



Forecast

JUNE 2020

NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

We Are All In This Together

First, congratulations to our newly elected and re-elected Councilmembers! Following the Town's first ever universal vote-by-mail election, Ellen Cornelius Ericson, Irene Lane, and Barney Rush were sworn in for two-year terms on the Council at our May 13 Council meeting. Ellen and Irene are joining the Council for the first time, as Barney embarks on his third term. Joel Rubin and I have a year remaining on our current terms. I look forward to serving this next year with all of them.

While I welcome Irene and Ellen, I will miss Wicca Davidson and Kirk Renaud as Council colleagues. Many thanks to each of them for their volunteer service, which extends far beyond their time on the Town Council, and for their friendship and support.

With Wicca's and Kirk's departures, we have rotated positions on the Council. Barney is now the Treasurer, Ellen is the Secretary, Irene is the Community Liaison, Joel is the Vice Mayor, and I am now the Mayor. Despite these shifts, I am confident the Council will continue to serve the Town and our residents as effectively and conscientiously as possible in these uncertain times.

And I thank Barney for his leadership as Mayor for the past two years. We all should be grateful for his thoughtful and diligent efforts to reduce the impact of the Purple Line on those who live near the project, to improve public safety in and around Town, and to advocate for parks on the surface parking lots behind the Farm Women's Market. I am pleased that he will continue his efforts in those areas this year.

Unfortunately, the current COVID-19 pandemic continues to cast a dark shadow over our community and far beyond. Within the Town, it has forced us temporarily to abandon our in-person gatherings and events; to postpone cherished community traditions like Trash & Treasures and block parties; and to pull away from, rather than draw closer to, our neighbors as we pass on the street. Montgomery County remains under a stay-at-home order, even as other parts of the state begin to reopen.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts by our staff, however, the Town's business continues, and we are all adapting as best we can to meetings by videoconference. With relatively little lead time, the Council, Elections Board, and Town staff successfully converted our annual election into one conducted entirely by mail, resulting in the highest-ever voter participation in an uncontested Town election. We continue to move forward on a range of Town projects, including addressing leaf blower concerns, traffic and safety issues, and redevelopment plans for Zimmerman Park.

While we all look forward to a time when our lives can resume some semblance of normalcy, please continue to follow official guidance from the County and State regarding COVID-19. And please be mindful of the impact of your actions on the health and safety of others. Unfortunately, the more that people disregard public health directives, the longer the County stay-at-home order is likely to remain in effect.

Yet amidst the uncertainty, one more silver lining is the spirit and strength shown by our residents who have organized and participated in efforts to help others during this difficult time. Whether it is donating protective gear, shopping for seniors, or sharing some flour with a neighbor, our residents are stepping up to the challenge. Thank you all for what you do, and please keep up the good work. We are all in this together.

-- Mayor Cecily Baskir

TOWN NEWS

Public Hearing on Proposed Building Code Changes

At its June 10 meeting, the Town Council will hold a public hearing on proposed amendments to the Town building code. The amendments clarify existing exceptions to the Town's side yard setback regulations. The exceptions allow additions to homes that do not conform to the Town's required side yard setbacks, provided certain criteria are met. The proposed changes include:

- Clarifying the Town's side yard setback requirements for additions to nonconforming houses on interior lots that are less than seven feet from each side property line. In these cases, only the walls of the proposed addition are used to calculate the required setbacks.
- Clarifying the Town's side yard setback requirements for additions to nonconforming houses on interior lots that are seven feet or more from at least one side property line. In these cases, the Town allows one wall of the house that is at least seven feet from a side property line to be extended. Only the walls of the proposed addition are used to calculate the required setbacks.

In addition, the proposed amendments clarify that porch and terrace coverings on certain corner lots that have a fifteen-foot front yard setback may not project into that front yard setback.

A complete copy of the ordinance is available for review on the Town website. If you would like to participate in the public hearing, you may join online at <https://zoom.us/j/3016547144> or by phone at 301-715-8592. The Town's meeting identification number is 301 654 7144. If you are unable to attend the June Council meeting, you may submit comments to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org.

Council to Consider Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Ban

At its June 10 meeting, the Town Council will discuss, and consider introduction of, an ordinance to implement a phased-in ban of gas-powered leaf blowers in Town.

In May, the Town's Climate and Environment Committee presented a report to the Town Council requesting action to address noise, harmful pollutants, and other impacts from gas-powered leaf blowers. In response to the Committee's specific request for a phased-in ban, the Council asked the Town attorney to draft an ordinance to prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers on Sundays, effective September 1, 2020, and to prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers on weekends and federal holidays, effective January 1, 2021. The Council agreed to consider introduction of the ordinance at the June Council meeting and to hold a public hearing at the July Council meeting.

