



Forecast

FEBRUARY 2021

NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE



Monday, February 1
Long Range Planning*, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, February 3
Community Relations*, 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 4
Climate & Environment*, 7 p.m.

Monday, February 8
Racial Justice*, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 9
Traffic Study Forum, 6 p.m.
see page 2

Wednesday, February 10
Town Council, 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 11
Horwitz Discussion, 7 p.m.
see page 3

Tuesday, February 16
Council Work Session, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, February 16
Healthy Lawns Webinar, 7 p.m.
see page 3

Sunday, February 21
Racial Equity Workshop, 3 p.m.
see page 3

Wednesday, February 24
Public Services*, 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 25
Land Use*, 7 p.m.

* Town Committee meeting

Please visit the website calendar for more information on, and instructions to join, these meetings.

A Busy Start to 2021

It's still early in 2021, but we are already off to a busy start. Three major issues dominated our lengthy January meeting and will continue to occupy our attention going forward: the recently completed Town-wide traffic study, the County's proposed zoning changes to allow more multifamily housing in the Town, and plans to improve Zimmerman Park. Hard work lies ahead on these issues, and your engagement and opinions are invaluable.

Traffic Study: Prior to the pandemic, our traffic engineering firm measured the speed and volume of traffic in the Town, with a particular focus on cut-through traffic. It compiled its findings and recommendations into a report that was presented to the Council at its January meeting, together with an alternate analysis and recommendations prepared by the Town's Public Services Committee. Both reports are available on the Town website.

I invite you to review these two reports, especially the different recommended cut-through traffic mitigation strategies. The reports raise challenging questions for the Town to consider, including what level of personal inconvenience we as residents are willing to tolerate to try to deter cut-through traffic. Please join us for a Town Forum on February 9 at 6 p.m. to discuss the reports and share your questions and comments about the recommended mitigation strategies. Your feedback will greatly assist the Council.

"Missing Middle Housing": The potential expansion of multi-family housing known as "Missing Middle Housing" is a core component of the County's general plan update (working its way to the County Council this spring), as well as the focus of a specific zoning law change currently under County Council consideration. Whatever results from this process could bring big changes to our community, and we need to hear your questions and views on these ideas. In the meantime, we are advocating for the Town to maintain the power it currently has to regulate all residential development within our borders, and we want to make sure all stakeholders, including Town residents, have sufficient time to learn and be heard about proposed changes.

Zimmerman Park: For over a year, the Town Council has been working through ideas to improve Zimmerman Park to better serve multiple interests of our residents. With help from landscape architects and engineers, we are developing a concept plan that we will share with residents soon. Your feedback will help guide the Town Council's further decision-making.

Please see page 2 and stay tuned for more information on these initiatives, come to our virtual meetings, ask questions, and tell us what you think. Thank you.

– Mayor Cecily Baskir

TOWN NEWS

County's Proposed Land Use Rules Would Impact Town

Duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhouses, and small apartment buildings could be built in the Town if the County adopts the changes proposed in Zoning Text Amendment 20-07 (ZTA 20-07). The stated purpose of ZTA 20-07 is to provide more housing options within transit-proximate neighborhoods at more price points to alleviate Montgomery County's housing shortage.

The ZTA proposes that the County's setback requirements and height limits for single-family houses would apply to the multi-family housing types. It is unclear at this time if the Town's more restrictive requirements also would apply. For lots within one-half mile of a Metrorail station entrance, the County's lot coverage limit (which now ranges between 20% and 30%) would increase to 35%, and on-site parking space requirements would be reduced. There would be no limit on the number of dwelling units that could be built on a site provided that the height, setback, and lot coverage limits are met.

Since this legislation was introduced, the Town has been working with other municipalities and communities to understand and respond to it. The community coalition is concerned about the rushed process being followed for this major zoning change and the lack of sufficient planning review or study. Further, the Town Council believes strongly that any material change to zoning should await completion of the update to the County's General Plan (Thrive Montgomery 2050) and should reflect the considered conclusions of the new general plan and a holistic assessment of what policies will best achieve the plan's goals.

More information about the ZTA is available on the Town website. You are encouraged to send comments to the Montgomery County Planning Board (mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org) and to the Montgomery County Council (county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov) before their public hearings on the ZTA, which are scheduled for February 4 and 11, respectively.

Town Forum on Traffic Study to be Held on February 9

On February 9 at 6 p.m., the Town will host an online public forum to review and answer residents' questions about the Town-wide traffic study, which was presented to the Council in January. The study and a report from the Town's Public Services Committee (PSC) with its alternate analysis and recommendations are available for review on the Town website. The Council will hold a work session on February 16 at 6 p.m. to discuss the study's findings, the PSC's report, and residents' questions and comments received as of that date. No traffic mitigation strategies will be adopted before a public hearing. Information on how to join the forum is posted on the Town website.

Council Approves Emergency Plan for the 2021 Election

On January 13, the Town Council approved an ordinance to adopt an emergency plan for the 2021 Town Council election. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Town will continue a universal vote-by mail system for the 2021 Town election with some changes to protect voter privacy. A complete copy of the ordinance and emergency plan is available for review on the Town website.

