safety and explore opportunities for reforms in policies and programs that disproportionately impact communities they serve;

- Reviewing police operations that may not be mission focused;

- Reimagining the County response to community needs for health and social services where Police are filling the void; and

- Providing input on the indepen-

MORE

February Program, cont.

dent and comprehensive, including racial bias, audit of the Police Department.

The Reimagining Public Safety Task Force has 5 subcommittees, or Focus Areas:

1. Community Needs - 911 and 311 Data
2. Budget and Structure
3. Police Department Programs
4. Alternative Programs to Police & Jail
5. Health, Social Services, and Crisis Response System

Elrich has also advocated for shifting certain responsibilities from the police to other County agencies who are better situated to address some situations frequently encountered by law enforcement. Over time, law enforcement officers have been asked to take on

more and more of the role of social worker, therapist, or case manager in responding to calls from people who are in mental distress. In some cases, a person in mental distress gets into an altercation with police, and it can have negative results, as police are not trained to be social workers for those in mental crisis.

MCPD Chief Marcus Jones is supportive of the community conversations that are taking place. “I always believe it is important for us to be talking about the realities of what’s going on within our police department, for transparency to occur and for folks to know exactly how things are functioning and really looking more into not only just the data, but also looking into the system itself and how we are also having some impact in some parts of our community, whether that’s positive or negative,” he said.

The [website for the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force is here](#).

In 2019, the Montgomery County Council created the [Policing Advisory Commission](#) in response to the ongoing public dialogue around policing practices and as an effort to increase community involvement in matters of public safety. Over 200 residents applied to serve on the Commission.

The Commission’s mission is to advise the Council on policing matters and recommend policies, programs, legislation, or regulations with regards to policing. With Committees on School Resource Officers, Hiring and Discipline, Discretionary Police and Emergency Response, the Commission will weigh in on pending bills related to School Resource Officers and Community Police Data Collection.

MORE



February Program, cont.

In July 2020, the County Council voted unanimously to approve changes to the Department’s use-of-force policy, including banning some no-knock warrants, limiting the use of deadly force, and banning chokeholds and other restraints.

Also, in July 2020, a 69-page report, *Local Policing Data and Best Practices*, was released by the Council’s Office of Legislative Oversight. The report says the data collected showed “wide disparities in police interactions by race and ethnicity.”

African Americans make up 18 percent of Montgomery County residents, but they accounted for 55 percent of 2018 use-of-force incidents involving Montgomery County Police, along with 44 percent of the department’s 2017 arrests and 32 percent of traffic stops in 2018. The

OLO says the data for arrests and traffic stops includes residents and nonresidents of the county who had interactions with Montgomery County police. Based on the data outlined in the report, 27 percent of Black adults experienced a traffic stop last year, compared 14 to 17 percent of White and Latinx adults.

POLICE CHIEF JONES

Chief Marcus Jones was sworn in as Chief of the Montgomery County Police Department on November 8, 2019. Jones has been with the Montgomery County Police Department for 35 years and had served as the acting police chief before assuming his current position.

Prior to taking over as acting police chief, Jones served as the assistant chief of the Investigative Services Bureau. He also served as the 3rd District commander in Silver



JONES

Spring, Director of Major Crimes, Drug Enforcement Commander, and he created an award-winning diversity training program. He is on the board of the Governor’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council, and the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Council.

He has been an adjunct instruc-

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February Program, cont.

tor for the Leadership in Police Organizations’ three-week training course sponsored by the International Association Chiefs of Police. He is a former chair of the National Black Police Association and served on the Board of Directors for the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund and the Task Force on Mentoring in Montgomery County. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland University College and is a graduate of the FBI National Academy.

COUNCILMEMBER JAWANDO

Councilmember Will Jawando was elected and sworn-in as an at-large Montgomery County Councilmember in December 2018. He serves on the Council’s Education



JAWANDO

and Culture and the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committees.

A Silver Spring native, Councilmember Jawando is a graduate of Catholic University and its Columbus School of Law. Described as “the progressive leader we need” by civil rights activist and Congressman,

John Lewis, Will has worked with Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi, Senator Sherrod Brown, and then-Senator Barack Obama. During the eight-year Obama Administration, Will served as Associate Director of the White House Office of Public Engagement, followed by a position as an advisor to U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.

■ [The Montgomery County Police Department website.](#)

■ [View Montgomery County’s annual Community Policing Report.](#)

■ [The OLO Report.](#)

HOW TO REPORT A CRIME

■ Crime in Progress or Just Witnessed an Emergency Situation: Call 911

■ Reporting a Nonemergency Incident in Progress: Call 301.279.8000. ■

Synthetic Turf, Poured-in-Place Playgrounds, MS4 Permits—Point Sources of Pollution

By Bailey Condrey, MCCF Immediate Past President

This article is based on a letter titled “Comments on Phase I MS4 Permits” sent to Raymond Bahr of the Maryland Department of the Environment Water and Science Administration from the Storm Water Partners Network of Montgomery County. **The lengthy January 21, 2021, letter provides comments** on the draft and covers numerous issues as they relate to the draft MS4, including storm water management implementation, green infrastructure definitions, watershed assessment planning, relationships to other county agencies, synthetic turf and poured-in-place playgrounds, and other subjects.

