

County Council PHP Committee Once Again Rejected Funding for the Office of the People's Counsel for FY2027 | The President's monthly letter to delegates and members explains | [P. 3](#)

May Program: A Town Hall on Data Centers | Some required reading on data centers before the May meeting from the nonprofit *Mother Jones* magazine | [P. 5](#)

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER
SUNDAY, JUNE 7, 2026
5:00 P.M. | \$35 PER PERSON
LOS CHORROS RESTAURANT
2420 BLUERIDGE AVENUE
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902
[BUY TICKETS HERE](#)

Nominating Committee Report for 2026 | The suggested slate of officers with a brief "bio" for each candidate on the slate | [P. 7](#)

Early Voting Begins June 11 | See the list of locations for early voting from June 11 to June 18 | [P. 9](#)

Council Urged to Eliminate Bus Depot in Special Protection Area | West Mont. Co. Citizens Assn. writes about their concerns on the proposed MCPS bus depot in a Special Protection Area | [P. 10](#)

Intro to Home Tree Care 101 | A special offer for MCCF on May 30 from 10 a.m. to noon | [P. 13](#)

TO PRINT, USE [PRINT VERSION](#)

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #974

Monday, May 11 2026, 7:00 p.m. *online via Zoom*. Topic: "A Town Hall on Data Centers."

- Join the [Zoom Meeting Here](#)
[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]

[AGENDA, P. 2](#)

April Meeting Minutes

General Meeting #973 [P. 12](#)
Executive Committee Meeting [P. 14](#)

Membership Application

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

Federation Meeting #974

Monday, May 11, 2026
7:00 p.m.
Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: April General Meeting [P.12](#)
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. May Program: A Town Hall on Data Centers and AI [P.5](#)
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 May 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, May 11, 2026, 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 **893 0704 2347**. No password is required.

We hope you will join us! ■

mccf

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

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except 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](mailto:civicednews@montgomerycivic.org)

TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, [SEE PAGE 14](#)

President's Monthly Letter to MCCF Delegates and Members

Dear Delegates and Members,

This week, the Council PHP Committee once again rejected funding for the Office of People's Counsel for FY 2027. The funding for OPC lapsed and has not been renewed since 2011. County Executive Elrich's budget recommended funding this year, as he has done for at least the last 5 years. The vote before the Council PHP Committee today was 2-1 against funding the office. Councilmembers Friedson and Fani-Gonzalez voted against funding the office, and Councilmember Jawando voted in favor of restoring funding.

Funding the office has been a priority for the MCCF since it was defunded due to budget constraints in 2011.

The OPC was established through legislation proposed by

former County Executive Ike Leggett when he was on the Council. The purpose of the OPC is to protect the public interest and promote a full and fair presentation of relevant issues in land use cases in the County. The People's Counsel, appointed by the County Council, can participate as a party in certain land use cases and can provide technical assistance to residents on land use procedures and regulations. The decision makers stay the same—the Planning Board and the Council. The OPC provides invaluable technical assistance and counseling to residents and may take a position before the Board or Council on land use proposals with recommendations in the public interest, like environmental or racial equity concerns.

Our partner under MNCPPC,

Prince George's County, has statutory language and funding providing a People's Counsel in state law, but we have nothing. A bill that MCCF supported two years ago by Senator Kramer to provide equal treatment to Montgomery County residents under state law was defeated after strong opposition led by Councilmembers Friedson and Fani-Gonzalez and state delegates Lily Qi and Julie Palakovich-Carr. It is worth noting that five counties across the state have an OPC and Montgomery County, the largest county, does not.

The County mandatory racial equity and social justice office recommended full funding of the current statute and noted that communities of color and low-income residents are most in need of this help as

MORE

Dear Delegates, cont.

wealthier neighborhoods have the resources to hire lawyers.

I am sure you are all aware that we have navigated complex and highly technical processes and rules around land use proposals that would have had major impacts on neighborhoods, the built environment, traffic, and a host of issues—and we have had to do it on our own. The Council has amplified harm to public participation by conducting more business behind closed doors, refusing to hold a hearing on BRT as required by law, appointing a Councilmember to an elected position behind closed doors, and standing by while Planning withholds important information under the MPIA, to name just a few issues.

