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1 message

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Wed, Apr 24, 2024 at 9:07 PM

Action on rezoning the Chevy Chase Main Street is nigh. Make your voices heard!
Please take my two-minute [survey](#). Hundreds have responded, but I want to hear from everyone.
Also, speak at tomorrow's ANC meeting and write to the Zoning Commission. Details below.

Happy Earth Week!
Join our two SMD 02 special events on Friday and Saturday. Details also below.

Neighborhood News ANC [Single Member District 02](#) April 24, 2024

ANC holds its final Conn Ave zoning mtg April 25
Zoning Commission hears DC's case April 29
SMD 02 celebrates Earth Week

Plus:

Jackson-Reed talk on the Reno Community April 25
Friday Morning Music Club, Woman's Club of Chevy Chase April 26
Chevy Chase's 2nd Annual *Spring Fling* May 3-5
Lafayette Elementary's Spring Auction May 5

ANC meets tomorrow night (April 25) for the fourth and final time on the District's proposed Connecticut Avenue zoning changes. The meeting is online only. Please plan to attend and make your voices heard. Register [here](#). I will be sharing your survey responses at the meeting. Additionally, you can submit comments directly to the Commission [here](#).

To review the bidding (for folks just dialing in), there are three new zones in the offering: (1) to allow 80' buildings (including a 15' penthouse mechanical space) with 60% maximum lot coverage at the Community Center and Library site; (2) to permit 70' buildings (including a 15' penthouse mechanical space) with 75% maximum lot coverage everywhere else on the Avenue from Livingston St to the Circle; and (3) to provide for row houses with up to two dwelling units at the CVS, Safeway, and PNC parking lots with height up to 40' and 60% maximum lot coverage. Current zoning (commercial on the Avenue, not residential) allows 55' buildings with 100% lot coverage. The Avalon Theatre, for reference, is about 40'.

Why the rezoning? The District wants to increase housing in Chevy Chase, including a significant amount of affordable housing, to advance its racial and social equity goals. To achieve the housing DC wishes, there needs to be greater development density and taller buildings on the Avenue, as developers' business models don't work (i.e., they can't make money) with 55' buildings. That's all that current zoning allows. So, the zoning must change.

What do Chevy Chase residents think about taller buildings with housing as the driver? "Neighbors" are not a monolith, to be sure. But here's what the data show from the available survey research. In a [2019 survey](#) by the ANC, only 7-9% of respondents said they supported "6 plus story high rise/mixed-use" buildings for affordable, senior, or "workforce" housing in Chevy Chase. In [last fall's ANC survey](#) on the District's proposed redevelopment of the Community Center and Library site to include affordable housing, 70% of respondents opposed buildings more than 60'. Moreover, in the same survey, when asked about various concerns regarding the District's proposal for the site, the number one concern (expressed by 59% of respondents) was "scale and style of development: consistency with neighborhood architecture and feel." The issue I'm asking about now in the [ongoing survey](#) is the District's proposed 70' buildings elsewhere on the Avenue. Again, please take it if you haven't yet.

What's the ANC's position? The Commission has not yet expressed a position on the zoning changes – that's what tomorrow night's meeting is about. However, the ANC has passed two prior resolutions (located [here](#) and [here](#)), based on the fall survey results, calling on the District to specify a 60' building height limit in the requests for proposals (RFP) for prospective bidders on the Community Center and Library redevelopment.

Commissioner Peter Gosselin has penned a [draft resolution](#) for debate at tomorrow night's ANC meeting. In sum, it defers action on the Zoning Commission's (ZC) failure to engage the ANC, as required, in the initial review process, thereby denying us an opportunity to request party status for the April 29 hearing, and it supports "the major provisions of the proposal" despite community opposition to many of those provisions. Specifically, the draft resolution endorses 80' building heights at the Community Center and Library site and 70' heights elsewhere on the Avenue.

