



MONTGOMERY PARKS
F O U N D A T I O N

October 1, 2024

MEMORANDUM

To: Artie Harris, Chair *GA*
Planning Board Members

Via: Miti Figueredo, Director of Parks *GB*

CC: Darren Flusche, Deputy Director *DF*
Gary Burnett, Deputy Director *GB*

From: Devin Ellis
Board President, Montgomery Parks Foundation

Subject: Montgomery Parks Foundation Board of Trustees – New Member 2024
Alison Gillespie

The Montgomery Parks Foundation is pleased to present a new candidate for nomination to the Foundation Board of Trustees. Please find attached her bio. This candidate has been fully vetted and voted on by a quorum of the Montgomery Parks Foundation.

We ask for final approval of this candidate at the next Planning Board Meeting.

Sincerely,

Devin Ellis
Board President, Montgomery Parks Foundation

Bio/Coverletter Alison Gillespie, June 2024

I would like to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Montgomery Parks Foundation because I believe that parks are this county's biggest public asset. I'd like to help advocate for them and partner with the staff members who are working to improve and manage them.

As my resume details, I have many skills that could be useful to the Foundation.

I'm a skilled communicator with more than two decades of experience writing about natural resources, ecology and environmental issues. I've also closely worked with elected officials on the local, state and federal level and enjoy good relationships with many who oversee funding for Montgomery County.

I currently work as a public affairs specialist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Silver Spring, where I help to explain and promote the science and history of NOAA to members of the press. Previous to my work at NOAA, I was a communications specialist for the National Science Foundation's National Science Board. In both of these posts I have helped science leaders communicate in plain language with policymakers, stakeholder groups and the general public. These two jobs have included writing speeches, press releases, op-eds, talking points, letters, blog posts and one-pagers and pitches stories to reporters. I also managed social media accounts. All of these skills could help you increase the visibility of the Foundation.

Before my time at the NSF I was a public affairs specialist for the National Institute of Standards and Technology, a large federal lab in Gaithersburg, MD. This work was pre-pandemic and I commuted every day to that part of the county and became very familiar with the unique issues that communities along the I-270 corridor face as they seek to improve. This provides a wide lens for viewing the needs of communities far from my own home and immediate community of Silver Spring.

Since 2023 I have served as Executive Secretary for Bike Maryland, an advocacy group working to make biking better for everyone in the state, and as a trail liaison for the regional mountain bike group, Mid-Atlantic Off Road Enthusiasts (MORE). Both of these demand oversight of teams of volunteers. During the pandemic I co-founded Open Streets Montgomery, a coalition of organizations dedicated to repurposing underused street space for people instead of cars.

My mountain biking friends and hiking pals have provided me with a rich network of potential allies for many types of Foundation endeavors, including fundraising and budget advocacy. I spend many hours a month on trails north, south, east and west in this county and I feel lucky to live near so many great parks. I am regularly able to get dozens of people to testify on behalf of Park issues as needed.

It would be a pleasure to come work with you all at the Foundation.

Thanks for considering my application.

Alison Gillespie

Alison L. Gillespie
(301) 385-0313 | alison@alisongillespie.com
LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/gillespiealison

Professional Experience:

Public Affairs Specialist

Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Silver Spring, MD
Jan 2022 - present

Serves as the agency spokesperson responsible for conducting public affairs and media strategies including planning, designing, and executing activities and campaigns to inform and educate the public about National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) programs, science, and services.

Builds relationships with journalists in order to facilitate the dissemination of critical scientific information that affects both public safety and commerce.

Plans and prepares agency scientists and managers for media interviews.

Writes and edits news releases, talking points, web stories, social media posts, fact sheets and communications plans in plain language style designed to convey critical information.

Writes stories about NOAA research for both the main NOAA website and the research website.

Provides feedback and public affairs advice to the NOAA Communications director and deputy director.

Communications Specialist for the National Science Board

National Science Foundation
Alexandria, VA
June 2020 – December 2021

Supported the National Science Board's communications initiatives, particularly strategic engagement initiatives with critical stakeholders. Developed and managed external and internal engagement, developed engagement products and tools drawing from existing Board and National Science Foundation resources.

