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of note

Next MCCF Meeting #912

Monday, April 13 2020, 7:45 p.m. online via Zoom. "The Montgomery County Fiscal Year 2021 Budget"

■ [Join the Zoom Meeting Here](#)
[See further instructions on page 3]
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Meeting Minutes

March 9 General Meeting #911 **P. 18**
March 19 Executive Committee Teleconference Meeting **P. 23**

Membership Application

Join or Renew Now **SEE FORM**

TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

Federation Meeting #912

Monday, April 13, 2020
7:45 p.m.

Video Zoom Conference
(Details at Right and on Page 3)

AGENDA

- 7:45 Call to Order/Introductions
- 7:50 Approval of Agenda
- 7:51 Announcements
- 7:55 Approval of Minutes, March 9 Meeting **P.18**
- 7:56 Treasurer's Report
- 8:00 Program (Zoom Online Conference, right): *FY2021 Montgomery County Budget* **P.3**
- 9:25 Committee Reports
- 9:35 Old and New Business
- 9:45 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, at 7:45 p.m.

The April 13 meeting will be held online via Zoom (also see page 3 for further details):

■ To be part of the video conference, download the **Zoom Client for Meetings here**.

■ Meeting Name: "Bailey Con-drey's Zoom Meeting."

■ Date and Time: April 13, 2020, 7:45 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 597 995 438. A password will not be 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 25

MCCF Hosts April Zoom Discussion on the FY 2021 Montgomery County Budget

By Bailey Condrey, President

Richard Madaleno, the director of the Office of Management and Budget for Montgomery County will participate in a joint meeting on April 13th at 7:45 p.m. where members of the Civic Federation and the MC Taxpayers League will have an open discussion on the proposed budget for FY 2021, and the opportunity to ask questions directly of the director.

The Corona Virus pandemic has thrown a monkey wrench into budgets across the nation. Tax revenues have plummeted, investment values have taken a hit, and the value of the primary investment for most Americans, their homes, will also decline in value. In light of these drastic revenue shortfalls, belt tightening will be required and sacrifices may

be required among many of the county's constituent groups. But how will we get there?

The MCTL has published a list of "Stewardship Principles" that include budgeting goals such as:

- Make budgets strategic.
- Get what you pay for.
- Eliminate duplication.
- Make salaries, wages, and benefits market-based and reflect productivity increases.

These are just a handful. For those whom wish to examine the proposed budget prior to the call, it can be found [online here](#).

During the 2020 legislative session the MCCF worked closely with legislators on SB 795, which passed both houses of the General Assembly and establishes an inspector general for schools, but the rules within the

bill give the IG authority over MCPS and the BOE.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION IS CRUCIAL TO YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS MEETING

This conference call will be a Zoom teleconference. You can choose whether you wish to be an audio participant or an audio/video guest. It's incumbent upon you to do your homework first so that you can be an active participant in the call. We will not have time to walk you through your sign-in steps the night of the call. I have been assured that the process is simple and straightforward, but please don't wait until the last minute.

You can [download the ZOOM Client for Meetings here](#).

[MORE](#)

April Zoom Program, cont.

You can look at Zoom's FAQs at its [Support Center](#), if you haven't already. You also can attend a [free weekly on-boarding training](#).

The following are details for the call. The Montgomery County Civic Federation is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting, although it will be referenced as **Bailey Condrey's Zoom Meeting**.

Time: 7:45 p.m. Eastern Time (U.S. and Canada) on Monday, April 13, 2020.

To join the Zoom meeting from your browser, you can [use this link](#).

If you are dialing into the meeting (audio only), you will call 301.715.8592. The meeting ID is 597 995 438. A password will not be required.

We look forward to your participation. ■

Call for Nominations and Volunteers for Awards Event

Do you know someone who has made great contributions to Montgomery County and who you would like to see recognized with one of the annual MCCF Awards? If so, be sure to send your nomination to the Awards Committee this month! The Awards Event will be held in June (more details to follow) and the Committee will be reviewing the nominations in May.

Also, if you'd like to help the Awards Selection Committee, let us know. The work of the Awards Selection Committee includes accepting nominations for award recipients, evaluating those nominations, and making final recommendations on the awardees. The work should be of short duration and may be done largely by phone. If you would like to help with the

event and/or the committee, please let us know by sending an email to [info AT montgomerycivic DOT org](mailto:info@montgomerycivic.org).

LIST OF AWARDS

■ **The Wayne Goldstein Award** is awarded to an individual or group for outstanding service to the people of Montgomery County.

■ **The Sentinel Award** is sponsored by *The Montgomery Sentinel* newspaper and awarded to an individual or group for a significant contribution to "good government" at the local level.

■ **The Star Cup** is awarded to a Delegate or Committee of the Federation for outstanding public service on behalf of Montgomery County.