SWPN has had ongoing dialogue over the last few years on polluted

runoff and clean water permits with MDE.

Here is Section IX of the letter:

IX. The use of synthetic turf carpet and other plastic or rubber infills is not consistent with MS4 requirements.

SWPN is concerned that Montgomery County continues to allow synthetic turf (synturf), both on public and private property and to use synthetic turf in public spaces. These artificial plastic carpet playing fields disintegrate into air, soil, and water through wear and tear (an estimated 1–5 tonnes per year per synturf field). The carpeting uses virgin plastics, is very difficult to dispose of responsibly, is not recyclable, and requires treatment with chemical flame retardants, antioxidants, surfactants, and other

harmful cleaning agents during its lifespan which inevitably end up in our waterways. In addition, the granules of plastic and crumb tire-rubber infill dumped on top of the carpets (to cushion against the hard surface underneath) run off into soil and water and can themselves be toxic to wildlife (the European Union is for that reason planning to ban all such synthetic turf infills). The chemicals in the synthetic carpet and infills are shown to bio-accumulate in fish (and then humans). Some examples are the carcinogenic polycyclic-aromatic hydrocarbons, endocrine disrupting phthalates, plasticizers, immuno-toxic PFAS chemicals, cadmium, neurotoxic lead, carbon black, VOCs, and zinc (highly toxic to aquatic systems). A

MORE

SWPN Letter, cont.

recent study showed that a specific tire rubber additive (6PPD) is particularly and highly toxic to salmon. Note that many synturf installations, rubber mulch and poured-in-place playground surfaces, use ground-up used tire rubber as their infill material.

SWPN member Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc., (SHPTI) has gathered extensive information demonstrating the toxicity and environmental mobility of the various components of synturf and used tire surfaces, from plastic blades, to plastic or crumb rubber infill, to glues and surfactants. Many of the same toxins found in carpeting in general are even more of a problem for outdoor carpeting like synthetic-turf. Real-world evidence and photographs show that many



THE PHOTOS DEPICT WATERSHED-BOUND MICRO-PLASTICS POLLUTION FROM THE OLD WALTER JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELD. THIS PARTICULAR PITCH WAS A WATER POLLUTION POINT SOURCE FOR YEARS AND NEVER REGULATED AS SUCH. ALL OF THIS POLLUTION WAS DUMPED SOMEWHERE WHEN THEY REMOVED THE TOXIC OLD FIELD AND CONSTRUCTED A NEW TOXIC FIELD THAT HAS BEEN EMITTING METHANE AND ETHYLENE FOR ROUGHLY A YEAR NOW. MCPS WAS SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE A LETTER STATING THAT THE OLD TOXIC FIELD HAD BEEN RECYCLED. THIS WAS JUST A PUBLIC RELATIONS LIE THAT WAS FORETOLD IN THE MARCH 2020 EDITION OF CFN.

synturf installations send particles migrating across sidewalks and into public storm-drains which often have stormwater BMPs which are not designed to capture such small and mobile buoyant and partially

buoyant materials or the chemicals associated with them. What's more, storm water BMPs were never intended to excuse the voluntary and intentional discharge of pollutants

MORE

SWPN Letter, cont.

into the storm sewer system.

After years of pointing out the hazards of these synthetic surfaces, it is striking that they are still being installed on public property. **They are clearly in violation of a number of provisions of the County's MS4 permit:**

■ Any of these pollutants fall in the category of "nonstorm water discharges" that the County is required to minimize or prevent from passing into, through, or from its MS4 if they will render the waters harmful to "1. Public health, safety, or welfare;...and 4. Fish or other aquatic life." (Draft permit Part VII.A.).

■ Under draft permit Part VII.B. Duty to Mitigate, the county is required to "take all reasonable steps to minimize or prevent any discharge in violation of this permit

that has a reasonable likelihood of adversely affecting human health or the environment."

■ And in Part IV D.3, Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination, the county is required to either permit or eliminate all discharges into, through, or from the MS4 that are not composed entirely of [clean] stormwater. To our knowledge, no synthetic turf or rubber mulch playground has been required to get a discharge permit by the county, nor has an enforcement action been issued for particle migration into the MS4.

■ Finally, these surfaces are shedding an unknown but certainly significant amount of trash. Permit Part IV.F.3.d. Anacostia Trash TMDL requires the county to "reduce trash, floatables, and debris, and show progress toward achieving the annual trash reduction

allocation required by the Anacostia trash TMDL." Permitting more surfaces made of highly mobile bits of plastic and rubber is a recipe for knowingly increasing, not decreasing, toxic, micro-scale trash pollution in the Anacostia and other watersheds.

In light of the above information, we urge MDE to examine and regulate these Clean Water Act hazards much more closely, and we urge Montgomery County to immediately stop installing them on public property (i.e., public schools and parks) and stop permitting them in public rights-of-way (i.e., Ellsworth Place in Silver Spring).

Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc., worked with SWPN to create this section of the letter. SHPF has been

SWPN Letter, cont.

working on the issue of synthetic turf and poured-in-place playgrounds for roughly a decade. It has documented the point-source pollution and air pollution effects of these surfaces for nearly as long. It has documented the solid waste disposal debacle that these fields have created, which will balloon, and yet no regulations exist to require disposal plans. The county stands on the edge of finalizing a Climate Action Plan and yet these massive sources of pollution aren't even mentioned.

