

Special September 4 Event: An Evening with Miranda Spivack
| Join us in-person in Chevy Chase to hear from the author of *Backroom Deals in Our Backyards* | **P. 4**

September General Program
| Our speaker will be former state delegate Al Carr | **P. 3**

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TO PRINT, USE PRINT VERSION

of note

Next MCCF Meeting #966
September 8, 2025, 7:00 p.m. *online via Zoom.*
| **Join the Zoom Meeting Here**
[See further instructions on page 2. No password is required.]
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July General Meeting #965 **P. 16**
No Executive Committee Meeting

Membership Application
JOIN ONLINE | MAIL-IN FORM

Federation Meeting #966

Monday, September 8, 2025
7:00 p.m.
Online Zoom Meeting

AGENDA

1. Call to Order/Introductions
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes: July General Meeting #965 (New this year) **P.16**
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Announcements
6. September Program Speaker: Al Carr **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 (new!) July.

The September 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, September 8, 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 **861 1689 2554**. 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 18

Dear Delegates and Members: A Letter from Our President

By Cheryl Gannon, MCCF President

As summer comes to an end, we are gearing up for a productive fall for the MCCF. Please mark your calendar for our September 8 regular meeting. Our speaker will be former state delegate Al Carr. Al will share his thoughts on government transparency and access and potential legislative measures.

If I can work it out, I will also add a speaker on the Office of People's Counsel. It has been a long-time goal of the MCCF to restore funding and a fully functional Office of People's Counsel for Montgomery County.

We will be developing a legislative agenda for changes to state and local law to improve transparency,

access, and ethics in government. This will kick off our discussions as we develop a policy and legislative agenda in September and October.

On September 4, we will have a book discussion with author Miranda Spivack—the award-winning investigative reporter—to discuss her new book, *Backroom Deals in Our Backyards*. A riveting product of years of reporting, the book showcases “accidental activists,” people from across the nation who questioned why their governments weren’t protecting them from damaging policies. The secret deals, lies, and corruption they discovered (including in Maryland) moved them to action. An R.S.V.P. is required and there are only a few seats left.

[Email me](#) if you’d like to attend. Books will be available for sale, \$30, via Venmo, cash, or check. [See page 4](#) for further details and to register.

Finally, there are three important hearings this month before the Council. The University Blvd Corridor Plan will have two Council hearings on September 10 and 16 ([see details on page 6](#)) and the lot consolidation changes under ZTA 25-02 will have a hearing before the Council on September 16 ([see page 5](#)). The MCCF will be testifying on both issues on September 16.

I hope everyone has had a safe and enjoyable summer. We look forward to seeing you all on September 8! ■

Special Event: An Evening with Miranda Spivack, September 4 in Chevy Chase

Please join the Montgomery County Civic Federation to hear award-winning investigative reporter Miranda Spivack discuss her new book, *Backroom Deals in Our Backyards: How Government Secrecy Harms Our Communities and the Local Heroes Fighting Back*.

A riveting product of years of reporting, the book showcases “accidental activists,” people from across the nation who questioned why their governments weren’t protecting them from damaging policies. The secret deals, lies, and corruption they discovered (including right here in Maryland) moved them to action.

We will be unveiling an MCCF agenda for discussion this fall for more open and transparent processes in this county and state. This



MIRANDA SPIVACK

book event is an excellent opportunity to hear from this award-winning journalist about her work unveiling the government processes that limit transparency and harm communities.

The author discussion will be held at Somerset Town Hall, 4510 Cumberland Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. The Hall will open at 6:30 p.m., when we will have refreshments and mingling; the program will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Space is limited to 40 attendees, so please register ([via email to Cheryl Gannon](#)) as soon as possible. Books will be available for sale, \$30 Venmo/cash/check.

The event is free, and we encourage attendees to purchase the book at the event, but purchase is not required to attend. ■

Council Approves ZTA 25-02 (More Housing N.O.W. — New Options for Workers)

By Elizabeth Joyce, MCCF Second Vice President and Housing Chair

On July 22, the Montgomery County Council approved ZTA 25-02, a component of its “More Housing N.O.W. (New Options for Workers)” legislative package. The rezoning bill will allow duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and modest apartments to be built on 25 major corridors throughout the county. The bill also allows lot consolidations of up to 3 lots to allow for larger developments. Although its sponsors (Councilmembers Andrew Friedson and Natali Fani-Gonzalez) intend for the bill to increase workforce housing, the vast majority of ZTA 25-02-authorized homes will be market rate (unaffordable to workforce wage earners).