We look forward to hearing from you! ■

Coronavirus in Montgomery County and the State of Maryland Spreading

By Alan Bowser, 1st Vice President

Montgomery County, like jurisdictions throughout the United States, is experiencing the consequences of the global coronavirus pandemic.

As of this writing, the entire State of Maryland is under a state of emergency to curtail social gatherings to protect the public from the aggressive virus. Non-essential business, schools, government offices, restaurants, and bars have been shuttered in an attempt to stop the spread of the virus throughout the community.

Montgomery County has had the most identified cases of the virus in the State of Maryland. The number of coronavirus cases in Montgomery County has increased rapidly from 208 on Friday, March 27, from 164

on Thursday, March 27.

Montgomery County accounts for nearly half of the state's confirmed cases, according to the health department's latest tally. Those infected with the virus include a county police officer, a Whetstone Elementary School employee, a man in his 20s, and a married couple in their 70s.

At the same time, the number of cases in Maryland rose to 774 cases on Friday from 580 Thursday, according to the State Department of Health. The State's total has added 425 cases in the last three days. As of Friday, there were coronavirus cases reported in every Maryland jurisdiction except Dorchester and Allegany counties.

On Wednesday, the state ordered that public schools remain closed

through April 24. On Thursday, Gov. Larry Hogan announced that Maryland had received a major disaster declaration from the federal government. The declaration means Maryland will be eligible for reimbursements for emergency protective measures taken by state and local governments, as well as some nonprofits, according to a press release. Also, on Thursday, State Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon announced that all child care providers would close by the end of Friday except those serving essential personnel.

More information is available at the [Montgomery County Government website on the coronavirus](#) and the Federal [Centers for Disease Control website](#). Learn what you need to in order to stay safe! ■

What Marylanders Need to Know About COVID-19



Governor Hogan declared a state of emergency to **expand the state's ongoing, coordinated response.**



Practice good hygiene with frequent handwashing, covering coughs, and staying home when sick.



All levels of government have been **actively and aggressively preparing** for all possible scenarios.



Symptoms of COVID-19 include **fever, cough, shortness of breath, and difficulty breathing.**



Stay informed by reputable sources. Marylanders can visit health.maryland.gov/coronavirus or dial 2-1-1.



If you are experiencing the above symptoms, **contact your healthcare provider for guidance.**

Suburban Hospital Seeking Medical Supplies Donations

By Josh Kurtz, Co-founder and Editor of Maryland Matters

Suburban Hospital in Bethesda is seeking donations of numerous items to ensure that its clinical teams have an ample supply of personal protective equipment and other supplies when shortages arise.

Currently, the hospital is accepting donations of the following:

- N95 face masks (unused),
- Surgical masks (not hand-sewn),
- Safety goggles,
- Face shields,
- Disposable gowns,
- Non-latex gloves,
- Hand sanitizer (unopened), and
- Disinfecting/bleach wipes (unopened).

No other items can be donated at

MORE

Suburban Hospital, cont.

this time.

The hospital is at 8600 Old Georgetown Rd. in Bethesda. The drop-off location for donated goods is at the McKinley Street delivery entrance, just off Old Georgetown Rd.

Donations can be made Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Security and staff will be onsite to assist with removing items from donors' vehicles.

For more information, email SHFoundation@jhmi.edu or call 301.896.3971. ■



Trump Administration Uses Coronavirus Pandemic as Excuse to Suspend Enforcement of Environmental Laws

By Bailey Condrey, President

The Environmental Protection Agency issued a sweeping suspension of its enforcement of environmental laws Thursday, March 26, telling companies they would not need to meet environmental standards during the corona virus outbreak.

The temporary policy, for which EPA has set no end date, would allow any number of industries to skirt environmental laws, with the agency saying it will not "seek penalties for noncompliance with routine monitoring and reporting obligations."

Cynthia Giles, who headed EPA's Office of Enforcement during the Obama administration,

called it a moratorium on enforcing the nation's environmental laws and an abdication of EPA's duty.

"This EPA statement is essentially a nationwide waiver of environmental rules for the indefinite future," she wrote in a statement to The Hill. "It tells companies across the country that they will not face enforcement even if they emit unlawful air and water pollution in violation of environmental laws, so long as they claim that those failures are in some way 'caused' by the virus pandemic. And it allows them an out on monitoring too, so we may never know how bad the violating pollution was." ■

Montgomery County 2018 IGCC Public Comment Period to be Extended One Month to End of April

According to Bryan Bomer, the Green Building Manager for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) for the Division of Commercial Building Construction, the public comment period for the 2018 International Green Construction Code has been extended to April 30th.

According to those knowledgeable about the IgCC, support for the installation of green roofs can have a profound effect on mitigating some of the worst drivers of climate change.

