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of note

Next MCCF Meeting #962

Monday, April 14, 2025, 7:00 p.m. *on-line via Zoom*. Topic: "Environmental Issues."

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

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March Meeting Minutes

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Membership Application

JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM

TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

Federation Meeting #962

Monday, April 14, 2025
7:00 p.m. | Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: March General Meeting **P.25**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. Introduction of Speaker: Angie McCarthy, Nature Forward **P.3**
7. Old Business: Consideration and Vote on Report and Resolution of Bylaws Committee (continued from March meeting), 7:45–9:00
8. New Business
9. 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 April 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, April 14, 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 873 6640 3739. 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 28

Angie McCarthy, Maryland Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward

The guest speaker for our April 14 meeting will be Angie McCarthy, Nature Forward's Maryland Conservation Advocate. Angie joined the Nature Forward team in July 2024, where she has immersed herself in learning about the issues important to their people, partners, and communities, including responsible data center development, tree canopy and forest conservation laws, and County stormwater issues

Angie grew up in Malaysia and Southwest Colorado, before going to high school in Fairfax County, Virginia. She is a graduate of Middlebury College in Middlebury, Vermont, with a degree in Environmental Studies and Geography. After several years with M&T Bank in Buffalo learning about macroeconomic factors and how they impact

recessions, model risk analysis, and the like, Angie decided to align her day job more closely with her values of community-building and equity. Angie returned to the DMV and chose to join Councilmember Andrew Friedson's office. There, as a Senior Legislative Aide, she managed external communications and worked on environmental matters, including forest and tree matters, stormwater issues, and issues around the Agricultural reserve. She also worked with her accomplished Nature Forward predecessor, Denisse Guitarra, on



Montgomery County's 2023 Forest Conservation Law, from the other side of the desk.

Angie left the Friedson office to join New Columbia Solar, the largest rooftop solar developer in the DMV; there, as part of the Business Development team, she helped bring on nearly 32 MW of solar into the construction pipeline. She left New Columbia Solar last July for Nature

Forward, where she has applied her professional experience to working for common sense environmental policies for all Marylanders. We are pleased to have her as our speaker. ■

Dear Delegates and Members,

The Mont. Co. Civic Federation is an umbrella organization of neighborhood Civic Associations. Delegates from across the County collaborate on issues and create a shared vision through our advocacy and education program. The delegates are the voice of their neighborhoods and a reliable barometer on the needs and aspirations of communities.

Last month, the Bylaws Committee, which was appointed in September, provided delegates with a detailed review of their proposed amendments. The proposed changes are the result of many months of work by the Committee and will center delegates from neighborhoods in all that we do, reflect best practices, keep us in compliance with state and federal laws and make the organization more efficient. The Executive

Committee has voted to recommend adoption, and I hope to have your support for the revisions at the April 14 meeting.

When I ran for President, I committed to increase membership, welcome new voices and ideas and provide value to membership through an enhanced education and advocacy program. We have instituted regular updates on important legislation, booked excellent speakers to help educate us, debated and adopted resolutions, testified, written letters, and, in many ways, amplified the voices of residents in our neighborhoods. We continue to bring in new members with valuable experiences and expertise, and I am so appreciative of the advice, help, and activism of our members. Together, we are making a difference.

As we grow and expand our activities, we must keep an eye on our overarching responsibility to be a voice for Civic Associations. As we organize and strategize to present a united agenda, we also want to recognize the service of our Past Presidents, by offering lifetime individual membership—opening the Association up to them to continue to participate, offer advice and ideas, and serve on committees. We have had many individual members over the years who have made meaningful contributions. Of course, Past Presidents can also be named by their own neighborhood Civic Association as delegates and participate with full Delegate rights. In this way, we balance the mission of the organization as one that represents Civic Associa-

Dear Delegates, cont.

tions, with inclusion of individual voices, including Past Presidents.

Other changes include changing the composition of the Board and Executive Committee, reducing the number of Committees, and tasking Committees of jurisdiction with recommending legislative positions to the Executive Committee, based on their Committee jurisdiction and expertise.

The Committee Chair is Joe Harkins, an attorney and resident of the Parkwood Civic Association. Also on the Committee are Joyce Gwadz, an attorney and the current 1st Vice President; Alan Bowser, our Secretary, Past President, and an attorney; and Jeffrey Slavin, the Mayor of Somerset, an attorney with extensive experience with nonprofits and governance. All members of the Com-

mittee have experience on boards and with bylaws and legal expertise.

Please plan to attend on April 14. We will begin with a speaker on environmental issues, in a nod to Earth Day. Angie McCarthy, Advocacy Manager with Nature Forward (formerly Audubon) will brief us on environmental challenges facing the county and state. As discussed at the last meeting, we will debate and vote on the resolution and report of the bylaws committee in the second half of the meeting.

Don't forget—the MCCF 100 year Celebration and Awards Ceremony will be held on Sunday, June 8, at Hollywood East Café in Wheaton. We promise a fun evening of networking, socializing, and recognizing the good work of our neighbors.