We can't expect a county of roughly 1.1-million people to make sacrifices in their daily lives to accomplish our collective greenhouse gas reduction goals when the government that represents them creates exceptions in the plan large enough to drive a transit bus through. ■

Remembering the Life of Thomas Raskin

By Alan S. Bowser, MCCF President

I'd like to take a moment to remember and pay tribute to a remarkable young man, Thomas Raskin, whose life ended tragically on New Year's Eve.

By any measure, Tommy Raskin led a life well-lived and we all are better for his many contributions that enriched our MoCo community.

His parents—and our friends—Jamie Raskin and Sarah Bloom Raskin, have warmly recalled Tommy's many gifts to his family, friends and community.

Always brilliant, compassionate, and full of energy, his life journey through MoCo Public Schools—Takoma Park Elementary School, Pine Crest Elementary School, Eastern Middle School and Montgomery Blair High School—taught him the valuable lessons of the importance of curiosity,

generosity, and public service.

His memory should stand as a bright beacon calling others "to do the most good" and to be selfless in worldly affairs. We commend the numerous, exemplary actions that Thomas took throughout his young life to lift others and improve the conditions of those he never met.

His level of volunteer spirit and commitment to community engagement, while suffering from a deadly disease, embody the spirit and dedication of those who serve the Montgomery County Civic Federation.

His passing has left tears in our eyes and an emptiness in our hearts. We express our most sincere and deepest condolences and sympathies to his family and friends for this tragic loss and we know that his memory will be a blessing. ■

Pepco Electricity Sources

We have received many questions on the sources of Pepco's electricity that is sold to its customers in Montgomery County.

Power plants can generate electricity from a number of different fuel sources, resulting in different emissions. Pepco reports fuel sources and emissions data to customers.

The electricity provided to Pepco's customers is supplied by the PJM Interconnection, the federally regulated regional transmission system operator that coordinates the movement of wholesale electricity in all or parts of Del., Ill., Ind., Ky., Md., Mich., N.J., N.C., Ohio, Penn., Tenn., Va., W.V., and D.C.

The amount of air pollution associated with the generation of electricity for the PJM region, which includes Pepco, for the most recent

ENERGY SOURCE (FUEL MIX)	1/1/13 to	7/1/15 to	7/1/17 to	1/1/19 to	1/1/20 to
	12/31/13	6/30/16	6/30/18	12/31/19	6/30/20
Coal	42.80%	33.00%	30.80%	23.78%	20.40%
Natural Gas	15.80%	25.30%	28.60%	36.53%	39.20%
Nuclear	33.90%	36.70%	35.40%	33.95%	34.40%
Fuel Cell				0.03%	
Oil	0.20%	0.20%	0.20%	0.10%	0.10%
Captured Methane	3.00%	0.30%	0.30%	0.31%	0.30%
Hydroelectric	1.00%	1.20%	1.10%	1.35%	1.30%
Solar	0.10%	0.10%	0.20%	0.33%	0.40%
Solid Waste	1.30%	0.60%	0.50%	0.51%	0.50%
Wind	1.80%	2.30%	2.60%	2.94%	3.10%
Wood or other Biomass	0.10%	0.30%	0.20%	0.17%	0.20%
Total	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

period, in pounds emitted per megawatt hour of electricity generated, is:

- Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂) 0.44
 - Nitrogen Oxides (NO_x) 0.38
 - Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) 803.5
- CO₂ is a "greenhouse gas," which

may contribute to global climate change. SO₂ and NO_x released into the atmosphere react to form acid rain. NO_x also reacts to form ground level ozone, an unhealthful component of smog. ■

Support for Climate and Environmental Legislation in Annapolis

By Peggy Dennis, Chair, MCCF Legislation Committee

Upwards of 1,000 bills have been introduced during the current session in Annapolis. The Civic Federation cannot take a position on many, but more than 2 dozen environmental and climate groups have identified the 3 bills below as their top priority. Two more bills are also championed by the Chesapeake Climate Action Network. I suggest we vote to support these bills at the general meeting on February 8.

The key to getting these bills passed is to get them out of committee. You can access these bills (and all others) [online here](#). Each bill has some MoCo legislators who are not yet supporters and need to hear from their constituents. Feel free to share this with friends who are in the

Districts identified below.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS NOW ACT OF 2021

HB0583 sponsored by Delegate Stein and SB0414 sponsored by Senator Pinsky

Synopsis: Requiring the State to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 60% from 2006 levels by 2030; requiring the State to achieve net-zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2045; requiring the Maryland Department of Labor to adopt regulations establishing certain energy conservation requirements for certain buildings by July 1, 2022; establishing a goal of planting and helping to maintain in the State 5,000,000 sustainable trees of species native to the State by the end of 2030; terminating certain

provisions of the Act; etc.