Built and maintained relationships with the media.

Prepares talking points, speeches, and presentations for Board members and the Executive Officer using National Science Board reports, data, and graphical elements.

Assisted the Communications Director in short-term and long-term planning and implementation and participates in all phases of the planning process.

Developed content for National Science Board social media and website. Managed all social media accounts for the Board.

Public Affairs Specialist/Science Writer

National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, MD
January 2017 – March 2020

Responsible for reporting and promoting science research efforts and programs through writing of press releases, news articles, feature stories, video scripts, fact sheets, blog posts, web pages and infographics.

Topic areas included biology, chemistry engineering and materials science.

Gathered and monitored analytics of science content for NIST's social media accounts, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.

Maintained large press database, and pitched stories to editors and reporters.

Writer and Communications Professional

Self-Employed

Washington, DC

July 2001 – December 2016

Wrote feature stories for: *Smithsonian.com*, *ModernFarmer.com*, *ElevationDC*, *Bats* magazine, *The Chesapeake Bay Journal*, *Natural Awakenings*, *Rural Telecom* magazine, and *Domicile* magazine.

Wrote news briefs for: *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment* and *ElevationDC*.

Most assignments involved working with research staff and experts in scientific fields.

Pitched stories to editors.

Projects for non-profits included blog posts, briefings, brochures, press releases, annual reports, and other written products.

Public Affairs Officer

Ecological Society of America

Washington, DC

December 1998 – July 2001

Helped to communicate peer-reviewed research science using lay language.

Wrote news articles, press releases, annual reports and brochures.

Led publicity campaigns and maintained a large press contact list and database.

Assisted in the planning of science briefings for policymakers on Capitol Hill.

Instructed members on the importance of tailoring communications to specific audiences.

Managed two interns each year.

Coordinator of Media Relations, Special Events & Volunteer Services

Irvine Nature Center

Owings Mills, MD

June 1994 – October 1997

Wrote newsletter articles, annual reports and press releases.

Created and hosted a weekly informational segment on the local CBS-TV affiliate.

Assisted with the nature center's environmental education programs.

Organized special events, including festivals and educational seminars and a native plant sale that brought thousands of visitors to the Center.

Responsible for promoting the organization through active media campaigns and outreach.

Successfully pitched stories to local reporters regarding Irvine's programs and events.

Managed 100+ volunteers rural and urban volunteers from diverse backgrounds and ages who collectively donated 1000s of hours per year.

Volunteer Leadership Experience

Executive Secretary
Bike Maryland
2023-present

Trail Liaison
Mid-Atlantic Off-Road Enthusiasts
2023-present

Vice Chair
Countywide Recreation and Parks Advisory Board
2020-2023

President
Forest Estates Community Association, Silver Spring, MD
2019-2021

Bluebird Trail Monitor, Wheaton Regional Park, Montgomery County, MD
Montgomery Parks Department
2010-2022

Chair, Playground Refurbishment Committee for General Getty Park
Forest Estates Community Association, Silver Spring, MD
2017-2020

Chair, Environmental Stewardship & Tree Committee
Forest Estates Community Association, Silver Spring, MD
2010-2014

Chair, Safe Routes to School Committee
Montgomery County Council of PTAs
2019-2021

PTA President
Sligo Middle School, Silver Spring, MD
2014-2015

Education

Bachelor of Arts in English and History, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

Affiliations

National Association of Science Writers (member)

DC Science Writers Association (member)

Author of a nonfiction book:

Hives in the City: Keeping Honey Bees Alive in an Urban World

(Croydon Hill, March 2014)

Awarded Independent Book Awards Silver Medal (Environment/Ecology/Nature) in 2015

Signature:



Email: darren.flusche@montgomeryparks.org

Signature:



Email: gary.burnett@montgomeryparks.org

Signature:



Email: artie.harris@mncppc-mc.org











Memo to Planning Board_Foundation Board of Trustees Member

Final Audit Report

2024-10-02

Created:	2024-10-01
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-  Document created by Katie Rictor (katie.rictor@montgomeryparks.org)
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