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## Neighborhood News, March 25, 2024

1 message

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Mon, Mar 25, 2024 at 3:41 PM

**ANC meets tonight in [regular session](#) and Wednesday in [special session](#) – details below**

**Tomorrow night:**  
**Is Artificial Turf Safe for Our Kids and Our Environment?**  
**An Expert Panel and Community Discussion**  
**7-8:30PM**  
**Zoom only – register [here](#)**  
**(We hit 100 registrants, so I boosted capacity. One and all can join.)**

### Neighborhood News ANC [Single Member District 02](#) March 25, 2024

**Tonight's ANC mtg to address Lafayette field, DCPS budget  
 CM Lewis George requests pause on Lafayette field  
 Tomorrow's Zoom to dive into turf safety issues  
 Wednesday's ANC mtg to revisit Conn Ave upzoning  
 Plus:  
 "Shut Up and Write"  
 Donate to the NW Community Food pantry  
 Shred your documents**

**Tonight's ANC meeting will take up a second resolution concerning the District's plan for the Lafayette ball field, proposed testimony concerning the DCPS budget, and establishment of an ANC transportation committee.** The [new draft resolution](#) asks the District to decouple plans for renovating the upper and lower fields at Lafayette and reiterates the Commission's request that the District honor prior commitments to renovate the ball field at Lafayette using natural grass. This comes as District officials had announced on March 13 plans to use artificial turf instead. On the DCPS (District of Columbia Public School) budget, the Commission remains very concerned about shortfalls anticipated for next year, especially the ~24% reduction for Lafayette given budget cuts and the increased staff and teacher salary costs the school will have to absorb. As the DC budget process plays out, the Commission anticipates submitting testimony to the District on behalf of the community to urge restoration of school funding. The [proposal](#) to establish a standing ANC Transportation Committee has advanced through various planning stages and is poised for a vote tonight. I have questions as to the Committee's agenda, members, and relation to individual Commissioner service to constituents. In our Commission area, we're currently working a host of transportation-related issues, from traffic-calming to bioretention beds to stormwater runoff management. I want to avoid inadvertently adding a layer of bureaucracy. Dealing with the District is cumbersome enough. Alternatively, I'll suggest identifying one or two pressing transportation issues not already being addressed by individual Commissioners and asking experienced community members to work on them through a small task force.

**Councilmember Janeese Lewis George, weighing in on the Lafayette ball field renovation, has asked the District to pause plans pending further information and community involvement.** On Thursday (March 21), the CM wrote (letter attached) to Delano Hunter, Director of the Department of General Services, and Lewis Ferebee, DCPS Chancellor saying, "I believe the best course of action is to delay this phase of the project (the lower field) until plans are further developed and properly vetted." She requested, among other documentation, "a side-by-side comparison of artificial turf vs. natural grass including installation costs, operating costs, potential safety risks, length of useful life, usable time per year, and any other relevant factors which informed DGS/DCPS decision." CM Lewis George asked DGS and DCPS to respond by April 1.

**Tomorrow's town hall on artificial turf takes place amidst rising concerns about artificial turf proposed for playing fields at both Lafayette and the Episcopal Center for Children (ECC).** Neighbors want access to durable, reliably playable athletic fields for school and recreational sports programs, and they want to ensure the safety and well-being of youth athletes and the environment. Tomorrow's meeting will address the latter. A second community meeting (date TBA) will focus on the former, comparing the playability of artificial and natural grass fields.

Speakers tomorrow will include: **Melanie Taylor, President of the Synthetic Turf Council** (the industry trade association); **Darren Gill, Executive Vice President of Tarkett Sports**, which owns **FieldTurf**, the company selected by DC for the Lafayette field; **Dr. Kyla Bennett, Director of Science Policy, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility** (Dr. Bennett discovered PFAS in artificial turf in 2019); **Graham Peaslee, Professor, Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Notre Dame** (Dr. Peaslee is the foremost independent authority on testing artificial turf for PFAS); and **Dr. Sarah Evans, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Medicine and Public Health, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai** (Dr. Evans focuses on the impacts of early life exposures to environmental chemicals on child development). Speakers' presentations will compose the first half (45 minutes), followed by equal time for Q&A and discussion with the community.