As always, thank you for all you do.

Cheryl Gannon, President ■

Proposed Amendments to MCCF Bylaws: Introduction

The President of MCCF appointed, with the approval of the Delegates, a special Bylaws Committee in Fall, 2024. Serving on the Bylaws Committee are Chair Joe Harkins and members Jeffrey Slavin, Joyce Gwadz, and Alan Bowser.

The committee met throughout the Fall and Winter to review and analyze the current MCCF Bylaws, which were last revised comprehensively in 2013. The committee is proposing significant amendments to many, although not all, of the Bylaws, depending on the need for updating and alignment with best practices for similar nonprofit organizations. Amendments to certain Articles may be deferred to a future time. The amendments proposed by

MORE

Amendments Intro, cont.

the Bylaws Committee are reflected in the link below for a “redlined” version showing all the changes made and a “clean” version of the Bylaws document, with those changes incorporated. Also online are the “old” Bylaws and a summary of the changes to all the bodies of the MCCF, which also appears at right.

[View all these documents here.](#)

Briefly stated, the goals of the amendments are to: streamline MCCF's organizational structure; expand the size and strategic role of the Board of Directors; reduce the size of the Executive Committee in order to enhance its tactical role and administrative work; reduce the number of Standing Committees and Appointed Officials to better capture current Federation practice; refine the various catego-

ries of membership in the Federation with the aim of increasing the quantity and commitment of members, particularly Local Associations; and enhance the overall effectiveness of MCCF by centering the representational and voting roles of the Delegates.

Please review the links for the proposed amendments developed by the Bylaws Committee and recommended for approval by the Executive Committee. The proposed amendments were discussed at the March meeting and will be voted upon at the April meeting. ■

MCCF Bodies: Current (2013) and Proposed (2025) Bylaws Compared

At the March 2025 general meeting, the Bylaws Committee received a request to summarize and compare the Bylaws provisions, current and proposed, with respect to the various bodies of MCCF. Attached are the Chair's notes providing such comparison in summary form.

1. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Current

- President
- First Vice President
- Second Vice President
- Recording Secretary
- Treasurer

MORE

MCCF Bodies, cont.

As Elected Officers, nominated by Nominating Committee and/or Delegate from floor and elected by membership. As members of the Board of Directors, formed by By-laws.

Proposed

Above 5 Officers (except “Recording Secretary” would be shortened to “Secretary”) plus:

- Chairs of Standing Committees (5)
- Board Members-at-Large (up to 3)

To be formed by Bylaws for Officers. Standing Committee Chairs would be appointed by President and confirmed by Delegates. Board

Members-at-Large would be nominated by Executive Committee and confirmed by Delegates.

2. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Current

Above 5 Officers, plus:

- Committee Chairs (7)
- Executive Committee Members-at-Large (up to 5)
- Immediate past president
- Past presidents in attendance
- Appointed Officials (4)

Formed by bylaws except for Members-at-Large and Appointed Officials. Members-at-Large and Appointed Officials are nominated by President and confirmed by membership.

Proposed

Above 5 Officers, plus:

- Communications Director as Other Official

Formed by Bylaws for Officers. Communications Director would be nominated by President and confirmed by Board of Directors.

3. ELECTED OFFICERS

The 5 Elected Officers remain the same under the proposed amendments to the Bylaws as under the 2013 bylaws. Current Bylaws provide for nomination of Officers by Nominating Committee or Delegate from the floor and election by hand count, or secret ballot in the case of a contested office. The proposed bylaws provide for nominations in

MORE

MCCF Bodies, cont.

the same manner and election by electronic secret ballot.

4. APPOINTED/OTHER OFFICIALS

Current

- 5 Members-at-Large
- Historian
- Newsletter Editor
- Database Manager
- Public Relations Officer

Appointed Officials are nominated by President and confirmed by membership.

Proposed

- Communications Director
- Webmaster

These Other Officials would be nominated by President and confirmed by Board of Directors. Also, a Parliamentarian appointed by the President is allowed in the current bylaws, but deleted as unnecessary in the proposed bylaws. Further, Database Manager’s duties can be assumed by Second Vice President and/or new Membership Committee.

5. STANDING COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Current (8)

- Environment
- Education
- Legislation
- Planning & Land Use
- Public Finance
- Public Safety
- Transportation
- Utilities

Chairs are nominated by President and confirmed by membership.

Proposed (5)

- Energy & Environment
- Planning & Land Use
- Public Safety
- Transportation & Pedestrian Safety
- Membership

Standing Committee Chairs would be appointed by President and confirmed by Delegates.

6. COMMITTEES CREATED BY BYLAWS

The 3 committees created by the 2013 bylaws would remain the same under the proposed 2025 Bylaws. They are: Nominating, Awards, and

MORE

MCCF Bodies, cont.