Support for this bill is needed from residents in Senator Nancy King's District 39 (So. Germantown, Germantown, Montgomery Village) and Del. Pam Queen in District 14 (Damascus, Sandy Spring, Burtonsville, Fairland). Passing this Amendment will result in:

- Overriding Governor Hogan's veto on the Chlorpyrifos Ban;
- Increasing Maryland's greenhouse gas reduction requirements to 60% below 2006 levels by 2030 and net neutral by 2045;
- Banning plastic bags at the point of sale at retail locations;
- Fighting dangerous PFAS "forever chemicals" that are polluting our waterways and putting health at risk;
- Funding the Maryland Transit

Legislation, cont.

Administration's (MTA) Capital Needs and electrifying MTA buses.

CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION ACT

HB0033 sponsored by Del. Frazer-Hidalgo and SB0076 sponsored by Sen. Ben Kramer

Synopsis: Establishing a Climate Crisis Initiative in the Department of the Environment for certain purposes; establishing a greenhouse gas reduction target of 60% from 2006 levels by 2030 and net-zero by 2045; establishing a Climate Crisis Council to develop a plan to reach the reduction targets and submit it to the General Assembly by December 31, 2022; requiring the Council to have the plan verified in a certain manner; requiring a greenhouse gas pollution fee on all fossil fuels brought into the

State for combustion in the State; etc.

MARYLAND TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION, TRANSIT SAFETY AND INVESTMENT ACT

HB0114 sponsored by Del. Lierman and SB0199 sponsored by Senators Zucker and McCray (a swing vote for this bill is Sen. Nancy King of District 39)

Synopsis: Requiring the Governor to include certain appropriations in the State budget from the Transportation Trust Fund to the Maryland Transit Administration for certain operating and capital needs in certain fiscal years; authorizing the reduction of certain appropriations under certain circumstances; requiring that certain capital appropriations be in addition to capital funds appropriated for the Purple Line; requiring the Administration to submit a certain report annually;

declaring the intent of the General Assembly; etc.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION CLIMATE TEST

HB0298 sponsored by Del. Charkoudian and SB0083 sponsored by Senator Ben Kramer

Synopsis: Requiring the Secretary of the Environment to prepare a certain recommendation in connection with certain issues considered by the Public Service Commission; requiring the Secretary of Natural Resources to incorporate an evaluation of the impact of certain electric power plants on climate change into the Power Plant Research Program; requiring the Commission to consider the maintenance of fair and stable labor standards and the protection of the global climate in supervising and regulating certain public service companies; etc.

MORE

Legislation, cont.

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT - ENVIRONMENTAL RIGHTS

HB0082 sponsored by Del. W. Fisher and SB0151 sponsored by Sen. Patterson (a swing vote for this bill is Delegate Kumar Barve of District 17 [Rockville/Gaithersburg])

Synopsis: Proposing an amendment to the Maryland Constitution to establish that every person has an inalienable right to a healthful environment; declaring that the State's natural resources are the common property of every person and the State is the trustee of the natural and historic resources of the State; establishing that every person has the right to intervene in an action brought by the State or a political subdivision of the State to protect certain rights; submitting the amendment to the qualified voters of

the State; etc.

ELECTION LAW - VOTING - ELECTIONS BY MAIL, POLLING PLACES, AND EARLY VOTING CENTERS

SB0029 sponsored by Senator Kramer

Synopsis: Requiring each local board of elections to send a vote-by-mail ballot to each individual who is registered to vote as the 21st day before the day of each election; requiring the State Board to establish a certain date by which the vote-by-mail ballots must be mailed; requiring a voter to take certain actions to vote a vote-by-mail ballot; requiring the instructions provided with each vote-by-mail ballot to include a certain warning; authorizing a voter to return a marked vote-by-mail ballot to a local board by certain methods; etc. ■

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 Allan Bowser at president@montgomerycivic.org. Include topics/possible dates.

The Arctic, Synthetic Turf, and the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan

The Cap Should Call for a Ban on ST Now: No New Synthetic Turf Fields and All End-of-Life ST Fields Converted Back to Grass

By Bailey Condrey, MCCF Immediate Past President

As I was preparing this article, *The Washington Post* reported on January 25, 2021, that glacial ice loss around the globe has reached 1.2 trillion tons annually. I knew that our global loss of ice was being driven by powerful feedback loops, set in motion by the climate crisis, but I was staggered to read *WaPo*'s reporting on this recent research. The young climate activist Greta Thunberg chided the world's adults some months ago on our complacency and lack of moral courage in making the necessary decisions to help stave off the worst effects of the climate crisis, and here we are, many months later, having mostly lived with the status quo.

This is not about blame, but there is plenty of that to be shared. The world's scientists have delivered another wake up call. It's a call from an emergency operator at the "Climate Crisis Helpline" informing us that we dither and grant exceptions to special interests at our peril. One of those special interests is *synthetic turf*. A point source of pollution that never stops degrading the air and water and the health of those forced to use it.

So the title of this article morphed into two. Without a scientific rationale for the continued use of synthetic turf, which its proponents have never proved, how do we morally require taxpayers to fund it and athletes to abide it? The same holds true for poured-in-place

playgrounds for toddlers, but the science is a little different. Syn turf, however, being numerous plastics, off-gases methane and ethylene.