View a PDF of a March 2, 2020, IgCC 2018 code adoption Powerpoint [overview by the DPS here](#).

You can see a free view-only copy of the 2018 IgCC online at <https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/docu->

[ment/1283](#).

A comparison of the major section [changes between the unamended 2012 and 2018 IgCC Editions can be seen online here](#).

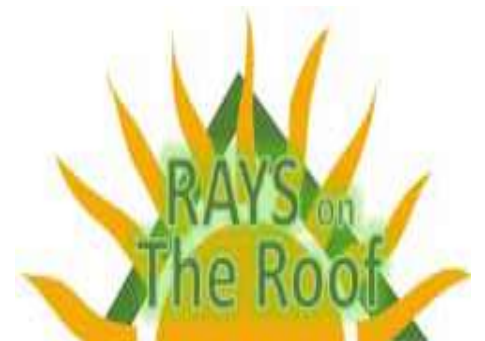
Mr. Bomer is available to answer any questions or help with clarification. He can be reached at the following contacts:

Bryan Bomer
Green Building Manager
Department of Permitting Services
Division of Commercial Building Construction
Montgomery County, Maryland
montgomerycountymd.gov/dps
Office: 240.777.6230
Mobile: 301.580.6128
E-mail: Bryan.Bomer@montgomerycountymd.gov. ■

'Rays on the Roof' Solar Array Project Overview

By Bailey Condrey, President

I'm not a member of the Greenbelt Co-op supermarket and pharmacy; it would be a little extravagant from an emissions perspective for me to drive that far to obtain groceries. However, providing them with seed money to get [their solar roof project](#) completed bears further inspection.



EIWG Hosts Zoom Mtg. 4/2 on Covid-19 Challenges to Local Food System, Supplies

By Catherine Nardi, Programs and Policy Coordinator, Montgomery County Food Council

The Environmental Impact Working Group will host a Zoom meeting next Thursday, April 2, from 9-10:30am to discuss:

■ The impacts that COVID-19 has had on our local food system and food supply,

■ Food rescue and recovery efforts,

■ Opportunities to support the efforts of the Food Council and our partners in addressing this situation.

While we still are committed to promoting food waste composting in Montgomery County and pursuing the other 2020 goals of the EIWG, our current focus is on supporting more situationally relevant areas of need related to our County's food system. We hope you

will participate in this meeting; the collaboration of our members and stakeholders is necessary to help us spread the word about services and resources that community members can use during this critical period.

JOIN ZOOM MEETING

■ <https://zoom.us/j/694258809?pwd=Wm9qRWpCTTFaODFFNm4vWitBTGN5QT09>

■ Meeting ID: 694 258 809, Password: 759282

■ One tap mobile: +1.929.205.6099, 694258809# (ET)

Additionally, the Recycle Leaders is offering a "competition" related to taking action on climate change for Earth Day 2020 from home while social distancing! "Team Up on Food Waste @ Home"

is a fun, four-week remote competition that provides a structured way for individuals, students, and families to participate in the EPA's Get Smart Challenge on reducing food waste at home together. Learn more and sign up at the link below by April 6th: <https://www.recycle-leaders.com/projects/2020/3/23/lets-team-up-on-food-waste-home-for-earth-day>.

Hope to have you join us for our Zoom meeting next week! Please contact me directly at cnardi@mo-cofoodcouncil.org with questions or concerns. Thank you.

[Nardi also can be reached at 301.664.4010. The Montgomery County Food Council can be reached at www.mocofoodcouncil.org.]

Maryland General Assembly 2020 Legislative Session Bill Roundup

By Bryan Renbaum, MarylandReporter.com

The Maryland General Assembly passed more than 660 bills during the 2020 legislative session, which the global outbreak of the coronavirus cut short. Most of the bills are now headed directly to Governor Larry Hogan's desk.

Below is summary of some of the major bills.

HB001/SB001**Built to Learn Act of 2020**

Provides more than \$2 billion over the next five years for school construction and renovation throughout the state. The legislation authorizes the Maryland Stadium Authority to issue revenue bonds that are backed by annual payments from the Education Trust Fund.

HB004/SB0208**Public Safety-Rifles and Shotguns-Sales, Rentals and Transfers**

Requires a background check for the secondary transfer of "long guns," such as rifles and shotguns. The legislation provides exceptions for certain temporary transfers. Penalties for violation include up to five years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$10,000.

HB1661/SB1079**State Budget-Revenue Stabilization Account Transfers-Coronavirus**

Emergency legislation that authorizes the governor to transfer by budget amendment up to \$50 million from the state's "rainy day fund" to various state agencies to respond

to the virus. The legislation expires on June 30, 2021. (Signed by the governor.)

HB1300/SB1000**Blueprint for Maryland's Future-Implementation**

Provides for a sweeping overhaul of the state's education system per the recommendations of the Kirwan Commission. The legislation is projected to cost about \$32 billion over the next decade.