Opponents of the bill, who filled

the hearing room July 22, believe the new housing will displace current residents, especially minorities and people of color. Critics also cite the insufficient planning for the infrastructure needs—such as storm water management, tree canopy, school space, traffic management, and expanded utilities the new housing will require. Such expenses, they say, will fall to taxpayers and utility customers.

Most important, according to County Executive Marc Elrich, is that the Council of Governments recently reported that the County already has enough planned housing units (85,000 in addition to 30,000 plus units already in the development pipeline) to house all new anticipated residents for the next 30 years. The plan substitutes

an “optional method of development” controlled by the Planning Board for the master planning process which involves residents and has worked well for many years. Also, the ZTA creates 15 more major corridors than were allowed under Thrive Montgomery 2050, the County’s new general plan, and is likely to promote rentals rather than home ownership for county residents, Elrich said.

Council Vice President Will Jawando, citing valid concerns from residents, voted against the bill, as did Councilmembers Kristin Mink and Sidney Katz. Council president Kate Stewart and Councilmembers Alborno, Balcombe, Fani-Gonzalez, Glass, Friedson Luedke, and Sayles (with an amendment), voted in favor of the bill. ■

Council to Consider Controversial University Boulevard Corridor Plan

By Elizabeth Joyce, MCCF Second Vice President and Housing Chair; Saratoga Village Neighbors, East Silver Spring

On June 12, 2025, the County announced:

The Montgomery County Planning Board, part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), voted on Thursday, June 12, 2025, to approve the University Boulevard Corridor (UBCP) Plan. The plan will now be transmitted to the Montgomery County Council for review.

The UBC Plan makes recommendations for community needs within a three-mile stretch of University Boulevard (MD 193) from the edge of East Indian Spring Drive, just south of I-495, to Amherst Avenue in Wheaton. The draft recom-

mendations focus on traffic safety, regional connectivity, environmental sustainability, corridor-focused growth, economic development, and providing more housing of all types, sizes, and prices to meet a variety of housing needs. The plan explores opportunities for new transit-oriented housing, bikeways, and bus rapid transit (BRT), as well as the creation of complete streets with wider sidewalks, comfortable public transportation stops, and safe access.

The UBCP has spurred significant opposition from residents, who say they have not been consulted in the development of the plan. The Woodmoor-Pinecrest citizens Association points out that, “The UBCP proposes to add 4,000 housing units by upzoning 536 single-family

homes, 9 religious institutions, and all existing commercial properties into the Commercial-Residential Town zone.” Other frequently cited concerns include increased traffic congestion, potential negative impacts on residential streets from higher density development and cut-through traffic, and fears of adverse effects on local infrastructure and schools.

Some fear traffic congestion will delay ambulances and emergency vehicles traveling to Holy Cross Hospital. Others argue the plan will make the corridor harder to navigate, with reduced right-turn lanes and lower speed limits potentially causing many traffic jams. Some communities believe the plan sidelines the actual needs of surrounding

UBCP, cont.

neighborhoods in favor of “corridor-focused growth.” And others fear more incursions into residential neighborhoods than the plan authorizes.

A community meeting on the UBCP will be held September 10, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at Montgomery Blair High school. Deadline to sign up to speak is September 8 at Noon.

A Council hearing will be held September 16, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. at the Council Hearing room. Deadline to sign up is also September 8 at Noon.

Hyperlinks to sign up for both appear in the box at right. ■

Upcoming County Council Hearings

Sign up for all Council hearings is [at this page](#); scroll to the hearing you wish to speak at.

UNIVERSITY BLVD CORRIDORS PLAN (TWO HEARINGS)

■ September 10, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at Montgomery Blair High School. Deadline to sign up to speak is September 8 at Noon.

■ September 16, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. at Council Hearing room. Deadline to sign up is also September 8 at Noon.

SUBDIVISION REGULATION AMENDMENT (SRA) 25-02 Technical Review—Optional Method Workforce Housing Development

This is the legislation that deals with consolidation of lots under the More Housing N.O.W., ZTA 25-02.

September 16, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. Deadline to sign up is September 15 at 2:00 p.m.

