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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #952

Monday, April 8, 2024, 7:30 p.m.
online via Zoom. Topic: "Housing Issues in Montgomery County with MoCo Planning."

! **Join the Zoom Meeting Here**

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

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MARCH

Membership Application

JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM

Federation Meeting #952

Monday, April 8, 2024

7:30 p.m.

Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: March 11 General Meeting **P.8**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. April Program: Housing Issues in Montgomery County **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 April meeting will be held online via Zoom (see page 3 for program) at 7:30 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 8, 2024, 7:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

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

■ To participate by phone call (audio only), call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is **899 4667 7857**. 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

April Program: Housing Issues with Montgomery County Planning

By Cheryl Gannon

The April meeting of the Montgomery County Civic Federation will focus on housing issues in the County. Our guests are Jason Sartori, Montgomery County Planning Director, and Lisa Govoni, Housing Planner with the Montgomery County Planning Department.

The Planning Department is currently working to refine its Attainable Housing Study Initiative, started in 2021, to review and study housing options in the county for current and future residents. It is soliciting public comment for its draft plan, and will work with the Planning Board to provide a report to the Montgomery County Council about housing options in June 2024.

This Initiative is intended to foster policy changes that could

produce diverse housing typologies that could result in more attainable housing in the County. In the draft report, the Planning staff proposes three scales of attainable housing—small, medium, and large. With the three scales come three distinct sets of housing typologies, achieved through different recommendations and implementation tools, each with its own geographic focus.

You can [read the staff draft on-line here](#).

While all the housing categories are important, the small-scale attainable housing recommendations have drawn the most attention as they principally affect detached single-family house neighborhoods in areas near transit. The draft report recommends allowing, **by-right**, with pattern book conformance,

small-scale attainable housing duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes in the R-40, R-60, R-90, and R-200 zones. There are some exceptions, such as no triplexes and quadplexes in the R-200 zones. There are also recommendations regarding the pattern book priority housing districts and development standards.

Although estimates can vary, the Metropolitan Council of Governments estimates that Montgomery County needs to add 41,000 housing units in the next ten years to meet housing demand and that 75 percent of this housing should be affordable to low- and moderate-income households (incomes between 30% and 150% of AMI, or area median income). Housing to meet this need

April Program, cont.

will not be met by private investment alone.

The housing-need forecasts produced for Montgomery County account for both demographic trends and future economic growth in Montgomery County and the greater Washington, D.C., region. These planning forecasts are designed to take into account demographic and income projections, including the age distribution of new workers, distribution of wages of jobs by industry sector, household types, including the number of adults and children and the number of workers per household. Planners expect that the greatest shares of new households in the 2020 to 2040 period

will have incomes between \$25,000 and \$49,999 (26.6 percent) and \$125,000 and over (23.9 percent).

You can view the [Montgomery County Planning Department resources on housing here](#).

Montgomery County, like many high-cost jurisdictions, has struggled with how to ensure its housing is affordable and attainable for residents at all income levels, including housing for essential workers like teachers, police, and firefighters. Residents and potential residents are finding it increasingly difficult to find housing they can afford. This shortage of affordable housing must be addressed.

In the coming months, the MCCF

will evaluate the proposals and concerns of its neighbors and participate in the process to work toward the best possible result. Examples of some of the concerns raised by residents and civic associations include: adherence to the master plan process, conforming new builds to current development standards on size and lot coverage requirements, capacity for street parking and traffic, adequacy of infrastructure, not adequately addressing affordability, reliance on housing taxes to finance school and transit improvements, and investigating why there is not more developer interest in developing land already approved for mixed use, multifamily developments. ■

Lawsuit to Block Beltway/I-270 Expansion Dismissed By Federal Judge

*By Jerry Garson, Chair, MCCF
Transportation Committee*

A federal judge on March 20, 2024, dismissed a lawsuit filed by a coalition of environmental and preservation groups seeking to block a proposed expansion of the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Interstate 270, claiming the Maryland Department of Transportation did not adequately assess the effects of the expansion project.

U.S District Court Senior Judge Deborah K. Chasanow rejected a request for summary judgment sought by the Maryland Chapter of the Sierra Club, Friends of Moses Hall, National Resources Defense Council, and the Northern Virginia Citizens Association. The groups filed suit to block the proposed but now stalled highway widening project.

A spokesperson for the Maryland Department of Transportation said in a statement, “We will continue to work with community stakeholders and our local, state, and federal partners to advance the Moore-Miller Administration’s new path forward on this much-needed multimodal transportation program for the American Legion Bridge and I-270 corridors.”

The original lawsuit filed in 2022 against the Maryland Department of Transportation and Federal Highway Administration sought to block the highway widening project first proposed by then-Governor Larry Hogan (R) as a way of relieving traffic congestion.

