

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMITTEE
MINUTES
February 18, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Members present: Ann Wild (chair), Tom Brault, Rose Edwards, Julie Stanish, Kathy Strom (Town Council liaison), and Cathy Wolf. Martin Gold arrived at 7:25, and Scott Egloff arrived at 7:35. Also attending were Warren Rizzi, the Town management assistant, and Joan Urban and Naomi Kaminsky, who are working on an aging-in-place initiative for Chevy Chase.

The minutes of the January 21, 2009, meeting were approved.

Reporting on events, Kathy Strom said that the Town had received a good response to the Feb. 22 chili dinner, but that the art event for children, also scheduled for that day, was being postponed. It may take place instead on March 22, when there also will be a classical concert. An event to launch the Climate Protection Committee's month-long walking challenge has been rescheduled to March 15. An April 18 event, Magicians Without Borders, may also include the playground re-opening, and there may be a wine-tasting event in May.

Julie Stanish said 18 people, and a Gazette reporter, have said they are planning to attend the Town's first Chevy Chase Dinner Group event, at the Shangri-La restaurant on Feb. 19.

Joan Urban and Naomi Kaminsky gave an overview of their planned initiative, Chevy Chase at Home, designed to allow people to remain independent as they age in their own homes. Participating residents would get access to a broad network of services through a single phone call to a central coordinator; the structure could be based on annual dues or a combination of fees, volunteers and voluntary contributions. The two women said they have received strong support so far from residents of the various Chevy Chase sections, and the committee agreed to distribute a survey at an appropriate time to help determine if there is sufficient interest among residents to help make this project work and what services residents would like from the program. Urban and Kaminsky also plan to offer an article for the April issue of the Town Forecast and propose a budget to the committee to help cover communication start-up costs.

Scott Egloff updated the committee on the proposed Neighborhood Watch Program. The program was discussed at the Public Services Committee, and Scott made a presentation to the Town Council. Officer Dana Matthis, the Montgomery County Police liaison to the program, will speak at the Town annual meeting on May 5. There also will be a Town public meeting on policing and public safety options in March, where it may be possible to find people willing to be Block Captains. Eventually 100 Block Captains would be needed for the 1,000 homes in the town, but Egloff said he initially hopes to sign up 30 volunteers.

Tom Brault described the efforts to combat crime in his neighborhood, near the 4-H Center. He has worked with officials at the 4-H Center and with Todd Hoffman. He has also met with the Public Services Committee, which deals with public safety and has brought policing options before the Town Council. Kathy Strom noted that the Town has recently hired off-duty police to patrol on weekend nights.

Ann Wild discussed the Manna Food Center collection program that Rose Miller has agreed to run for two years. Residents are encouraged to deposit food in drop boxes that will be in the Town Office lobby and at Town events. Rose will take the food to the Manna Food Center.

Kathy Strom and Ann Wild, who met with Todd Hoffman and Warren Rizzi, said the Town is receptive to the committee's projects. Ann said the names of Town documents on the Web site have been changed so they no longer all begin with the words "Town of Chevy Chase," which will make searching easier.

Cathy Wolf said a planned event featuring Charlie Cook could be in April or May.

Ann Wild brought up a proposal from Ketch Ryan to organize an event for people using the Townneighbors listserv to meet one another. After a brief discussion, members turned instead to an idea to host a progressive dinner in the fall. This event could mark the 100th anniversary of the first house in town or other historical event, though more research is needed. Bridget Hartman, who has expressed interest in organizing the dinner event, will be invited to the April committee meeting.

On the continuing efforts to find a family to run the Fourth of July event, Kathy Strom said she would contact families who have hosted block parties.

Martin Gold proposed changing the Policy for Use of the Town Crier to include the theft of items from unlocked cars as well as locked cars. Committee members had mixed views on this proposal, which was not acted upon. The committee no longer had a quorum.

Ann Wild described her meeting with the chairs of other Town committees. She has gotten the other committees to post their agendas on the Web.

The meeting adjourned at 9 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rose Edwards