MCPS Background Screening Review Reveals 12K Outdated Criminal History Checks

The Montgomery County Office of the Inspector General issued a “Review of MCPS Background Screening Office” on August 4. The following text appears in the document’s Executive Summary.

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) is the largest school system in the state of Maryland, with 211 schools and more than 24,400 employees, supporting the educational needs of over 160,000 students. Ensuring the safety and protection of students, staff, and visitors is critical to MCPS’ success. As such, Maryland law and MCPS regulations and procedures require various background checks for employees and others who may have unsupervised access to students. These include criminal background and Child Protective Services checks.

During this review, we found MCPS has more than 12,000 current employees who have outdated criminal history checks and approximately 4,900 individuals that have not undergone a CPS check and may have access to children. Additionally, while MCPS contractors and certain volunteers with unsupervised access to students are required to have criminal history checks, we found that some began work prior to those checks being completed.

We also determined that MCPS does not have a process to ensure volunteers completed required training regarding child abuse and neglect and that MCPS continues to monitor the criminal histories of persons no longer employed or providing services to MCPS. Lastly, we observed that MCPS does not have

formal procedures governing suitability determinations when negative information is discovered through a criminal history check.

RESULTS

■ MCPS is not monitoring criminal histories for all employees.

■ MCPS is not ensuring initial criminal history checks are conducted for contractors and volunteers prior to them beginning work.

■ Not all individuals with access to students have undergone a Child Protective Services check.

■ MCPS has no formal procedures governing suitability determinations.

■ MCPS does not consistently remove people from the criminal history monitoring program as required.

■ MCPS does not consistently en-

MCPS Screenings, cont.

sure volunteers have taken required child abuse and neglect training.

RECOMMENDATIONS

█ Take immediate action to eliminate the backlog of existing employees that have not been entered into the criminal history monitoring program.

█ Ensure applicable contractors and volunteers that may have unsupervised access to students have the required criminal history check completed prior to starting work.

█ Provide training for relevant staff on the requirements and process to initiate a criminal history check.

█ Take immediate action towards eliminating the backlog of CPS checks.

█ Implement regulations for investigating and making suitability determinations.

█ Remove persons who have separated or are no longer providing services to MCPS from the monitoring program.

█ Ensure child abuse and neglect training is completed and tracked.

You can [read the full report here](#). █

Free Gun Locks

Free gun locks are available to the public at each police district station in Montgomery County.

The Montgomery County Department of Police encourages firearm owners to be responsible and conscientious when it comes to the safe handling, use, and storage of firearms. Responsible gun ownership includes keeping firearms secure to prevent theft and prevent those persons prohibited by law from obtaining firearms. Maryland law states that a child under 16 cannot have unsupervised access to a loaded firearm.

For new gun-owners, [here is information about Firearms Safety Classes from the Maryland State Police](#).

Learn more about the gun lock give away and gun safety [here](#). █

More State Trails May Open to E-Bikes

The Baltimore Banner reported this month that the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is considering allowing e-bikes on more state bike trails, which they say could increase accessibility to public parks.

“Sales of electric bikes quadrupled in the U.S. between 2019 and 2022,” wrote Clara Longo de Freitas. “The DNR hopes e-bikes will bring more visitors to state parks and ... provide further opportunities for outdoor recreation to people who cannot use traditional bikes due to physical disabilities, age, or mobility issues.”

Opponents have raised safety concerns as e-bikes can reach 28 mph and would be sharing trails with people walking, some with dogs. Some trails in the county are

used by people riding horses, too.

Pedal-assisted e-bikes would be allowed, but class 2 e-bikes—which have a motor that works whether or not the rider is pedaling—would only be allowed if they are “adaptive,” which means those customized for people with physical disabilities or mobility challenges, wrote de Freitas.

In MoCo, this would affect Seneca Creek State Park [11950 Clopper Road, Gaithersburg], which already allows mountain biking on its trails.

[Read the full *Banner* article here](#).

[Read the legislation language in the *Maryland Register* of August 22 here](#). █



Synthetic Turf Letters

By Bailey Condrey, Kensington, Former President, MCCF

I’ve been looking for employment for the last several months in the climate crisis arena and/or the commercial landscaping space. This has allowed me to occasionally take a look at what *The Washington Post* is reporting. For many years, I was an activist with the [Safe Healthy Playing Fields Coalition](#) that advocates for returning the nation’s athletic playing fields to grass. I know a little bit about plastics, and I’ve spent a number of years petitioning various groups to improve how these chemically complicated materials are handled, reused, recycled, and even replaced.