Hogan proposed a multibillion-dollar public/private partnership. The plan called for a consortium to

build a new American Legion Bridge, along with toll lanes to widen Maryland portions of the Capital Beltway, as well as a portion of I-270.

Judge Chasanow, in her decision, ruled that the plaintiffs “have not demonstrated that defendants’ actions were arbitrary and capricious in their decision to approve the Preferred Alternative.”

She added that the plaintiffs also failed to demonstrate “that defendants have violated” federal environmental laws.

Judge Chasanow ruled in favor of a cross complaint for summary judgment filed by the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration to end the case. ■

Legislation in Annapolis

REPORT FROM SHELDON FISHMAN

HB 0457, sponsored by Delegate Lehman, will create a Synthetic Turf Chain of Custody process.

This bill is significant because today no one officially knows where synthetic turf fields have been installed and where, at their end of life (about 8 years), they are disposed of or dumped. Remarkably, this bill also is very simple, with a trivial fiscal note. It simply requires the owner of a synthetic turf field to report to the Maryland Dept of Environment (MDE) where the field is located and, when it is removed, the owner must report where it has been taken. The House of Delegates passed the bill 101 to 38.

The bill successfully crossed over from the House of Delegates and had

a hearing in the Senate Education, Energy and Environment (EEE) Committee on March 20, 2024. At the Senate Committee hearing, no one testified in opposition, so only the House Sponsor, Delegate Mary Lehman, and her witnesses testified. The Sierra Club testified how its volunteers had located over 430 synthetic turf fields in Maryland, but that is not their job. A student testified for the need for this bill because her generation will need to clean up the mess, and it is necessary to know where the old fields have been deposited. An activist described where some fields have been dumped near the Chesapeake Bay.

With luck, this year EEE will give a positive recommendation to HB 0457, the Senate will pass it, and the Governor will sign it. The risks are that a Senator(s) may introduce and get passed amendments that risk

objections from the House or just run out of time before the end of the session. Worse, Senate leadership may block HB 0457 from getting a vote in committee or on the floor of the Senate.

REPORT FROM PEGGY DENNIS

PG/MC 112-24, People's Counsel for Land Use Planning, sponsored by Senator Ben Kramer, would have required our Park and Planning Commission to include in its annual budget proposal funding for the People's Counsel and require the County Council to approve that funding. It became HB 1364 and then had amendments made in the House of Delegates that would have effectively emasculated it. It has since been withdrawn, with the plan to reintroduce it in the 2025 session and try to have it passed without unfriendly amendments. ■

Update on PEPCO's Shared Use Path

By Peggy Dennis, Transportation Committee

For those of us relatively new to the Civic Federation, we played a vital role some years ago to getting PEPCO to agree to allow a “shared use path” along its transmission corridor between Westlake Drive in Bethesda and Germantown. The western end was opened several years ago. Because that end is a natural surface trail, it is really only good for mountain bikers. The longer, eastern end will be paved and will be suitable for bike commuters, biking families, walkers, and runners. The eastern end required far more engineering and permits. Michael Zelaski from the Montgomery county Parks Dept. provides the following update and thanks us for our continued interest.

“The north Cabin John trailhead and associated stormwater management and parking lot improvements is nearly through the permit process. Construction will likely begin later this year.

“The section from Westlake to the north side of Cabin John Creek is close to 50 percent design[ed] and we are currently working on the stream crossing which will be followed by stream stabilization design and a substantial permit application process.

“The section from the north side of Cabin John Creek to St. James is under design. A conceptual alignment has been drafted and information pertaining to the environmental permits is being gathered.” ■

2024 Awards

The Executive Committee has named the Awards Committee: Dan Meijer, Jay Elvove, Jerry Garson with Peggy Dennis (hotyakker@gmail.com) and Alan Bowser (president@montgomerycivic.org) as Co-Chairs. Now we need your nominations for the following awards:

- The Star Cup is given to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding service on behalf of Montgomery County.
- The Sentinel Award is given to an individual or group for a significant contribution to good government at the local level.
- The Wayne Goldstein Award is given to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., March 11, 2024, Meeting #951 Minutes

By Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

1. Approval of March 11 agenda. The agenda was approved.

2. Approval of February Minutes. The minutes of the February 12, 2024, meeting were approved.

3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson presented the Treasurer's Report, unchanged from the previous month.

4. Announcements. Peggy Alpert announced a memorial service for Karen Cordry, MCCF Secretary and President of the Kensington Heights Civic Association, will be held on April 28, 2024 at 1 pm at the Rock Creek Mansion.

5. A Conversation with Montgomery County Chief Administrative Officer Richard Madaleno. Madaleno discussed the County's current fiscal situa-

tion and described various aspects of the County's Operating Budget. The FY25 Recommended Operating Budget will be released on March 14, 2024. Among the factors creating pressure on the County fiscal position are future funding for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, real estate tax volatility, infrastructure demands, and the recruitment and retention of County employees, especially first responders.

