

Environment Committee Minutes
February 5, 2009

A meeting of the Town of Chevy Chase Environment Committee (EC) was held Tuesday, February 5, 2009 at 7:00 pm.

Attendees:

Vicky Taplin (Chair)
Rob Enelow (Counsel Liaison)
Sam Black
Ruth Fort
Miriam Goldberg
Sally Kelly
Jean Shorett
Joan Rood

1. Vicky Taplin made these announcements:

- ❑ The EC noise proposal was presented at the January Town Council meeting. The Council was generally receptive. An informational meeting for residents will be held on February 24, followed by a public hearing at the March Council meeting. Written comments may be sent to the Town Office.
- ❑ The Shades of Green program began in January with postings in the Forecast. Green Pages giving additional information and links are on the Town website. EC members were encouraged to share information with other residents via the Townneighbors listserv.
- ❑ The EC recommendation that Town staff take measures to protect trees during public construction projects was presented at the January Town Council meeting. The policy holds the Town to the same standard for protecting trees during public construction that the tree ordinance imposes on private construction. The Council adopted the recommendation.
- ❑ Town resident, Melanie Choukas-Bradley, has just released a new edition of her book "A City of Trees," which is a field guide and history of the trees of Washington DC. It is available at Barnes & Noble and through Amazon.

2. The Committee discussed a draft of a Tree Canopy Incentive Program written by Vicky Taplin and Tom Heath.

- ❑ The planting of 90 trees/year on Town-owned property is not sufficient to ensure a thriving canopy over the long term.
- ❑ The draft proposal presented for discussion has two goals: encourage residents to plant canopy trees on their own property, and encourage proper maintenance of existing trees.
- ❑ After discussion, the Committee consensus was that:
 1. The proposed tree planting incentive was appropriate and should go forward. The Committee recommended that tree species should be limited to native species that are hardy within our soil and climate conditions, that the offer should be on a first come first served basis.
 2. Any financial incentives for tree maintenance should be offered separately rather than associated with new tree plantings. Problems were identified relative to whether such incentives would work, and whether they would reach the right audience (those who do not currently do work to keep trees healthy). The tree sub-committee should consider this part of the proposal further before making a recommendation on tree maintenance to the Council.
 3. Related to tree maintenance, Joan Rood will write a notice for the March Forecast reminding residents that spring ice, rains, and wind can lead to tree and property damage from falling

limbs, and that therefore, March would be a good time to make use of a free “tree checkup” from the Town arborist.

3. Sally Kelly described an upcoming presentation to be held March 2nd on a Net-Zero Energy home being built by Meditch-Murphey architects, who are Town residents. The presentation will cover all the features of the home with a view toward how residents can apply them to their own homes. In addition to promotion within the Town, the event will be promoted via other neighborhood listserves.

4. A proposal to add bike racks in the Town was on the agenda, but the presenter was unable to come to the meeting. The topic will be addressed at a future meeting.

5. Joan Rood informed the Committee about progress in the review of the Water Drainage Management Ordinance. She reported that residents with recent construction projects are being surveyed about how the ordinance has affected them. One concern has arisen regarding the deed restriction associated with the Town’s requirement for maintenance of water retention equipment. One resident said this affected his ability to get a construction loan. The subcommittee will look into this further to determine whether this is an individual case, or a pattern. There was a discussion about how the Town engineer and Water Board interpret the Town’s water drainage ordinance relative to the County’s requirements. It was agreed that parties enforcing the Town’s ordinance should be fully informed about the County Code, and that the Town should only allow drainage systems that meet or exceed the County’s requirements.

7. The EC’s next meeting will be held on March 5th. The meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Submitted by
Sally Kelly