

Join Us at the MCCF Annual Awards Reception on June 10th

- | Schedule of Events | [P. 2](#)
- | Invitation and a list of this year's award winners | [P. 3](#)

Legislative Update | [P. 4](#)

MoCo Council Votes to Approve \$7.18 Billion FY2025 Operating Budget, FY25-30 CIP | Read their May 23 press release | [P. 5](#)

Letter to the Council | Max Bronstein congratulates, asks a question | [P. 15](#)

MCCF Resolution on Priorities and Approaches for Housing Policy and Legislation | [P. 16](#)

Property Tax Increases | MCTL tackles the Charter Review Commission Report | [P. 21](#)

Citizens Guide to Safe Bow-and-Arrow Deer Hunting in Our County's Suburbs | [P. 25](#)

Thank You, MCCF! | Bowser pens a farewell | [P. 29](#)

Results for the School Board Election | See the data from the votes at the Presidential Primary Election in Mont. County | [P. 33](#)

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TO PRINT, USE [PRINT VERSION](#)

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #954

Monday, June 10, 2024, 7:30 p.m. *in-person only!* It's our Annual Awards Celebration in downtown Silver Spring!

[AGENDA, P. 2](#) • [PROGRAM, P. 3](#)

Meeting Minutes

May 13, 2024, Meeting #953 [P. 34](#)
Executive Committee Meetings

MAY [P. 36](#)

Membership Application

[JOIN ONLINE](#) | [MAIL-IN FORM](#)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE JUNE MEETING WILL BE HELD IN PERSON ONLY. [SEE PAGE 3.](#)

Federation Meeting #954

Monday, June 10, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Awards Celebration

Welcome: Montgomery County
Civic Federation President
Alan Bowser

Presentation of the Sentinel

Award: District 5 County
Councilmember Kate
Stewart

Presentation of the Wayne Goldstein Award:

Maryland State Delegate
Lorig Charkoudian

Presentation of the Star

Cup: Montgomery County
Executive Marc Elrich

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.

The June meeting is MCCF's Annual Award Celebration. It will be held in person only.

! Location: ***Cissel-Saxon American Legion Post #41, 8110 Fenton Street, Downtown Silver Spring.*** Enter from the parking garage.

! Monday, June 10, 2024, 7:00 p.m. *Please note earlier time!*

! ***In person only; this event will not be broadcast virtually.***

! There is no charge for this event. Light fare will be served; cash bar.

! RSVP at ***rsvp@montgomerycivic.org*** by Sunday, June 11, so we have a head count and badges.

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 37

You are Invited to the Montgomery County Civic Federation Annual Awards Celebration

MONDAY, JUNE 10, 2024 | 7:00 P.M. | AMERICAN LEGION POST #41
8110 FENTON STREET, SILVER SPRING (ENTER FROM THE PARKING GARAGE)

Congratulations to the 2023–2024 Award Recipients

THE WAYNE GOLDSTEIN AWARD **Tree Friends United and** **Conservation Montgomery, Inc.**

The Wayne Goldstein Award honors an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County. Both of these dynamic nonprofit organizations support environment protection and sustainable development. They are working with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation to address the problem of invasive plants in our communities. Learn more about the 2024 nominees at [Conservation Montgomery](#) and [Tree Friends United](#).

THE SENTINEL AWARD **Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic** **Association**

For more than 50 years, SOECA in Silver Spring has mobilized its community resources to address issues of environmental protection, public safety, pedestrian safety, traffic, and community development. The Sentinel Award honors an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level. Learn more about the [Seven Oaks-Evanswood Civic Association](#).

THE STAR CUP **Alan Bowser**

The Star Cup honors a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding service on behalf of Mont. Co. This year, the recipient of the Star Cup is Alan Bowser, the 2023–2024 President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. He is also President of the Park Hills Civic Association in Silver Spring.

**RSVP TO RSVP@MONTGOMERYCIVIC.ORG BY
SUNDAY, JUNE 9. THERE IS NO
CHARGE FOR THIS EVENT. LIGHT
FARE IS INCLUDED. CASH BAR.**

Update on Annapolis Legislation in April

By Peggy Dennis, Legislation Chair

HB 0457, sponsored by Delegate Mary Lehman, was passed and signed by the Governor. It requires “a producer or seller of synthetic turf to disclose to a customer typical maintenance practices and costs for removing, replacing, and disposing of synthetic turf; and requiring the Department of the Environment, in consultation with representatives of the industry, local environmental and community stakeholders, and synthetic turf producers, retailers, and users, to conduct a study on the synthetic turf industry in the State and report its findings to certain committees of the General Assembly by July 1, 2026.” We consider this a small but significant step forward.

PG/MC 112-24, People’s Counsel for Land Use Planning, sponsored by Senator Ben Kramer. This was the bill that would have required our Park and Planning Commission to include in its annual budget proposal funding for the People’s Counsel and require the County Council to approve that funding similar to that in P.G. County. Despite our advocacy on its behalf, it was withdrawn due to unfriendly amendments that would have seriously weakened it. Sen. Kramer plans to reintroduce it in the 2025 session in its original form.

HB 1300, introduced by Delegate David Moon. This bill was of great concern. It was described as “Providing that certain restrictions on use that prohibit the use of real property in Montgomery County for housing units otherwise authorized under law are void and unenforceable; and applying the Act retroactively to restrictions on use recorded before June 1, 1958.” Really clear language, right? We understood this to throw out covenants for older developments that would have stood in the way of the upzoning provided by Thrive 2050. Fortunately, it did not get a vote in the House ENT Committee, so is dead for now. ■

County Council Votes to Approve \$7.1B FY2025 Operating Budget, FY25-30 CIP

[The following is the text of MoCo Council Press Release ID: 24-202.]

Council's budget makes historic investment in education, holds the line on property taxes with a \$692 property tax credit for homeowners, expands essential services for residents, and funds collective bargaining agreements and inflationary increases for nonprofit service providers.

On May 23, 2024, the Montgomery County Council voted to approve the County's \$7.1 billion Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Operating Budget and the \$5.94 billion FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to fund school construction, infrastructure improvements, and community projects. The FY25 Operating Budget represents a five percent increase compared to the FY24 Operating

Budget.

"Putting together a fiscally sound budget that meets the needs of Montgomery County's nearly 1.1 million residents is the ultimate balancing act," said Council President Andrew Friedson. "Like residents across Montgomery County who create household budgets, the Council had to make difficult choices with finite resources, especially as we sought to increase funding for public education. With an unprecedented level of community engagement throughout this deliberative process, the Council has produced a budget that meets today's needs and makes strategic investments for Montgomery County's future so we can strengthen our social safety net and maintain our high quality of life.

"We are adding significant ad-

ditional resources for Montgomery County Public Schools by funding 99.2 percent of the Board of Education's request without raising taxes or increasing the County's debt, while maintaining our reserve levels above 10.8 percent, and providing the necessary flexibility to respond to potential fiscal emergencies in the months ahead.

"Like all budgets before us, this year brought its own set of challenges and opportunities. Faced with tough choices, we worked strategically to increase our commitment to public schools, our hardworking employees, and our nonprofit service providers.

"I appreciate each of my Council colleagues for the purposeful way we conducted our work, the County Executive and his staff for their budget



TOP

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

recommendations, and the County residents who expressed their views.”

Council President Friedson’s full remarks on the budget can [viewed here](#) and [read here](#).