Audit. Currently, Chairs are appointed by President and confirmed by Delegates, with committee members appointed by Chairs. Proposed Bylaws provide Chairs and members appointed by President and confirmed by Delegates, to be consistent with other committees. ■

Proposed Bylaws Changes

By Luella Mast

[President's Note: At the March meeting, a motion was made by a member to allow past members of MCCF bylaws committees publish their perspective on the history of bylaws provisions. The membership agreed and these are the submitted articles from Luella Mast and Peggy Dennis.]

In addition to working on the MCCF bylaws, I have also served on Bylaws committees for various levels of the League of Women Voters, County and State PTA Bylaws committees, and, like many of you, my local civic, the Greater Colesville Citizens Association. Also, like many of you, I have developed Standing Rules for such organizations. My volunteer positions for MCCF have been as secretary and treasurer. I am an MCCF Associate member.

Looking at the bylaws changes presented at the March meeting, my first thought was that presented with a set of bylaws which were so filled with red changes it is almost impossible to determine which changes are simple wordsmithing and which are substantive. Were the MCCF a business and were I a potential investor, the broad scope of the changes and the difficulty in making an informed

decision as to which changes are wheat and which are chaff would lead me to believe that I would not invest in the business.

I leave Peggy to comment on specific changes. In addition, I would suggest that, rather than presenting the proposed amendments as a whole, some attempt should be made to clarify for members those changes which are substantive and which should require more thought and discussion, perhaps through pro and con newsletter articles, rather than a simple up or down vote on the proposed amendments as presented. There should be no rush to approve the proposed amendments as a whole. Certainly, at the very least, were I a voting Delegate, I would appreciate a more nuanced explanation for the rationale behind some of those changes. ■

Proposed Bylaws Changes

By Peggy Dennis

I was deeply concerned with a number of the substantive changes proposed. Like Luella, I have a long (some 30 years) history with the Federation as Newsletter editor, President, and Bylaws volunteer. So, between the two of us, we have the historic perspective that was missing from the current 4-person Bylaws committee. When serving on the last Bylaws committee, our focus was on not "fixing" anything that was not broken, but on changes that would make the Federation a more productive, effective, and vibrant organization

The following are substantive changes (not in the order in which they appear in the Bylaws) that I believe would have the opposite effect.

ARTICLE XV. ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Those who go back before the 2020 pandemic will remember our Annual Awards ceremony as the "go-to" event of the year. It was held on a Friday evening so attendees could relax at the end of the week. It was held in mid-May to minimize conflicts with Mother's Day and school graduation ceremonies and optimize attendance. All but the awards recipients and their chosen presenters ("comped") paid to attend, usually around \$35.00. The awards presenters had plenty of time to extol the accomplishments of the awardees. It was a banquet with attendance often of 100 folks including elected officials. People dressed up, ate well, and had plenty of time to socialize with each other. It is particularly sad and ironic that this tradition has been abandoned and that the

Awards event will be folded into the June regular meeting along with the celebration of our 100th Anniversary. I recommend that this section of the Bylaws be rewritten to keep this function the exciting "go-to" event that it was before the pandemic.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

3. Individual Member Status

Current wording:

B. Past Presidents

(1) Definition. All past presidents of the Federation who are legal residents of the County shall be classified as a past president member. They may be delegates from an association but need not be.

(2) Duties and Privileges. Past Presidents shall have all the rights and privileges of delegates and shall have the right to vote in meetings of the Executive Committee. They need

Proposed Changes, cont.

not pay dues.

The current wording makes Past Presidents Delegates for life. The Bylaws Committee has recommended that the status of Past Presidents be downgraded to that of an Individual Member.

Why? For 100 years, Past Presidents have continued to serve as full Delegates with no problems.

Individual Members cannot make motions, vote on actions, serve on the Nominating Committee, and attend Executive Committee meetings. Surely the Federation is best served if our Past Presidents remain active and enthusiastic members. What will be lost if this amendment is passed is much of the historical memory, practical experience, and dedication of those who have served in its highest position.

ARTICLE IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

5. Committees Established by the Bylaws. These Bylaws establish three (3) Committees: Nominating (Article VI), Awards (Article XV), and Audit (Article XVI). Bylaws Committee should be removed from this section and addressed under number 7 as a Special Committee.

6. Standing Committees. Having a robust list of Standing Committees is desirable, even if some committees have, from time to time, no chair. Eliminating the Education Committee means that a Delegate with an interest in Education will not find a committee to volunteer for. Eliminating the Legislation Committee is problematic because so many of our issues are covered by legislation. We actually need a Legislation committee with two co-chairs: one to cover legislation from our County Council

and one to cover bills of concern proposed in Annapolis. I agree that Public Finance and Utilities could go and not be missed.