As Dr. Peter Wadhams, a scientist with *Facing Future Earth* explains, "Methane is one of the most important greenhouse gases, second only to carbon dioxide in its heating effect, though far more potent, molecule for molecule. Its instantaneous global warming potential is ~120 times stronger than CO₂ (Myhre, G. et al., 2013). The levels of both gases are increasing, with CO₂ having now reached over 400 ppm. Methane is increasing far more rapidly."

The research on how the disappearance of sea ice leads to the

MORE

Synthetic Turf, cont.

acceleration of glacier loss also reveals that it accelerates the thawing of Arctic seabed sediments. These sediments have been locked in the deep freeze and under immense pressure from what heretofore had been meters of sea ice on the surface in past decades. These sediments, thousands of feet deep, have begun to thaw and, without the overlying pressure, the sediments have begun to release methane at alarming rates. Science has established that the plastics used to produce syn turf fields emit both methane and ethylene from the very moment they are exposed to the sun, accelerating endlessly. This research was conducted at the University of Hawaii by Dr. Sarah Jeanne Royer.

We have to get a handle on



anthropogenic methane emissions. The research circulated by *Facing Future Earth* is so profound that Sweden is contemplating seeding clouds above the Arctic with an iron compound to increase cloud cover

in the absence of sea ice: *Arctic Seafloor Releasing CH₄*:

- Part 1
- Part 2

For the CAP to succeed, we can't pay lip service to special interests that have ignored science for their own selfish interests. If you took a vote among teenagers attending middle and high school after explaining what's at stake with syn turf, do you think they would affirm the continued use of this toxic product?

We have come to an existential fork in the road. One of the paths contains the mindless addiction to syn turf and the inundation of our coastal economies. The other path contains a return to grass, reduced GHGs, and a greener economy for our children's future. A successful Climate Action Plan can't have it both ways. ■

'Missing Middle' Housing: An Idea Whose Time Has Come? Or a Step Too Far?

Montgomery County is in the middle of updating its master plan, Thrive Montgomery 2050, which is intended to deal with accommodating the growth expected in the County over the next 30 years. It is also busily working on an overall environmental policy intended to help the County reach its goal of zero net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2035. Council Member Wil Jawando recently filed ZTA 20-07, which relies on a zoning strategy that purports to help implement both of those major policy goals. The question for the County and its residents, though, is whether the proposal, if enacted, would create a viable and desirable step towards meeting those goals, or whether it will dramatically loosen housing standards in ways that will burden many County resi-

dents and change the nature of their neighborhoods without creating the benefits it promises.

"Missing middle" housing is a concept suggested about a decade ago by Daniel Parolek, who argued that housing in many communities had lost a vital "middle" component between the typical single-family homes (of whatever size) and large-scale, multistory apartment buildings that might be built along the main traffic corridors. What used to be fairly common earlier in the 20th Century, but were no longer being built, were structures such as duplexes or triplexes, courtyard groupings of two to three-story single or attached "cottage"-type buildings, and small apartment complexes only a few stories high and with a modest number of units. Parolek's argu-

ment starts with the undeniable fact that there is essentially no functional difference for the surrounding community between a large single-family home (which can, in fact, be occupied by any number of housemates, each with their own car and impact on the infrastructure) and a similarly sized, and externally identical, structure that is divided up internally in to 2, 3, or more separate housing units, which are occupied by separate individuals or family groups.

To the extent that the external housing structure is required to conform to the same size requirements as the single-family housing (usually referred to as "form-based zoning"), there is little reason to distinguish a multihousehold structure from a single-household structure. And, by

MORE

Missing Middle, cont.

splitting the costs for the property between two or more households, each of which could obtain a "right-sized" home for them, it should be possible for such housing to be more affordable to each household.

There is clearly much potential merit to this idea and, for those who wish to get a further understanding of the concept and see examples of its use, [watch this discussion by Mr. Parolek](#). Here is also [a slide show by AARP](#) that gives a number of examples of housing types that fall within this concept. Councilmember Jawando's ZTA amends the current Zoning Code to allow such housing.

The idea is not new at this point in Montgomery County; a number of recently approved or currently being considered sector/master plans—as well as the Thrive Montgomery plan

discussions—have considered and/or approved of the idea in general, at least with respect to particular areas. To implement those proposals, some form of zoning code change will be necessary at some point. The proposed ZTA, though, would immediately change the Zoning Code throughout the County to make its changes available as a matter of right, without being tied to any specific plans, the approval of Thrive Montgomery, or any requirement for specific approval of any of these proposed projects, so long as they meet

the relatively broad requirements in the ZTA. As such, there has been considerable concern over whether the ZTA should be considered independently from, in advance of, and, to some extent, separate from those other discussions.

As currently drafted, the ZTA would only apply to areas within R-60 zones within one mile of a Metro station (with some provisions only applicable if the housing site is within a half-mile of the Metro). The R-60 zone is currently primarily used for single-family housing, although it can also accommodate townhouses and duplexes to a degree (primarily as an optional method development to accommodate Moderately Priced Dwelling Units) or for townhouses on larger parcels, i.e., 3-plus acres or more). Lot sizes within the R-60 zone are

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Daniel Parolek

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Missing Middle, cont.

generally in the 6,000 square foot range (approximately 1/7 of an acre). The new proposal would allow, by right, duplexes, townhouses, and “multi-unit living” facilities (which could accommodate anything from triplexes on up to typical apartment buildings) on any lot in the R-60 zone up to 25,000 square feet. The 25,000-square-foot lot would be based on aggregating up to four existing single-house lots into a combined lot that could accommodate a substantially larger building than on any one lot currently.

