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## of note

### **Next MCCF Meeting #960**

Monday, February 10, 2025, 7:00 p.m. *online via Zoom*. Topic: "A Conversation with Marc Yamada, Montgomery County Chief of Police."

! **Join the Zoom Meeting Here**

[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]

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### **January Meeting Minutes**

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Executive Committee Meeting **P. 10**

### **Membership Application**

**JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM**

## Federation Meeting #960

Monday, February 10, 2025

7:00 p.m.

Online Zoom Meeting

### AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: January General Meeting **P.8**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. February Program: A Conversation with MoCo's New Chief of Police **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.

**The February meeting will be held online via Zoom** (see page 3 for program) at 7:00 p.m.:

■ To be part of the video conference, first **visit the Zoom website** to download the program for your phone or computer.

■ **Date and Time:** Monday, February 10, 2025, 7:00 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 **899 1277 7870**. No password is required.

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 11**

## February Program: A Conversation with MoCo's New Chief of Police, Marc Yamada

The guest speaker at our meeting on Monday, February 10, will be Chief Marc R. Yamada, the Chief of Police of the Montgomery County Police Department. We encourage you to attend and to come with your questions for the Chief.

Born and raised in Wheaton, Maryland, Chief Yamada's connection to the community runs deep. He attended public schools in the county before pursuing higher education, earning a Bachelor of Science in Business Management/Marketing from Frostburg State University. This academic foundation, coupled with his strong ties to the community, provides him with a unique perspective and understanding of the diverse needs of the county's residents. Chief Yamada is the first Japanese-American to lead



our Police Department, a significant milestone for our County.

Chief Yamada's journey with the Montgomery County Police Department began in 1988. Over the course of his distinguished 35-year career, he has diligently served the

community in various capacities, demonstrating unwavering dedication and a commitment to public service. His roles have been diverse, encompassing patrol officer duties, supervisory positions within major crimes, investigative work in narcotics, and leadership roles as Lieutenant/Deputy Commander of the 4th District Station and Director of the Community Engagement Division.

Throughout his career, Chief Yamada has consistently demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and a strong commitment to community engagement. He has been recognized for his outstanding service with numerous awards and accolades, including being named Officer of the Year on three separate occasions.

## February Program, cont.

As Chief of Police, Yamada is committed to building upon the department's successes under the leadership of his predecessor, Chief Marcus Jones. He prioritizes strengthening community partnerships, fostering trust and transparency between the police department and the community it serves. His focus will be on enhancing community initiatives, ensuring public safety, and continuing to provide the highest level of service to the residents of Montgomery County.

### **BACKGROUND: SHIFTING TIDES: PUBLIC SAFETY TRENDS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND (2020-2024)**

Montgomery County, Maryland, long recognized for its relatively low crime rates, has witnessed a shift in

public safety trends over the past four years. While still generally safe, the county has experienced a notable increase in certain crime categories, prompting a reassessment of public safety strategies.

#### **KEY TRENDS**

**I Surge in Auto-Related Crimes.** A significant rise in auto thefts and carjackings has emerged as a primary concern. This trend, partly attributed to vulnerabilities in specific car models, has impacted residents and businesses alike. *(Source: Montgomery County Police Department, WUSA9 News.)*

**I Escalation of Violent Crime.** While remaining lower than national averages, there has been a concerning increase in violent crimes such as robberies and aggravated assaults. *(Source: Montgomery County Police Department, County Council Public*

*Safety Commission reports.)*

**I Juvenile Crime on the Rise.** A concerning trend involves an increase in juvenile-related violent crime. This has spurred discussions on addressing root causes, including access to mental health services, poverty, and community support programs. *(Source: Bethesda Magazine, Maryland Department of Juvenile Services.)*

**I Focus on Community Engagement.** The Montgomery County Police Department has prioritized community engagement initiatives, aiming to foster trust and strengthen relationships with residents. This includes community policing programs, increased transparency, and proactive efforts to address community concerns. *(Source: Montgomery County Police Department website.)*

## February Program, cont.

### EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND POLICING STRATEGIES

#### I Drone as First Responder

**Program.** Montgomery County has implemented a pioneering “Drone as First Responder” program. This innovative initiative utilizes drones to rapidly assess emergency situations, providing valuable information to ground units and potentially reducing response times.

**I Automated Traffic Enforcement.** The county is exploring the use of automated traffic enforcement systems, such as speed cameras and red-light cameras, to improve traffic safety and reduce accidents. While these technologies have generated debate, they offer potential benefits in enhancing road safety and deterring traffic violations.

### ADDRESSING STAFFING SHORTAGES

A significant challenge facing the Montgomery County Police Department, as with many law enforcement agencies nationwide, is staffing shortages. This shortage impacts response times, officer morale, and overall operational capacity. To address this challenge, the department is implementing several strategies:

**I Competitive Compensation and Benefits.** Increasing officer salaries and offering competitive benefits packages to attract and retain qualified personnel.