ARTICLE V. POWERS AND DUTIES OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

13. Quorum and Action. New wording states, “At meetings of the above Federation bodies, unless otherwise provided herein, a quorum shall be a majority of the current members of the body. Action may be taken by a majority of the body’s members present at a particular meeting, unless otherwise provided herein.” This section is confusing and may seem to contradict itself. A “majority of the current members of the body” suggests that, if we have 160 Delegates and members in the database, then a majority would

MORE

Proposed Changes, cont.

require 81 members to constitute a Quorum. An “Action,” on the other hand, merely requires a majority of the body’s members present at a particular meeting. So, when is a Quorum required and for what purpose?

ARTICLE VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. Nominating Committee. It is appropriate that the President and First Vice President not serve on the Nominating Committee, but putting the determination of who shall serve in the hands solely of the President puts too much power in that one individual. Delegates to serve on the Nominating Committee should be approved by the Executive Committee, announced in the February Newsletter, and confirmed by the

membership at the February meeting. The work of the Nomination Committee is usually pro forma. It consists of contacting the current elected officials to determine who is willing to continue serving. For those not willing to serve another term, members of the Nominating Committee must search for new blood to fill the holes. The report of the Nominating Committee (the slate of officers) could easily be brought forward to be published in the April newsletter and presented at the April meeting.

2. Nominations. This section should be unchanged except for the dates, so it would read: “A Delegate must be nominated for office either by the Nominating Committee or from the floor by a Delegate at the April meeting. Any Delegate has the right to nominate from the floor at the April meeting. Such nomination

shall require seconds by Delegates from three (3) different member associations.”

Sections 3 and 4 should be reversed so that Voting comes first and Election second.

Section 3. Voting. Voting in the past was always done at the June regular meeting by hand count with no proxies permitted. This function was transparent and we all had faith in the outcome. The use of the electronic “secret ballot” in a past election proved problematic as one person and one person only had control of who received the ballots. I recommend that voting continue to be done by hand count. In the case (it is usually the case) of uncontested positions, a simple hand count is all that is necessary. In the rare case of a contested election (more than one nominee), a secret, paper ballot, is

MORE

Proposed Changes, cont.

easily counted by the Nominations committee.

Section 4. Election. Announcement of the results of the voting should take place at the June annual meeting.

5. Term. I question what is to be gained by changing the term of office for elected officials from one to two years. It is hard enough to get some people to agree to serve for one year. Making it a two-year commitment will cause more people to decline to serve.

ARTICLE VII. DUTIES OF ELECTED OFFICERS

2. First Vice President. Current wording: “The First Vice President shall be responsible for all programs presented at regular meetings and will assist the President

upon request in the discharge of all presidential duties. All duties of the President shall devolve upon the First Vice President if the President is absent or unable to act.” The last Bylaws Committee introduced the idea that the First Vice President should have responsibility for all programs. In fact, this has never worked. The person suggesting a program topic and/or presenter has usually been the person to organize that program and do the write up for the Newsletter. I recommend that responsibility for programs be dropped, leaving the first Vice President to be purely the back stop for the President and available to take on work as needed.

3. Second Vice President. I recommend that the Second Vice President continue to be responsible for membership recruitment and retention and Chair the Membership

Committee.

ARTICLE VIII. DUTIES OF OTHER OFFICIALS

This entire section needs cleaning up and reorganizing.

2. The Historian’s position is obsolete and should be removed. The function of maintaining our records/Newsletter now falls to the Newsletter Editor who must simply turn the Newsletter over to the Montgomery County Historical Society which has archived our records almost since our inception.

4. The Parliamentarian position can also be eliminated. It has been unfilled for decades, and we have survived just fine without a parliamentarian.

5. The Public Relations Officer position can be eliminated as these responsibilities now seem to fall

MORE

Proposed Changes, cont.

under the purview of the Communications Officer/Newsletter editor.

6. Database Manager. If this position is eliminated, who will be responsible for maintaining our membership records and providing up-to-date email lists for the use of the Communications Director, President, and Second Vice President who is in charge of Membership?

ARTICLE IX. DUTIES OF STANDING COMMITTEES

1. General. This section can remain where it is, but I recommend that the duties of the specific committees be enumerated under their headings in under Article IV, Section 6.

ARTICLE X. MEETINGS OF THE FEDERATION

For 95 years, Delegates and

members got on trolleys, on buses, or in their own cars to drive to Federation meetings. We often had time before the meeting for coffee and social time. We shook hands, recognized each other, and made some friends for life. At the meeting’s start, we went around the room and introduced ourselves with names and organizations represented. The pandemic stopped this, but the interruption should have ended several years ago. Our “virtual” meetings appear to be well-attended but may be a sham. Many of the attendees do not show up but appear as photos or worse, gray blocks, some without even a name. It is impossible to know who is paying attention. Most do not participate by asking questions or making comments. When taking a vote, it is impossible to know who is a Delegate or if we have a proper quorum. Regular meetings

should be conducted in-person with hybrid (electronically) an option for those who cannot attend in person for medical reasons. Virtual-only meetings should be permitted only for reasons of extreme weather or pandemic-like shutdowns.

