



Happy New Year!

As we start 2015, we wish you and your family a joyous new year!

Montgomery County

Welcome and Farewells

MHP wishes a fond farewell and thank you to Department of Housing and Community Affairs Director Rick Nelson on his retirement. We welcome Clarence Snuggs, former interim Secretary at MD DHCD as the new Director. Snuggs will begin this month, and we look forward to working with him. Elisabeth Feldt has also been selected as the new Director for the Department of Environmental Protection. Additionally, we wish farewell to Steve Silverman, who retired from his post as Director of the Department of Economic Development last week.

Development Ombudsman

County Executive Leggett requested the introduction of Expedited Bill 58-14 that would create a new non-merit position of Development Ombudsman, serving in the Office of the County Executive. The Development Ombudsman would act as a facilitator for commercial and residential development projects - working as an intermediary to address challenges, issues and concerns during development. The job includes promoting regulatory efficiency, accessibility, transparency, predictability and consistency across agencies and departments.

The public hearing is scheduled for January 13 at 1:30 p.m. Call 240-777-7803 to sign up to speak, or send your written testimony to county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov.

County Executive and Councilmembers Sworn-in

On December 1, 2014 County Executive Leggett was sworn-in for his 3rd term as County Executive. He was joined by re-elected Councilmembers Berliner, Elrich, Floreen,

Leventhal, Navarro, Rice and Riemer. Additionally, newly-elected Councilmembers Tom Hucker (District 5) and Sidney Katz (District 3) were sworn-in. Since then the Council has elected George Leventhal as Council President and Nancy Floreen as Council Vice President.

Ban the Box Regulations

Legislation went into effect on January 1, 2015, requiring **all businesses with 15 or more full time employees** to remove questions about criminal arrests and convictions from their employment applications. The law also prevents employers from asking job candidates about criminal arrests or convictions until the conclusion of a first interview. Guidance on the new law is available [here](#).

Paid Sick and Safe Leave Legislation Proposed

The Council is considering legislation that would require all employers to provide paid "sick and safe leave" to all employees in Montgomery County, including part-time and tipped workers. [Bill 60-14](#), Sponsored by Leventhal, and co-sponsored by Navarro, Branson, Elrich, and Riemer, would require employers to provide earned sick and safe leave at a rate of at least 1 hour for every 30 hours an employee works in the County up to 56 hours in a calendar year. No public hearing date is set yet.

State of Maryland

Hogan swearing-in scheduled for January 21st

Governor elect Larry Hogan will be sworn-in on January 21st. Two days later he will be required to release his FY16 budget. A big question of concern for many Montgomery County residents is whether Hogan's budget will fund the Purple Line. Hogan has declined to offer positions on many issues - delaying until after he is sworn in. If you would like to send a letter of support for the Purple Line, please see the sample letter from [Purple Line NOW!](#)

Changes in Montgomery County Delegation

On January 14th, a number of new members from Montgomery County will be sworn-in. These are Susan Lee (District 16) and Cheryl Kagan (District 17) in the Senate. On the House side new members are: Marc Korman (District 16), Andrew Platt (District 17), Marice Morales (District 19); and David Moon and Will Smith (District 20). Additionally, due to new appointments (Del. Anne Kaiser is now the House Majority Leader), the Montgomery County Delegation chairs are now Senator Nancy King and Delegate Shane Robinson.

Federal

President Signs FY15 Spending Bill

Last week President Obama signed into law the FY15 Budget bill. The bill includes a total of \$45.4 Billion of funding for the Department of Housing and Urban Development - a very slight decrease from FY14 spending. However, funding within programs was adjusted, resulting in some substantial gains and losses. These include a cut of 10% to HOME funding - dropping the program to its lowest funding level. On the other hand, the Rental Demonstration Assistance (RAD) program saw an expansion which will allow an additional 125,000 public housing units to convert to project based rental assistance, and allow

applications to be accepted through September, 2018. Enterprise has created a [chart](#) detailing each programs funding level.

FHFA requires Fannie and Freddie to fund the Housing Trust Fund

On December 11 the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) announced that it would lift its suspension of mandatory funding to the Housing Trust Fund and the Capital Magnet Fund. The funds will be required to set aside .042 percent of new business purchases to the funds beginning in January 2015. Based on recent purchase volumes at Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, this amount could reach into the \$400 - \$500 million each year, with 65 percent going to the Housing Trust Fund and 35 percent going to the Capital Magnet Fund. Communities should begin to see these dollars in 2016.

Upcoming Events

January

- 15 - [Using Tax Exempt Bonds to Finance Your Developments](#), HAND, Washington, DC
- 22 - Community Development Network of Maryland's [Legislative Luncheon](#), Annapolis, MD
- 29-31 - [New Partners for Smart Growth](#), Local Government Commission, Baltimore, MD

February

- 12 - MAHC Housing Day, Annapolis. MD

March

- 28 - The National Conference on Ending Poverty, presented by A Wider Circle, Washington, DC

Please visit our website at www.mhpartners.org
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