The budget provides funding to increase ongoing investments in education, public safety, health and human services and affordable housing. Resources are also included to combat climate change and boost economic growth. These priorities are funded while providing more competitive salaries for Montgomery County employees and nonprofit providers and honoring the County’s long-term commitments to retired employees with \$59.1 million provided for Other Post Employment Benefits. The Council continues to reinforce the County’s financial stewardship by funding the County’s

reserves at 10.8 percent.

The Council also held the line on property taxes. The FY25 weighted tax rate remains static at \$1.0255 per \$100 of assessed value and includes \$0.0470 per \$100 that is dedicated to Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Additionally, homeowners will continue to receive a \$692 property tax credit that includes a degree of progressivity since lower-valued properties will receive a greater reduction in property taxes.

The capital and operating budgets go into effect on July 1.

FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program

The Council approved \$5.94 billion in capital funding to address the County’s most urgent building needs including more than \$1.85 billion for MCPS infrastructure. The Council made an unprecedented

investment by adding \$165 million in systemic projects to support critical infrastructure and extend the life of and improve conditions in schools. The Council’s approved CIP program for MCPS provides funding for 18 individual school projects and sets a schedule and sequence for school construction that can be maintained to avoid delays in the future.

The CIP provides \$398.2 million for Montgomery College for capital projects including \$60.5 million for the new East County Campus.

The capital budget also includes a significant increase for affordable housing programs, including \$65 million in current revenue in FY25 for the Affordable Housing Acquisition and Preservation project and a \$20 million increase in FY26-27 for the Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund. Additionally, there is a \$50

MORE

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

million addition to the Nonprofit Preservation Fund, including \$35 million in FY24 and \$15 million in FY25. The capital budget also establishes a new project, Revitalization for Troubled and Distressed Common Ownership Communities, to provide \$10 million of financial and technical support for homeowner and condominium associations.

Several capital projects across the County are also included in the capital budget. Some highlights include:

- Funding for the implementation of the comprehensive flood management plan in the amount of \$153 million over six years.

- Funding for a new organics processing facility in the amount of \$28 million.

- Funding for a hydrogen bus center in the amount of \$10.95 mil-

lion to plan, design, and construct a hydrogen fuel cell bus and fueling site at the Equipment Maintenance and Transit Operations Center in Gaithersburg.

- Funding for WSSC Water capital expenditures for FY25–30 in the amount of \$4.88 billion.

- Funding for modern renovations of Alcohol Beverage Services retail stores throughout the County.

- Funding restoration for the Summit Avenue Extended Project for the master-planned northern extension of Summit Avenue from Plyers Mill Road to Farragut Road. Summit Avenue is a two-lane, two-way business district street in the Town of Kensington.

- Funding to complete the retail space at Park and Planning Headquarters in Wheaton.

- Funding for design and construction of four new bridge proj-

ects: Auth Lane Pedestrian Bridge, Brookville Road Bridge, Redland Road Bridge, and Schaeffer Road Bridge.

FY25 Operating Budget EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The Council voted to approve funding to support MCPS, Montgomery College and essential educational and cultural services in Montgomery County. Funding \$3.3 billion for MCPS comprises half of the County's overall budget and is 99.2 percent of the Board of Education's request. The local County contribution of \$2.13 billion funds the school system at approximately \$158 million above the state mandated funding level.

Some highlights include:

- MCPS funding in the amount of \$3.3 billion, which is an increase of more than \$157 million, or five per-



MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

cent, over the approved FY24 Operating Budget and \$29.6 million more than the County Executive's Recommended Budget. The tax-supported budget, which excludes grants and enterprise funds, is more than \$3.1 billion. This represents an increase of more than \$151 million, or 5.1 percent, over the FY24 approved tax-supported budget. The budget adds a net total increase of 248.4 full-time employees (FTE) above the approved FY24 budget level, for a FY25 total of 24,764.5 FTE.

■ Montgomery College funding in the amount of \$334 million, which fully funds the College's request. It is a decrease of \$10 million, or three percent, from the previous year; however, this reflects a slight decrease in state aid and the one-time use of fund balances in FY24 that

were used to support the build out of the leased facility for the East County Education Center.

■ Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL) funding in the amount of \$52 million.

■ Over \$1.9 million in funding for the KID Museum, which is the region's largest center for maker learning for youth, families, and educators.

■ Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County (AHC MC) NDA funding in the amount of \$6.8 million. AHC MC annually distributes grants to organizations and individuals to help fund enriching cultural activities in our County and provides the infrastructure and support to maintain a robust creative community that includes more than 500 cultural organizations and 2,000 artists and scholars.

■ More than \$220,000 for the

Historical Activities NDA, which includes funding for the County's 250th Anniversary Project, the Unfinished Revolution Initiative, and the Black Resistance Oral History Initiative.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Council voted to approve funding to enhance public safety across Montgomery County. Some highlights include:

■ Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) funding in the amount of \$330 million, which represents an increase of nearly \$18 million. The largest increases in costs are a result of compensation adjustments and increases, one-time lapse adjustments, retirement adjustments and personnel costs. Other increases are attributed to new technology enhancements to support police opera-

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

tions, including an expansion of the Drone as First Responder Program.

■ More than \$780,000 for the Police Accountability Board, which is an advisory entity that reviews cases heard by the Administrative Charging Committee to determine trends or any other concerns in police disciplinary cases.

■ Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) funding in the amount of \$290 million, which includes adding six firefighter positions to Station 40 and a new Emergency Medical Services duty officer to improve health outcomes in under-resourced areas of the County.

■ State's Attorney's Office funding in the amount of \$25 million, which is used to prosecute criminal violations in Montgomery County, educate the public concerning criminal

justice issues, and provide training to lawyers for future service.

■ Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (OEMHS) funding in the amount of more than \$4 million, including \$1.2 million for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program to help protect nonprofit organizations and houses of worship. The role of the OEMHS is to plan, coordinate, prevent, prepare for, and protect against major threats to the Montgomery County community and manage the County's unified response and recovery.

■ Sheriff's Office funding in the amount of \$30 million, which provides general law enforcement, judicial enforcement, and specialized public safety services to the residents of Montgomery County. The Sheriff's Office serves warrants and court orders and is responsible for transporting inmates.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Council voted to approve economic development initiatives focused on job creation and business attraction and development in Montgomery County. Some highlights include:

■ Funding in the amount of \$4.7 million for the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC). The MCEDC NDA was created to be the County's designated lead economic development organization and implement the County's economic development strategic plan, which includes marketing, business attraction and retention, entrepreneurship, and promoting the County's economic base.

■ More than \$2.4 million for Montgomery County's business incubators to help grow businesses.

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

■ Conference and Visitors Bureau funding in the amount of \$2.2 million. The Conference and Visitors Bureau, also known as Visit Montgomery, promotes the County as a destination for meetings, conferences, student group travel, group tours, leisure travel, and sports events.

■ Small Business Support Services funding in the amount of \$2.3 million, which provides a vehicle for funding ongoing contracts with third parties to provide specialized assistance and programs for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

■ More than \$560,000 to establish BioHub Maryland in Montgomery County to support operating a 7,500-square-foot biomanufacturing training center.

■ University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing funding in the

amount of \$6.3 million, including the restoration of \$1.3 million in lease payments from FY24 that required the institute to sign a lease, which it identified and moved into in Jan. 2024, as well as the full \$5 million in annual funding the County committed to provide from FY24 through FY29. UM3 is exploring how artificial intelligence, machine learning, and clinical analytics can facilitate knowledge discovery for human health and wellbeing. It is being developed through a partnership with the County and multiple statewide institutions for higher education.