And another regular meeting in July? Why? It is hard enough to get members, especially younger members, to attend September-June meetings. Summers are for relaxation, family time, and vacations. I suspect that a regular meeting in July would be poorly attended.

ARTICLE XIV. FEDERATION NEWSLETTER

Need to add: *Section 4.* The Communications Director shall be responsible for sending each copy of the newsletter to the Montgomery County Historical Society to be archived. ■

Resolution to Adopt Amendments to Federation Bylaws in Accordance with Redline Developed By Special Bylaws Committee, 2025

Whereas, a special Bylaws Committee was appointed by the President and approved by the Delegates in Fall 2024; and

Whereas, the Federation's Bylaws have not received a comprehensive review and revision since 2013; and

Whereas, the Bylaws Committee reviewed and analyzed the 2013 Bylaws with the aim of updating them and aligning them with best practices for similar nonprofit organizations; and

Whereas, MCCF's organizational structure can be streamlined to facilitate its efficiency; and

Whereas, the Board of Directors and Executive Committee can be reconstituted to better define their respective strategic and tactical roles; and

Whereas, the number of Standing Committees and Appointed Officials can be reduced to reflect current volunteer staffing; and

Whereas, the various categories of membership in the Federation can be refined to increase the commitment and scope of members, particularly those of Local Associations; and

Whereas, the overall effectiveness of MCCF as an advocacy organization can be enhanced by centering the representational and voting roles of Delegates;

Therefore, be it resolved that the amendments to the Bylaws developed by the Bylaws Committee and recommended for approval by the Executive Committee, as posted on the website in redlined and clean versions during March 2025, be adopted at the April 2025 general Federation meeting, to take effect immediately thereafter.

—Report by the Bylaws Committee and Recommended by the Executive Committee ■

Montgomery County Executive's FY26 Recommended Operating Budget Summary

By Alan Bowser

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich has **released his recommended operating budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26)**, totaling \$6.8 billion, representing a 4.2% increase from the previous year. The proposed budget addresses key priorities in education, public safety, housing, and environmental sustainability, while maintaining core services and addressing the needs of a growing and diverse population.

The Civic Federation is pleased to see the inclusion of funding for the Office of the People's Council, free RideOn transit buses, and more money for the creation of affordable housing.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)

The recommended budget allocates \$3.3 billion to MCPS, accounting for approximately 48% of the total operating budget. This represents an increase of \$120 million over the FY25 budget. The additional funding aims to:

- Maintain current class sizes.
- Expand pre-kindergarten (pre-K) programs to increase early childhood education access.
- Address learning loss through targeted intervention programs.
- Support special education and English language learner services.

Montgomery College

Montgomery College is slated to receive \$353 million, reflecting a 3.5% increase from the previous year. The budget prioritizes:

- Workforce development and training programs to meet the needs of local industries.
- Expansion of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programs.
- Increased support for student counseling, financial aid, and retention services.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD)

The proposed budget includes

Budget Summary, cont.

\$448 million for the Police Department. The funding increase will support:

- The hiring of 35 additional officers to strengthen community policing efforts.

- Expansion of crisis intervention programs and mental health training for officers.

- Modernization of equipment and technology to improve response times and operational efficiency.

Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS)

MCFRS is allocated \$237 million to maintain staffing levels and operational readiness. The funding will:

- Support upgrades to emergency response technology.

- Maintain training programs and equipment to ensure effective emer-

gency response.

- Enhance the county's emergency medical services capacity.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

DHHS is slated to receive \$325 million to support the county's safety net programs and public health initiatives. The budget proposes:

- Increased funding for behavioral and mental health services.

- Expanded services to address food insecurity and provide nutrition assistance.

- Support for programs assisting vulnerable populations, including seniors, immigrants, and individuals with disabilities.

Substance Use and Crisis Intervention Programs

Additional resources will be directed toward expanding substance use prevention programs and enhancing crisis intervention services to address the growing demand for mental health and addiction treatment.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Affordable Housing and Housing Initiative Fund

The recommended budget includes \$78 million to support affordable housing and homelessness prevention efforts. This allocation includes:

- Funding to expand affordable housing projects and preserve existing affordable units.

MORE

Budget Summary, cont.

- Increased investment in the Housing Initiative Fund (HIF) to support permanent supportive housing programs.

- Resources to prevent evictions and provide emergency rental assistance.

Homelessness Prevention and Supportive Housing

The budget also proposes funding for programs that provide housing stability for vulnerable populations, including families, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.

LIBRARIES, RECREATION, AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL)

The budget recommends \$55 million to support library operations and technology upgrades. These funds will:

- Maintain current service levels and library hours.

- Expand digital literacy initiatives and enhance virtual services.

- Upgrade library facilities and technology infrastructure.

Recreation and Community Services

A total of \$35 million is allocated for recreation and community services, including:

- Expansion of youth programs and after-school activities.

- Maintenance and improvement

of recreational facilities.