Battery-Powered Blower Rebate Program Now Available

The Town Council recently approved a rebate program for battery-powered blowers and related equipment that is intended to reduce noise from landscaping activities. Residents may request a rebate for half the cost of the purchase of a battery-powered blower, batteries, and chargers, up to a maximum rebate of \$200 per household. The equipment may be purchased by a resident or by a contractor for use in landscaping activities on the resident's property. The Council approved \$30,000 to fund the program, and these funds are available on a first-come, first-served basis until May 31, 2021. More information and an application form are available on the Town website.

TOWN EVENTS

A Discussion with Murray Horwitz

Thursday, February 11, 7 p.m. Via Zoom

Have you tuned your radio to 88.5 FM on a Sunday night and heard an episode of *Gunsmoke* or *Dragnet*? It's *The Big Broadcast*, WAMU's longest running program, hosted by Town resident Murray Horwitz. Each week, Murray weaves together shows from the golden age of radio with historical tidbits and connections to entertainment today. Join us for a moderated discussion on Zoom during which Murray will discuss why radio from the 30's through the 50's continues to draw listeners, how he curates each week's program, and how he handles early radio's limited approach to women and diversity. Murray, a Tony-Award winning playwright, lyricist and broadcaster, has been affiliated with public broadcasting and National Public Radio for more than 30 years and was instrumental in starting *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!* Please RSVP to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org to receive the Zoom link.

Green Town Series -- Healthy Lawns Webinar

Tuesday, February 16, 7-8 p.m. Via Zoom

This webinar will inform residents about how we can implement sustainable, organic practices to have healthy lawns without using synthetic chemical pesticides. Mary Travaglini, the head of the County's organic lawn care program, will tell us about the County's pesticide law, which the Town is considering adopting, and give us a full set of practical "how to" suggestions on practicing organic lawn care, hiring an organic lawn care contractor, and more. There will be an opportunity for you to ask questions and get expert advice. Please RSVP to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org to receive the Zoom link.

"Is Everyone Really Equal? Creation of Resistance"

Sunday, February 21, 3-5 p.m. Via Zoom

Please join a virtual workshop on racial equity and resistance to kick off the Racial Justice Speaker & Event Series hosted by the Town's Racial Justice Special Committee. The inaugural workshop will be facilitated by Mr. Troy Boddy, Director of Equity Initiatives for Montgomery County Public Schools, and will provide a foundational understanding of how systems of oppression and racism impact opportunities in our communities. Participants will learn about and reflect on the historical context of race in the United States, systems of oppression and how they operate, the degrees of racism, and how to interrupt racist systems. Please RSVP to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org to receive the Zoom link.

"Eat Chili Day" -- Sunday, February 28

For many years, we have enjoyed the annual Town chili dinner in late February. It was an occasion to mingle with neighbors and contribute to the Manna Food Center. This year we are proclaiming February 28 as TOCC "Eat Chili Day." In conjunction with this special day, we want to put together a collection of chili recipes for online distribution. We need YOU to send in your favorite recipe to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org by Monday, February 22. If you've copied or adapted a recipe, please note where it came from and whether you want to include your name or a recipe title. Also, please consider a contribution to Manna, whose mission is "to end hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy." See donation options at www.mannafood.org/donate-to-manna/.

Winter Clothing Drive Continues Thru February 28

The Town continues to donate winter clothing to Interfaith Works, which distributes it to 13,000 income-qualified residents, including nearly 6,000 children. Please donate clean, gently used or never worn clothing, such as coats, gloves, hats, and socks, as well as waterproof winter wear. The 24-hour donation box is on the front porch of Marjorie Shaw and Barney Rush at 6917 Maple Avenue.

Town of Chevy Chase

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Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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TOWN COUNCIL

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Irene Lane, Community Liaison



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AROUND CHEVY CHASE

CC@H Virtual Trips & Tours Planned for February

February 10, 1-2 p.m.: **Smithsonian American Art Museum Virtual Tour: Women Artists**

February 19, 1-2 p.m.: A virtual trip through some of **Scotland's most spectacular scenery**

February 22, 2-3 p.m.: A virtual Tour of the **George Washington Masonic National Memorial**

CC@H will host a **5-week Life Stories Workshop** starting February 16, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The workshop will get you started writing your stories. For more information, call 301-657-3115.

Advance registration for these programs is required. Visit www.chevyCHASEathome.org.

Chevy Chase At Home (CC@H) is a non-profit organization that helps local seniors "age in place."

Climate & Environment Committee's Tip of the Month *Attract Birds with Native Plants*

A silver lining to the pandemic is that people are enjoying our beautiful Town environment, including birdwatching and buying bird feeders to attract them. Another thing we can do to attract birds is to install plants that support them. The Audubon Society (<https://www.audubon.org>) has a database searchable by location to help you choose appropriate native plants. As an example, berry-producing plants are generally great for birds, but there is a red-berried plant in our neighborhood that is toxic to them: Nandina, or Heavenly Bamboo. For a list of plants native to Maryland, visit <https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/recommended-native-plants-maryland>.