HB0037/SB0145**Election Law-References to Absentee Voting in Communications-Main-In Voting**

Alters references to absentee voting. It requires the State Board of Elections and local election boards

Legislative Roundup, cont.

to designate absentee ballots as “mail-in ballots” and absentee voting as “mail-voting.” The legislation takes effect Jan. 1, 2021.

HB1444/SB0531

Discrimination-Definition of Race-Hair Texture and Styles

Bans discrimination against people with hairstyles that are often associated with certain racial groups. However, the law does require employees to adhere to “reasonable workplace appearance and grooming standards” applicable to the specified profession.

HB1260/SB1043

Historically Black Colleges and Universities-Funding

Provides a total of \$577 million to Maryland’s historically black col-

leges and universities from FY 2022 to FY 2031. The legislation goes into effect July 1, 2020; however, some of its provisions are contingent upon the completion of a final settlement agreement in a lawsuit.

HB005/SB0161

Crimes-Hate Crimes-Use of an Item or a Symbol to Threaten or Intimidate

Prohibits the placement or inscription of threatening symbols or items such as a swastika or noose on public or private property without the express permission of the owner(s) of the property. Penalties for violation include up to three years in prison and/or a fine of up to \$5,000.

HB0233/SB0212

Criminal Law-Assault in the First Degree-Strangulation

Expands the definition of felony first-degree assault to include intentional strangulation. Penalties for violation include up to 25 years in prison.

HB0231/SB0530

Housing Opportunities Made Equal Act

Prohibits residential discrimination on the basis of the source of income used to pay rent.

HB0125/SB0148

Board of Public Works-Land Acquisition Requirements

Requires the Board of Public Works to consult with the Legislative Policy Committee before approving the acquisition of property worth \$500,000 or more. The bill provides exceptions for land the state acquires for preservation and conservation

MORE

Legislative Roundup, cont.

purposes. The legislation goes into effect June 1, 2020.

HB0250/SB0227

Peace Orders and Protective Orders-Extension

Would make petitions to extend a final order already in place automatic if the hearing for the extension is not held by the time the original order expires. ■

We’re Asking Why, Two Years Later, Montgomery Parks Fails to Join Field Turf Class Action Fraud Suit

By Bailey Condrey, President

It seems that a lot of people—especially the taxpayers—have been played by Montgomery Parks and Montgomery County Public Schools. In February of 2018, Mike Riley of Montgomery Parks told local activists that they would join the Class Action against Field Turf for knowingly selling defective “Duraspine” synthetic turf fields to Parks for the Montgomery Blair High School field. MCPS never showed any inclination to recover county citizens’ money. One of those defective fields at Walter Johnson High School has just been replaced, even though it failed years ago. Not a dime of money was recovered from Field Turf to pay for the WJHS replacement.

Anonymous sources have said

that the law firm of a County Council member represented Field Turf at the time that the fields were sold to the county. Those fields also contained lead, which a Field Turf representative admitted to before the Maryland General Assembly. Parks Director Riley appears to be engaged in a rope-a-dope routine by telling local groups that they’re still working on it and may become the lead plaintiff, but it hasn’t happened.

Why?

[View the Civic Federation News article from February 2018: “Montgomery Parks Department Joins Nationwide Synthetic Turf Class Action Fraud Suit: Public pressure from activists forces agency to finally act on defective athletic turf.”] ■



Planning Board Briefing on Thrive Montgomery 2050 Draft Goals, Policies Moved to 4/16

By Khalid Afzal, M-NCPPC

The Thrive Montgomery 2050 briefing on the Draft Goals and Policies—previously scheduled for Thursday, April 2—has been postponed to Thursday, April 16 (originally postponed to April 9, as of press time it has been postponed a second time to the 16th). Therefore, the staff memorandum that was going to be posted on Thursday, March 26, will now be posted on Thursday, April 9.

As you may already know, starting Thursday, March 26, until further notice, the Planning Board will be conducting all its meetings online in response to Covid-19. You can sign up to testify remotely in upcoming Planning Board meetings while practicing social distancing.

The Draft Goals and Policies

presentation at the April 16 Board meeting is a briefing for the Planning Board (as opposed to a regulatory item that requires the Board to make a decision) with staff soliciting the Board's comments and guidance. Public testimony will be allowed at the Chair's discretion. If you want to testify on the Draft Goals and Policies item, you must send an email to the Chair's office at mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org requesting permission to provide live online testimony. The Chair will decide whether to allow live testimony.

You can always submit written testimony regardless of whether live online testimony will be taken. Written testimony must be submitted no later than 12:00 noon on Wednesday, April 15. Details

on how to submit testimony for these online Board meetings can be found on the Montgomery Planning Board's "[Sign Up to Testify: Testifying While Social Distancing](#)" webpage.