- Support for senior and community engagement programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION

Climate and Sustainability Initiatives

The proposed budget allocates \$28 million to advance the county's climate action goals. Funding will be directed toward:

- Clean energy programs aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

- Stormwater management and flood prevention initiatives.

- Enhancements to public transportation and infrastructure to promote sustainability.

MORE

Budget Summary, cont.

Energy Efficiency and Resilience Projects

The budget also includes investments in energy efficiency projects and programs to build climate resilience across the county.

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Transportation and Road Maintenance

The budget recommends continued investments in maintaining and upgrading the county's transportation infrastructure. Funding priorities include:

- Improvements to road safety and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Expansion of bus services and transit access to underserved areas.
- Maintenance and repair of

county roads and bridges.

Vision Zero Implementation

The budget continues support for the county's Vision Zero initiative to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

Small Business Support and Economic Growth

The recommended budget includes funding to support small businesses, promote entrepreneurship, and attract new industries to the county.

- Resources will be directed toward workforce development programs.
- Technical assistance and grants will be available for small and minority-owned businesses.

Innovation and Technology Investments

Funding is also allocated for digital transformation and technology upgrades to enhance service delivery and improve government efficiency.

BUDGET REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS

The Montgomery County Council will hold public hearings and conduct a thorough review of the FY26 recommended operating budget. Residents will have the opportunity to provide input and offer feedback on the proposed allocations. Following the review process, the County Council will adopt the final budget before the start of the fiscal year on July 1, 2025. ■

Taxes, Fee Increases in Mont. Co. Executive's FY26 Recommended Operating Budget

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich's recommended FY26 operating budget includes several proposed increases in taxes and fees to fund core services, address rising costs, and meet the county's long-term priorities. The proposed changes primarily affect property taxes, income taxes, and various service fees. The key proposed increases are listed below.

1. PROPERTY TAXES

Rate Increase: The budget recommends a 3.2% increase per \$100 of assessed value on the county's property tax rate.

Impact on Homeowners:

■ For a home assessed at \$500,000, the increase would add approximately \$160 annually to the

homeowner's tax bill.

■ For a home assessed at \$750,000, the increase would result in an additional \$240 annually.

Reason: This increase is projected to generate an additional \$78 million in revenue to support increased funding for public education, affordable housing, and infrastructure improvements.

2. INCOME TAX ADJUSTMENT

Increase in Income Tax Rate

Cap: The recommended budget raises the county's income tax rate cap from 3.2% to 3.5% for high-income earners.

Impact:

■ The increase would apply to individuals earning over \$500,000 annually and joint filers earning over \$600,000 annually.

■ This measure is expected to generate an estimated \$45 million in additional revenue.

Reason: Additional revenue from the income tax increase is earmarked for maintaining public safety services, expanding mental health programs, and sustaining safety net services for vulnerable populations.

3. RECORDATION TAX INCREASE

Rate Increase: The budget proposes an increase in the recordation tax rate on property transfers valued above \$500,000.

New Rate Structure:

■ For properties between \$500,000 and \$1 million, the recordation tax rate would increase by 0.25%.

Increases in Budget, cont.

■ For properties over \$1 million, the rate increase would be 0.5%.

Revenue Impact: This change is expected to generate an estimated \$18 million in additional revenue to support affordable housing and school construction.

4. ENERGY TAX ADJUSTMENT

Increase in Fuel-Energy

Tax: The budget includes a 5% increase in the county’s fuel-energy tax.

Estimated Impact:

■ For an average household, this increase would result in an additional \$30 annually on utility bills.

■ For large commercial properties, the increase could add \$5,000 or more annually, depending on energy consumption.

Reason: The additional reve-

nue will be allocated toward funding climate action initiatives and improving the county’s energy efficiency.

5. WATER AND SEWER RATE INCREASES

Rate Increase: The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) is proposing a 4.9% increase in water and sewer rates.

Impact on Households:

■ The typical household will see an increase of approximately \$55 to \$70 annually in water and sewer bills.

Reason: The rate adjustment is necessary to cover infrastructure upgrades, system maintenance, and compliance with environmental regulations.

6. SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING FEES

Increase in Collection and

Disposal Fees:

■ The annual residential solid waste collection fee is proposed to increase by \$18 per household.

■ The tipping fee for commercial waste disposal would rise by 4.5% to account for increased processing and transportation costs.

Projected Revenue Impact:

■ These increases are expected to generate an additional \$7 million to fund landfill operations and expand recycling programs.

7. PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION FEES

Parking District Rate Increases:

■ The budget proposes an increase of \$0.25 per hour for metered parking in the Bethesda, Silver Spring, and Wheaton parking districts.

■ Monthly parking permit rates are

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Increases in Budget, cont.

set to increase by 10%.

Transit Fare Adjustments:

■ Fare increases of \$0.25 per ride are proposed for Ride On bus services, with monthly passes increasing by \$5.

Reason: The revenue generated from these increases will help fund transit system improvements and expand mobility options.

