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Neighborhood News, Week Ending June 25 (Note: Key meetings this week regarding the Chevy Chase Civic Core)

1 message

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Focusing on the Civic Core

If you're interested in the future of the Chevy Chase Civic Core (community center and library), now's the time.

Tomorrow night (Monday, June 26) ANC 3/4G will meet in person and by Zoom from 7-8:45PM to hear a revised proposal by the DC Office of Planning on redeveloping the Civic Core.

On Wednesday night (June 28) I will host a follow-on SMD 02 Zoom-only discussion from 7:00-8:30PM for further, in-depth discussion on your views, questions, and concerns about the Civic Core.

Neighborhood News for ANC Single Member District 02 Week Ending June 25, 2023

Priming for this week's Civic Core discussions
Anticipating DDOT's July 19 walk-through on traffic safety
Resolving day-to-day neighborhood difficulties

Plus: help needed for MPD 2nd District annual Meal Day June 28, DC Public Libraries to open and close an hour earlier effective June 26,

Summer in the Parks event at Carter Barron June 29, Wilson pool closed again indefinitely, getting started with DC's composting program

Civic Core Redevelopment – Basics

- **What's in play?** DC's Office of Planning (OP) has advised the ANC it's planning to update its call for a proposed mixed-use building for the Civic Core and associated new zoning. The new proposal will again be for a combined community center and library with housing, including some percentage of affordable units, but now as tall as 80 ft (7-8 stories) as opposed to 93 ft (8-9 stories) previously, while occupying up to 80% of the 73,390 sq ft, 1.685-acre site (aerial photo). OP's changes reflect input from the ANC and community to OP's presentation at a special ANC meeting on May 10. This summary chart captures the changes.
- **Where's it coming from?** OP's proposal tracks:
 - DC's Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan), underscoring racial and social equity goals.
 - ANC 3/4G's 2020 Comp Plan task force report and resolution, calling for redevelopment of upper Connecticut Avenue into the "Chevy Chase Gateway" with affordable housing to be guided by a "Small Area Plan" akin to other city SAPs;
 - The subsequent Chevy Chase Small Area Plan (CCSAP), initiated by OP in March 2021 with community outreach (limited by Covid), supported by ANC 3/4G resolution in May 2022, endorsed by the Mayor in June 2022, and approved by the Council in July 2022;
 - Housing recommendations in 2021 by ANC 3/4G's Task Force on Racism (now the standing Committee on Racial and Social Equity); and
 - Initial implementation of the CCSAP including the January 12 (2023) public "surplus" meeting led by the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) and the February-March (2023) community survey on the same. ("Surplussing" here means determining non-essential facilities and features to inform the Request for Proposal to be issued to developers – e.g., **IF** the community decided basketball courts were not essential at the future site, they would not be included in the RFP.)

- **What's at issue?** The city seeks to redevelop the Civic Core per the CCSAP. The community still has a voice, and it's the ANC's job to represent that voice in all its complexity and nuance. So first, it's about whether the community wants any development at the Civic Core site other than modernizing the community center (which was the only option on the table until 2019-2020) and the library. If so, the issue becomes balancing housing, including affordable units, with modernizing the community center and library consistent with the community's preferences for the look and feel of what constitutes our neighborhood main street. This is a tall order, trade-offs are a given, and the resulting size and scale of the building could irretrievably alter the streetscape. The Civic Core is not, however, an isolated property. It's part of the stretch of Connecticut Avenue from Livingston St to the Circle that the CCSAP envisions will be redeveloped on both sides over the next 15 years. This will include converting the sites now occupied by Wells Fargo, Safeway, PNC, etc., as they become available, also into mixed-use residential, including a percentage of affordable housing, and retail. The Civic Core is the land the city already owns, and thus the first parcel up. Envisioning what the Avenue will eventually look like arguably should inform this initial step. How much open space, green space, recreational space, etc. will ultimately remain when the whole Avenue is redeveloped? What will the final iteration look like? 14th St? NoMa? Navy Yard? Something else? Can the CCSAP goals of redeveloping the neighborhood be met while retaining its distinctive character?
- **What's next?** As OP presents its revised concept tomorrow, it will explain the next steps. Already we can anticipate it will seek to roll quickly into the RFP process with the required community engagement. Here the aim will be to refine the criteria of community needs and preferences for the Civic Core, building on the January public meeting and subsequent survey. Meanwhile, ANC 3/4G will pursue a parallel course of public engagement through an all-community survey, neighbor focus groups, and stakeholder engagement meetings.
- **What can you do?** Be informed. Be engaged. Be heard. **Please attend (either in person or virtually) and speak up at tomorrow's ANC meeting – and Zoom into our follow-on SMD 02 discussion on Wednesday.**

Other Items

- **Heads up on the traffic safety walk-through on July 19 with DDOT (District Department of Transportation) Director Everett Lott** (and hopefully Councilmember Janeese Lewis George). This follows the CM's Care Days visit on May 24. I've flagged Rittenhouse between Utah and Nebraska, Northampton between Utah and Moreland and the intersections at Rittenhouse and Utah, Oregon and Tennyson, Nebraska and Oregon, and Northampton and Moreland. CM Lewis George has advised we confer as a community on our specific requests for traffic calming and control and convey those to Director Lott (with her support). Details to follow, including community meetings, to discuss and reconcile our preferences.
- **Resolving day-to-day neighborhood difficulties is often as simple as using [DC 311](#). But when it isn't, let me know.** This week neighbors alerted me to the following issues: malfunctioning streetlights on the 2900 block of Rittenhouse; a flooded bio-retention bed at 29th and Tennyson; a low-hanging electrical wire on 3100 block of Tennyson; a vacant and trash-strewn property on the 6100 block of 31st; and a serious sanitation issue at Upshur pool (not in our neighborhood but affecting a neighborhood family). We've resolved or are resolving these now.

Announcements and Notices

- **Help support the annual full day meal for Second District Police officers on June 28.** Please consider donating a dessert or soft drinks (Coke, Diet Coke, Sprite, Diet Sprite, or tea in individual cans or bottles). You can deliver soft drinks ahead of time to the Second District Police station at [3320 Idaho Avenue, NW](#) or until June 27 at the home of Samantha Nolan at 2940 Northampton Street. For desserts, please take them to the station on June 28 in the morning (not ahead of time). Also, volunteers are still needed to help serve the officers for the last shift of the day, 10:30-11:55PM. Please email Samantha at nolantutor@yahoo.com or call her at 202-244-2620.
- **DC libraries (including Chevy Chase) will [open and close an hour earlier](#) on Mondays through Thursdays, starting Monday, June 26,** "to better serve those who co-work at the library, seniors,

older students, and caregivers with young children.”

- **The Rock Creek Conservancy and NPS will host a (free) [Summer in the Parks event](#) on Thursday, June 29 from 6-8PM** for people of all ages near Carter Barron Amphitheater.
- **The Wilson Aquatic Center is closed again due to emergency maintenance.** There’s no word as of now on when it will reopen. Direct any comments or questions to dprcustomercare@dc.gov. As an outdoor alternative, the new [Hearst outdoor pool](#) will begin weekday hours, 6AM-8PM, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays, starting June 26, with continuing weekend hours 10AM-6PM.
- **If you signed up for DC’s [composting pilot program](#),** you should have received in the mail a welcome packet with instructions and FAQs. If not, email curbsidecomposting@dc.gov.

Finally, [here](#) is the Ward 4 weekly newsletter.

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

Best, Bruce

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