



October 11,2021

The Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Subject: Sierra Club Endorsement for Planning Board

Dear Council President Hucker and County Councilmembers,

The Sierra Club Montgomery County Group is pleased to recommend Carol Rubin for appointment to the Montgomery County Planning Board.

To arrive at our recommendation, we distributed a questionnaire on qualifications, transportation, smart growth, and other climate/ environmental issues to the two applicants selected by the Council for interviews. We received responses from both applicants, whom we then interviewed.

We identified a few broad criteria to help evaluate candidates for the current opening on the Board: (1) extensive knowledge and experience with the Montgomery County planning process, especially in terms of land use and transportation practices and policies; (2) a commitment to, and experience with, engaging populations for whom there are often barriers to participation in the planning process; and (3) a vision of the County that is responsive to the climate threat, prioritizes smart growth so as to focus new development in attractive, high density, walkable, mixed-use, mixed-income, transit-served communities, with plenty of parks and conservation.

While both the applicants shared thoughtful responses and expressed their commitment to public service, we were most impressed with Carol Rubin, who stood out for several reasons.

First, Carol has solid substantive credentials for the position. She has long-standing and successful experience working in the County for several years including the State Attorney's office. Through her work with the Planning Department for 15 years, where she served as counsel representing the Parks Department, the Planning Department and the Board, Carol has gained excellent knowledge, expertise and understanding of issues.

Second, Carol's experience in the community as Chair of the Silver Spring Urban District has provided her insights into the needs facing our urban communities and has learned, through her experience on Gandhi Brigade Youth Media, the importance of encouraging all residents of the County to advocate for their communities so that their issues can be addressed effectively.



Beyond her resume, in her questionnaire responses and during her interview, she demonstrated a thoughtful approach to complex issues that will serve the Planning Board well. Some specific attributes that impressed us are listed below.

1. She recognizes the interconnections among key issues the county is facing -- such as climate change, education, stagnant tax base, equity for all income and ethnic/racial groups.
2. She combines idealism and pragmatism (thus finding a practical way to address critical social and economic issues).
3. She emphasizes searching for win-win answers when making difficult choices.
4. She understands that what is good for the entire county will often have to prevail over what a specific vocal community might desire.
5. She understands the need to listen patiently and respectfully to all communities with an interest in a particular decision; and to respond honestly but firmly to these communities.
6. She demonstrates the intellectual curiosity needed to grapple effectively and creatively with complex and controversial issues; she understands the payoffs from brainstorming.
7. She understands that the approach to addressing many questions must be nuanced.
8. She expresses a life-long passion for public service.
9. She brings some knowledge and understanding of several key issues areas -- such as forest conservation, the county's Agricultural Reserve, MCPS land use decisions, Hogan's 270-495 expansion proposal.
10. She recognizes that the best success for addressing the toughest county issues requires strong and effective partnerships among key decision-making bodies (e.g., Planning Board, MCPS, MCDOT),
11. She worked as staff attorney for various county agencies over recent decades; thus she is familiar with some of the specific opportunities and challenges of several agencies.

On behalf of the Sierra Club Montgomery County Group, for the many reasons set forth above, we believe that Carol Rubin would be an excellent addition to the Planning Board and recommend that the council appoint her.

Sincerely,

Shruti Bhatnagar
Chair, Sierra Club Montgomery County, MD
Shruti.bhatnagar@mdsierra.org | 240.498.3459