I've reported previously on ZC's failure to engage us. At the [April 11 ANC special meeting](#), I urged the Commission to challenge ZC. My appeal fell on deaf ears. My request was simply to allow us full participation in the hearing, to ask questions, delve into details of our survey data, suggest alternative approaches as warranted – in short, to be a full discussant/participant in the proceedings. I was not advocating a policy direction, rather only that we have a real voice. As things stand, we'll get a mere five minutes along with likely dozens of other speakers at the April 29 hearing – and this, on a critical matter to our community that we've been discussing collectively for more than a year.

How does the ANC fulfill its function of being the neighborhood voice if ZC effectively shuts down our voice? Yes, we can submit a resolution as our community statement. But that amounts to shouting from the bench instead of being a player on the field. At the same time, how does the ANC fulfill that very function of being the neighborhood voice if the Commission itself fails to heed the expressed majority sentiment of the community?

Zoning Commission hears DC's case on April 29. The hearing will start at 4 PM on Monday. It's virtual only, accessible through [this link](#). I encourage you to [speak](#) at the hearing or [write to the Commission ahead of time \(by COB 4/28\)](#) to express your views.

The case is #23-25, which you can review in detail [here](#). I summarized the core proposals above. I've also attached the Office of Planning's summary. I encourage all interested neighbors to participate. At the top I embedded links to register to provide oral testimony and to send written testimony. If providing testimony, oral or written, you should take a look at the Office of Zoning's [background and guidelines](#).

It bears reminding that the new zones proposed by the District are necessitated by the redevelopment of the Avenue as called for in the [Chevy Chase Small Area Plan](#), which seeks to advance the District's racial and social equity goals in Chevy Chase by spurring more affordable housing. As of now, the only parcel actively being redeveloped is the Community Center and Library site, which is public land. The rest of the plan will take years to complete as it entails private land subject to redevelopment by individual parties.

However, if ZC approves the new zones, future development on the Avenue will be "by right," meaning developers will be able to build to code with no community input. Increased height and density will significantly enhance the economic viability of development. Buildings as tall as 70' along the Avenue and 80' at the Community Center and Library site are to be expected. They are the trade-offs for substantially more housing, including affordable housing.

Celebrating Earth Week in our neighborhood. This year's [Earth Day](#) theme is "Planet vs Plastics." [EARTHDAY.ORG](#), the global event organizer, is "demanding a 60% reduction in the production of **ALL** plastics by 2040." They note, "Plastics extend beyond an imminent environmental issue; they present a grave threat to human health as alarming as climate change. As plastics break down into microplastics, they release toxic chemicals into our food and water sources and circulate through the air we breathe. Plastic production now has grown to more than 380 million tons per year. More plastic has been produced in the last ten years than in the entire 20th century, and the industry plans to grow explosively for the indefinite future ... More than 500 billion plastic bags—one million bags per minute—were produced worldwide last year. Many plastic bags have a working life of a few minutes, followed by an afterlife of centuries. ... 100 billion plastic beverage containers were sold last year in the United States. That's more than 300 bottles per inhabitant. A few of them will be converted into park benches; none of them will be made into new plastic bottles and 95% of all plastics in the US won't be recycled at all."

On Friday, April 26, from 8:30 AM-12:00 PM, our neighborhood green thumbs will again team up with DOEE (Department of Energy and Environment) and its contractors the Rock Creek Conservancy and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay for some green infrastructure work, specifically a spring cleaning of our neighborhood bioretention beds. We have a core group of volunteers but welcome all others who care to join. The meet-up spot will be 29th St and Tennyson by the bioretention bed there. Wear appropriate shoes and bring some gardening gloves if you have them. If not, we'll have extras and all the tools we'll need. Please contact John Burwell if you can participate (johnburwell@me.com), copying me. This is a fun and productive activity that helps ensure the (26) bioretention beds in our neighborhood are free of weeds and invasive species. **The meet-up spot is 29th & Tennyson Sts.** An ample supply of coffee and donuts will get us started.