Any facilities built under this provision would still have to meet the same lot coverage, height, and setback limits for any other building in the zone (i.e., it would satisfy the form-based zoning criterion). But, because the new zoning would also



allow townhouses and “multi-unit living” facilities without any further limiting criteria, it could allow placing of such buildings in many areas where they do not exist now.

The Civic Federation has not yet taken a position on the ZTA, not least because Councilmember Jawando, in an open meeting held earlier in January, made clear that it is still very much a work in progress. Implemented sensitively, and

with creative builders, it could well provide valuable options for many community members ranging from young singles and small families just starting out, to elders seeking to downsize from a larger existing home.

However, as was brought out in that meeting, there are numerous questions that still need to be addressed. For instance, perhaps as

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Missing Middle, cont.

part of the goal of reducing the need for cars so as to reduce the impact on neighborhood parking and traffic and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the proposal assumes a relatively small number of cars per household. To make that practical, this new zoning structure was limited to areas near the Metro so people would presumably be able to use transit for much of their travel rather than driving. However, it is not at all clear that reduced need to drive automatically translates into reduced car ownership. Moreover, by including the one-mile geographic limit and by excluding all zones except for R-60, these developments are inherently restricted to some of the most desirable—and expensive—land in the county. As a result, the goal of making this housing afford-

able, at least on an absolute scale, may well not be attainable.

There are, thus, many questions, about whether this Code should be limited to only those areas or made more broadly available. Conversely, there are other questions, such as: whether “apartments” as such should be included in this approach; whether the 25,000-square-foot lot size is too large; how to gauge whether these new buildings will overly burden existing infrastructure, including specifically: what levels of parking on and off-site should be required, will it be possible to ensure that adequate green space, stormwater management, and drainage are maintained; will the likely population overwhelm existing schools in the area etc., etc. That said, as noted initially, there is much of value in these suggestions and many buildings that fit within

these concepts could easily settle into existing neighborhoods without occasioning a second look.

Many community members and members of the Civic Federation have been in discussions with Councilmember Jawando and those discussions are ongoing. A hearing will be held on February 4, 2021; one can submit comments (email to MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org, by 12 noon on the Wednesday before the meeting) and/or [sign-up to testify here](#). (Although the slots to testify are apparently currently filled, one can place one’s name on an overflow list.)

We expect that the measure will continue to evolve; we are hopeful it can end up in a posture that can win general support and create a win-win situation for the County and its residents. We’ll keep you informed of developments. ■

Have Expertise? Got an Opinion? Like to Follow What's Going On?

Your Civic Federation needs you! You can help in following and organizing its Countywide portfolio of important community issues. We're looking for volunteers to help us monitor issues in the following areas: education, public safety, public finances, environment, transportation, land use and planning, and legislation. Interested? Please email *president AT montgomerycivic DOT org*.

Got a "bee in your bonnet" over something you see as wrong in the County? It could serve as an idea for MCCF meeting agenda topic. You just have to let us know!

Know of people working hard for others in the County? Then you have candidates for an MCCF "Community Hero." Email *president AT montgomerycivic DOT org* to nominate them.

Have community project ideas to share and neighborhood best practices? Email *president AT montgomerycivic DOT org*.

Have an article for the newsletter? Email ... *you know who.* ■

MARYLAND COVID-19 VACCINE PRIORITY

- 1A**
 - Health care workers
 - Residents and staff of nursing facilities
 - First responders, public safety, corrections
- 1B**
 - Assisted living, other congregate settings
 - Adults age 75 and older
 - Education and continuity of government
- 1C**
 - Adults age 65-74
 - Essential workers in lab services, agriculture, manufacturing, postal service, etc
- 2**
 - Adults 16-64 at increased risk of severe COVID-19 illness due to comorbidities
 - Essential workers in critical utilities, transportation, food service, etc
- 3**
 - General population, including healthy adults age 16-64

In Search of...

Will MCCF have awards this year? We need volunteers to serve on the Civic Federation's Annual Awards Committee. Know of any individuals and/or groups you would like to nominate for an award? The awards are: **The Wayne Goldstein Award** (for outstanding service to the people of MoCo), **The Sentinel Award** (for a significant contribution to good government at the local level), and **The Star Cup** (an MCCF Delegate or Committee for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County).

Please contact our MCCF President, Alan Bowser, by email [*president AT montgomerycivic DOT org*] if you have a nomination or if you are willing to serve on the Awards Committee. We cannot do this without your help! ■

Become Part of an Active Advocacy Group: Join the MCCF

You can become part of MCCF's Countywide organization in support of our civic associations and homeowner's associations. With your help, we can continue our active advocacy work on behalf of our neighbors and maintain the high level of service we provide to MoCo residents.

We invite the participation of you and your organization at our meetings and in the work of our Executive Committee and in our subject-matter committees. There are many opportunities for your delegates to serve as chairs of Civic Fed committees and to be part of our Executive Committee team.

