



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 778

DATE: March 6, 2023

SPONSOR: Montgomery County Delegation and Prince George's County Delegation

ASSIGNED TO: Health and Government Operations

CONTACT PERSON: Kathleen Boucher (kathleen.boucher@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Support with Amendments

**Montgomery County – Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission –
Commissioner Requirements and Open Meetings
(Montgomery County Planning Trust and Transparency Act of 2023)
MC/PG 105-23**

This bill makes a variety of changes to State law governing the five Commissioners of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) who serve on the Montgomery County Planning Board, including appointment process, term limits, removal and discipline of members, designation of Chair, salaries, outside employment, political activities, revolving door policy, open meetings, and training. The bill was voted favorable by the Montgomery County House Delegation with significant amendments.

Key amendments include those that: (1) delete all changes to the appointment, removal, and salary setting processes for Planning Board members; (2) delete all changes to open meetings requirements applicable to the Planning Board; (3) delete broad prohibitions against a Planning Board member soliciting political contributions and engaging in political activities and substitute a narrower prohibition against a Planning Board member soliciting financial contributions for any political candidate or organization from a person with business before the Commission or soliciting the endorsement of or opposition to a political candidate from any person with business before the Commission; (4) modify training requirements; (5) prohibit the Planning Board Chair from holding any other full-time employment; (6) require the Planning Board to report to the Delegation by December 31, 2023 on its ability to publish on its website frequently updated and timely information on regulatory matters over which the Planning Board has decision-making authority; and (7) authorize individuals appointed by Montgomery County to any bicounty agency (i.e., M-NCPPC, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, and Washington Suburban Transit Commission) to submit financial disclosure statements to the County Council electronically. The amended bill also expands the current process for removal of a Planning Board member to authorize the County Council to discipline a Planning Board member.

Montgomery County supports this bill with the amendments adopted by the House Delegation and respectfully request that the Health and Government Operations Committee vote favorable on the bill with these amendments.