To my surprise, two articles on plastics ran in *The Post* in less than

Syn Turf Letters, cont.

14 days this August.

The first article, by Michael J. Coren, “Navigating the raging turf war over artificial grass,” led off by quoting a Yale University epidemiologist about all of the downside risks that plastics grass presents for its users. But then, the article transitioned into the same old “what-about-ism” that has pervaded the discussion about this dangerous product for at least the last decade. You can [read that article here](#).

The following is my response to the article:

Dear Editors:

Where is the war raging? This horror story continues unabated in the U.S.

The synthetic turf industry is completely unregulated. Tires are

toxic waste, but become children’s products when ground or shredded into smaller pieces. Many of the chemicals used to produce plastics grass fields are extreme heat islands and they become point sources of pollution to local watersheds when the elements break them and heavy rains wash off the fragments and infill.

A number of groups are responsible for choosing to pave over the nation’s grass playing fields with plastics. They repeatedly embrace unproven claims by an unregulated industry that has helped drive the micro-plastics and PFAS pollution crises. Logic, reason, and economics be damned!

*Syn turf **cannot** be recycled. Processing the waste doesn’t come close to recycling the components. Each type of plastic (there are many) is contamination for an-*

other type. Separation is essential for reuse. The compounds used to create and stabilize the plastics—all contaminants. This makes the cost to recycle many times higher than the market value of the components. Our nation is now home to waste syn turf piles dumped on the landscape.

Shortly after a plastics field is laid in the sun, it begins to bake. The baking releases methane and ethylene, used to make the grass blades. Once the off-gassing begins, it never stops. Methane is 20 times more potent than CO₂ as a greenhouse gas. The climate crisis is deepening rapidly.

THE GLOBAL PLASTIC THREAT

Research finds plastics can lead to disease, disability, and premature death.

MORE

Syn Turf Letters, cont.

Syn turf fields with plant-based infills have their own issues. Weeds and fungi grow in the pitch. Roots are very difficult to remove; they become entwined in the matrix through which the PFAS-laden grass blades are woven. Herbicides usually come into play to kill them.

No long-term studies on the effects of exposure to the multiple toxins in the fields on users have been conducted. Epidemiologists have warned for years, however, that adolescent exposure to multiple chemical toxicants simultaneously will have profound health effects later in life.

For more information, see:

- [Safe Healthy Playing Fields;](#)
- [Environment & Human Health, Inc.;](#)
- [The March 2020 issue of this](#)



newsletter.

Then to my surprise, on August 19, *The Post* ran a much more hard-hitting article about plastic water bottles that people inadvertently allow to get hot before drinking the water. [That article is here.](#)

It may have been planned, it may

have been accidental, but *The Post* created what would seem to be a very logical connection between the heating of water in plastic and the heating of children on plastics fields.

Here is my response to that article:

Dear LTE,

On 08/07/25 you published an article on the pros/cons of the U.S. addiction to plastics grass and the health risks certainly affecting the predominantly young users of this product, chosen by adults. Third-degree burns, heat stroke and death, serious abrasions, turf-toe, easily IDed, but these only scratch the surface.

Today, 08/19/25 you publish information on the health risks that single-use plastics bottles pose for consumers when exposed to heat

MORE

Syn Turf Letters, cont.

and UV energy from the sun. You focus on water bottles, but the chemistry is the same for all sorts of plastics beverage containers.

Being journalists, hopefully driven by logic and science, you can connect the dots. Plastics grass being exposed to UV energy for 8–10 hours/day, reaching temps from 120° to 150°F will decompose in the same manner. The breathing space above a plastics grass field is full of microplastics, nanoparticles, lead, other toxins, and methane gas.

A wealth of science on plastics' toxicity can be found at [Artificial Turf.php](http://ArtificialTurf.php) on the Environment & Human Health, Inc. website.

They did not publish the first letter. At this writing the second has yet to appear. ■

A Citizens Guide to Safe Bow-and-Arrow Hunting for Deer in Montgomery County's Suburban Neighborhoods

By Peggy Dennis, Past MCCF President and Member of the Transportation Committee; West Montgomery County Citizens' Association

The 2025–2026 season for archery hunting begins in September and runs through the end of January. Now and over the summer is the perfect time to discuss archery hunting with your neighbors and local civic association and line up one or more hunters to work in your neighborhood.