6. Members asked questions about maintenance of effort, DOT programs to combat invasive plants, greater control over the schools budget, housing, East County development, noise ordinances, free Ride On, workforce housing, Montrose Parkway, and supermarket beer and wine sales, among others.

7. Committee Reports.

a. *Education.* Members expressed appreciation for the recent MCPS Budgetpalooza cosponsored by the Civic Federation, the Parent's Coalition, and the Montgomery County Taxpayers League.

b. *Environment.* The status of the State legislation to require a chain of custody of artificial turf was discussed. The Governor's proposal to facilitate the building of data centers in the State was also discussed.

c. *Land Use and Planning.* Members discussed State legislation of interest, particularly, the Kramer bill to establish an Office of the People's Counsel in M-NCPPC, and the Moon bill to void restrictive uses of real property. Cheryl Gannon, cochair of the Federation's land use and planning committee, reported

March Minutes, cont.

on the progress of the housing task force.

d. *Public Safety.* Members commented on County Council legislation to require the early closing of some business establishments in the County. There will be a March 16, 2024, meeting of the Public Safety Committee to discuss the early closing bill.

e. *Transportation.* Members commented on the status of the American Legion Bridge, the Purple Line, bus rapid transit plans in the County, pedestrian safety in parking lots, and the permitting implications for increased electric vehicle use in the County.

8. Newsletter articles are due by March 26, 2024, for the April *CFN*.

9. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 9.55 p.m. The meeting was recorded ([see it here](#)). ■

MCCF Executive Committee March 21, 2024, Minutes

By Elizabeth Joyce, Acting Secretary

1. Call to Order. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. Members present: Jacquie Bokow, Elizabeth Joyce, Margaret Dennis, Jerry Garson, Jay Elvove, Dan Meijer, and Brenda Freeman.

2. March General Meeting Review. Members discussed the March General meeting with guest Montgomery County CAO Rich Madaleno. Members observed that the released Recommended FY25 Operating Budget supported most of the Civic Federation's priorities for the County Budget.

3. Treasurer's Report. Treasurer Jerry Garson reported that

there was new membership and the organization balanced for \$7777.26.

4. April General Meeting. The April General Meeting will be held on Monday, April 8, 2024. The meeting topic will be affordable and attainable housing. Invitations will be sent to Lisa Govoni and Jason Sartori of the Montgomery County Planning Board to present the staff report on the Attainable Housing Study.

5. Nominations Committee. Alan Bowser recommended members of the 2024 Nominations Committee to include Jerry Garson, Chair, and Liz Joyce, Jacquie Bokow, Richard Kaffunger, Ira Unger, Ken Markison, and Chris Reynolds.

March ExCom Mtg., cont.

6. Proposed Elections and Voting Bylaws Amendments for 2024 Only. Members discussed and approved amendments to the MCCF bylaws for voting and elections in 2024. The amendments would apply to 2024 only.

a. Regarding elections, the current bylaws rule regarding Election follows: **3. Election.** *Officers shall be elected at the annual meeting in June and shall assume office at the close of the meeting.*

b. The proposed amendment to be ratified by the membership: **3. Officers shall be elected by the annual meeting in June and shall assume office at the close of the June meeting.**

c. The current bylaws rule regarding Voting: **4. Voting.** *Voting shall be by hand count except in contested elections when a secret ballot shall be used for the contested positions(s). A majority of all votes cast shall be required to elect. If no nominee receives the required majority on a vote, the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes will be dropped, and the vote will be repeated. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.*

d. The proposed amendment to the Bylaws: **4. Voting.** *Voting shall be by email balloting or by hand count at in-person meetings. In the case of email balloting, all eligible Federation delegates will be sent a ballot containing the names and association affiliations of the nominees. Voted ballots must be timely returned*

to the Nominations Committee for the vote to be tallied and reported at the June General meeting. At a scheduled in-person meeting, voting shall be by hand count except in contested elections when a secret ballot shall be used for the contested positions(s). A majority of all votes cast shall be required to elect. If no nominee receives the required majority on a vote, the nominee receiving the lowest number of votes will be dropped, and the vote will be repeated. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.

7. Awards Committee. The 2024 MCCF Awards Committee was established to include Alan Bowser and Margaret Dennis as co-chairs, with members Jay Elvove, Dan Meijer, and Jerry Garson. Members will

March ExCom Mtg., cont.

nominate awardees for the Star Cup, the Wayne Goldstein Award, and the Sentinel Award.

8. Announcements. Members discussed the current status of legislation in Annapolis and Rockville in which the Civic Federation had interest.

9. Newsletter. Newsletter articles are due to Jacquie Bokow by March 26.

10. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8 p.m. ■

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.

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