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Neighborhood News, Week Ending October 1

1 message

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Mon, Oct 2, 2023 at 8:05 PM

Thank you (!) for taking the [bioretention beds survey](#) (72 replies) and the [streetlights survey](#) (90 replies). Hugely helpful to me in representing your views and hopefully to the city (I've shared the results).

Topic A this month is the proposed redevelopment of the Chevy Chase Community Center and Library. Tell me – [here](#) -- how interested you are and well informed you feel – and what specifically you need to know. Then, join me on [Zoom](#) this Thursday (10/5), 7-8PM, for an informative Q&A session.

Neighborhood News for ANC [Single Member District 02](#) Week Ending October 1, 2023

D-day on the Civic Core/Commons
Bioretention: what did we learn, what do we do now?
Streetlights: understanding/fixing the problems
Follow-up on traffic safety requests to DDOT
Tree planting season is now
Plus: antiques and art, upcoming events

- **If you're interested in the future of the Community Center and Library site (aka Civic Core or Commons), now's the time to engage. Here's how.**

Be informed. As many already know, the city's proposing to redevelop the Community Center and Library site to construct new facilities with housing, including affordable housing. **Here's the gist in a one-page backgrounder (three-minute read).**

Look for the all-ANC Community Center and Library survey – next week. The survey will solicit your views on the city's proposal, on affordable housing, and on design elements for a new Community Center and Library. I want you to be heard. With the help of neighbor volunteers, I'll be going door to door to promote the survey and speak to you directly about the issues.

Participate in the city's upcoming community engagement sessions, October 14 and 18. On a parallel track to the ANC's community survey, DMPED (Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development) is also engaging the community in support of the city's OurRFP process. This is to inform the request for proposals the city intends to issue to prospective bidders for the proposed redevelopment. DMPED has scheduled two OurRFP meetings, one on Saturday, October 14 at 12 PM (noon) and another on Wednesday, October 18 at 6 PM. Both will be at Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church at One Chevy Chase Circle. It is critical for DMPED to hear from a cross-section of neighbors. Please plan to attend if possible.

Understand the context. The city is proceeding while the ANC is soliciting your views, including whether you favor the redevelopment or not. It remains to be seen what the results of the survey will be and how they will play with city planners. As your Commissioner, I will represent your views, which is why your engagement is so critical.

Let me help you get ready. I want to encourage and prepare all to engage. As noted above, please tell me about your level of interest and awareness and any questions or issues you have. And

join our Zoom call this Thursday, October 5 from 7-8 PM when we'll review Community Center and Library basics and take your questions and comments.

- **Of the 72 neighbors who have now taken the bioretention bed [survey](#), 58% say they support additional beds on local streets if they are maintained adequately and parking impacts are minimized.** Thirty-three (33)% are opposed, 3% don't feel well enough informed to voice a view, and 6% have no opinion. Almost 60% of respondents (42 people) have written comments, some supportive of the green infrastructure objectives but most critical of the city's maintenance to date. **(See comments in full attached.)**

Surprising support? Yes, considering how critical folks are of the current beds. One might think few if any would want more. But the question was posed as a conditional, and folks responded in that vein. ***IF* is the operative word.**

Now what? Again, the only new beds proposed for our neighborhood are two near the intersection of Nebraska and Utah, one on Nebraska just east of Utah and another on Utah just north of Nebraska. Parking impacts remain to be seen for ECC (Episcopal Center for Children) and neighbors on Nebraska (our house included) once the Maret sports fields are operational. Meanwhile, there are clear benefits of improved stormwater management and traffic-calming. The latter is important on Nebraska at Utah to prevent speeding cars from passing on the right heading eastbound, endangering kids and parents on foot and bikes.