This is my annual exhortation for civic organizations and individuals to organize. As deer populations have increased, suburban and urban areas in Montgomery County face too many deer. The carrying capacity of the land is about 40 animals per square mile but, in some suburbs, it

is believed the deer population exceeds that exponentially. Although pleasing to watch, large numbers of free-roaming deer increase the risk of human injury from deer-vehicle collisions (DVC). Montgomery County has more than 2,000 reported DVCs per year, and this statistic does not include the thousands of deer which are injured or killed but are not reported. Some years back, my son sustained major damage to his car by running over a dead buck with antlers.

Most people know that deer and deer ticks spread Lyme disease. How many are aware that they are also associated with debilitating and costly diseases such as Babesiosis, Bartonella, Ehrlichia Chaffensis, and

MORE

Bowhunting Deer, cont.

Powassan Encephalitis? Decreasing our deer overpopulation is good for public health.

Deer cause great damage to the environment. They have destroyed the understory of many of our regional, community, and stream valley parks; denuded hillsides of native plants; destroyed habitat for other species; accelerated soil erosion; and promoted the takeover of invasive species. Some naturalists now consider overabundant deer as significant a threat to the bird population as climate change. Too many young deer make your neighborhood attractive for predators such as coyotes to move in, a situation we are beginning to experience in Montgomery County. And, if you have too many deer, forget about your landscaping or trying to grow your own fruits and

vegetables in your back yard!

THE BOWHUNTING OPTION

You can help solve this ongoing problem. Other options for deer management—such as feeding, exclusionary fencing, and chemical “birth control”—are impractical, counterproductive, or prohibitively expensive. Regulated hunting, specifically bowhunting, is a safe, ethical, humane, and efficient method for decreasing the number of deer in residential neighborhoods. It provides deer population control at the least cost to taxpayers because volunteer bowhunters do the “work” of removing deer as a public service.

Hundreds of metro areas—including Fairfax County, Virginia; Columbus, Ohio; the Pittsburgh suburbs; and many cities in Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Canada—allow bowhunting. Few problems and

no accidents have been reported. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources supports the use of bowhunting to curb deer populations in the suburbs.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Archery is one of the safest sports in the United States. Most accidents involve the bowhunter falling out of a tree stand. In Maryland and Virginia, there have been no recorded incidents involving injury to persons, pets, or property caused by a bowhunter.

Bowhunters typically hunt from elevated positions or tree stands. This means that an arrow is shot at a downward angle. If it misses the deer, it goes harmlessly into the ground. An arrow, under most conditions, cannot travel any appreciable distance once it hits even a

MORE



Bowhunting Deer, cont.

twig or small limb. National surveys show that most deer harvested with a bow are shot at distances of 20 yards or less, which makes it ideal for hunting in and around suburban and urban areas.

Deer taken by reputable hunters are never “wasted.” All the meat (venison) is used, either by the hunter or by donation to local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters. In Montgomery County, this is done by an organization called Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry. Property owners who wish to obtain venison may do so through arrangement with their hunter.

GETTING STARTED

Many individuals know little about hunting, particularly bowhunting. Bowhunting in residential

neighborhoods should never be undertaken by amateurs, but left to licensed, well-trained, skilled sportsmen.

HOW TO FIND A SAFE AND RELIABLE HUNTER

In Montgomery County, several groups can link you to an expert bowhunter. The Animal Connection Deer Management Team (ACDMT) and the Bow Hunting Fire Fighters of Maryland are two organizations of skilled, veteran bowhunters with strict rules and enforcement to ensure the safety of hunters and the public. Both groups strongly advocate ethical bowhunting within the laws of the jurisdiction. Most members are members of the Maryland Bowhunters Society, an organization dedicated to preserving and promoting safe and responsible bowhunting; educating the nonhunting public

about the role of the bowhunter in wildlife management and conservation; and educating bowhunters in safety, shooting skills, hunting techniques, and relations with property owners.