■ WorkSource Montgomery funding in the amount of \$2.2 million. WorkSource Montgomery is the County's designated workforce development corporation and fiscal agent responsible for local administration of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and coordina-

tion of the public workforce development system.

■ More than \$4.1 million for the Economic Development Fund, which provides assistance for private employers who are located, plan to locate, or substantially expand operations in the County.

■ More than \$74 million for the Alcohol Beverage Services' operating budget, including a transfer of \$26.6 million to the General Fund in FY25.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

The Council voted to approve numerous Health and Human Services programs that residents rely on for health care, safety-net services, and older adult and youth services. Some highlights include:

■ The Council approved more than \$504 million for the Department of Health and Human Services

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

(DHHS), which represents an increase of more than \$27 million, or 5.8 percent from the approved FY24 Operating Budget.

Some of the divisions and initiatives included in the budget are:

■ Aging and Disability Services with \$72.6 million that provides seniors, persons with disabilities, and their families with home and community-based support services and protections.

■ Behavioral Health Services with \$61.8 million allocated across 10 program areas that promote mental wellness, prevent substance abuse and suicide, and ensure access to a comprehensive treatment recovery system of effective services and supports for children, youth and families, and adults and seniors with behavioral health needs.

■ Children, Youth and Family Services with \$124.7 million allocated across eight program areas that provide protection, prevention, intervention, treatment, and financial assistance services for children and their families.

■ Public Health and Minority Programs with \$116.3 million to protect and promote the health and safety of residents by implementing intervention strategies to contain or prevent disease and fostering public-private partnerships to increase access to health services.

■ Services to End and Prevent Homelessness with \$49 million to provide access to safe, affordable housing and opportunities to improve quality of life through a continuum of services that includes housing stabilization, homeless diversion, and permanent housing options.

■ Office of Food Systems Resil-

ience (OFSR) funding of \$14 million to develop and maintain a strategy for improving the efficiency, equity, sustainability, and resilience of the food systems in Montgomery County. The budget increases focus on programming and grants supporting the Strategic Plan to End Childhood Hunger and transitioning the COVID-19 era Food Staples Program to a permanent program model to help reduce food insecurity of residents.

■ Among initiatives that include DHHS involvement with MCPS, \$13.5 million is provided for Early Childhood Services, \$10.3 million for the Early Care and Education NDA, \$2 million for Child Care Subsidies, \$45.7 million for School Health Services, \$14.7 million for Linkages to Learning, \$8.6 million for High School Wellness Center and Wellness Initiatives, \$7.1 million for the

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

Newcomers Initiative, and \$1 million for Cluster Projects.

HOUSING

The Council voted to approve funding for housing programs to create and preserve affordable housing in Montgomery County. Some highlights include:

■ Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) funding in the amount of \$79 million, including \$14 million from the General Fund and \$8.8 million from the Grant Fund (which programs federal and state grants related to community development). DHCA works to preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing, maintain existing housing in a safe and sanitary condition, preserve the safety and quality of residential and commercial areas,

ensure fair and equitable relations between landlords and tenants, and support the success of common ownership communities.

■ Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) resources in the amount of \$56 million to finance the production, acquisition, and preservation of affordable housing and rental assistance programs for households with low incomes and for households moving from homelessness to permanent housing.

■ Funding for the Homeownership Assistance Program totaling \$4 million.

■ Housing Opportunity Commission (HOC) funding totaling nearly \$8.3 million. HOC's mission is to provide affordable and supportive services that enhance the lives of individuals and families who have low to moderate incomes. Since HOC is an external organization,

the County's contribution is part of HOC's Public Fund. HOC's full FY25 recommended operating budget is more than \$348 million.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENTS

The Council voted to approve funding for service delivery through government operations and to invest in the County's workforce. Some highlights include:

■ Full funding for the collective bargaining agreements with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) Lodge 35, the Montgomery County Career Fire Fighters Association of the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF), Local 1664, and the Municipal and County Government Employees Organization (MCGEO), Local 1994.

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

■ Funding to add two positions to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for increased oversight of MCPS as part of the OIG's more than \$3.6 million overall budget. The mission of the office is to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse in government activities and propose ways to increase the legal, fiscal, and ethical accountability of County government and County-funded agencies.

■ Board of Elections funding in the amount of \$17 million, including more than \$2.79 million in increased costs for State Board of Elections expenses, including \$1.95 million in enhancements for State Board of Elections new election equipment for state mandated pollbooks, and \$70,000 in one-time funds to be used for outreach for the 2024 elec-

tion cycle.

■ Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) funding of \$1.6 million. ORESJ works with all County departments to ensure race is not a predictor of outcomes for Montgomery County residents.

■ Funding of \$1.2 million for the Guaranteed Income NDA. First started in FY22, the Guaranteed Income NDA funded a three-year pilot of the MoCo BOOST Program (Building Our Opportunity and Strength Today), with the purpose of providing direct, recurring cash payments to targeted groups of people without strings attached. The goals of the program were to alleviate poverty, provide a form of financial stability, and give people the ability to make their own choices to improve their economic position.

■ Funding of \$73.5 million for Technology and Enterprise Business

Solutions, which provides technology solutions and services to facilitate the delivery of a wide range of services to all branches of government.

■ More than \$5 million in funding for the transition for MC311 from the Public Information Office to Technology and Enterprise Business Solutions in FY25. MC311 provides the public with a single three-digit number to call for County information and service.

■ The approved budget also includes \$532,000 to support the deployment of artificial intelligence (AI) strategies in a deliberate manner into County operations, including the launch of a data classification effort to protect sensitive data.

TRANSPORTATION AND ENVIRONMENT

The Council voted to approve

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

numerous transportation programs and environmental initiatives. Some highlights include:

■ Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) funding in the amount of \$63 million. These funds are divided among MCDOT's General Fund, the Leaf Vacuuming Fund and the Grant Fund. The General Fund is used to plan, design and coordinate development and construction of transportation and pedestrian routes, operate and maintain the traffic signal system and road network and to develop and implement transportation policies to maximize efficient service delivery.

■ Division of Transit Services funding in the amount of \$193 million, which provides public transportation services in the County and its budget is composed of the Mass Transit

Fund and the Grant Fund.

■ More than \$370,000 for the Vision Zero NDA, which is an increase of 85 percent from last year's budget to fund the oversight and coordination of the Vision Zero Initiative to end traffic related serious injuries and fatalities. This increase in funding was made possible because of a federal grant.

■ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) funding in the amount of almost \$200 million. The overall DEP budget has four ongoing funds, which include \$9.6 million for the General Fund, \$36 million for the Water Quality Protection Fund, \$12.3 million for the Solid Waste Collection Fund and \$142 million for the Solid Waste Disposal Fund. DEP works to enhance the quality of life in Montgomery County by protecting and improving air, water and land in a way that fosters smart growth, a

thriving more sustainable economy and healthy communities.

■ Montgomery County Green Bank (MCGB) funding in the amount of more than \$19 million, which is a more than \$478,000 increase over last year's budget. The MCGB provides financial backing and technical expertise to advance clean energy initiatives throughout the County. This work is critical to helping the County meet its climate goals to reduce emissions by 80 percent by 2027 and 100 percent by 2035.

■ Climate Change NDA funded in the amount of \$718,344, which is a near 50 percent increase compared to the previous year. The NDA was first created to fund the development of the Climate Action Plan and related studies and then shifted to other planning efforts and to assisting departments with various

MoCo Oper. Budget, cont.

climate-related initiatives.

