

**Community Relations Committee
MINUTES
July 15, 2009**

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Members present: Ann Wild (chair), Kathy Strom (Town Council liaison), Tom Brault, Rose Edwards, Scott Egloff and Cathy Wolf. Warren Rizzi, the Town management assistant, and Bridget Hartman, a Town resident, also were present.

Cathy Wolf offered a motion to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2009, meeting. Kathy Strom seconded the motion, which was approved.

Cathy and Bridget Hartman said Town residents are volunteering to host and/or cook dinners for the Centennial Supper, which is being held to mark the 100th anniversary of the first platting in Chevy Chase. Relatively few residents have signed up to attend so far, though committee members said they expect a good response as the event, scheduled for Sept. 12, draws closer. Another flier will go out in mid-August. The committee also complimented the Town staff for the hard work and creativity they put into an earlier flier, inserted in the July Forecast, which showed a map of the area from 100 years ago. Cathy reminded committee members to talk up the dinner with friends and neighbors, and Scott Egloff said he would encourage block captains to do the same.

Discussing the Town's July 4th celebration, committee members said the crowd, of about 675 people, was bigger than last year, with many of the attendees signing up at the last minute. People occasionally had to wait for food items to be replenished, and the loud music sometime made it hard to hold conversations. Overall, though, the event was quite successful, with residents appreciating such innovations as sack races and, especially, the reading of the Declaration of Independence. Cathy said she would send thank-you notes to organizers Susan Reynolds Milner, Diane Mooney and Karen Elkins.

The committee thanked Rose Miller for organizing the June 18 discussion and dessert, which was well-attended; it featured Town residents Barbara Oppen, Peter Winglee and Michael Lebowitz.

Scott said that efforts to launch a Neighborhood Watch program are gaining momentum, and he and Officer Dana Matthis, the Montgomery County Police liaison to the Town, believe that the training of block captains can begin in September. Given that the training lasts nine hours, committee members strongly supported the idea of making the sessions available on DVD or videotape, and Scott said he would bring this up with Officer Matthis. He said the residents who have volunteered to participate also will be discussing what sort of program to have; several committee members said the initiative should aim to boost communication and neighborliness as well as to combat crime.

Kathy discussed a recent conference call in which she and Warren talked about the Town Web site with committee member Martin Gold and Town Manager Todd Hoffman.

Several proposed improvements, such as adding a security item to a drop-down list and a news box to the home page, have been made. Warren said the re-labeling of documents—so the names don't all start with Town of Chevy Chase and say what the document is about—has made navigating the site much easier. Tom Brault suggested adding a link to the Chevy Chase Historical Society Web site, which includes old photos of the Town.

Ann Wild said Town Council member Pat Burda had incorporated the committee's suggestions in her draft update of a Town document laying out guidelines for committee procedures and responsibilities. The Council is still working on the guidelines, however. The committee had called for more regular reporting of committee agendas and minutes and better communication among committees.

Regarding Chevy Chase at Home, an aging-in-place initiative, Kathy and Warren said the organizers could submit receipts for agreed-upon spending to the Town office, though they should call first.

Pat Burda has agreed to host an event for new Town residents in September or October. As for other planned events, members discussed holding a celebration of the reopening of Elm Street Park, possibly a joint event with the county. Ann said the Chevy Chase Dinner Out Club plans to have its next restaurant outing in late August or early September.

Ann led a discussion of the committee's work over the past year. Members said they were generally pleased with their efforts, with Tom citing last November's Turkey Trot and last spring's playground re-opening as particularly fun and successful events. Members expressed strong support for continuing the holiday gift drive and the Manna food drive, which both began this year, and coming up with more Discussion and Desserts. Ann noted that the committee needs an events chair for next year. She thanked the members for their hard work; Kathy did, too, on behalf of the Town Council.

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Rose Edwards