[Khalid Afzal is Special Projects Manager for the General Plan Update in the Montgomery County Planning Department of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. You can reach him via email at khalid.afzal@montgomery-planning.org or by phone at either 240.515.7532 or 301.495.4650. You can view online [Mr. Afzal's Power-Point presentation on Thrive Montgomery 2050](#) at MCCF's October 2019 meeting on the MCCF website [here](#).] ■

Maryland Public Service Commission Announces Community Solar Pilot Programs

By Bailey Condrey, President

The Maryland Public Service Commission has adopted regulations for a community solar pilot program in Maryland, with an emphasis on providing renewable energy benefits for low and moderate income customers. Community solar customers are expected to see some savings on their electric bills and all Marylanders will benefit from more clean energy options.

In addition, the program will encourage private investment in Maryland's solar industry and diversify the state's energy resource mix to meet Renewable Portfolio Standard and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act goals.

Utility community solar programs and interconnection applications include:

- BGE Community Solar Pilot Program,

- Delmarva Power and Light Green Power Connection,

- Potomac Edison Company (Md.) Community Solar, and

- Potomac Electric Power Company (Pepco) Green Power Connection.

The three-year community solar pilot program will:

- Provide access to solar-generated electricity—in a manner similar to rooftop solar and net metering—for all Maryland customers without requiring property ownership;

- Incentivize solar companies to provide service to low- and moderate-income customers;

- Set aside program capacity for each area of the state with a statewide cap at about 193 MW (about 60 MW is set aside for projects focused

on low- and moderate-income customers);

- Attract new investment in Maryland's renewable infrastructure and green economy;

- Allow renters to contract for solar energy with the same benefits as rooftop owners;

- Create separate program capacity for small systems and systems built on brownfields, parking lots, or industrial areas;

- Allow smaller and rural service territories to make use of existing solar facilities while encouraging construction of new systems in the urban and suburban areas of Maryland;

- Include significant consumer protections, including prohibition against unreasonable fees and clear

Community Solar, cont.

contract disclosure requirements; and

■ Allow the Commission Staff to collect necessary data to study the impact on Maryland's electricity grid over the three-year pilot program.

Individual community solar projects will be operated by subscriber organizations (which can include utilities, retail electricity suppliers, solar developers, etc.) that are approved by the Public Service Commission (application form here) and the electric company serving the location of each project. The template for the community solar contract disclosure form (along with instructions), can be found here.

The Maryland Energy Administration offers grants for residential and commercial community solar subscriptions. [See MEA's website.](#) ■

Reply from Maryland State Senate President Bill Ferguson

[The following is President Ferguson's reply to 2nd Vice President Sue Schumacher's letter addressing handicapped parking near the Maryland Capitol building that appeared in the February Civic Federation News.]

March 2, 2020

Dear Ms. Schumacher:

Thank you for your kind letter regarding the lack of handicapped parking near the State House and its related buildings. I agree that we should have information available for the general public about how to access the handicapped parking for the complex. While parking near the Senate and House office buildings are limited, we should make certain that all who wish to participate in

democracy are able to do so.

I have copied Secretary Ellington Churchill on this letter. Secretary Churchill is the Secretary of the Department of General Services, who oversees the management of the Annapolis complex. Secretary Churchill has a keen eye to detail, and I have full confidence in his ability to ensure that information is available to the public concerning how to access and locate handicap parking locations around Annapolis.

Thank you again for your letter, and I appreciate your eagerness to participate in strengthening our democracy. If I can be of further assistance, please let me know.

Best,
Bill Ferguson
President of the Senate ■

MCCF Testimony on House Bill 795 on an Inspector General for MoCo Public Schools

[The following testimony was given by MCCF Treasurer Jerry Garson on March 17, 2020, before the Maryland State Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee.]

My name is Jerry Garson and I am a Certified Public Accountant, testifying on behalf of the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., which represents over 150,000 Montgomery County residents.

The mission of the MCCF is to preserve and improve the quality of life for all current and future residents of Montgomery County, Maryland.

HB 795 is a bill for the purpose of authorizing the County Council of Montgomery County to enact a local law that grants to the Montgomery County Inspector General certain

authority over the Montgomery County Board of Education and public schools located in Montgomery County. We ask for a favorable report on the bill that passed the House of Delegates by a vote of 131-0.

Since over half of the County's budget is for education, the oversight of such a large expenditure is very important. For your information, the Operating Budget for 2020 is \$2,680,574,773 and the Capital Budget for 2021 is \$378,133,000 both are very large amounts.

We would request that the Inspector General have an adequate budget and staff to supervise the expenditure of over 3 Billion Dollars. We think this bill is a good start. When you spend over 3 Billion dollars, oversight is very important to

the taxpayers of the county.

