

March 23, 2021

**Testimony on CB 11-21**  
**Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC) - Bylaws - Live Video Streaming of Open Meetings**  
**Montgomery County Council**

**Position: Favorable**

Common Cause Maryland supports CB 11-21 which would significantly increase access to Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation (MCEDC), requiring that meetings be made publicly available by live stream.

Video streaming is an easy and efficient ways to enhance County residents' access to the work of MCEDC. This access and transparency is particularly necessary for MCEDC which provides support to businesses in the county, and now assisting with business relief efforts during the pandemic. The organization has received near \$40 million from County funds and it is important that residents are able to have access to meetings as majority of the organization's revenue is provided by residents of the County.

For too many residents, the work done by MCEDC is a distant and often undecipherable series of activities. Many County residents are unclear how to observe and participate in meetings, especially during the pandemic, but have a strongly vested interest in the work of this organization. For those who can attend meetings, they have to navigate the unnecessary hurdle of requesting access and don't have access to meeting materials.

As technology makes information in all its forms more readily available, Montgomery County should continue seeking ways to utilize these technologies to increase accessibility to information across the state. The technology to live-stream is inexpensive, widespread, and allows all County residents to participate. The use of this technology should also not require registration or any process for requesting access to observe.

**Suggested Amendment:** While we support requiring video streaming, we believe additional requirements are needed to help ensure access and transparency of MCEDC. We recommend requiring video stream be archived for at least a year, or longer if website capacity is not an issue or a platform like Youtube is used to store streams. Meeting materials should also be made available online, in addition to the meeting agenda, at least 24 hours prior to a meeting. Public access to materials will ensure those tuning in to the stream are able to have a full understanding of discussions during that meeting. Meeting material and meeting minutes should be archived and made available online following these meetings.

CB 11-21 would vastly increase Montgomery County residents' access to the meetings of the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation. We urge a favorable report.