We have very little support on the Council for the OPC. At our MCCF forum for County Executive candidates in November, Councilmember Glass also said he would not support funding the office.

The County can't afford money for a People's Counsel for Planning but can afford a \$3.7M (a whopping, unheard-of \$440 per sq.ft.) construction allowance for Silver Branch Brewery to open in the Wheaton HQ first floor?! Plus Silver Branch is getting rent abatement for over 18 months!

We may be able to raise the issue again before the full Council. I am considering our options for a strategy.

I wish I had better news. We

will discuss this more at our May meeting. I am attaching a letter that MCCF sent to the Council this month on funding the OPC.

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of your neighborhood. Your association's support and membership in the MCCF is essential to our success.

We will meet by Zoom on May 11 at 7:00 p.m. and I am working on a speaker on data centers.

Our June 7 meeting will be our annual awards dinner at Los Chorros restaurant (2420 Blueridge Avenue) in Silver Spring. Watch for an invitation later this week and an announcement of this year's awardees. It will be a great event.

—Cheryl Gannon ■

Required Background Reading on Data Centers Before the May MCCF Meeting

For background information, read the following articles on data centers from independent nonprofit Mother Jones Magazine articles (newest first):

How the American Oligarchy Went Hyperscale

The AI boom is fueling a literal and metaphorical power grab by tech billionaires—and forcing a reckoning.

TIM MURPHY | MAY+JUNE 2026 ISSUE

Why Maine’s Governor Just Killed a Pioneering Data Center Moratorium

Janet Mills vetoed a statewide construction pause, citing the potential of 100 permanent jobs.

SOPHIE HURWITZ | APRIL 25, 2026

Maine Said No to New Data Centers. Other States Are Racing to Follow.

At least 12 more legislatures are weighing bills to halt grid-killing AI development.

SOPHIE HURWITZ | APRIL 17, 2026

The Actual Economic Impact of Data Centers on a Place? That’s a Secret.

Some North Carolina officials are rethinking tax breaks for an opaque industry.

LISA SORG | APRIL 13, 2026

In Indian Country, Data Centers Come With a Familiar Threat of Colonialism. These Organizers Are Fighting Back.

When a data center proposal popped up on the Muscogee Reservation, these activists fought to stop it. Their work isn’t over yet.

CHEYENNE MCNEILL | APRIL 7, 2026

“I Believe in One God, and It’s Not a Computer”

How the data center boom plunged one small Pennsylvania town into chaos.

REBECCA EGAN MCCARTHY | MARCH 21, 2026

MORE

Data Center Info, cont.**Google’s Sneaky Trick to Sidestep an Iowa County’s Data Center Zoning Rules**

Just convince a nearby city to annex the land.

ANIKI JANE BEAMER | MARCH 6, 2026

These Utilities May Be Wildly Overestimating the AI Boom—at Public Expense

Power companies are already building more fossil fuel infrastructure than data centers likely need.

EMILY JONES | FEBRUARY 16, 2026

People Hate Data Centers, so the Industry is Spending Millions to Rebrand Them

The advertisements tout jobs, clean energy, and lower bills, but skepticism is in order.

SOPHIE HURWITZ | JANUARY 28, 2026

Bernie Sanders and AOC Are Pushing a Moratorium on Data Center Construction

The senator says his new bill would give lawmakers time to “ensure that AI is safe.”

MOLLY TAFT | MARCH 25, 2026

New Report Indicates a Growing Public Resistance to Data Centers

The facilities suck up land, water, and power—driving up prices for all—and many locals are fed up.

MOLLY TAFT | NOVEMBER 18, 2025

The Data Center Building Boom Is Running Into Local Resistance

These New Mexicans have serious water issues—and concerns about a proposed new \$165 billion data complex.

ANNIE ROSENTHAL | SEPTEMBER 14, 2025

Claim Comes With a Big Asterisk

Offsetting its data centers’ H2O use is great. But what about the thirsty power plants they rely on?

JAKE BITTLE | AUGUST 31, 2024 ■

Nominating Committee Report for 2026: Slate of Officer Candidates, Procedures

The following is the slate of MCCF elected officer candidates and procedure for nominations from the floor at the May meeting.