We are concerned when the Comptroller of Maryland says that it costs Montgomery County twice what it costs Fairfax County to build a school; therefore, we get half as many new schools built and we have a significant amount of overcrowding.

We have to question how the rebuilding of Bells Mill Elementary School that occurred in the 21st Century could have a gym built without air conditioning. The Montgomery Council just passed a bill requiring landlords to have air conditioning in all rental apartments. It is often very hot in May, June, and September.

We also would like an inspector general to ask why each classroom

MCPS IG Testimony, cont.

built in new schools does not have a separate thermostat, so that each teacher can set the temperature of the classroom. We see Winston Churchill High School having open windows on days that the temperature is below 20 degrees. This wastes heat and increases costs.

Since its founding in 1925, the volunteers of the MCCF have committed themselves to providing an effective citizen voice to government policy makers, both elected and appointed. The Civic Federation is a not-for-profit, county-wide umbrella group designed to promote cooperation, education, and effectiveness of civic and community associations in Montgomery County.

It addresses a wide range of concerns in transportation, land use, environment, education, budget

and finance, public safety, and ethics. With its strength of numbers and thoroughness of its deliberations, the Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc., influences county policy and balances the activities of vested county pressure groups.

Thank you for considering our views.

[Note: *House Bill 795*, "Montgomery County—Authority of County Council Over Inspector General—Montgomery County Public Schools, MC 14-20," passed in the House by a vote of 131-0 on March 14, 2020, and passed in the Senate by a vote of 45-0 on March 18. The bill is now being sent to the Governor.] ■

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!!!

Please volunteer for MCCF's Nominating Committee. The MCCF will only be effective with good leadership.

Recommendations are needed for:

President
1st Vice President
2nd Vice President
Secretary
Treasurer

A report will be due by May. Contact the MCCF at *info AT montgomerycivic DOT com* to volunteer or ask questions.

Minutes of the March 9, 2020, MCCF General Meeting #911, Held in Rockville

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

General Meeting #911 convened at the Executive Office Building.

Call to Order: President Bailey Condry called the meeting to order at 7:48 p.m. and attendees provided introductions.

Adoption of Meeting Agenda: It was moved and seconded that the agenda as printed in the newsletter be adopted. The agenda was unanimously approved.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER BUSINESS

■ The League of Women Voters will hold a meeting regarding at large Board of Education candidates

at the Aspen Hill Library on 3/30.

■ The Governor has declared a state of emergency in Maryland as of Friday due to the coronavirus. There had been 4 cases reported to that point all of whom had returned from foreign travel.

■ The *Bethesda Beat's* "Voters' Guide" should be issued within a week.

■ It was moved and seconded that minutes of the February 2020 meeting, as published in the newsletter, be approved. The minutes were unanimously approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

As of March, revenue from dues was a total of \$1,263. Total expenses have been \$2,540, which includes substantial prepaid expenditures for the year, and \$590 for this month

for insurance.

MARCH PROGRAM

The topic for March was an open discussion with new Montgomery county Police Chief Marcus Jones. Chief Jones began with a discussion of his assuming command and changes he has been instituting in the department. He noted that he has been Chief for five months now, after having spent 34 years in the Department, including as Commander of the 3rd District in Silver Spring, and, most recently as Assistant Chief.

There have been a lot of other leadership transitions, since three of the other Assistant Chiefs retired recently and his own position needed to be filled as well. Nominations

March Minutes, cont.

have been made for all four positions with hearings to be held during the upcoming week. Willie Parker-Loan was nominated as Asst. Chief of the Patrol Division, Ron Smith as Asst. Chief of Investigative Services, Dinesh Patil as Asst. Chief of Management Services, and Tom Didone as Asst. Chief of the Field Services Bureau. The District Commanders have also all been settled now: 1st District (Rockville and north) is Elizabeth Hattenberg; 2nd District (Bethesda) is Sean Gagen; 3rd District (Silver Spring to Burtonsville, the busiest district with the most calls for service and for crimes) is Darren Francke; 4th District (Wheaton/Glenmont, second busiest) is Marc Yamada; 5th District (German town and Clarksville, rapidly growing) is Mark Plazinski; and the Sixth

District (Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village) is Paul Liquorie.

Chief Jones noted there had been some small reductions in overall crimes over the past year but there was still plenty out there to be addressed. Thefts from cars was the most common occurrence and he reminded everyone of the need to keep cars locked to discourage opportunistic thieves. Violent crimes, including burglaries and robberies are slightly down; there have been 19 homicides (the majority of which were domestic related).

The Department has 1,300 total officers, of whom 800 are in the Patrol Division; these are the first responders operating on the streets in marked vehicles. The Investigative Services Division has the detectives who follow up and investigate reports on crimes ranging from thefts to sexual assaults and child abuse, to

vice and narcotics. The Field Services Division is the traffic division and includes the K-9 officers, and the Management Services Division, as the name suggests, manages overall operations.