What about the maintenance? We'll see how the city does from here and how our community collaboration goes. Our neighbor-led bioretention brigade has already cleaned up several beds in preparation for new planting on October 27 with the DOEE (Department of Energy and Environment) and its contractors, Rock Creek Conservancy and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. And arguably, it's spurred the city to clean up several of the beds on its own – city teams were at work in the neighborhood last week. So, we're off to a good start. But again, we're helping not replacing the city. **There are two more scheduled clean-ups: Saturday, October 14, 1 PM, Northampton and Moreland and Saturday, October 21, 10 AM, 29th and Stephenson.** Extra volunteers are welcome (encouraged). **Please email Jane Sherman (janetillinghastsherman@gmail.com).**

- **Wrapping up our [streetlights survey](#), 50% of 90 neighbor respondents say the lights are bright (17.5%) or too bright (32.5%). Nearly as many, 47.5%, say they are just right. And 2.5% say they are dim.** This is helpful feedback, and I've reported the results on a rolling basis to the city's project manager, Robyn Jackson (robyn.jackson@dc.gov). This will help the city evaluate its program and anticipate requests for adjustments.

How to get the lights adjusted. Jackson has advised to use the [DC 311](#) system to request adjustments to the lights. There's no need to file a request through the ANC (as a Chevy Chase listserv post had indicated). However, if you do not get a response from the city, contact me.

- **Further to our pending Traffic Safety Input requests to DDOT.** The third quarter ended on Saturday, This week, DDOT (District Department of Transportation) will run its quarterly assessment of pending [Traffic Safety Input](#) requests and select the next batch for action. This will be the first run since the July 21 neighborhood visit by Councilmember Janeese Lewis George and DDOT Director Everett Lott. We're hoping the various streets and intersections we visited make the cut.

I spoke with CM Lewis George at Chevy Chase Day (Sept 23) to ask for her further support to get DDOT to move on our neighborhood requests. She pledged to be helpful. I then wrote to her last week to follow up and encourage her to contact the department. **I also wrote to DDOT directly to press them.** Here's what the department representative told me:

For the 7/21 site visit, I spoke with the engineers and they have the running list of issues flagged and noted with the critical concerns and possible solutions. However, we want to wait until the latest batch of locations are revealed next week under Q1 in the TSI 2.0

model to see if any of the locations in question come up. We continue to rely on the prioritization process and can only take action once they are selected. So I'm hoping some are chosen and we can get the ball rolling. If none show up in the October batch, then the team and I will follow up internally to see what low-hanging fruit we can tackle that may be done outside of the TSI process. For now, we ask for the community's patience as we await next steps on what the dashboard shows next week.

Takeaways: (A) We'll see if we make the cut. (B) If we don't make the cut, DDOT might chose other avenues to move on some of our requests. I will continue to press our case with DDOT and CM Lewis George.

- **DDOT/Urban Forestry have launched the 2023-2024 tree planting season — get yours!** DDOT/UF aim to plant 8000 trees this year toward the goal of a 40% increase in the city's tree canopy by 2032. And here's the incredible offer that bears repeating: [the city will plant a tree](#) on the street in front of your house for free. Even better, [Casey trees](#) will plant up to 25 (yes, 25!) trees in your yard for free. Beyond all the other benefits of trees (lower summer temperatures, improved air quality, reduced flooding, etc.), they also increase the value of your property. So, carpe diem!

Want to help nurture the trees we already have? Check out the city's tree watering app to find newly-planted trees on your street that you can help water. You can also track trees to be planted at DDOT's tree planting map.

Upcoming Events:

- **Treasures in the Attic, an antique evaluation event sponsored by Chevy Chase Main Street and Long & Foster, will take place this Saturday, October 7 from 1-5 PM in the parking lot at Long & Foster offices at Chevy Chase Circle.** Take your art, antiques, sculptures, jewelry, books, etc. to be evaluated by a panel of expert appraisers. Tickets are \$10 (just to browse and have fun) and \$15 (to have something appraised). Register for a time slot (1-3 PM or 3-5 PM) and purchase your ticket in advance at [Eventbrite](#). All proceeds will go to Chevy Chase Main Street for their support of small businesses and investment in the community.
- **Chevy Chase Art will hold its 4th annual neighborhood art walk on Saturday-Sunday, October 21-22 from noon-5 PM** (both days). Seventy-seven (77) local artists will be showing their painting, sculpture, jewelry, pottery, ceramic art, photography, fabric art, etc. in 31 homes across Chevy Chase, DC and MD. Read more and see the map [here](#).

Lastly, [here's](#) the weekly newsletter from the office of our Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis George.

As always, be in touch with any comments, questions, or requests for service.

Best, Bruce

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Comments on Neighborhood Bioretention Beds.pdf
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