For 95 years, the MCCF has been devoted to improving the quality of life in Montgomery County, advocating for improvements in the infrastructure of the County, and evaluat-

ing and discussing issues of concern to its members.

The MCCF is the only Mont. Countywide membership organization which addresses critical issues across a wide spectrum, including land use and planning, public safety, environment, education, public finance, health, and community development. We have successfully mobilized community support to make meaningful changes in transportation, environmental, and public accountability issues. With member feedback, communications, resolutions, and testimony are provided to the County government, State government, and bi-County agencies on a regular basis.

You can join the Civic Federation [online here](#) or mail your application.

Hope to see you soon. ■

Solar in the Ag Reserve: Build it Right the First Time

By Bailey Condrey

On January 26, 2021, the MC Council voted to allow industrial solar in the agricultural reserve under conditional use. This is the mechanism that has been in place for decades in the AR to preserve farming as the primary use. The small acreage in the first round of solar arrays was to be 1,800 acres, or about 2% of the 93,000 acres in the AR. The ultimate goal is 20,000 acres of solar arrays in the AR, or close to 20 percent. Just the first step in this process, the proposal to change the zoning law has resulted in land lease price speculation in the AR. This speculation will force farmers from land that is supposed to be dedicated to farming. Farmers cannot compete with the solar industry in what they pay for land leases. It's already

been shown in other counties in Md. that attempting to graze livestock amidst solar arrays doesn't work. The animals damage the technology. It's already been shown in other Md. counties that conditional use works quite well for placing solar arrays with beneficial cover crops.

When solar gets sited in the AR, it must be sited on soils that are the poorest quality. No siting study was done for placement of the first solar installation.

Time is of the essence, so we should quit bellyaching about the fact that science prevailed in this discussion and vote. Instead, let the MC Council show the leadership necessary to get on with the business of making the first industrial solar arrays, covering approx. three-square-miles, in the AR a national test case

for doing it right the first time.

There is absolutely no reason this cannot be done in concert with nature and without pricing farmers off the land, but science must form the backbone for this effort. Science did not form the backbone of ZTA 20-01, which is why the amendments were necessary.

As the climate crisis worsens, the AR offers the opportunity to expand truck crop farming and regenerative agriculture. The hemp industry also affords opportunities. All of this can be done in concert with industrial solar. We just have to make it so.

One more very important point: no one can tell you with certainty where the voltage goes when it enters the grid. It may be possible to keep it within the regional grid, but no one can tell you that it will be provided to low-income residents or residents of color. ■

Minutes of January 11, 2021, MCCF General Meeting #919 [Zoom Virtual Meeting]

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the General Meeting was held via Zoom as a virtual meeting.

Call to Order: President Alan Bowser called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. There were 50+ participants on line over the course of the meeting.

Approval of Agenda: It was moved and seconded agenda be approved; approved by voice vote.

Approval of Minutes: It was moved and seconded minutes of the last meeting be approved; so approved by voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Gar-

son reported that, since July 1, we received \$1,093.04 in dues, and had \$734.55 in expenses for that time period. The current bank balance is \$9,607.28.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Alan Bowser made a statement about the passing of Tony Raskin, stating our sorrow and condolences for his family and friends, including our U.S. Representative Jamie Raskin. The statement will be conveyed to the Raskin family.

PROGRAM

Marc Elrich, County Executive, was the primary speaker. He stated he would provide a general update on County affairs, and would then speak specifically to the COVID-19 issues facing the County. Mr. Elrich

noted that, two days after he took office, he learned there was a \$60 million shortfall in the budget that had to be dealt with immediately. While he was able to make progress on the BRT and early childhood education in 2019, everything that was planned for 2020 had to be reevaluated in light of the COVID epidemic. Initially, it seemed in May that the problems might be ebbing by July, but it quickly became apparent that the problem wasn't going away any time soon. In the summer, the county was seeing 45-50 cases a day; by now, it has 600 cases and a 8% positivity rate on tests. And, of course, everything the County does to minimize the effects of the disease has a disastrous effect on business. The County is getting vaccines and

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getting them out quickly, but are only receiving about 10,000 doses a week and, at that rate, it will still take months to get even the priority communities vaccinated.

There have been large amounts of food aid handed out and that needs to continue. There has also been a moratorium on evictions but that will be ending soon. We will need to provide aid for individuals and businesses both that need help with paying rents going forward. One positive effect of the virus is that it has helped us learn new ways of doing things including how to provide services, using teleworking, providing virtual access to meetings so everyone does not have to come to Rockville. Continued use of teleworking may allow the County to reduce the amount of office space

it needs to use and employees enjoy the added independence.

In other areas, the County is working on a number of transportation issues, including a bus Flash Line on Route 29, redesigning Route 355 from I-495 to Clarksburg and the CCT, and looking at Veirs Mill Rd. from Wheaton to Rockville.

They are also looking at re-vamping the tax system, including the current Impact Taxes for new development. They are looking at what Virginia does with respect to development districts with taxing and borrowing authority as providing more predictability and certainty to developers and, in turn, giving the County the authority to bond against such revenues.

They are working with the unions on plans to restructure and right size the work force in light of changes from fully integrating tech-

nology advances and the changes made during this year.