The Nominating Committee (Joe Harkins, Chair; Liz Joyce, Ken Markison, Jay Elvove, Sherri Weiss, Members) recommends the following individuals to serve as Elected Officers of the Montgomery County Civic Federation (MCCF) for 2026–2028 terms. Below, the Committee provides a brief “bio” for each candidate on the slate.

LINDA NEMEC, PRESIDENT

Linda Nemeč is an entrepreneur and former CEO of Acute Incite, a consulting firm focused on facilitation and adaptive management. She retired in 2025 and advises the firm as it transitions to supporting

workforce training in AI tools. Over her career, Linda held leadership roles at Sprint (in Moscow), Accenture, and international development firms, including Nathan Associates, DAI, and Dexis, focusing on analysis, problem solving, and business development. Linda currently serves as Co-President of Forest Grove Citizens Association (FGCA), where she has been actively engaged in community efforts to improve land use, development, and transportation. She also reinvigorated FGCA to provide neighborhood input on a large apartment development and its traffic impacts. She strengthens community engagement through increased recruitment, clear communication, and meeting facilitation. Linda helped bring FGCA into MCCF, and she is an active partici-

part in Federation meetings.

CHERYL GANNON, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Cheryl Gannon has extensive advocacy expertise, having spent 30 years as a federal lobbyist for non-profits, a business trade association, and a Fortune 1000 corporation. She also held Board positions on two federal Political Action Committees (PACs) and a statewide PAC. Cheryl has volunteered in numerous local political campaigns, as well as in Woodside Civic Association. Now, Cheryl is completing two years as MCCF’s President. In that time, she expanded membership, fortified advocacy, and assisted member associations to be heard on a variety of issues, including problematic hous-

MORE

Slate of Officers, cont.

ing and land use issues. Cheryl has the ability to support the new President while also continuing with the advocacy and programing work of the Federation.

LIZ JOYCE, SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

A long-time Montgomery County resident, community activist, and Delegate for Saratoga Village Neighbors, Liz Joyce has served in many roles, most recently as Second Vice President of MCCF and Chair of its Planning and Land Use Committee. Liz has testified on behalf of MCCF before the Maryland General Assembly, Montgomery County Council, and County Planning Board. A professional writer, Liz has contributed analyses and position papers on a variety of issues of concern to

the Federation. Previously, she was Vice President, Communications, for the Women’s National Democratic Club. She is a past president of the Montgomery County Commission for Women and Montgomery County NOW. Currently, Liz serves as a member of the Board of the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women.

ALAN BOWSER, SECRETARY

Alan Bowser is an attorney practicing in Montgomery County for more than 30 years. His areas of expertise include family law, small business counseling, and wills, trusts, and estates. Alan also held several senior positions in the Executive Branch of the federal government, as well as on staff at the U.S. House of Representatives. In Montgomery County, Alan served as chief of staff to a Member of the County Council, and in Annapolis,

he served in a similar position for a state Delegate. At MCCF, beginning as Delegate for Park Hills Civic Association, Alan was President for four years, in part during the COVID crisis, and for the last two years, he served as Secretary.

JERRY GARSON, TREASURER

Jerry Garson is a Certified Public Accountant. He is a long-time resident of Regency Estates and has held the Treasurer role of its civic association (RECA) since it was reorganized. Jerry has served as the RECA Delegate to MCCF since 1990 and the Federation’s Treasurer and Chair of the Transportation Committee for more than 15 years. Over the last two years, Jerry has worked extensively with the RECA president and Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) to begin re-

MORE

Slate of Officers, cont.

pairs to some 95 percent of failing sewers in his neighborhood.

