

TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE  
COUNCIL MEETING  
April 10, 2024

*All Councilmembers were in attendance.  
The recording of this meeting is available on the Town website.*

DISCUSSION WITH WONDERS EARLY LEARNING

At 6:30 p.m., the Town Council met with representatives from Wonders Early Learning and Extended Day to discuss the organization’s mission, enrollment trends, and financial needs. The Council agreed to continue consideration of Wonders’ request for financial support.

I. GENERAL BUSINESS

- Heard March 2024 financial report.
- Heard Town Manager’s report.

II. PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Held a public hearing on a variance for a front yard fence at 6700 East Avenue. Voted unanimously to approve the variance.
- Held a public hearing on an ordinance to amend Chapter 1 (General Provisions) of the Town Code to clarify language and revise the list of Montgomery County laws that apply in the Town. Discussed and agreed to one amendment requested by Councilmember Rush regarding clarification that the Town will not automatically opt into chapters of the Montgomery County Code that are replaced in their entirety. Voted unanimously to adopt the ordinance, as amended.

III. COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS

- Discussed the FY25 budget. Voted unanimously to introduce an ordinance to adopt the FY25 budget. A public hearing on the budget will be held at the Town’s May 7 Annual Meeting.
- Voted unanimously to introduce an ordinance to require a real property sale disclosure regarding Town regulations. The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure buyers of real property in the Town are aware of the Town’s building, water drainage, urban forest, and noise regulations. A public hearing on the ordinance will be held at the May 15 Council meeting.
- Discussed the Bethesda Market Park project. Councilmember Rush presented a draft plan to provide additional Town funding to allow for construction of a well-designed park with high-grade amenities, including a water feature, stage, and play/exercise area.

Mr. Rush explained that due to project delays, inflation, and further work on design, the original budget, which includes \$4.5 million from the Town, will provide for only basic amenities, such as a lawn area, trees, paths, and dog parks. To not lose the opportunity to build the exciting and attractive park that had been previously envisioned, the Town should consider providing additional support. This support should be part of a comprehensive plan that assures an adequate budget for the additional amenities and contingencies, and also requires participation of other parties. Mr. Rush recommended that the total increment to the budget be set at \$5 million, with contributions as follows:

- \$500,000 of state grant monies that the Town received in FY24
- \$1.5 million in base Town funding
- \$1.5 million in funding from the Town if matched equally by other sources
- \$1.5 million from other sources, including private donations and additional funds from the Parks Department.

This plan would include conditions including, among others:

- Assurance from the Parks Department that they support this financial plan and will seek its full funding.
- The park will include high-grade amenities, with support from the Parks Department for the capital and maintenance costs necessary for ensuring a high-quality park.
- A commitment that construction of the portion of the park on Lot 10 will proceed as soon as the Parks Department takes possession of that parking lot, and that this should occur promptly upon the opening of the garage on Lot 24.

Mr. Rush noted that the Town's ample reserves can support the proposed incremental funding plan. The Town's ARPA federal grant of \$2.3 million has offset Town operating expenditures, leaving an equal amount in the Town reserves to support special projects, including the Bethesda Market Park. If the full incremental amount of \$3 million in Town support were authorized, the Town would still have over \$10 million in unallocated reserves after the authorization.

The Council endorsed the draft plan, approved notice to Town residents, and agreed that a final vote on any additional funding will only be taken following a presentation of updated park designs to the community, along with updated cost estimates, and solicitation of resident feedback.

*A detailed review of the draft plan will be sent via Town Crier next week.*

#### IV. OTHER BUSINESS/UPDATES

- Discussed the Montgomery Planning Department's Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative (AHSI). Mayor Lane reported that she has testified in front of the Planning Board on the initiative, and her testimony was well received. She also met with municipal leaders and the Planning Department staff, the latter who confirmed that there is no intent to supplant municipal building regulations with regulations for multifamily housing. Mayor Lane asked the Planning staff to establish this intent in the official report to be sent to the Planning Board this summer following work sessions on multifamily housing strategies.
- Discussed modifications that the Town has requested to the fencing and barriers along the Purple Line alignment adjacent to the Town to enhance residents' privacy and safety. MCDOT and Purple Line officials are currently considering these improvements and their cost, but the Town is still awaiting a formal response, which is expected within several weeks. The Council also discussed the status of the Capital Crescent Surface Trail through Elm Street Park and along Willow Lane. County transportation officials will attend the Council's July 10 meeting to discuss the project. The Town will invite Parks officials to this discussion.
- Mayor Lane and Councilmember White reviewed legislation of interest to the Town that passed during the Maryland General Assembly's 2024 legislative session. The

legislation includes Governor Moore's three housing bills. The Council conferred with the Town Attorney about a provision in one of these bills that is unclear and regards the exemption of established single-family neighborhoods from certain multifamily housing density requirements. The Town attorney has reached out to Delegate Solomon, a sponsor of the bill, to request clarification.

- Councilmember Rush asked about the status of the East West Highway crosswalk installation and the widening of Bradley Lane at Wisconsin Avenue. The Council discussed these matters and asked the Town Manager to provide updates.

V. ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting was adjourned at 9 p.m.