**I Streamlined Recruitment Process.** Improving the efficiency of the recruitment and hiring process to expedite the onboarding of new officers.

**I Community Outreach and Recruitment.** Actively engaging with diverse communities to encourage individuals to consider careers in law enforcement.

**I Emphasis on Wellness and Support.** Prioritizing officer wellness programs to support the mental and physical health of officers.

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE SHIFTS

**I Regional Crime Trends.** The county has not been immune to broader regional and national trends in crime, including the impact of the opioid epidemic and social unrest.

**I Social and Economic Disparities.** Socioeconomic disparities, lack of access to mental health resources, and other social factors can contribute to increased crime

## February Program, cont.

rates.

### **I Impact of the Pandemic.**

The COVID-19 pandemic likely had indirect impacts on public safety, potentially disrupting social services, increasing economic strain, and contributing to social unrest.

### **ADDRESSING PUBLIC SAFETY CHALLENGES**

The county is actively addressing these challenges through a multi-pronged approach:

#### **I Increased Police Presence.**

Enhanced patrols in areas experiencing higher crime rates, including the deployment of specialized units to combat auto-related crime.

#### **I Community-Based Solutions.**

Investing in community programs, youth services, and mental health resources to address the root causes of crime.

**I Data-Driven Strategies.** Utilizing data analysis to identify crime hotspots and inform policing strategies, allowing for more targeted and effective interventions.

#### **I Technology and Innovation.**

Leveraging emerging technologies, such as drones and automated traffic enforcement systems, to enhance public safety and improve efficiency.

#### **I Community Partnerships.**

Strengthening partnerships with community organizations, schools, and other stakeholders to foster a collaborative approach to public safety.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

Maintaining public safety in Montgomery County requires a continued commitment to addressing the root causes of crime, fostering strong community partnerships, and adapting to evolving challenges. By leveraging data-driven strategies, investing in community-based solutions, embracing innovative technologies while ensuring ethical considerations and community input, and effectively addressing staffing challenges, the county can work towards a safer future for all its residents.

*[Disclaimer. This article provides a general overview of public safety trends. For the most up-to-date and detailed information, please refer to official reports from the Montgomery County Police Department and other relevant sources.] ■*

## 2025 MoCo Public Schools Budgetpalooza is Coming Thursday, February 27

Again this year, MCCF joins with the Montgomery County Taxpayers League and the Parents' Coalition of Montgomery County to bring you the *Budgetpalooza*, where we take a deep dive into the proposed MCPS budget. This year that budget is proposed to total *\$3.6 Billion*, almost half of our entire county budget. Individuals volunteer to cover a section of the budget and report on their findings during the online meeting.

The Budgetpalooza will be held **Thursday, February 27th, at 7:00 p.m., on Zoom only.** Use [this link to join the Zoom session.](#)

For more information or to volunteer, contact Paula Bienenfeld at [paulabienenfeld@gmail.com](mailto:paulabienenfeld@gmail.com). ■

## Legislative Alert: County Council to Introduce More Housing N.O.W. (New Options for Workers) Legislation

*By Cheryl Gannon*

On January 28, six members of the Council announced intentions to introduce a ZTA the following Tuesday to foster more and denser housing on corridors throughout the county. The proposal also highlights workforce housing, down payment assistance programs, and incentives to convert office space to residential space—issues MCCF has raised in our [adopted resolutions](#). We are in the process of reviewing and analyzing the ZTA, and we have some questions we are asking for clarity.

[The summary and ZTA can be found here](#) (scroll down to see both).

Please feel free to email [president@montgomerycivic.org](mailto:president@montgomerycivic.org) with any

questions or comments you have.

We will be in touch soon, and thank you for your patience. ■

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## WSSC Reform Bill Now In Committee

*By Gordon Brenne, Treasurer, Maryland Taxpayers League*

The Maryland Taxpayers League is pleased to announce that a WSSC Reform bill is now in committee and could be approved by the state legislature this spring. The bill would improve both WSSC service and management.

See my opinion piece in the [February 1 Bethesda Magazine here](#). ■

## Update on Pepco Shared-Use Path

*By Peggy Dennis, Past President and Transportation Committee Member*

Because the Civic Federation was instrumental in getting Pepco to finally agree to allowing a shared-use path in their western transmission corridor, I pass this update on to you from Michael Zelaski at Montgomery County Parks:

■ Contractor bids for the north trailhead are being reviewed. Construction may start late winter early spring.

■ The south trailhead and storm-water management project is still in design and efforts are being made to minimize impacts to environmental assets.

■ They started with the trailheads because they are on Parks' property and were the quickest to get to

construction. Work within Pepco property incurs an additional level of review by Pepco beyond the typical government agency reviews.