In addition, Article VI, Section 2, of the MCCF Bylaws provides a procedure for nominations from the floor at our May meeting. Any Delegate may make a nomination from the floor and such nomination, to move forward, requires “seconds” from Delegates of three different civic associations. Any elected offices that have nominations of candidates from both the slate developed by the Nominating Committee and the floor would then proceed to a contested election. ■

Early Voting Begins June 11

The following are the locations of the Early Voting sites for the Early Voting for the 2026 Gubernatorial Primary Election which will occur from Thursday June 11, 2026, through Thursday, June 18, 2026 (including Saturday and Sunday) from 7:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

- **Activity Center at Bohrer Park**
506 South Frederick Ave
Gaithersburg MD 20877
- **Bauer Drive Community Recreation Center**
14625 Bauer Drive
Rockville MD 20853
- **Damascus Community Recreation Center**
25520 Oak Dr
Damascus MD 20872
- **Isiah “Ike” Leggett Executive Office Building**
101 Monroe St

Rockville MD 20850

- **Germantown Community Recreation Center**
18905 Kingsview Rd
Germantown MD 20874
- **Jane E. Lawton Community Recreation Center**
4301 Willow Ln
Chevy Chase MD 20815
- **Marilyn J. Praisner Community Recreation Center**
14906 Old Columbia Pike
Burtonsville MD 20866
- **Mid-County Community Recreation Center**
2004 Queensguard Rd
Silver Spring MD 20906
- **Nancy H. Dacek North Potomac Community Recreation Center**
13850 Travilah Road
Rockville MD 20850

MORE

Early Voting Sites, cont.

- **Potomac Community Recreation Center**
11315 Falls Road
Potomac MD 20854
- **Sandy Spring Volunteer Fire Station**
The Ballroom
17921 Brooke Road
Sandy Spring MD 20860
- **Silver Spring Civic Building**
1 Veterans Plaza
Silver Spring MD 20910
- **Wheaton Library and Community Recreation Center**
11701 Georgia Ave
Wheaton MD 20902
- **White Oak Community Recreation Center**
1700 April Lane
Silver Spring MD 20904

Primary Election Day is Tuesday,
June 23, 2026, 7:00–8:00 p.m. ■

WMCCA Urges Council to Eliminate Bus Depot in SPA

[The following letter was sent by the West Montgomery County Citizens Association to the County Council concerning the proposed MCPS Bus Depot in a Special Protection Area (SPA).]

April 28, 2026

Dear County Council Members:

It was a shock to learn that on April 14, 2026, you voted to approve a bus depot (7-4) at the corner of Shady Grove Road and Cavanaugh Dr. on a 12+ acre forest. There was no public notice of MCPS’s designation of the site as a bus depot. MCPS did not hold public hearings or meet with the community. Other budget documents avoid any direct mention of this property. Despite the lack of notice, MCPS has approved this

site in its current CIP budget. The County Council concluded its budget hearings, including this proposal, long before the public even learned of it. We commend the four Council Members who voted to eliminate the Bus Depot from the CIP: Andrew Friedson, Evan Glass, Sidney Katz, and Marilyn Balcombe.

The site is part of the upper Piney Branch watershed designated a Special Protection Area (SPA). SPAs are areas of unusually sensitive water resources (i.e., high-quality streams, sensitive wetlands, steep slopes, and soils prone to erosion) and other environmental features and where those resources are threatened by land use changes (such as development) unless extraordinary or special protective

MORE

WMCCA and SPAs, cont.

measures are taken. The 12.1-acre site is heavily forested and considered part of a Priority Urban Forest as designated by Maryland's Department of Natural Resources. A bus depot would require extensive, if not total, clear-cutting. For 20+ years, the community has been led to believe (via signage at the site) that this would be the home of a future school.

ABOUT SPECIAL PROTECTION AREAS (SPA)

Piney Branch Special Protection Area (SPA) was established in 1994. This SPA includes the Serpentine Barrens Conservation Park South Unit. Serpentine communities are considered one of the State's rarest natural resources, and one of

the most unusual sets of natural communities in the eastern North America temperate forest region. WMCCA was instrumental in the extensive process that led to SPA designation for Piney Branch. There are only four such sensitive watersheds in Montgomery County. The largest and most well-known SPA is in the Ten Mile Creek watershed. The need to protect water quality in these high-quality streams led to creating extraordinary standards for any development, including placing severe limits on impervious surface levels. A 12-acre parking lot replacing dense forest does not fall within these water quality protection standards. In fact, it is a complete violation of standards for our drinking water supplies.