They are working on drafting the Climate Action Plan to set metrics and priorities going forward. A draft is currently circulating for public comments. They are working on switching both school buses and police cars to electric from diesel. They are also working on doing solar installations at a number of county buildings both for their own value and as demonstration projects.

They are also working on trying to revitalize the County economy with a focus on life sciences and IT. The County had been dependent on the federal sector and that had largely stalled over the last decade. They are oriented towards bringing jobs first and can assume that housing and residents will follow the jobs, and the jobs will bring the revenues

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to do everything else.

Mr. Elrich also took questions on numerous topics, ranging from access to vaccines, to the proposal on “Missing Middle” housing (see page 17), to whether there would need to be changes to the Master Plan arising from the changes all businesses were seeing from the shock course in teleworking they have faced this year.

Other topics included work on the MS-4 storm water permits, whether the County could phase out the use of synthetic turf and ban No. 6 plastics which are generally unrecyclable, and the status of the Vision Zero project, including getting State permission to be able to lower speed limits in Central Business Districts on state roads. And much more; what is clear is that the Country



Frances Spiegel

hasn't let COVID keep it from working on a whole range of issues.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Public Safety

■ Next month's meeting will be on Police Accountability and Reform with Chief Marcus Jones and Council Member Will Jawando.

Transportation

■ Jerry Garson noted that Mary-

land and Virginia continue to work on a proposal for bus transit between Maryland and Virginia across the American Legion Bridge. Maryland is continuing to work on the proposals for the western spur from that bridge and up I-270 to 370. The Purple Line is moving forward but slowly.

Environment

The MCCF will comment on the Climate Action Plan and Healthy Playing Fields proposals.

NEW BUSINESS

■ We will need to set up a Nominations and Awards Committee for the June awards dinner.

Adjourn: At 9:45, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion was approved by voice vote. ■

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting January 21, 2021 [Zoom Virtual Meeting]

By Karen Cordry, MCCF Recording Secretary

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the ExCom Meeting was held via Zoom as a virtual meeting.

In Attendance: Alan Bowser, Peggy Dennis, Jerry Garson, Tim Willard, Sue Schumacher, Bailey Condrey, Harriet Quinn, Jim Zepp, and Karen Cordry

Meeting opened at 7:30 pm.

Motion to Approve Agenda: Made and seconded. Approved on voice vote.

Motion to Approve Minutes of the December 2020 ExCom Meeting: Made and seconded. Approved on voice vote.

Treasurer's Report: Jerry Garson reported with same figures as December General Meeting: in December, we received \$85 in dues, and had \$100 in expenses. Total dues since July 1 are \$498. The current bank balance is \$9,747.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ Evan Glass will be holding a Pedestrian Safety Town Hall on Jan. 23 at 10 am.

■ Our March Membership meeting will be dealing with pedestrian safety issues.

GENERAL MEETING

■ The February meeting will be held on the 8th and will deal with police accountability and reform. Chief Marcus Jones and Council

Member Will Jawando will be the featured speakers.

■ We are still working on getting County Public Health Officer, Dr. Gayles, to attend a meeting and provide an update on COVID issues.

■ It was noted that the County held an online town hall earlier that week on that issue with more than 2,300 attendees.

OLD BUSINESS

Membership Outreach

■ Alan is continuing to work on this.

■ Harriet noted that we could obtain contact management software that would allow us to put the entire system online, including allowing people to check on whether

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they have joined and/or paid their dues. She will forward information to Karen and Bailey and they can look at it and work with Harriet on a proposal for MCCF to purchase the software.

NEW BUSINESS

MoCo Climate Action Plan

■ Alan has asked for an extension of time to comment on the drafts to at least March 31 in light of the detailed information and the pandemic issue. Bailey will reach out to other groups to support that request.

AG Reserve Solar ZTA

■ The proposed sign-on letter from the Clean Water Action Coalition, which was requesting that the ZTA be amended to require

approval of these projects through the conditional use process, was discussed in detail. It was noted that the industry had characterized such a requirement as a "poison pill" but that other counties had similar requirements. There was general support for the letter's position, but some dispute as to whether the ExCom should just sign that letter or, instead, send a separate letter. Both of those proposals failed on 4-4 votes; it was eventually agreed, on a 5-3 vote, that we would sign the group letter and send a second Civic Fed letter.

Missing Middle ZTA 20-07

■ It was briefly discussed, but no formal action taken. The Civic Fed will try to set up a meeting in addition to the general meetings to discuss these issues.

■ It was noted that a meeting was

held with Councilmember Jawando to get more clarity and there is an ongoing group working on these issues that we can coordinate with.

Community Hero Guidelines

■ Jim Zepp supplied a draft text and it was approved by the group. The guidelines will be put on the website so members can make nominations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation

■ Jerry noted that both rail transit and bus usage were still down very substantially, with the bus ridership dropping off again after fares had been reintroduced in the last few months.

■ Due to aid from the federal government, it will not be neces-

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sary for the State and County to implement the draconian cutbacks that had been suggested before.

■ The P3 planning process is gong forward for the I-270 spur toll lane project.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn made, and seconded. Approved by voice vote. Meeting ended at 9:15 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org

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