Recruitment recently has been a challenge with lots of openings and a reduced number of applicants (which is being seen around the whole DMV area). This is basically due to a good economy with plentiful other jobs and a degree of negativity about police work. The Department has been increasing recruitment efforts to try to increase the numbers without compromising quality. As of now, they have 38 openings in the current recruit class but only have 29 current candidates.

At that point, the meeting turned to audience questions. There were a number of questions about what

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efforts the department made with respect to ensuring that officers were not overly aggressive in interactions with community members; i.e., the idea of de-escalation tactics and similar measures. Chief Jones noted that all patrol officers wore body cameras and all resisting-arrest and use-of-force interactions are reviewed by the executive staff. They have definitely addressed the issue with certain officers and disciplined them where necessary. De-escalation is taught both at the training academy and when officers come back in for additional training.

Chief Jones also addressed some of the resources the department has for community interactions, including the Ride Along program; School Resource Officers in each high school; the Citizen Academy, a 15-

week program open to county residents to learn about all aspects of the police department; and Community Service Officers who are available to attend community meetings.

Chief Jones was also asked about what the department was doing with respect to the Vision Zero program and noted that there were ongoing efforts in every division, including use of speed and red-light cameras, as well as cameras on school buses to document cars failing to stop for those vehicles as required. They are continuing to push the standard messages about slow down, pay attention, don't be distracted while walking or driving, but they can't do it all themselves. They are considering centralizing all traffic efforts so they can best prioritize the areas to be addressed. They are also talking with the County and State Transportation departments about reengi-

neering roadways and are looking at limiting right turns on red in some urban areas.

A question was asked about whether efforts were being made to increase the number of female commanding officers and Chief Jones noted that, currently, three of 20 captains are female. To help increase the numbers of women in executive level positions, they have set up a mentoring program to help better prepare them and give them experience/insight into the jobs.

There was a discussion about a recent incident on Blueridge Avenue in Wheaton where several people were stopped while walking in the road and frisked. Chief Jones said the basic concern was the pedestrian safety aspects of their presence in the road, and that the officers followed standard procedure when

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stopping someone in terms of asking for ID. The further interactions were based on their evasive behavior when questioned. One of the problems in this incident was that the pedestrians were not walking facing traffic (which is a violation of the law) and that they needed to do more education on that point especially with foreign-born populations.

Chief Jones was also asked about the County's policy with respect to being a "sanctuary city" and whether there had been any changes since Marc Elrich became County Executive. He stated that the County's policy was and is that it does not ask about immigration status in dealing with the public and his job is not to enforce federal laws. But, if an individual is arrested, ICE can go through the public information of

who is being held in custody and, if they find someone they are interested in, they can issue a detainer that we have to honor.

In terms of crimes allegedly committed in schools by students, the policy is that those matters are to be deferred to the police department. He will be speaking with the Superintendent to reiterate and clarify that policy and to work him to train principals and other officials on the policy.

He gave a plug to home security system cameras as being useful in solving and deterring crime and talked about some of the gun control issues in the County, noting that all guns are required to be registered so they can be traced if stolen, that a separate concealed carry permit is needed if they are brought outside the home, and that "ghost guns" (one where separate parts are being

produced and shipped and then assembled) are becoming a problem.

He also discussed the Robert White case (an unarmed man who was killed in a confrontation with a police officer who believed he was engaged in threatening behavior). Chief Jones noted that the person had been somewhat aggressive but that not all officers (including the one here) did not have TASERs that could be used in such situations. There has been increased efforts to improve our response to persons with mental health issues.

Finally, Chief Jones also noted that the department was working to better deal with officer stress issues, including ensuring that officers feel comfortable with talking about such issues and did not feel a stigma if they raised them. The Department currently has two staff psychologists.

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OLD BUSINESS

■ Kim Persaud raised an issue that had been discussed at previous meetings and had been noted in the newsletter: namely, a petition drive in favor of eliminating the four at-large Council positions and dividing the County into nine individual districts. They had previously submitted a resolution for MCCF to substantively support that position; at this time, she withdrew that request and submitted a simple request that the Federation support putting the issue on the ballot. It was noted that, several years ago, MCCF had strongly supported the substantive position, and that had never been rescinded as a Federation position. It was moved and seconded that the new resolution should be supported. The vote was 12 yes, zero no, and

four abstentions.

NEW BUSINESS

■ There was a motion, noted in the newsletter, to send a protest to WMATA of its plans to greatly reduce bus service on a number of lines in the County coincident with the implementation of the County's Bus Rapid Transit service. Although WMATA asserted that the changes were merely being made to reduce overlaps and redundancies, there was a strong concern from the County Council and others that WMATA was treating BRT as a substitute for service, not a supplement. The motion was made and seconded the final vote was 15 yes with two abstentions.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Education

■ The synthetic turf issues are getting good exposure, including about

the massive emissions increases from using the synthetic rather than real turf.