We find it hard to believe the County Council was unaware of the

water quality standards applied to this portion of Piney Branch. The County Council approved all SPAs and created policies applicable to them. What is the sense of making policy you do not intend to follow? WMCCA supports issues raised by adjacent civic associations but we believe the SPA status overrides all other concerns.

During the reconciliation process, you have an opportunity to right this egregious decision. We urge you to remove bus depot proposal from the budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Barnes
Environmental Chair
West Montgomery County Citizens Association
www.wmcca.org ■

MCCF General Meeting #973 Minutes of April 13, 2026

By Alan Bowser, Secretary
[[Video Link here.](#)]

1. Call to Order. President Cheryl Ganon called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

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

3. Approval of the Minutes. The minutes of the March General Meeting were approved.

4. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of \$5633.00.

5. April Program: WSSC, Water and Sewerage Infrastructure. Officials from WSSC Water provided an overview of

Montgomery County's water and sewerage infrastructure.

■ **Infrastructure Status:** Approximately 41% of water pipes and 46% of sewer pipes in the system are over 50 years old. WSSC is utilizing a 1–5 scoring system and AI modeling to prioritize replacements before failures occur.

■ **Capital Improvements Program (CIP):** For FY 2026–2031, the water CIP is budgeted at \$1.18 billion, a reduction aimed at staying within revenue goals and managing rate impacts.

■ **Emergency Management:** Glenn Diaz detailed the recent repair of a 30-inch sewer main in Germantown. The repair involved replacing 110 feet of pipe and was completed by April 5th with minimal disruption to the local elementary school.

■ **Member Q&A:** Topics included the national supply chain issue affecting fluoride levels, water affordability compared to regional neighbors, and concerns regarding the environmental impact of data centers on the Potomac River.

6. Nominations Committee. The membership affirmed the appointment of the Nominations Committee, chaired by Joe Harkins. A recommended slate of officers for the 2026–2027 membership year will be reported at the May meeting. (See page 7.)

7. MCCF Annual Awards Dinner. Announced for Sunday, June 7, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at Los Chorros restaurant in Silver Spring.

April Minutes, cont.

8. Public Information Act (MPIA) Issue. President Gannon discussed a statement of support regarding a resident’s appeal against the M-NCPPC. The commission recently denied access to master plan survey data, classifying master plans as “research projects” exempt from data disclosure—a stance the Federation views as a significant threat to public transparency.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m. ■

A special offer for MCCF

Introduction to Home Tree Care 101

May 30, from 10 am to noon



Home Tree Care 101

Swing into spring with a **free** class offered by Conservation Montgomery.

We’ll send an arborist to meet in an MCCF neighborhood to help MCCF organizations learn how to maintain trees on home lots. Learn about proper pruning, mulching and removal of invasive species with hands-on demonstrations. After the class, you may want to sign your community up for a fall class.

You can nominate your neighborhood for this class by sending an email to info@ConservationMontgomery.org.

Sign up today to participate in the May 30th class. Send us an email to the address above.



Executive Committee Meeting Minutes April 30, 2026

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order by President Cheryl Gannon at 7:00 p.m.

2. Members Attending: Cheryl Gannon, Elizabeth Joyce, Joyce Gwardz, Joe Harkins, Ken Markison.

3. Annual Awards Dinner. The Annual Awards Dinner will take place on June 7, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. at the Los Chorros Restaurant in Wheaton. Ticket prices will be \$35 per person. All Board members are requested to sell 3-5 tickets in order to meet budget.

4. 2026 Election. Members discussed procedures for this year’s

officer elections: President, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. MCCF will use the same election software that was used for last year’s election.

5. May 2026 Program. Members discussed speakers for the May program on data centers.

6. Newsletter. Newsletter articles and information should be provided as soon as possible.

7. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 7:55 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

www.montgomerycivic.org

info AT montgomerycivic.org

Twitter Feed @mccivicfed

[MCCF Facebook Page](#)

The *Civic Federation News* is published monthly except August by the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. 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.”

Submit contributions for the next issue by the 26th of the current month. Send to CFN at civicfednews@montgomerycivic.org.

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

VIEW PAST ISSUES ONLINE [HERE](#)