Not every suburban yard is appropriate for bowhunting. The bowhunter will first tell you if your property has a suitable location for hunting. If it does, the bowhunter should provide you with copies of his/her hunting license, safety certificate, a release of liability form, and a copy of the permission form for you to sign, plus copies of the permission form for your neighbors to sign, if needed. Your contract or agreement with the bowhunter may stipulate what days and times hunting may take place, how you will know that the hunter is at work, where the hunter will be shooting

MORE



Bowhunting Deer, cont.

from, where bait will be located, whether the hunter may field dress the animal and leave remains on your property or not, and whether you wish to be gifted with venison for your own consumption.

GET SUPPORT FROM YOUR NEIGHBORS

Under current law, owners of inhabited dwellings within 50 yards of the hunting location should give permission before hunting takes place. In seeking permission from your neighbors, you should draw the distinction between the shooting that will take place on your property, and the permission that the hunter will need to enter your neighbor’s yard, should a wounded deer stray onto their property. Hunters are required to make every attempt

to track, euthanize, and remove a wounded deer, even if it is no longer on the property where the shooting has occurred. Most homeowners do not want to return home to find a dead or dying deer in their yard, and will be willing give the permission to the hunter to “track and retrieve.” If your neighbors have questions or express anxiety or reluctance, it will help if you hold a meeting with them and the bowhunter. The bowhunter can then explain how, where, and when the hunting will take place. It is crucial that your neighbors understand that this form of hunting is safe, humane, and presents no risk to people, pets, or property.

To find an experienced, licensed archery hunter, contact one of these:

- [Animal Connection Deer Management Team](#)
- [Bow Hunting Firefighters of Md.](#)
- [Maryland Bowhunters Society](#) ■

Minutes, MCCF General Meeting, Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 7 p.m., via Zoom

By Alan Bowser, Secretary

- 1. Approval of the Agenda.** The agenda was approved.
- 2. Approval of the Minutes.** The minutes of the June 8, 2025, awards program were approved,
- 3. Treasurer’s Report.** Treasurer Jerry Garson reported \$5,060.00 as the Federation bank balance.
- 4. Announcements.**
 - President Gannon announced a September 4, 2025, in-person event featuring author Miranda Spivak speaking about her new book on transparency in government.

MORE

July Minutes, cont.

■ The next General Meeting of the Civic Federation will be September 8, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., via Zoom

5. July Program. The evening's discussion focused on the County Council's More Housing N.O.W. proposal and ZTA 25-02 now before the Council. [A video of the meeting is online here.](#)

a. County Executive Elrich made extensive comments about the proposed ZTA and the general subject of planning and land use in Montgomery County. He expressed his view that the community engagement process of the Planning Board and the County Council was lacking, leaving residents poorly informed or misinformed about the housing in the County. He also expressed his

view that the County's traditional master planning processes had been ignored by the Council and the Board in their recent plans for housing and corridor development. He called on residents and organizations like the Civic Federation to advocate for a more community-based planning process in the County and to hold elected officials accountable for their decisions about land use and planning.

b. The County Executive also discussed regional housing forecasts and reported that the Council of Governments had informed Montgomery County that it had determined that the proposed housing units included in the County's various master plans more than exceeded its regional recommendations and that there was no need for the County to make zoning changes

to facilitate additional housing. The County Executive also called upon the County Council and the Planning Board to investigate why developers were not utilizing and building out their already permitted approvals for new housing, including in the master plans and in the activity centers. He said that the Council's proposal would not create the needed workforce housing in the County and, further, did not take into account the negative impacts that the plan would have on the environment, water and sewerage infrastructure, and schools. He said that the government needed to take a stronger role in creating affordable and workforce housing.

c. Delegate Questions. Delegates asked a broad range of questions regarding housing and transportation issues facing Montgomery

MORE

July Minutes, cont.

County. They asked about: tax increment financing; new approaches to build out the County's bus rapid transit system; gentrification and displacement; fiscal impact statements for proposed development; community engagement; the future of master planning; and the impact of federal downsizing on planning, housing, and economic development.

d. Speakers also asked questions about the University Boulevard Plan and how it would affect the Four Corners and Kemp Mill neighborhoods. There was also considerable interest in a proposed ZTA that would affect the siting of a proposed Costco gas station location in the East County and its impact on nearby communities. A speaker also

asked questions about the County's eminent domain plans related to the deployment of bus rapid transit on Viers Mill Road.

6. Adjournment. The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 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 civicfednews@montgomerycivic.org.

Send all address corrections to membership AT montgomerycivic.org.

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