At its May meeting, the Council also discussed the Climate and Environment Committee's proposal to implement a total ban of a gas-powered leaf blowers effective January 1, 2022. Before considering this specific proposal, the Council agreed to hold a public forum in July to solicit community feedback. More information on the forum will be included in the July newsletter.

Zimmerman Park Redevelopment Update

In May, the Town Council continued its discussion of redevelopment plans for Zimmerman Park. The Town's landscape architect has developed several concept plans for park amenities, including a large multi-use lawn area, a natural playground, a picnic area, and a perimeter fencing system that could be fully enclosed to accommodate occasional off-leash dog events.

The Council has asked the landscape architect to work with the Town's civil engineer to develop a final concept plan and to provide a cost estimate for that plan. The Council will continue its review and consideration of the improvements this summer and will discuss when and how to present the concept plans to the public, including holding a public hearing.

Volunteer for Town Committees & Boards

Dear Neighbor,

Each year in June, the Town Council begins the process of seeking volunteers for the Town's committees and filling vacancies on the Town's boards and commission. We encourage you to consider volunteering for one of these bodies so we can involve as many residents as possible in Town affairs.

This summer, I will appoint, with the advice of the Town Council, residents to serve on each of the Town's five standing committees for a period of one year beginning in September. Following is a list of the committees, including a short description of each:

- **Climate and Environment:** Inspires and facilitates energy conservation and environmental stewardship by the Town and its residents.
- **Community Relations:** Encourages a strong sense of neighborliness through community activities and communications.
- **Land Use:** Guides building and redevelopment within the Town using available planning tools.
- **Long-Range Planning:** Identifies emerging issues that require longer-term planning and analysis and monitors activities in county and state government likely to impact our Town.
- **Public Services:** Advocates for high-quality Town services for our residents.

I also will appoint one resident to serve on the Town's Elections Board, one resident to serve on the Town's Ethics Commission, and one resident to serve on the Town's Water Board. Following are brief descriptions of these bodies:

- **Elections Board:** Oversees all Town elections, including making appropriate provisions for nominations, printing ballots, appointing tellers and/or judges and supervising the polls.
- **Ethics Commission:** Receives, verifies, and maintains all financial disclosure forms required by the State of Maryland.
- **Water Board:** Hears requests by property owners who have had a water drainage plan denied by the Town.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve on any of the Town's committees, boards or commission, please submit a brief note to the Town Office **by June 26, 2020**. Your correspondence may be submitted by e-mail to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org and should include your name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and a few sentences about why you would like to serve on that particular body.

On behalf of the entire Council, I would like to extend a special thanks to all of you who have served on one of these bodies over the past year. The dedication of your time and talents provides an invaluable resource to the Town and continues to strengthen and improve our community.

Sincerely,

Cecily Baskir
Mayor

Town of Chevy Chase

4301 Willow Lane
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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TOWN COUNCIL

Cecily Baskir, Mayor

Joel Rubin, Vice Mayor

Barney Rush, Treasurer

Ellen Cornelius Ericson, Secretary

Irene N. Lane, Community Liaison



This newsletter is printed on recycled paper

TOWN UPDATES

Council Listening Sessions in June

Councilmember Irene Lane will conduct two one-hour "How Can We Help?" listening sessions by videoconference to hear directly from residents on what you love about the Town, what you need, and what you may like to change. Sessions will be held on June 3 at 9 a.m. and June 24 at 12 p.m. Please email townoffice@townofchevychase.org with a preferred date to receive a Zoom link.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Wicca Davidson has set up two systems to assist with shopping for those who are sheltering in place. The website <https://my.lotsahelpinghands.com/community/residents-of-town-of-chevy-chase/home> connects those who need a few items with a neighbor who is going shopping. Neighborly volunteers also shop regularly for one or two households. If you would like to volunteer or need assistance, send an email to wicca@wiccadavidson.com or call her at 301-980-5596.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day is June 5, 2020

For a second year, the Town Council has approved a proclamation recognizing June 5 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day. The proclamation honors all victims and survivors of gun violence and declares that our country must do more to reduce it. The day kicks off "Wear Orange" weekend when a national coalition of gun violence prevention organizations will raise awareness about the issue. Visit <https://act.everytown.org/event/wear-orange-2020/search/> for more information.

B-CC Graduation Car Parade -- June 13

A graduation car parade is planned on June 13 to celebrate B-CC High School's 2020 graduation. Residents are encouraged to park in their driveways that day and to cheer on B-CC's graduating seniors as they pass by. Updated information on the parade route will be available via Town Crier.