■ WSSC Water fully funded in the amount of \$1.02 billion which provides public water and sewer services to approximately two million residents in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

RECREATION, PARKS AND PLANNING

The Council voted to approve numerous recreation, parks and planning programs. Some highlights include:

■ Department of Recreation funding in the amount of \$64.4 million, which is an increase of \$4.7 million, or 7.8 percent, from the approved FY24 Operating Budget, and includes increased funding for school based Out of School Time programming.

■ Maryland-National Park and

Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) tax-supported funding in the amount of \$183.3 million. M-NCPPC is a bi-county agency that makes recommendations on planning and growth, protects natural, cultural and historic resources and provides leisure and recreational experiences. The Montgomery Planning Department prepares master and sector plans for Planning Board review and approval by the Council. The Montgomery Parks Department oversees the acquisition, development and management of the County's parks system, which is currently comprised of more than 37,000 acres across 420 parks.

Visit [this webpage](#) for more information on the FY25 Operating Budget and [this webpage](#) more information on the FY 25-30 CIP.

[Media Contacts: Sonya Healy, 240.777.7926; Lucia Jimenez, 240.777.7832.] ■

Letter to the Council

Dear Council President Friedson,

Congratulations to the Council on approving a budget of \$7.1 billion.

What is disappointing is that with all the dollars going for a variety of good causes, not one penny of the budgeted \$251,000 went to fund the People's Counsel, which is an entity to help particularly the less informed and least wealthy when a development is planned for their community. Also, this is an issue in the area of Racial Equity and Social Justice.

So, what is your answer as to why you oppose help to the most needy and least resourced among us?

To the Montgomery County community at large, civic associations, and HOAs, please write to the Council in support of funding the People's Counsel. Thank you.

Max Bronstein

MCCF Resolution on Priorities and Approaches for Housing Policy and Legislation

Whereas, the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. (MCCF), acknowledges that housing is a human right, acknowledges the predicted future growth in county population, welcomes new residents, embraces diversity, and supports providing equitable and affordable housing opportunities (both ownership and rental) to current and future generations of residents. These needs should be met through policies that provide all residents, especially groups historically subject to racially discriminatory housing policies, access to quality affordable housing and opportunities for economic growth, and policies that are effective, environmentally sound, and based on data. The MCCF wishes to partner with the county to achieve these goals.

Now, Therefore, Be it Resolved, that the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., adopts the following **Priorities and Approaches to Housing Policy and Legislation** as the policy of MCCF and to guide MCCF evaluation of housing legislation and policies as may be proposed by the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council, such as The Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative.

Approved, this 13th day of May, 2024
Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

PRIORITIES

Although estimates can vary considerably, the Metropolitan Council of Governments in 2019 estimated that Montgomery County needs to

add substantially more housing units in the next ten years to meet housing demand and that 75 percent of this housing should be affordable to low- and moderate-income households (incomes between 30 and 150 percent of AMI). Housing to meet this need will not be met by private investment alone. To this end, the following measures using governmental resources and programs should be priorities:

■ Colocating affordable housing on county-owned properties. This has been accomplished with a few properties and should be continued and expanded. Colocation presents opportunities for public or non-profit/private developer partnerships to build more deeply affordable housing.

MCCF Resolution, cont.

■ Implementation of a simplified process for zoning flexibility for income-restricted housing owned by faith-based organizations. One effort in this direction is the Zoning Text Amendment (ZTA) 24-01, also known as the Facilitating Affordable Inclusive Transformational Housing (FAITH) ZTA, recently adopted by the Council. An ongoing effort to track data on success of this initiative and identify barriers that impede success is important.

■ Increased financial support for the Montgomery County Housing Initiative Fund. The Montgomery Housing Initiative (MHI) Fund is the County's local housing trust fund that provides loans to the Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC), nonprofit developers, experienced rental property owners, and for-

profit developers to build new housing units, renovate deteriorated multifamily housing developments, preserve existing affordable housing, and provide special needs rental housing.

■ Montgomery County's Moderately Priced Dwelling Unit (MPDU) program has led the nation in inclusionary zoning requirements for more than fifty years. MPDU requirements provide that up to 15 percent of housing units in County residential developments of 20+ units are available for low-and moderate-income families. The MPDU program should be reviewed to assess how well it achieves its four program goals: enable county residents and workers to purchase or rent affordable housing; better distribute low- and moderate-income households throughout the county; expand and retain an inventory

of housing accessible to low- and moderate-income individuals; and provide funds for future affordable housing projects via windfall. To maximize the availability of low- and moderate-income units, policymakers should consider expanding MPDU's reach, where possible (by, for example, increasing the percentage of required units, adjusting the MPDU income requirements, requiring that MPDU units reflect the mixture of unit sizes available in the project, and ensuring that projects replacing projects meeting MPDU requirements at least maintain the percentage of affordable units). Policymakers should be mindful that too-stringent MPDU requirements can be counterproductive if they hinder the development of projects with additional affordable housing.

■ The membership continues

MCCF Resolution, cont.

to urge the Montgomery County Government to establish an effective policy of No Net Loss of Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH). Where NOAH exists in older multifamily developments slated for redevelopment, policymakers should seek to ensure that replacement projects will include affordable units at least equivalent in number, size, and rental cost to those currently available. The county should pursue antidisplacement initiatives in vulnerable communities.

■ Increasing attention to and focus on workforce housing, including housing for teachers, police, first responders and public servants. For this purpose, policymakers should utilize and consider expanding the MPDU program, where possible. Identify projects on county-owned

or faith-based properties that might designate a specific number of units for the county workforce housing program lottery.

APPROACH

■ The process of developing a housing policy for the county must be a search for the best way forward and result in a dynamic roadmap to implement the results of that search. The process must be data driven and informed by the work of a range of experts (including economists and social scientists) with differing approaches and conclusions, all following rigorous accepted research standards of reliability, objectivity, and relevance. Policymakers should set benchmarks and periodic reporting requirements and must be willing to re-evaluate and change direction if initial (or modified) plans and tools are not achieving the intended

results.

■ The MCCF affirms its support for the Montgomery County law requiring all legislation—including zoning changes and zoning text amendments—to undergo racial equity and social justice (RESJ) analysis by the Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) and urges the Council to observe OLO’s RESJ recommendations in formulating all zoning and housing policies or make public statements as to disagreement and reasons for disagreement.

■ It is important that policymakers consider the existing wide variations, from urban to rural and in between, in our county. It is also important that new housing be distributed throughout the county, working through the master plan process. The goal is to increase the availability and affordability of housing for

MCCF Resolution, cont.

current and future residents while enhancing the quality of life across the county.

■ The Civic Federation reaffirms its commitment to Master and Sector planning for modifying zoning within planning areas as those processes allow for consideration of important factors unique to a neighborhood, including existing density, transportation, infrastructure and adequate public facilities, and environmental concerns. These processes also allow for meaningful engagement with the specific community.

■ The Civic Federation supports the goal of creating greater opportunities for home ownership, particularly for communities that have historically been denied these opportunities. We note that 95 percent of the new multifamily hous-

ing approved and built in Montgomery County since 2017 has been rental and not ownership housing. This trend must be analyzed, data tracked, and policies to promote more home ownership opportunities in new developments must be put in place.