On Saturday, April 27, from 4-5:30 PM, tune into our community [Zoom](#), "Purging Plastics" with Stephanie Miller, founder and executive director of Zero Waste in DC, and John Johnson, program manager at DC's Zero Waste initiative. Given this year's Earth Day/Week focus on plastics, the Zoom will delve deep into what each of us can do to purge plastics from our daily use. [Zero Waste in DC](#) is a non-profit, based in Chevy Chase, dedicated to

promoting environmental sustainability. Stephanie Miller was at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) for 25 years, working on climate change and other development challenges in emerging markets. She's now shifted her focus to the individual level as a lecturer, workshop leader, consultant, and author. Her [book](#), *Zero Waste Living, The 80/20 Way: The Busy Person's Guide To A Lighter Footprint*, focuses on those things (the 20%) that can make the biggest (80%) difference for real and sustainable impact. John Johnson is a seasoned waste management professional with over twenty years of dedicated experience in the industry. Before joining DC's Department of Public Works, he was co-founder and chief operating officer of the Inner City Green Team in New York City, where he led the design and implementation of a comprehensive recycling initiative at the New York City Housing Authority. His expertise includes waste prevention, reuse, recycling, curbside composting and organics collections. John holds an MS in Urban Policy Analysis and Management from the New School for Social Research and BS in Urban Studies from Macalester College.

Other Events

Jackson-Reed High School students and faculty present their research on the Reno Community, Thursday, April 25, 6:30-7:30 PM at the Cleveland Park Library, [3310 Connecticut Ave NW](#). Registration is optional, but helpful [here](#). The presentation will feature the history of Fort Reno from the Civil War on, including the story of Reno City, a Black community dismantled to make way for Alice Deal Middle School. Presented in conjunction with *Undesign the Redline*, an exhibit about national and local housing discrimination on display at the Cleveland Park Library through July 11, 2024. Visit www.undesigndc.org for more or email undesigndc@gmail.com.

The Friday Morning Music Club returns to the Woman's Club of Chevy Chase on Friday, April 26 at noon. Music of Poulenc, Mozart, and Kapralova will be performed. An informal reception will follow. This event is free and open to the public. [7931 Connecticut Ave](#). Ample parking is available behind the clubhouse off Dunlop Street.

Chevy Chase's 2nd Annual Spring Fling is coming for a weekend of activities May 3-5. Organized by [District Bridges](#). Some highlights: **Friday, May 3:** 3-7 PM: Chevy Chase Main Street's First Fridays business specials and vendor market; 3 PM: Live Music at Blue44 Restaurant and Bar. **Saturday May, 4:** 11 AM- 12:30 PM: "300 Years Per Mile: A NEW Historic Walking Tour of Chevy Chase DC" with Historic CCDC & Chevy Chase Community Association; 12-5 PM: vendor market on Connecticut Ave NW with free popcorn and snow cones; 12-5 PM: kids craft activity at Child's Play with face painting and balloon art; 1-4 PM: live jazz music in Chevy Chase Circle; 2 PM: free outdoor yoga class with Circle Yoga at Chevy Chase Presbyterian Church. **Sunday, May 5:** 11 AM: Ibtys Salon grand opening, Chevy Chase Arcade; 11 AM- 4 PM: Chevy Chase/ART pop-up market in the PNC parking lot; 5 PM: Avalon 2024 gala, Avalon Theatre. Full details [here](#).

Lafayette Elementary School's spring auction is Saturday, May 4, 7-10 PM. This will be an outdoor event with some 500 people are expected to attend. The spring auction is the school's annual fundraising event and helps support some of Lafayette's unique programs and provides many needed school resources. Get your tickets and sponsor a teacher ticket if you are able at: <https://Lafayette2024.givesmart.com>. You can use this website to bid on silent auction items.

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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 [Chevy_Chase_Zoning_Summary.pdf](#)
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