While increased **injuries**, **heat effects**, and **disposal challenges** have been concerns about artificial turf, new worries have emerged over **plastic pollution** (artificial turf is plastic) and **PFAS** "forever chemicals" (**all artificial turf** tested to date contains PFAS). The meeting will take up these questions towards providing the community with the most up-to-date, fact- and science-based information.

**ANC to revisit Conn Ave upzoning on Wednesday (March 27)**. DC's Office of Planning (OP) will return to the Commission to review its proposal to change the zoning for Connecticut Ave from Livingston St to Chevy Chase Circle in preparation for the Zoning Commission **hearing** on April 29. To review, OP's **proposals** are for two new "Neighborhood Mixed Use" Chevy Chase zones: "NMU-4/CC1 and NMU-4/CC2." The latter is only for the Community Center and Library site and would allow 80' buildings (including a 15' penthouse mechanical space) with 60% maximum lot coverage. The former is for everywhere else on the Avenue and would permit 70' buildings (including a 15' penthouse mechanical space) with 75% maximum lot coverage. Current zoning caps building height at 55' with no restriction on lot coverage.

As I've noted before, the **Chevy Chase Small Area Plan** (CCSAP), the District's blueprint for the redevelopment of the Avenue, did not specify building heights. It left that to OP. Illustrations on page 55 of the plan, however, note "max 50 to 65 feet" (penthouses were not mentioned). Once the new zoning is set, development will be "by right," meaning developers will be able to build within the new codes without challenge by citizens or the ANC.

Height allowances aside, the CCSAP also contains a host of design principles to ensure "cohesive and context-sensitive future development." Those include measures to ameliorate the visual impact of taller buildings. OP acknowledges, however, that "some of the CCSAP guidelines have not been incorporated into the proposed zoning text – this is typically because some of the guidelines are beyond the scope of what zoning can or typically does regulate ..."

So, what's to ensure the guidelines are enforced? OP **has said** (pg. 19) it "anticipates additional discussions with the ANC and community about the proposal." I will be asking OP officials at the Wednesday meeting how the CCSAP guidelines will be adhered to and how residents will retain an effective voice as the long-term development plays out. How will we ensure going forward that the District delivers what the CCSAP promises?

## Announcements

**"Shut Up and Write"**. Paralyzed in your writing? Friends of Chevy Chase Library (MD) hosts a weekly meeting "Shut Up and Write," Wednesdays 12-2 PM in the basement at the Chevy Chase Library, **8005 Connecticut Ave**. FOCCL calls it "a real writing haven" and encourages all aspiring writers to join the experience "to see how much writing you get done quietly in the company of fellow writers." All are welcome no matter your writing experience. And it's free. For more, email: [folchevychase@gmail.com](mailto:folchevychase@gmail.com).

**Donate to the NW Community Food pantry**. The pantry serves 200-275 families weekly, including children and infants, frail elderly, refugees, and disabled veterans. Special items the pantry needs vary week to week – check their website to confirm. Food the pantry needs every week includes peanut butter, whole grain hot and cold cereal, unsalted nuts, dried fruits, cooking oil, fresh oranges and mandarins, granola bars and snack-size bags of trail mix. You can drop off donations every Saturday and Sunday from 11AM-3PM at the rear of **4225 Connecticut, NW (in the alley between Van Ness and Veazey, across from Giant)**.

**Shred your documents**. **Chevy Chase House** is hosting a community shredding event on Saturday, March 30, from 9AM-12PM at **5420 Connecticut Ave**. The shredding, done in partnership **Shred Ace**, will take place behind the building, accessible on Legation Street. **Not accepted**: three-ring binders, garbage (of any kind), newspapers, credit cards, CDs, cardboard, magazines, X-rays, or hardcover books. **Accepted**: donations for the Parkinson Foundation of the National Capital Area.

Finally, **here's** the latest weekly newsletter from CM Lewis George's office.

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

Best, Bruce

**Bruce Sherman**

*Advisory Neighborhood Commissioner*

ANC 3/4G Single Member District 02

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 **Lewis George Letter re Lafayette Field Meeting - 3.21.2024.pdf**  
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