■ The Civic Federation notes that conversion of owner-occupied housing to institutionally owned rental housing makes housing more expensive and reduces housing choices available to county residents. The SDAT recently noted an increasing trend in investors buying single-family homes in Maryland, and the estimate for inventory of investor-owned single-family homes in the D.C. metro area is now at 10 percent. There is a danger that first-time home buyers have a difficult time outbidding an institutional investor. The county should address these

issues before trends worsen, looking at a variety of tools to discourage land banking of already-approved development projects or investors buying single-family homes, including possibly tax measures and owner-occupancy requirements as the county ADU law provides. The MCCF supports innovative strategies, such as community land trusts, for expanding affordable housing.

■ The MCCF reaffirms its commitment to the adequate public facilities ordinance and the need to evaluate the impact of new development on an area and the adequacy of public facilities.

DATA

■ There are conflicting views on the extent of the housing needs in our County and on how needs at different income and price points

MCCF Resolution, cont.

should be prioritized and addressed. Policymakers should compile reliable housing-related statistics that residents can easily understand. Such data should include: the number of additional housing units needed, especially for those of low-to moderate-income (including workforce housing); how much of these housing needs can be accommodated by development under the current zoning requirements; how many residential units have been approved but are still in the pipeline (and, if construction has stalled, why, and how it might be expedited); and how many approvals have been pending for a number of years, suggesting that land has been “banked” as an asset. Median housing prices should be tracked on a regular basis.

■ Where zoning changes are being

considered, policymakers should prepare and share with residents relevant supporting data including: the types of housing sought; the extent to which zoning changes are needed to accommodate those types of housing and what those changes might be, under alternative scenarios; and projections of how much and what types of housing such changes might yield under different scenarios. Significant housing initiatives, such as the Attainable Housing Initiative, should begin with laying out specifics, including the number and type of ownership opportunities, and tracking sale prices on homes sold after the initiative as well as average rents on new units.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

■ Community outreach must be intentional and inclusive to advance and highlight diversity of thought

and lived experiences in the discussions of housing policy, and to be fully inclusive of race, ethnicity, age, disability, economic status, and geographical location. Further, where changes in communities are sought, they will be more timely and more successful if they gain local community acceptance and support. Community engagement with meaningful dialogue between community representatives and representatives of the county at every stage of the process is essential. With effective outreach and notice presented as a true search for solutions and not as a platform to sell a predetermined approach, community engagement can be highly effective. Meetings and town halls are excellent means for policymakers to become informed and educated by the views and concerns of residents, and vice versa. ■

Property Tax Increases: Charter Review Commission Recommendations

By Gordie Brenne, Treasurer, Montgomery County Taxpayers League

The Taxpayers League reviewed the **Charter Review Commission Report** dated April 24, 2024.

The Commission recommended several changes to Charter controls over how the Council approves spending and revenues (pgs. 13-23) that could go to a referendum this fall. The way a similar referendum was manipulated in 2020 to eliminate cost of living controls over revenue increases should make voters wary of any further Council revenue referendums ([note 1 below](#)). The controversial recommendation would make it easier for the Council to approve tax rate increases.

We are very concerned about higher property taxes because they increase housing costs, making

housing less affordable for lower income residents. Struggling homeowners and renters are most adversely affected when property taxes increase faster than the cost of living (Consumer Price Index- CPI) and their incomes. This results in double jeopardy for lower income homeowners and renters when coupled with a budget process that fails to deliver cost effective outcomes for educating their children, crime reduction, new jobs, commute times, health benefits, and affordable water and sewer services.

The Taxpayers League urges the Council to **retain Charter Section 305's unanimous vote requirement** as a final control over tax rate increases when earlier spending controls fail to produce a cost-effective budget. This is **consistent with**

the unanimous Council vote requirement approved by voters in 2020. We do agree with the two minority vote Commissioners who said that retaining the unanimous vote requirement (pg. 22) makes each council member accountable, increases their impact, and increases the voice of underrepresented parts of the county. Also, we agree with the Commission's recommended changes for a super majority vote to override earlier budget process spending controls for the CPI limit and Spending Affordability Guidance.

Current Council vote requirements for the three critical controls include:

1. **CPI spending limit override**—7 votes currently.

Property Taxes, cont.

2. **Spending Affordability Guidance override**—8 votes currently.

3. **Property tax rate increase**—unanimous vote currently.

The Commission's recommendations basically treat the three controls as equally important by applying the same voting threshold to each. But these three controls are separate actions at different points in the Council's budget review cycle, acting as checks and balances on the previous controls. Two are for spending, and the third is for revenues if the two spending controls fail. The first control, CPI spending limit override, is based on revenue and inflation forecasts and doesn't formally look at how cost-effective spending has been. If the CPI limit fails to eliminate programs that

aren't cost effective, Spending Control Guidance (SAG) is the next level of control. If that is overridden, the tax rate increase control is the last opportunity for responsible budgeting. At that point, the highest level of accountability, a unanimous vote is not only appropriate, but a good government standard.

We disagree with Commission conclusions in four issue areas:

1. Dominant Special Interest Groups. Chair Michaels erred (pg. 20, par 2) when he argues a unanimous vote would magnify the influence of one member. Quite the opposite is true since that person would know they are subject to intense scrutiny and accountability. He goes on to argue (pg. 20, par. 4) that a well-funded special interest group would defeat this recommendation. Again, the opposite is true since the County and teachers'

unions would welcome this change. Based on historical experience, the SAG control failure in 2023 ([note 2 below](#)) was due to the disproportionate influence of the County and teachers' unions, not the Council increase from 9 to 11 members. Only a unanimous vote provides a corrective control to offset these huge special interest groups whose advocacy disregards good government standards for cost-effective spending. County union demands for above-market pay increases without any documented increases in program outcomes in the budget, and teachers' union demands for across the board pay increases while student proficiency rates continued to stagnate in east county are irresponsible.

2. Bad Governance Perpetuated. Chair Michaels erred (pg.

Property Taxes, cont.

19, par.2) when citing the 2024 budget approved last year as “historical good fortune” that should be immortalized with a lower voting standard. The revenue gusher that resulted from higher appraisals, independent of the tax rate increase, was predictable last year, as were sadly static program outcomes. This is not good fortune, but a new burden on low-income residents.

Chair Michaels further erred (par 3) when he argued all areas of the county would be represented with a tax rate increase vote by a super majority. The entire up-county Council membership is just three votes. Chair Michaels erred when classifying last year’s budget fiasco as “historical good fortune” without disclosing the override of the Council’s SAG control which set MCPS

spending at the Maintenance of Effort level **just one month earlier**, and was caused by two poor judgment and hopefully nonrecurring events: the Executive’s invented education emergency and the school Board’s budget revision to direct \$50M in additional state funds to increase MCPS spending and not reduce the local tax share. The 2023 budget process then yielded to an override of the Charter under state law, without any additional spending justifications. That is not a good precedent when budgeting for ongoing operations.

Chair Michaels specious arguments (pg. 19) about the slim vote majority in the 2008 for the unanimous vote requirement, or that 11 Council votes to approve an increase would produce less of a compromise, ignores the basic differences between the three controls, where three dif-

ferent compromises are required.

Lastly, the Commission report (pg.17, par.2) argues that other Maryland counties apply a super majority vote. But none of the examples for four other Maryland counties cited in Appendix H are for increasing the tax rate, so this does not “bolster support” for eliminating the unanimous vote as claimed by the Commission.

