

**TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE
Long-Range Planning Committee**

**Minutes of March 15, 2007 Meeting
7:30 p.m. – Town Hall**

Virginia Ceaser, notetaker

Members attending: Pat Burda, Kathy Strom, Stephanie Brown, Tina Coplan, David Lublin, Diane Mooney, Tamara Harris, John Navratil, Virginia Ceaser

Handouts:

1. Agenda
2. Minutes of February 15, 2007 meeting
3. Notes from March 6th meeting with Dave Walton and Legacy Open Space packet
4. Elm Street Park history
5. Bethesda Parking District/Town of Chevy Chase maps
6. Governance Study Comparative Chart
7. MTA packet
8. Background paper on Purple Line recent developments

Call to Order: Pat Burda convened the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Minutes of the February 15, 2007 meeting were reviewed. Members of the Committee reported that they had no additional information on the Pier I site and also expressed concern that the sale of the Nigerian Embassy on Connecticut Avenue might result in subdivision which could set a precedent for the 4-H Club if it should decide to sell all or part of its property. After these comments, the minutes were adopted.

4-H Memo from the Committee

The Town Council has decided to put the Long-Range Planning Committee 4-H Club memorandum on its April meeting agenda. The Committee will recommend that the Council begin the application process for Legacy Open Space as a first step to qualify for County money should the property ever be offered for sale.

Strategic Plan

Pat Burda announced that the Visioning Committee's Strategic Plan was unanimously adopted by the County Council at their March 14 meeting. The Long-Range Planning Committee will need to structure a review process of the plan in the coming months.

Development Updates

- Woodmont Avenue (Lots 31 and 31A project) : David Lublin attended a meeting sponsored by the developers for the Bethesda construction projects on Lot 31 and

31A earlier this evening. Work on those projects is scheduled to begin in the fall of 2008 should be completed in 2010-11. Concerns were raised regarding road closures, increased traffic and the impact of this development on the Trail. David will contact DPWI and recommend any actions the Town Council should undertake to minimize the impact of this construction on the Town of Chevy Chase.

- Pier I: The Long-Range Planning Committee needs to track developments regarding the Pier I site. Negotiations are underway to transfer air rights from the adjacent church to the Pier I developers.
- Thyme Square (Woodmont East project): The Long-Range Planning Committee will track the progress of the new construction project proposed for this site which is also scheduled for by the Summer/Fall of 2011.

Purple Line

At the March 14 Town Council Meeting, Mier Wolf alerted the community that proposed changes in the Purple Line location have caused concern. In a letter to the Mayor from the MTA dated March 7, 2007, Michael Madden, Project Manager of Planning, states that “we do not feel that it is worthwhile to further study the underground tunnel options along the Master Plan alignment for the proposed Purple Line” because the tunnel costs are “at least \$150 million higher than an at-grade alternative”. In addition, it has been reported that there is now some question as to where the Purple Line will be built adjacent to the Trail. In addition, information on Trail access, Purple Line ridership and traffic impact are issues which need to be studied. The Town Council asked the Long-Range Planning Committee to look into these issues. A line item of \$250,000 was added to the Council budget for this purpose should professional studies/consultants be needed. John Navratil will be the committee’s lead person on this project with David Lublin’s help.

Walter Reed/Bethesda Naval Hospital

A 45-day community comment period concerning the impact of the closure of Walter Reed and transfer of patients and personnel to the Bethesda Naval Hospital may be ending. The committee discussed a draft statement concerning the traffic impact on Wisconsin Avenue and, possibly, its environmental impact on wetlands by the Trail.

Open Space

Tamara Harris, who has been asked to be the Committee’s lead person on Open Space, started the discussion by reviewing the handouts. She discussed the Town’s ability to hold conservation easements and then focused the discussion on “buffer zones” and how the Town might go about protecting them. Items for future discussion/exploration include:

1. Developing a plan for targeting desirable “buffer” properties, particularly parking lots on the west side of the Town.
2. Exploring the development of a Town-sponsored revolving fund for purchasing desirable properties. The Council could then put conservation easements on those properties prior to resale.
3. Identifying criteria for Town held conservation easements and, if none exist, the Committee might make recommendations for such criteria.
4. Publishing an article in the Forecast explaining the concept of conservation easements and how this authority could be used.
5. Considering a plan to encourage donations of property to the Town.

As these issues are all relevant to the Land Use and the Environment committees, Pat Burda suggested all committees work together to examine strategies.

Governance Study

The Committee reviewed a Governance Study Comparative Chart showing the governance structure of Maryland municipalities with population numbers similar to the those of the Town of Chevy Chase. It was decided that many of the municipalities listed were too dissimilar to be relevant. More information is also needed regarding what tasks mayors actually have in these municipalities and the differences between town managers and administrators. The Committee may ask Vic Tervalo of the Institute of Governmental Services, the University of Maryland, for further data.

Adjournment and Next Meeting

The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 19th.