



# MONTGOMERY VILLAGE FOUNDATION, INC.

10120 APPLE RIDGE ROAD  
MONTGOMERY VILLAGE, MARYLAND 20886-1000

(301) 948-0110 FAX (301) 990-7071 [www.montgomeryvillage.com](http://www.montgomeryvillage.com)

January 27, 2021

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Communications Committee

FROM: Mike Conroy, Assistant Executive Vice President

SUBJECT: Communications Committee Meeting

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The next meeting of the Communications Committee will be held at **7 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021** via conference call. Call-in instructions are included in the packet.

Attached is an agenda and meeting packet for your review. Please let me know your attendance plans as soon as possible by calling 240-243-2331 or e-mailing [mconroy@mvf.org](mailto:mconroy@mvf.org).

MC  
Enclosure



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## **MVF COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021**

**7 p.m.**

**Via Conference Call**

### **AGENDA**

- I. Residents Time
- II. Call to Order
- III. Approval of Minutes for August 5, 2020 (Attachment 1)
- IV. Recommend committee chair
- V. Discussion – 2021 Communications Goals
  - a. *Village News* quarterly printing/content needs
  - b. Other print publications
  - c. Weekly news blast
  - d. Social Media – how to capture/engage more residents
  - e. Other suggestions
- VI. Adjourn

**Next Meeting Wednesday, May 5, 2021**

# How to connect to the Montgomery Village Foundation Communications Committee meeting Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021 | 7:00 p.m.

In light of the COVID-19 health emergency, the Montgomery Village Foundation (MVF) Communications Committee is holding a virtual meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 3. This meeting will discuss regular business and include a portion for Residents Time. Please follow the instructions below to participate in the meeting.

## To access the meeting

### By Phone

- Dial: **425-436-6364**
- Access Code: **468503#**

*Please note that due to high call volumes, you may get a busy signal when trying to connect. Please hang up and try again.*

If you are unable to connect after several attempts, text the words **"CALL ME"** to the dial in number (**425-436-6364**). When you are called back, you will need to enter the access code. You can also text the word **"HELP"** to the dial in number to receive alternate numbers to call in with.

Alternatively, you can download the **freeconferencecall.com** app and use it to connect on your phone over wifi, bypassing the need to use a phone carrier. Simply click **"New"** and enter the dial in number and access code in the appropriate boxes.

### By computer or tablet

- Navigate to <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/mconroy60>
- Use your device audio – if you are having trouble with device audio, use the call in number to connect audio
- Do not activate video

### Rules for meeting

- Committee members will have the ability to talk during the meeting (microphones on).
- All other callers will be muted (microphones off) and be able to listen to the business meeting.
- Residents Time will be offered at the beginning of the meeting. Please limit your comments to 3 minutes:
  - Residents who cannot make the meeting can submit questions in advance via the website: <https://montgomeryvillage.com/eform/submit/residents-time-question>
  - A **Question and Answer session** will be available for residents in the meeting to participate
  - When the session starts, residents can enter the queue by pressing **\*6**
  - Residents will be prompted when it is their turn to speak (microphone automatically unmuted)
  - Microphone will be automatically muted after time is up (3 minute maximum, per regular Residents Time rules)

## **MVF Communications Committee**

**August 5, 2020**

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, a regular meeting of the Montgomery Village Foundation Communications Committee was held at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 5, 2020 via conference call.

### **Members Present**

Melanie O'Brien, Chairperson  
John Llewellyn  
Christine Scott  
Jeannie Pizzonia

### **Members Absent**

Doniele Ayres, MVF Board Liaison  
Bryan Price

### **Others Present**

Mike Conroy, MVF Assistant Executive Vice President

#### **1. Residents' Time**

No residents were present.

#### **2. Call Meeting to Order**

Ms. O'Brien called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m.

#### **3. Approve Minutes of the February 5, 2020 Meeting**

**Ms. Pizzonia moved to accept the minutes of the February 5, 2020 meeting. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

#### **4. Recommend Committee Chair**

Nominations were taken for the role of Committee Chair. The committee agreed that Ms. O'Brien has been doing a great job in this role and wanted her to continue in that capacity.

**Ms. Scott moved to nominate Ms. O'Brien as Committee Chair. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

## **5. Communications Policy Review**

Mr. Conroy noted there were no changes to the policies noted in the packet, however discussion was open for committee members to ask questions or make suggestions for potential changes.

### **a. Letters to the Editor Policy**

Mr. Conroy shared that a recent change to the Letters to the Editor Policy was made and approved by the MVF Board of Directors during the closure of the MVF Office. Several letters had been submitted for publication, however, without the printed *Village News* due to the shutdown, there was not a mechanism for the letters to be published (the previous version of the policy did not include publishing them online). The Board approved adding Letters to the Editor to the website, as well as changing the word count to 500 words.

### **b. VN Advertising Agreement**

There were no changes and no discussion.

### **c. VN Collections Policy**

There were no changes and no discussion.

### **d. VN Editorial Policy**

Ms. Pizzonia noted a typographical error which was fixed. There were no further changes or discussion.

### **e. Privacy Policy**

There were no changes and no discussion.

### **f. Web Presence Policy**

There were no changes and no discussion.

### **g. Website Terms of Use**

Ms. Pizzonia asked if the “Copyright” section prevents people from using MVF information and photos in social media posts. Mr. Conroy explained that generally, the information on the website is also shared on MVF’s social media posts, which in turn, are available to the public to share as well. In other cases, he has received inquiries regarding the use of/asking permission to use specific photos or information on the MVF website.

