

## Testifying at Public Hearings

- Advertisements of public hearings are carried in Montgomery County newspapers. If you wish to testify at a Council Public Hearing, you may call the County Council office at (240) 777-7931 in advance to have your name placed on the speakers list. If you have not called ahead, when you arrive at the hearing give your name to the Council clerk. If time permits, you may be heard after those who have already signed up.
- While there is a time limit on oral testimony, citizens are encouraged to provide additional comments in writing. Written testimony, whether mailed or presented to the Council at the hearing, becomes part of the official record and is given the same consideration as oral testimony.
- If you wish to present written copies of your testimony at the hearing, please bring at least fifteen copies of your testimony.
- If you need background material on the subject of the hearing to assist you in preparing your testimony, you can call the Council office and appropriate materials will be sent to you. Copies of material on the subject of the hearing are also available on our website and in the Hearing Room at the time of the hearing.
- The Council maintains an informal atmosphere at hearings and Councilmembers often ask the speakers additional questions.

## To Keep Informed About Council Activities

- The County Council office is located on the 6th floor of the Stella B. Werner Council Office Building at 100 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850. The Legislative Information Services office is located on the 5th floor, Room 501. Regular office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
- The Council Legislative Information Services (LIS) office, (240) 777-7910, maintains Council records and can assist the public for research in microfilm records dating back to 1844.
- A free subscription to the weekly mailing of the Council and Committee agendas and the County Cable Montgomery television schedule is available to interested citizens either by e-mail or regular mail. To get on the mailing list, please call LIS at (240) 777-7910.
- Minutes of Council meetings, including worksessions, are available for examination in Legislative Information Services and at the Municipal Collection of the Rockville Public Library. They are sent by mail for a yearly subscription fee of \$25. Please call (240) 777-7910 for further details.
- Copies of bills, worksession papers and other material before the Council are also available upon request. Please call (240) 777-7910.
- Members of the Council Staff are available to answer public inquiries. Please call (240) 777-7900.
- Group visits to the Council may be arranged. Please call (240) 777-7931 for further details.
- Regular Council sessions, Council "Town Hall" meetings, worksessions and public hearings, and some committee meetings are carried live on County Cable Montgomery channel 6. Regular Council sessions usually are repeated on Fridays at 8 p.m., and on Saturdays at 9 a.m. Regular council sessions also can be viewed live on our website [www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council).
- Visit our web site for the latest agendas, background material, minutes, Council and Councilmember News Releases, and more.

## Montgomery County Council Legislative Information Services



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## Fact Sheet

### The Montgomery County Council

- The Montgomery County Council is the legislative branch of County Government. It has nine members, all elected at the same time by the voters of Montgomery County for four-year terms. The terms of the present Council, elected November 2002, began at noon on December 2, 2002 and will continue until noon on the first Monday in December 2006.
- Five members of the Council are elected by the voters of their respective council districts. Four members are elected at-large by all the voters of the County.
- The Council officers are elected by the Council from among its members in December for a one-year term. Officers for 2002-2003 are:  
**President** Michael Subin  
**Vice-President** Steven Silverman
- As of December 2, 2002 the Council President receives a salary of \$79,813 per year. The other members receive a salary of \$72,557 per year.

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*Patrick Lacefield*  
Legislative Information Coordinator

There are seven Council standing committees. The Committees and their members are:



#### EDUCATION (ED)

SUBIN (Chair)  
DENIS  
KNAPP



#### HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

LEVENTHAL (Chair)  
SILVERMAN  
PEREZ



#### HOMELAND SECURITY (HS)

KNAPP (Chair)  
FLOREEN  
LEVENTHAL



#### MANAGEMENT & FISCAL POLICY (MFP)

PRAISNER (Chair)  
DENIS (Lead Councilmember for Personnel)  
ANDREWS



#### PLANNING, HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PHED)

SILVERMAN (Chair)  
FLOREEN  
PRAISNER



#### PUBLIC SAFETY (PS)

ANDREWS (Chair)  
SUBIN (Liaison for Crisis Management)  
KNAPP (Lead Councilmember for Fire & Rescue Services)



#### TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT (T&E)

FLOREEN (Chair)  
LEVENTHAL  
PEREZ (Lead Councilmember for Environment)

### The Council's Responsibilities

The County Council's responsibilities are specified by the County Charter and state law. Some of the Council's principal responsibilities are:

- Appropriates money to fund the capital and operating budgets and sets the local property tax rate and other local taxes.
- Approves all land use plans including the General Plan, area master plans, and sector plans prepared by the Planning Board.
- Acts on zoning changes.
- Exercises oversight over County programs to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.
- Approves the six-year capital improvements, public services, and fiscal policy programs. Approves the county Ten Year Solid Waste and Water Supply and Sewerage System Plans.
- Serves as the Board of Health for Montgomery County.
- Enacts all County laws and amendments to the Code.
- Acts on or initiates reorganization plans for the County government's executive branch.
- Directs and reviews the annual independent audit of County government operations.

### When the Council Meets

The Council generally meets on Tuesdays beginning at 9 a.m. The Council meets other days in committees and frequently holds public hearings and forums in the evenings. Nearly all Council meetings are open to the public.

### Council Procedures

The Council conducts business in the following manner:

1. An item of business is introduced at a regular Tuesday session. The public is notified through the advance agenda and Council report and the Council's website.
2. The Council schedules a public hearing if required by law, which is advertised in Montgomery County newspapers as well as in the agenda. Special measures may be advertised by press release.
3. After the public hearing, the Council holds committee and full Council worksessions. For worksessions, the staff prepares a packet of material for the Council's consideration that summarizes issues raised.
4. Worksessions are open to the public and are publicized through the agenda mailing.

After the worksessions, the item is brought before the Council for final action, usually at a regular Tuesday session.

### The Budget Process

The County Council ultimately has responsibility for government spending in Montgomery County.

On January 15 of each even-numbered year, the County Executive submits a recommended capital budget and six-year Capital Improvements Program. In odd-numbered years, the Executive submits a capital budget and may submit amendments to the CIP approved the year before. This begins the budget season.

The County Executive submits the recommended operating budget on March 15 each year. Independent agencies, such as Montgomery College and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, also submit their budgets on those dates.

After public hearings and extensive open worksessions, both in committee and with the entire Council, the Council takes final action on the budget on or before June 1.

Before the end of June, the Council must set the property tax rate necessary to help fund the operating budget that it approved.

Each fiscal year begins on July 1.