3. Ineffective Budget Process. The Majority Summary (pg. 17) said that a super majority vote for the third control is consistent with the first two controls, and would produce a “fair and predictable governance” process. This is nothing more than imposing symmetry on three very different controls, and will eliminate dissent and compromise. Taxpayers know what’s predictable: ever increasing

Property Taxes, cont.

taxes to fund fewer cost-effective programs. This problem is greatest for MCPS spending which is anchored in the state law for minimum school spending called Maintenance of Effort, perpetuates a 45 percent overhead rate for non-instruction costs that takes resources away from our kids, and doesn't focus on student proficiency improvements. Fundamentally, this is about assuring that every member is heard on the most important corrective control for tax rate increases when the first two controls fail to create cost-effective programs.

4. Misrepresented Accountability. Chair Michaels majority opinion erred (pg. 18) arguing that, with a unanimous vote requirement, just one person could veto tax rate increases, without negotiation or

compromise on the merits. There would be enormous accountability repercussions for that one person, and that would enable undecided members to join that one person, if so inclined, rather than be trampled by the majority. Case in point last year: two other members joined member Friedson in voting against the MCPS budget, not because they thought it was too much, but because they thought it was too low. That vote showed why raising property taxes was so controversial for education. Because of unfunded Blueprint mandates, it is reasonable to assume MCPS's budget will continue to be controversial. This is especially true because there is no in-depth review of MCPS's \$3.3 Billion budget, since only the incremental spending above the Maintenance of Effort minimum is ever debated. The bumper sticker rational for spending more than

that level is simply to "fully fund" the request. But none of the additional spending in the record budget increase requested for Fiscal Year 2025 was linked to student proficiency strategies, the number one priority.

Please let your council representatives know that you do not want to see a referendum this fall to changing the unanimous tax rate increase vote requirement.

Note 1: The Council drafted a referendum called Question A on the 2020 ballot, which voters approved. **That vote replaced a CPI limit on total property tax revenues** with a limit on just tax rate increases, but at least retained a unanimous vote requirement. Question A was labeled by the County on the ballot as "Limit Tax Rate Increases."

Property Taxes, cont.

But that charter change **allowed property assessment increases to increase tax revenues more than the CPI, as we've seen in the last year**, producing a revenue gusher this year, and was forecast to yield \$150M more than reserve requirements next year (the Council frittered away that extra money by approving unjustified spending increases in May appropriation votes). The alternative was Question B on that ballot, and was based on a grass roots citizen petition to retain the CPI limit on revenues. When the Council saw this, it preemptively created Question A which was placed first, and then added insult to injury by pejoratively labeling **Question B on the ballot as "Prohibit Override."** Because of that experience, voters have learned to be wary of any refer-

endum proposed by the Council.

Note 2: The influence of the unions over last year's tax rate increase for the so-called education budget "emergency" was perverse. It resulted in most of the extra revenue generated being spent on above market County employee pay raises and supplemental appropriations, not for MCPS, while low-income student literacy and math proficiency continues

to stagnate. Due to union influence, teacher pay raises were made across the board, not just for low income schools. In fact, were it not for the state Maintenance of Effort law governing minimum MCPS funding independent of outcomes, it's not likely the teachers union would have such an oversized influence on the Council's budget process, crowding out the will of voters for better results. ■

TOP

A Citizens Guide to Safe Bow-and-Arrow Hunting for Deer in Montgomery County's Suburban Neighborhoods

By Peggy Dennis, First Vice President

The 2024-2024 season for archery hunting begins in September and runs through the end of January. Now and over the summer is the perfect time to discuss archery hunting with your neighbors and local civic association and line up

one or more hunters to work in your neighborhood.

This is my annual exhortation for civic organizations and individuals to organize. As deer populations have increased, suburban and urban areas in Montgomery County face too many deer. In some suburbs, the

MORE

Deer Slaying, cont.

deer population exceeds 400 animals per square mile, while the carrying capacity of the land is about 40 animals per square mile. Although pleasing to watch, large numbers of free-roaming deer increase the risk of human injury from deer-vehicle collisions (DVC). Montgomery County has more than 2,000 reported DVCs per year, and this statistic does not include the thousands of deer which are injured or killed but are not reported. My son recently sustained major damage to his car by running over a dead buck with antlers.

Most people know that deer and deer ticks spread Lyme disease. How many are aware that they are also associated with debilitating and costly diseases such as babesiosis, bartonella, ehrlichia chaffensis, and

powassan encephalitis. Decreasing our deer overpopulation is good for public health.

Deer cause great damage to the environment. They have destroyed the understory of many of our regional, community, and stream valley parks, denuded hillsides of native plants, destroyed habitat for other species, accelerated soil erosion, and promoted the takeover of invasive species. Some naturalists now consider overabundant deer as significant a threat to the bird population as climate change. Too many young deer make your neighborhood attractive for predators such as coyotes to move in, a situation we are beginning to experience in Montgomery County. And, if you have too many deer, forget about your landscaping or trying to grow your own fruits and vegetables in your back yard!

THE BOWHUNTING OPTION

You can help solve this ongoing problem. Other options for deer management—such as feeding, exclusionary fencing, and chemical “birth control”—are impractical, counterproductive, or prohibitively expensive. Regulated hunting, specifically bowhunting, is a safe, ethical, humane, and efficient method for decreasing the number of deer in residential neighborhoods. It provides deer population control at the least cost to taxpayers because volunteer bowhunters do the “work” of removing deer as a public service.

Hundreds of metro areas including Fairfax County, Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; the Pittsburgh suburbs; and many cities in Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Canada allow bowhunting. Few problems and no accidents have been reported. The Maryland Department of Natural

Deer Slaying, cont.

Resources supports the use of bow-hunting to curb deer populations in the suburbs.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Archery is one of the safest sports in the United States. Most accidents involve the bowhunter falling out of a tree stand. In Maryland and Virginia, there have been no recorded incidents involving injury to persons, pets, or property caused by a bowhunter.

Bowhunters typically hunt from elevated positions or tree stands. This means that an arrow is shot at a downward angle. If it misses the deer, it goes harmlessly into the ground. An arrow, under most conditions, cannot travel any appreciable distance once it hits even a twig or small limb. National surveys

show that most deer harvested with a bow are shot at distances of 20 yards or less, which makes it ideal for hunting in and around suburban and urban areas.

Deer taken by reputable hunters are never “wasted.” All the meat (venison) is used, either by the hunter or by donation to local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. In Montgomery County, this is done by an organization called Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry. Property owners who wish to obtain venison may do so through arrangement with their hunter.

GETTING STARTED

Many individuals know little about hunting, particularly bow-hunting. Bowhunting in residential neighborhoods should never be undertaken by amateurs, but left to licensed, well-trained, skilled sports-

persons.

HOW TO FIND A SAFE AND RELIABLE HUNTER

In Montgomery County, several groups can link you to an expert bowhunter. The Animal Connection Deer Management Team (ACDMT) and the Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland are two organizations of skilled, veteran bowhunters with strict rules and enforcement to ensure the safety of hunters and the public. Both groups strongly advocate ethical bowhunting within the laws of the jurisdiction. Most members are members of the Maryland Bowhunters Society, an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting safe and responsible bowhunting; educating the non-hunting public about the role of the bowhunter in wildlife management

Deer Slaying, cont.

and conservation; and educating bowhunters in safety, shooting skills, hunting techniques, and relations with property owners.