LEGISLATIVE

■ Jerry Garson testified in favor of the bill authorizing MoCo to have an inspector general for the Board of Education (see page 16).

■ There are two pending bills on "producer pays" that would require manufacturers of synthetic turf to have a plan for disposing of the fields when they are removed. The bills have not been reported out of Committee. Jared Solomon also has a bill that would prohibit use of such field in the Project Open space area.

■ ZTA 19-07 on small cell towers has been tabled until the budget discussions. There is a pending Ninth Circuit case dealing with whether the FCC has preemption authority

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in this area; the argument has been held and a decision is expected in a few months.

Planning and Land Use

■ The Subdivision Staging Policy review is ongoing, dealing with changes to the Adequate Public Facilities ordinance. The Planning Board Chair has suggested eliminating impact fees and the moratorium on over capacity school districts. There is an emphasis on increasing density on major transit roads. Now is the time to be involved since recommendations on these topics will be made in the fall.

ADJOURNMENT

Bailey called for and received unanimous approval for adjournment at 9:50 p.m. ■

MCCF Executive Cmte. Meeting Minutes March 19, 2020

By Karen Cordry, Recording Secretary

Called to Order 7:50 p.m. Attending were Bailey Condrey, Alan Bowser, Jerry Garson, Sue Schumacher, Jacquie Bokow, and Karen Cordry. [Note: Meeting held by teleconference due to coronavirus restrictions.]

Agenda Approved: Moved and seconded to approve agenda; agenda approved.

Treasurer's Report: Same as March 9th General Meeting; Jerry has not visited Post Office.

NEXT MEETING TOPIC

We will plan on doing the planned topic on the upcoming

budget at our April 13 meeting, with preferably OMB Director Rich Madaleno as our speaker. Jerry Garson will contact and determine if he is available or, if not, if he can provide a substitute.

We will also invite Gordon Brenne of the MoCo Taxpayers League to present their concerns about the current draft proposal. It was noted that there was likely to be huge impacts on the current budget planning based on the dramatic and unanticipated effects of the coronavirus shutdowns. It was further agreed that, if we couldn't get Rich, we would still have the discussion based on the fact sheet that has been put out by OMB.

There was considerable discussion about the logistics of the

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meeting in light of the coronavirus constraints, including the limits on group meetings and the closure of County office buildings. Alan suggested we should buy our own Zoom access (approximately \$150 for unlimited use for a year) that would allow us to offer access to everyone to a video platform to watch and interact with the speakers virtually. It was moved and seconded to purchase the Zoom app and the vote was five years with one abstention.

DUES WEBSITE UPDATES

Jacquie indicated that she believes the website had been correctly modified so that those submitting their memberships would fill in their contact information first and then be directed to the payment page. In the past, the process was the oppo-

site and people did not always complete the contract information page.

Karen offered to have her organization be the guinea pig for trying the new page.

AWARDS BANQUET

As of now, in light of the coronavirus disruptions, planning for the banquet will be put on hold with the hope that it will be possible to reschedule later in the summer if the meeting restrictions are eased.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

■ Due to the unexpected early termination of the legislature, a number of bills died without action being taken thereon.

■ Jerry was able to attend the legislature and shepherd through the bill authorizing MoCo to appoint its own IG for the Department of Education.

■ Other bills of interest, including several having to do with the regulation and use of synthetic turf, and one attempting to require removal of invasive spreading bamboo stands, died when they were not acted on.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Transportation

■ Road traffic and transit use have both dropped dramatically in light of the "social distancing policies" for dealing with the coronavirus. Service is being cut back on transit which will exacerbate the usage fall-off.

■ Sue got a good letter from Senate President Bill Ferguson in response to her expressed concerns about the lack of accessible parking and access to the State House (see page 15).

■ Jared Solomon did get a bill through that authorizes negotiations

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with the District and Virginia about extending MARC trains to run into the District to Union Station and then onto Arlington and other Virginia stations so there can be a single, seamless trip for those users.

Education

■ The Board has issued a 500-page preliminary study dealing with school utilization issues with respect to a proposed boundary realignment to balance out over- and under-crowded schools

Public Finance

■ Kirwin Commission recommendations will likely be severely affected by the coronavirus revenue effect including tripping the “circuit breaker” included in the bill.

■ Elrich had already proposed a

property tax increase in the current budget to deal with revenue needs; most of the Council opposed this and it will be very difficult to effect in the current climate but the revenue needs will still be there.

No reports from other committees

ADJOURNMENT

It was moved and seconded, and unanimously agreed that the meeting be adjourned at 9:20 p.m. ■

Montgomery County Civic Federation

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