8. PERMIT AND INSPECTION FEES

Building Permit and Inspection Fee Increases:

■ A 5% increase in building permit and inspection fees is recommended to cover rising administrative and operational costs.

■ Fire code inspection fees would also increase by 3% to maintain fire safety enforcement services.

SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED REVENUE IMPACT

The proposed tax and fee increases are expected to generate approximately \$150 million in additional revenue for FY26. The revenue will be used to support essential services, invest in affordable housing, improve public safety, and advance the county’s climate action goals.

The Montgomery County Council will review these proposed changes during its budget deliberations and hold public hearings to gather community input before finalizing the FY26 operating budget. ■

Letter on HB 503/SB 430, The Housing for Jobs Act

[The following letter was sent on March 15, 2025, on behalf of MCCF.]
Dear Montgomery County Delegates and Senators:

I write on behalf of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, a 100-year-old umbrella organization of neighborhood civic associations with a membership representing over 30,000 households. We have serious concerns about the Housing for Jobs Act, as further described below. We urge you to amend the Bills before passage, to align the bill in line with existing community planning and zoning standards and authority and the Governor’s stated intentions.

At the March 4 Committee hearing on the Bill, the Governor stated that the goal was to act “...without

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HB 503/SB 430, cont.

heavy handed preemption..., we are simply asking local partners to enforce planning and zoning ordinances that they have already adopted. It's not asking to take on additional options, it's just simply asking to take on and enforcing the planning and zoning ordinance that they have already adopted and that way we are ensuring the spirit of planning and zoning regulations that they already have in place."

The Governor seems to be seeking an atmosphere of certainty for developers, an atmosphere where existing rules are clear and will be followed. However, the text of the Bill reads differently from Governor Moore's description of its intent. The current text of the Bill appears to create a presumption that, when a county is in a state-established hous-

ing "deficit," any housing application must be granted unless a jurisdiction can prove with "clear and convincing evidence" both (i) that a denial fits into one of six very narrowly drawn exceptions, and further, (ii) that the "denial under one of the six exceptions" overrides the vague standard of "need for more housing." These narrow standards by their terms, as drafted, would preempt any other standards that a locality might have in place.

We urge you to amend the bill to add language that would conform the Bill to the Governor's stated intention—that nothing in the bill preempts or precludes a locality from following its own standards, regulations, or rules at the local level in acting on an application for development. In addition, the Bill identifies the applicant—developers—as having the standing in a court case

and doesn't mention the public. The current standard of "any aggrieved party" must be maintained as the basis for legal standing to contest development applications.

Overall, the Bill in its current form sets aside years of work done at the County level to develop standards for integrating affordable and multifamily housing into established neighborhoods, work that is ongoing. Further, the bill potentially overrides elements of the current standards and regulations such as environmental standards, stormwater management and other infrastructure requirements, compatibility with surrounding communities, and many other factors required to be taken into consideration by our Planning Board and Council when considering development applications. It will require approval of some applica-

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HB 503/SB 430, cont.

tions that would have been denied under current established standards, regulations, or rules.

In our view, there is a significant question as to how the bill impacts the Montgomery County existing Growth and Infrastructure Policy (GIP). That policy requires adequate and funded infrastructure and public facilities to support developments. It is not clear that the County could enforce the GIP under the bill, as those considerations mostly fall outside the strictly limited language of the Bill and the six limited exceptions. The bill allows denials of application only for inadequate school space or water and sewer and not the other considerations of the existing GIP.

The bill arbitrarily assigns Montgomery County a deficit of 33,000 units, ignoring the over 35,000 units

currently in the pipeline, including the major developments approved at White Flint, Pike and Rose, and Viva White Oak (to name just a few). The result would be to keep the County in a perpetual "deficit," because the total number of approvals needed (nearly 70,000 including the pipeline) far exceeds the Council of Governments targets and market analysis of projected demand. Developers will not build or even in most instances apply for approvals in excess of demand and the result will be Montgomery County stuck in "deficit" status indefinitely. If the units in the pipeline are excluded from the Bill's "deficit" calculation, the math fails to reflect the reality on the ground, and Montgomery County would never be able erase the "deficit" artificially imposed by the Bill.

We oppose the imposition of a

rigid and questionable set of policies that supersede the local authority of counties and municipalities. We also note that HB 503/SB 430 does not address the greatest need in Montgomery County (and in others)—the need for more affordable housing. The bill is highly unlikely to generate much affordable housing because it focuses on zoning rather than on what is really needed: jobs and economic development; tools to help finance (through subsidy or otherwise) the development of affordable housing; and measures to thwart the trend of investors buying single-family homes, which reduces the supply of homes for sale to families and drives up costs.

Finally, both the State and localities are facing budget difficulties. Now is not the time to enact a bill with such sweeping impact through-

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HB 503/SB 430, cont.

out our State and County. We are facing unprecedented layoffs of federal employees, and it will take time to see the true the impact on housing and the economy. The State budget is severely challenged, and the State will not be in a position to provide needed funding for the infrastructure, transportation improvements, road improvements, and subsidies for affordable and workforce housing. Mandating a huge number of new approvals without any funding for needed infrastructure is neither equitable nor productive.