Not every suburban yard is appropriate for bowhunting. The bowhunter will first tell you if your property has a suitable location for hunting. If it does, the bowhunter should provide you with copies of his/her hunting license, safety certificate, a release of liability form, and a copy of the permission form for you to sign, plus copies of the permission form for your neighbors to sign, if needed. Your contract or agreement with the bowhunter may stipulate what days and times hunting may take place, how you will know that the hunter is at work, where the hunter will be shooting from, where bait will be located,

whether the hunter may field dress the animal and leave remains on your property or not, and whether you wish to be gifted with venison for your own consumption.

GET SUPPORT FROM YOUR NEIGHBORS

Under current law, owners of inhabited dwellings within 50 yards of the hunting location should give permission before hunting takes place. In seeking permission from your neighbors, you should draw the distinction between the shooting that will take place on your property, and the permission that the hunter will need to enter your neighbor's yard, should a wounded deer stray onto their property. Hunters are required to make every attempt to track, euthanize, and remove a wounded deer, even if it is no longer on the property where the shooting

has occurred. Most homeowners do not want to return home to find a dead or dying deer in their yard, and will be willing give the permission to the hunter to “track and retrieve.” If your neighbors have questions or express anxiety or reluctance, it will help if you hold a meeting with them and the bowhunter. The bowhunter can then explain how, where, and when the hunting will take place. It is crucial that your neighbors understand that this form of hunting is safe, humane, and presents no risk to people, pets, or property.

The 2024–2025 season for archery hunting begins in September and runs through the end of January. Now is the perfect time to discuss archery hunting with your neighbors and local civic association and line up one or more hunters to work in your neighborhood.

Deer Slaying, cont.

To find an experienced, licensed archery hunter, contact one or several of these organizations:

- [Animal Connection Deer Management Team](#)
- [Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland](#)
- [Maryland Bowhunters Society](#) ■



Maryland Bowhunters Society

Thank you, Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc.

By Alan Bowser, President

With the June 2024 Annual Awards Program in Silver Spring, I will be completing my tenure as President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to everyone who has supported this organization and its continuing efforts to advocate for Montgomery County's residents, its civic associations, and its homeowners association.

It's been a turbulent four years for Montgomery County and the Civic Federation, and both have emerged stronger and more committed than ever to serve all those who live, work, and play in the County.

I'd like to express my deepest appreciation to those individuals who are currently serving the Federation

as officers and as members of the Executive Committee: Peggy Dennis, 1st Vice President; Elizabeth Joyce, 2nd Vice President; Jerry Garson, our Treasurer; and Jacquie Bokow, our newsletter editor and webmaster. Tim Willard, Sue Schumacher, and Joshua Montgomery of McKenney Hills-Carroll Knolls Civic Association have also served as Vice Presidents of the Civic Fed during my tenure. All of them have worked tirelessly to keep the Federation on top of current events, to advocate to the County Government and the State Delegation, and to educate our members. Not to be forgotten is our wonderful Secretary, Karen Cordry, who passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in November 2023. Karen, who was serving as President

Bowser Farewell, cont.

of the Kensington Heights Civic Association at the time of her death, was a tremendous asset to the organization, whose intellect, energy, and commitment to our work was unrivaled. We miss her very much.

And my gratitude extends to our Executive Committee. We recently expanded our Executive Committee to include a more diverse and highly skilled group of individuals who are committed civic activists and subject matter experts on a variety of relevant issues. Thank you, Kim Persaud, Cheryl Gannon, Brenda Freeman, Jay Elvove, and Dan Meigher for your support and invaluable contributions to this work.

Increasing the Civic Federation's partnership with other County organizations was a top personal priority for me as MCCF President.

The Montgomery County Taxpayers' League, the Montgomery Countryside Alliance, the Montgomery County Climate Coalition, the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights, the Thrive 2050 Neighborhood Coalition, and Stormwater Partners were essential partners for our successful advocacy for County budget integrity, advocacy to protect the Agricultural Reserve, and environmental protection and sustainability.

During this time, I was proud to serve as the Civic Federation's representative to the Committee for Montgomery, Inc., helping that organization to become more diverse in its membership and relevant to its portfolio of Montgomery County issues that are affected by the Maryland General Assembly. I have served as Secretary of the Committee for Montgomery and will serve as

its Vice Chair in its next membership year. The Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., was a founding member of CfM, and supports its mission to bring more State resources back to the County.

The COVID-19 Pandemic was a defining feature of my MCCF administration. It forced us to conduct our work in a new way, relying on technology to continue our tasks to advocate for Montgomery County residents. We embraced Zoom as a method to conduct our meetings in a safe and efficient manner. While we missed our regular in-person meetings, we were able to hold regular and special meetings, and we saw an increase in participation online. Through our pandemic meetings, we were able to disseminate useful information about COVID-19 to our membership.

Bowser Farewell, cont.

And, over the last four years, we made significant changes in our membership technology. We worked with Chris Betti, a Montgomery County resident, to adopt “simplidues,” an efficient and inexpensive way to modernize our dues payment system. Members can now go to [simplidues](#) and pay their annual membership fee and get automatic reminders to renew.

As MCCF President, I emphasized several issues of great importance to me and to the community-at-large. My goal was and is focusing community attention on issues of public safety, pedestrian safety, environmental protection and sustainability, transportation, housing, and accountability and transparency. And we were able to do that by inviting important policy

makers such as Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Police Chief Marcus Jones, and Montgomery County Planning Board Chairs Casey Anderson and Artie Harris to talk to us about their priorities and to answer questions from our members.

We brought attention to best practices for community development and we recognized McKenney Hills Carroll Knolls Civic Association, the North Hills of Sligo Civic Association, and the Seven Oaks Evanswood Citizens Association as models of neighborhood organizations. We gave priority to transparency and accountability issues as we supported the establishment of Inspector Generals for important State and County agencies, such as WSSC and M-NCPPC, and extending the authority of the County’s Inspector General to Montgomery College

and the Montgomery County Board of Education.

But the three issues that most dominated our Civic Federation agenda over the last four years were the discussions of Thrive Montgomery 2050, the County’s new General Plan, advocacy for the Office of the People’s Counsel, and affordable and attainable housing. Many, many hours of research and discussion were needed to attain a general consensus on these issues. Federation delegates believed strongly that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there should have been much more community engagement around the draft General Plan and that a final decision and vote by the County Council should have been postponed until a new County Council had an opportunity to consider it, and the community had more of an oppor-

Bowser Farewell, cont.

tunity to learn about it and to make recommendations, especially around issues of the environment and economic development.

The Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., has been a strong supporter of a Montgomery County Office of the People's Counsel since it was first proposed and established by former Montgomery County Executive and former Montgomery County Councilmember Ike Leggett. This Office was defunded during the recession of the last decade for budgetary concerns, and efforts to "refund" the Office for the benefit of the people of Montgomery County by Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and Maryland State Senator Ben Kramer have been rebuffed by powerful economic interests in the County and their representatives on



the County Council. We will continue to support a strong and effective Office of the People's Counsel that will defend the public interest in planning and land use decisions.

And, finally, affordable and attainable housing issues have been a priority concern for the Civic Federation in recent years. The Federation recognizes that there is a housing crisis in Montgomery County and

that new policies and considerably more resources will be required to address the critical need for new housing in the County. We have discussed and supported a broad range of policies for affordable housing in the County. And we continue our work to help refine the Planning Board's Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative, which, when enacted in some form by the County Council, will have profound impacts on residential Montgomery in terms of adequate public facilities, environmental sustainability, transportation, fiscal impact, and density.