■ An initial submittal was made to

Pepco for the trail on Pepco property. Comments were received and are being addressed. They anticipate the next submittal in January. ■

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## MCCF General Meeting #959 Minutes, January 13, 2025

*By Alan Bowser, Secretary*

**1. Call to Order.** The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. on the Zoom platform. [A video of this meeting is online here.](#)

**2. Approval of the Agenda.** The agenda was approved.

**3. Approval of the Minutes.** The minutes of the December 9, 2024, meeting were approved.

**4. Treasurer's Report.** Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of \$6846.00.

**5. Announcement.** Jerry Garson reminded Delegates that the deadline for property tax assessment appeals was February 13, 2025.

**6. January Program.** Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich was the program speaker.



## January Minutes, cont.

**a.** The County Executive discussed the County's capital budget, noting that this was an off-year for the capital budget, requiring adjustments to the last year's approved budget. He noted that changes were necessary, given limits on bonding and difficulties in funding infrastructure. He reiterated his call for new local taxing authority in Maryland, so jurisdictions could adjust tax rates for local infrastructure.

**b.** He reported that MCPS' budget request for the next fiscal year was much larger than expected (\$295 million) and that new funds had been proposed for special education resources and hiring of new teachers. This request left little flexibility for new spending.

**c.** The CE highlighted some positive developments in County programs and operations, notably new chiefs for the police and fire departments; the success of the drones as first responders program; grants to houses of worship for security; the opening of the Clarksburg Fire Department; increased investment in affordable housing in the East County, North Bethesda, and Emory Grove; new investments in clean energy and environmental sustainability; record procurement with minority- and woman-owned businesses; and health computing projects with the University of Maryland. The County's bond rating remained strong.

## 7. Questions for the County

**Executive.** Delegates asked a range of questions, including:

**a.** How do we increase invest-

ment in infrastructure to support new housing?

**b.** What is the plan for housing going forward after the public reaction to the Planning Board's attainable housing strategies initiative?

**c.** What is the current status of the Purple Line and how can we support local neighborhoods and businesses?

**d.** What plans are there for toll lanes along I-495 and I-270?

**e.** What are the plans for reestablishing the Office of the People's Council?

**f.** Why does Montgomery County have a different limit on year-to-year increases in property tax assessments than other Maryland Counties?

**g.** What is the expected benefit for designated bus lines along major roads in the County?

## January Minutes, cont.

### 8. New Business.

a. Appointment of Mayor Jeffrey Slavin and Joe Harkens to the MCCF Executive Committee. (Motion made, seconded, approved.)

b. Legislative Alert to Delegates to contact Council calling for “pause” in the AHSI.

c. Welcome to new civic and HOA members

d. Delegate Amy Waychoff recommended printing of a palm card for residents discussing the Planning Board attainable housing proposal and changes to zoning.

9. **Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m. ■

## Executive Cmte. Meeting Minutes, January 23, 2025

*By Alan Bowser, Secretary*

**1. Members Present:** Alan Bowser, Jacquie Bokow, Cheryl Gannon, Jerry Garson, Joyce Gwadz, Ken Markison. Others: Peggy Dennis, and Cary Lamari. The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

**2. Treasurer’s Report.** Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of \$6,646.00.

**3. Upcoming Meetings.** Members discussed speakers for the upcoming General Meetings. In February, MCPD Chief Yamada will be our guest. For April, it was suggested to invite Montgomery County Chief Administrative Office Rich Madaleno to talk about the FY27 Recommended

Operating Budget. In April, possible topics include reestablishing the Office of the People’s Counsel, pedestrian safety, County infrastructure issues, particularly water and sewerage and electricity, senior villages. A speaker suggested inviting County Council staff Susan Farag, a public safety expert, to talk about MCPD staffing and County crime rates at the February meeting.

**4. MCPS Budgetpalooza.** Members discussed supporting the February 20, 2025, Budgetpalooza program, sponsored by the Montgomery County Taxpayer’s League and the Parents Coalition. President Gannon will follow up with the organizers about participation and/or co-sponsorship.

## January ExCom Minutes, cont.

**5. MCCF 100th Anniversary Plans.** Members discussed venues for the 100th Anniversary program to be held on June 10, 2025.

**6. MCCF AHSI Legislative Alert.** Members favorably commented on the Federation's AHSI Legislative Alert sent out in January calling on Federation Delegates and residents to contact the County Council and call for a "pause" on the Council's consideration of the AHSI. There had been positive responses to the legislative alert.

**7. Ongoing MCCF Membership Efforts.** Members noted the significant increase in MCCF memberships over the last year. President Gannon thanked Jeff Griffith of Parkwood Civic Association for supporting the

enhanced recruitment activities.

**8. Newsletter Deadline.** The deadline for the February newsletter is Wednesday, January 29, 2025.

**9. Adjournment.** The meeting was adjourned at 7:48 p.m. ■

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### Montgomery County Civic Federation

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**Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month.** Send to CFN at [civiefednews AT montgomerycivic.org](mailto:civiefednews@montgomerycivic.org).

**Send all address corrections to membership AT [montgomerycivic.org](http://montgomerycivic.org).**

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