Ms. Pizzonia also inquired whether the policy should include the use of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Mr. Conroy noted that the policy is specifically for websites that Montgomery Village Foundation owns and manages. MVF has accounts on social media sites

and provides links to them through the website – this is covered under the “Links to Third Party Websites” section. There were no changes or further discussion.

## **6. Discussion about print vs. digital *Village News* in 2021**

Mr. Conroy explained that given how COVID-19 is affecting MVF operations and revenue generation in the short and long-term, staff is assembling a very cautious 2021 Draft Budget. Cost-saving and process efficiencies across the organization are being considered. While the MVF Office was closed due to the health emergency, the *Village News* was not printed or delivered. Upon resuming the print editions, many residents were pleasantly surprised with its return. However, given the uptick in website usage for information and news during this time, a serious consideration for the MVF 2021 Budget is whether to continue print media.

Mr. Conroy noted that the draft budget will recommend printing a quarterly edition of the *Village News* allowing for timely insertion of Recreation Guides, as well as election, budget and special event materials. All news would be reported on the *www.mvnews.online* website.

Ms. Scott noted that given the current situation and the fact that several issues were not printed this year, this could be the ideal time to discontinue print altogether. However, she remained cautious that some segments of the population may be cut off from news information if they do not use technology. She also suggested a trial of digital only through mid-2021 to gauge resident response. Mr. Conroy noted that if funding was pulled from the budget, it would be harder to justify advocating for it to return in the future. He also said that without the *Village News*, there would need to be a new delivery mechanism for the Recreation Guides. This would be cost-prohibitive to mail. Ms. Scott agreed that if it cost almost as much to print and mail just the guides as it does to print and hand-deliver 12 issues (including the guides), then the lack of savings didn't make sense, just to cease print publication.

Ms. Pizzonia was concerned that some residents, seniors in particular, don't access technology, and look for the physical print editions. She noted that many in Seniors in Action get their news from the newsletter, so she would not be in favor of going full digital. Ms. Pizzonia also noted that the monthly publication gives kids the opportunity for a first job and responsibility, which is a positive thing. She was in favor of remaining on a monthly schedule.

Mr. Llewellyn asked if the size of the newsletter would increase if only printed quarterly. Mr. Conroy noted the number of pages is dictated by the amount of news needed to convey per issue.

It is reasonable to think that quarterly issues would be slightly larger, as they would most likely also contain pull outs for election, budget or special event information.

Ms. O'Brien agreed that the "hometown newspaper route" is part of the makeup of Montgomery Village's charm and an investment in the Village to provide the opportunity for the carrier staff. She thought the community involvement value was an important point to consider, beyond a purely budgetary/monetary decision; she was also concerned about the potential to keep the *Village News* Carriers on for only a quarterly delivery.

The committee suggested a transition period of quarterly publication before going fully digital.

## **7. Statistics Update**

Mr. Conroy gave a brief overview of the statistics included in the packet for the *Village News* website and social media channels. He noted that overall, response on all platforms has been positive and showed upward trends in usage or participation.

## **8. Discussion of Electronic Sign at Lake Marion Community Center**

Mr. Conroy gave an overview of the digital sign at Lake Marion Community Center. He said that MVF had been approached by other entities about the use of the sign for meetings or events, and the committee should discuss the potential for those use cases. Mr. Conroy explained that MVF needed a variance to erect the sign. The variance allows for a larger maximum size than specified in the county sign ordinance; higher frequency of messages (though they must be static, not moving messages); sets forth the hours of operation (6 a.m. to 11 p.m.); does not allow for commercial/paid advertising; and must adjust brightness to take into consideration surrounding homes.

The project was completed using MVF assessment dollars, is owned by MVF and resides on MVF property. MVF currently uses the sign to advertise its own programs, events or meetings of interest to the entire community. It may also include emergency messages or specific messages from the county applicable to all residents (e.g. – Census information).

The committee discussed the relevance of having messages specific to one segment of the population, and the lack of equity in not being able to provide a similar service elsewhere (e.g. – advertising homes corporation meetings). In addition, it didn't make sense to use the sign to

advertise meetings that did not take place near the community center (e.g. – a Stedwick Homes Corporation meeting announcement would likely not get the desired resident traffic in East Village). Also, it was mentioned that timing of the messages would be hard to predict in order to capture the ideal traffic for a specific message.

Ms. Pizzonia inquired about the potential for resident messages such as birth announcements or weddings (or noting a private rental at Lake Marion Community Center – e.g. “Johnny’s 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party”). Mr. Conroy said a use such as that would likely fall under advertising, as it would be part of the monetary process for the facility use/rental, in which case it would violate the terms of the variance.

The group further discussed that once MVF opens the door for one group to use the sign, others would follow. Given the limited number of messages per day, and the amount of information MVF wished to have on the sign, they felt the current practice of MVF-sponsored events, meetings, programs, etc. that are available for the entire community was the best practice for the sign and did not cross any lines in violating the terms of the sign variance. They also stressed the lack of ability to be equitable in providing relevant messaging for all groups as a reason to continue with the current practices.

## **9. Adjournment of Meeting**

**Mr. Llewellyn moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:09 p.m. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m. The reports, authorizations, and other documents presented at the meeting have been initialed for identification and attached hereto or filed in the offices of the Montgomery Village Foundation

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
MVF Communications Committee Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Mike Conroy  
Assistant EVP