All of this work continues. Serving as President of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., was an honor. Thank you to all who have helped to advance this agenda and who continue to support this organization, now going into its 100th year. ■

The Results for the School Board Election from the 2024 Presidential Primary in MoCo

The top two candidates (noted) go on to the General Election.

Board of Education At Large

Name	Early Voting	Election Day	Mail-In Ballot	Provisional	Total	Percentage
Lynne Harris <i>On to General Election</i>	5,756	15,294	21,497	1,379	43,926	32.03%
Sharif Hidayat	1,795	5,593	4,540	494	12,422	9.06%
Melissa Kim	2,025	8,696	9,760	728	21,209	15.47%
Jonathan Long	1,004	3,698	3,816	299	8,817	6.43%
Fitzgerald Mofor	1,244	3,377	2,254	255	7,130	5.20%
Rita Montoya <i>On to General Election</i>	<u>5,483</u>	<u>17,289</u>	<u>19,296</u>	<u>1,552</u>	<u>43,620</u>	<u>31.81%</u>
Totals	17,307	53,947	61,163	4,707	137,124	100.00%

Board of Education District 2

Name	Early Voting	Election Day	Mail-In Ballot	Provisional	Total	Percentage
Brenda M. Diaz <i>On to General Election</i>	3,861	12,295	10,483	1,122	27,761	20.64%
Ricky Fai Mui	1,278	4,077	4,665	321	10,341	7.69%
Rebecca Keller Smondrowski	2,877	7,665	13,168	628	24,338	18.10%
Aby Thioye	1,090	3,691	4,217	342	9,340	6.94%
Natalie Zimmerman <i>On to General Election</i>	<u>7,741</u>	<u>24,460</u>	<u>28,287</u>	<u>2,220</u>	<u>62,708</u>	<u>46.63%</u>
Totals	16,847	52,188	60,820	4,633	134,488	100.00%

Board of Education District 4

Name	Early Voting	Election Day	Mail-In Ballot	Provisional	Total	Percentage
Shebra Evans <i>On to General Election</i>	4,895	13,336	18,887	1,284	38,402	28.40%
Bethany S. Mandel	4,288	13,956	12,263	1,130	31,637	23.40%
Laura M. Stewart <i>On to General Election</i>	<u>7,857</u>	<u>25,205</u>	<u>29,937</u>	<u>2,190</u>	<u>65,189</u>	<u>48.21%</u>
Totals	17,040	52,497	61,087	4,604	135,228	100.00%

Montgomery County Civic Federation General Meeting #953, May 13, 2024, Minutes

By Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm by President Alan Bowser.

2. Agenda. The agenda was approved as amended.

3. Approval of Minutes. The minutes of the April 2024 General Meeting #952 were approved.

4. Treasurer's Report. The Treasurer's Report by Jerry Garson was received.

5. Announcements. President Alan Bowser reported on the Memorial Service for Karen Cordry, the late Secretary of the Montgomery

County Civic Federation, and President, Kensington Heights Civic Association. The celebration of Karen's life was held at the Rock Creek Mansion in Bethesda. Friends and relatives from all corners of the country came together to honor Karen's memory. The event was beautifully organized by Donna Savage, Peggy Alpert, and Stuart Phillips, who deserve our heartfelt congratulations for creating such a fitting tribute.

The celebration was attended by a host of distinguished guests, including Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich, Special Assistant to the County Executive Dale Tibbitts, Montgomery County Councilmember Natali Fani-Gonzalez, Maryland State Senator Jeff Waldstreicher, and Maryland State Delegate Jared Solomon. Other attendees included

Montgomery County Democratic Committee Member Shruti Bhatnagar and MCCF representatives Alan Bowser, Carol Ann Barth, Jim Zepp, Paula Bienfeld, Danila Sheveiko, Jerry Garson, and Dan Meijer.

6. Awards Committee. A Report of the Awards Committee was presented by Committee co-chair Peggy Dennis. Upon motion, the following individuals and groups were recommended to receive the 2024 Awards:

■ The Sentinel Award to the Seven Oaks-Evanswood Citizens Association in Silver Spring.

■ The Wayne Goldstein Award to Conservation Montgomery, Inc., and Tree Friends United.

■ The Star Cup to MCCF President

May Minutes, cont.

Alan Bowser. The motion was approved. The awards will be presented to the awardees on Monday, June 10, 2024, 7:00 p.m. at the American Legion Post 41, 8110 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, Md.

7. Nominations Committee.

A Report of the Nominations Committee was presented by committee chair, Jerry Garson. Upon motion, the following individuals were nominated to serve as MCCF officers for the 2024–2025 membership year. President: Cheryl Gannon, Woodside Civic Association; 1st Vice President: Peggy Dennis; 2nd Vice President: Elizabeth Joyce, Sarasota Neighbors Association; Secretary: Alan Bowser, Park Hills Civic Association; and Treasurer: Jerry Garson, Regency Estates Civic Association.

Upon motion from the floor, Peggy Dennis was nominated for President. After discussion, the membership voted to approve the nominations for the offices of President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The office of 1st Vice President will remain vacant until future action is taken by Federation delegates. Electronic ballots will be sent to all Federation delegates. The results of the election will be announced at the June 10, 2024, Awards Program in Silver Spring.

8. Draft Resolution on Priorities and Approaches for Housing Policy and Legislation. Cheryl Gannon, co-chair of the Land Use and Planning Committee, presented and summarized the Committee's amended draft Resolu-

tion on Priorities and Approaches for Housing Policy and Legislation. She thanked the members of the working group for their time and commitment to preparing the document for review by the membership. There was considerable discussion on the document and suggestions were made regarding aspects to include or discard in the draft document.

A motion was made to table the discussion of the draft Resolution to facilitate more discussion by delegates on the draft. The motion to table was not approved. Upon motion, the draft Resolution as amended was approved by the membership.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 10:05 p.m. ■

MCCF Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, May 23, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

By Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order by President Alan Bowser at 7:15 p.m.

2. Members Present: Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Peggy Dennis, Jacquie Bokow, Kim Persaud, Jay Elvove, Brenda Freeman, Dan Meigher, and Cheryl Gannon.

3. MCCF Officers Election Update. Jerry Garson and Alan Bowser summarized the process utilized for the MCCF Officers Election. A Gmail address had been created to use for elections emails and to create a google form election ballot. Ballots had been sent to all Delegates of record requesting their vote. It

was noted that some Delegates could not or did not want to use the google form for their vote, so an elections email was sent to them to request and record their vote. As of the meeting, more than 50 percent of the Delegates had voted. A reminder email would be sent to all Delegates of record in the week of May 27. June 5 is the final day to receive votes. Jerry Garson said he would forward the most recent email list of Delegates and members to all Executive Committee members. The new 2024–2025 MCCF Officers would be announced at the Annual Meeting.

4. 2024 Annual Awards Program. Alan Bowser briefed the Executive Committee on plans for the June 2024 Annual Awards Program. Awards would be presented to

the Seven Oaks Evanswood Citizens Association, Conservation Montgomery and Tree Friends United, and to Alan Bowser. As of this meeting, Montgomery County Marc Elrich, District 5 County Councilmember Kate Stewart, and State Delegate Lorig Charkoudian would attend to present awards and proclamations to awardees.

Kim Persaud suggested that the light appetizers for the program should be purchased from downtown Silver Spring restaurants.

5. Newsletter Articles. Articles and information for the June 2024 newsletter should be forwarded to Jacquie Bokow by May 28, 2024.

6. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m. ■



ENJOY YOUR SUMMER!

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