The bill is deeply flawed and must not be enacted in its current form.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Gannon, President

Montgomery County Civic Federation ■

MCCF March 10, 2025, General Meeting Minutes

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

1. Approval of the March 10, 2025, Agenda. The meeting agenda was approved.

2. Approval of the Minutes. The minutes of the February 10, 2025, General Meeting were approved.

3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported a bank balance of \$6963.00.

4. Announcements.

■ President Gannon reported that Montgomery County Councilmember Andrew Friedson will join the Civic Federation for a discussion of the More Housing N.O.W. legislation on March 24, 2025, via Zoom.

■ She also announced that the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Montgomery County Civic Federation will take place on Sunday, June 8, 2025, at the Hollywood East Cafe in Wheaton. Details will be forthcoming.

5. March Program: A Conversation with Montgomery County Chief Administrative Officer Rich Madaleno. [A video of the March meeting is online here.](#)

Madaleno said that the FY26 Recommended Operating Budget would be released on March 14, amidst uncertainty about the State and Federation budgets and their contribution to Montgomery County revenues. He expressed concern that recent developments in Wash-

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March Minutes, cont.

ington would very adversely affect Montgomery County due to the large number of federal employees in the County and cuts in Federal expenditures.

6. Members asked a variety of questions about County finances and the forthcoming budget recommendation, including about financing infrastructure, impact taxes, payment in lieu of taxes, State preemption of local zoning laws, maintenance of effort and transportation. One speaker asked about the County's plan for bus rapid transit on Route 29, noting that the median lane plan was more expensive and less effective than a managed lane plan.

7. MCCF Bylaws Update. By-laws Committee Chair Joe Harkins reviewed recommended changes to the Civic Federation bylaws. He said that the goal was to streamline and modernize the existing bylaws. A full discussion on the recommended changes would take place at the April meeting. Members with amendments to the proposed bylaws should send them, in advance if possible, to either Joe Harkins as Chair or to MCCF President Gannon. Members made several comments on the draft by-laws, including about standing committees, and making a clearer distinction between Executive Committee and proposed Board of Director members. Peggy Dennis said that she wanted to write an article for the MCCF newsletter outlining reasons why changes had been

proposed and adopted in the last revision of the bylaws. On motion, the proposal to write and publish information on the previous bylaws recommendations was agreed. A member said that he would like to see proposed amendments in advance of the April meeting.

8. New Member Association. It was announced that the Kemp Mill Civic Association had rejoined the Civic Federation.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m. ■

MCCF March 26, 2025, Executive Committee Minutes

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

1. Members present: Cheryl Gannon, Alan Bowser, Joe Harkins, Jacquie Bokow, Dan Meijer, Joyce Gwadz, Peggy Dennis, Jay Elvove, Elizabeth Joyce, Jerry Garson.

2. Appointment of 2025 Nominations Committee. Cheryl Gannon announced that the Committee will be chaired by Liz Joyce and include Brenda Freeman, Dan Meijer, Ken Markison, and Jay Elvove.

3. MCCF 100th Anniversary Celebration on June 8, 2025, at Hollywood East Cafe announced. A "Save the Date" Notice to Members, Delegates, and elected officials will

be sent out. We will solicit ideas for the June program from Delegates, Members, and past Presidents.

4. The Montgomery County Councilmember Andrew Friedman Special Zoom Meeting on More Housing N.O.W will be held on March 24, 2025. Committee members discussed format and principal questions to be asked regarding environment, infrastructure, taxes, workforce housing, sidewalks, timing and community process, etc.

5. State Legislative Update. Cheryl Gannon reported on State legislation. The Governor's bill on Jobs and Housing will be amended. Will it include residents' right to sue? Regarding the M-NCPPC

streaming legislation, there will be a hearing where MCCF will testify. Others are encouraged to testify.

6. April 14th General Meeting Programming. Caroline Taylor, Nature Forward, former Delegate Al Carr were suggested as possible guest speakers.

7. MCCF Awards Committee. Who will be selected this year? Send nominees to President Cheryl Gannon for the Sentinel Award, the Wayne Goldstein Award, and the Star Cup.

8. County Taxes and Fees. There was a general discussion about increasing taxes and fees affecting Montgomery County residents.

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SAVE THE DATE!

The 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., will take place on **SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 2025,** at the Hollywood East Cafe in Wheaton! More information to be announced soon. We hope to see you there.

March ExCom Mtg., cont.

9. April Newsletter. The deadline is March 26, 2025. Please send your submissions to Jacquie Bokow.

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

Montgomery County Civic Federation
www.montgomerycivic.org
info AT montgomerycivic.org
Twitter Feed @mccivicfed
[MCCF Facebook Page](#)

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

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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