



Forecast

FEBRUARY 2022

NEWSLETTER FOR THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE



Wednesday, February 2

4-H Committee*, 5 p.m.

Community Relations*, 7 p.m.

Thursday, February 3

Climate Webinar, 6:30 p.m.
see page 3

Monday, February 7

Land Use/ Planning, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, February 8

Climate/Environment*, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesday, February 9

Council Work Session, 6 p.m.
Town Council, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, February 15

Online Wine Tasting, 7 p.m.
see page 3

Wednesday, February 16

4-H Committee*, 5 p.m.

Thursday, February 17

4-H Presentation, 7 p.m.
see page 2

Monday, February 21

President's Day
Town Office Closed

Wednesday, February 23

Public Services*, 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, February 24

Gardening Event, 7 p.m.
see page 3

* Town Committee meeting

Please visit the website for more information on these meetings.

Redevelopment & Town Parks Update

The Council is working on three important land use projects: redevelopment of the former 4-H property; upgrading of Zimmerman Park, and the development of parks adjacent to a new Farm Women's Market.

4-H Property Redevelopment

The new owners of the former 4-H property closed their acquisition in mid-December. On January 19, the Town Council granted the owners a variance to construct a temporary fence, six feet high and with a green screen, around the core of the property. The fence will not enclose the two main wooded areas, on the west side of the property and along Thornapple, and the owners were responsive to Council requests to keep the fence away from residents' homes and move it back further from Connecticut Avenue. It will be in place until construction begins, currently expected in about 30 months.

The owners will be ready to present their initial concept plan to the Town on Thursday evening, February 17. This will be an open Town forum, conducted by Zoom, and all are encouraged to join and hear this presentation. See page 2 for more information.

Zimmerman Park Redevelopment

The Council considered all the comments received from residents regarding the earlier concept design and released two updated designs for resident comment last week. Thanks to everyone who has completed our survey on these updated designs or otherwise provided comments. The updated designs show improved drainage, an expanded amount of open field space, compared to the area residents currently enjoy, while providing security fencing along East West Highway and a portion of Maple Avenue. Temporary fencing will be brought in to enclose the lawn for the times that we have a dog exercise area. On February 9, the Council will discuss resident responses to the plans and decide what amenities, if any, we may wish to add to the park at this time.

Parks Adjacent to a New Farm Women's Market

We have been participating in discussions with the developers and the County's Transportation and Parks departments, regarding a financing plan for the building of the underground garage and constructing parks on the land currently used for the two surface parking lots. The focus is on the amount that the County needs to contribute, and how the County will memorialize its commitment. We hope to have a clearer picture on both points over the next couple of months. The Town's maximum \$4 million commitment has been appreciated, and we are hearing strong support for the project from County Councilmembers.

On another note, we regret to announce that our new Assistant Town Manager resigned just seven days after starting the new job. We will regroup and decide how to proceed in the coming months.

– Mayor Barney Rush

NEWS & NOTES

4-H Property Owners to Present Redevelopment Plan

On February 17 at 7 p.m. via Zoom, the new owners of the 4-H property, Galerie Living and Community Three, will present to the Town an initial concept plan for redevelopment of the property. The owners spent most of January refining the concept plan, taking into consideration the Town's September letter that outlines the Town's key interests in the redevelopment. Information on how to join the February 17 meeting is posted on the Town website. There will be a moderated resident Q&A session that evening following presentation of the concept plan. We encourage all residents to listen and participate as we learn more about the redevelopment.

Council to Discuss Zimmerman Park Plans and Survey

On February 9 at 6 p.m. via Zoom, the Town Council will hold a work session to discuss the latest concept plans for the redevelopment of Zimmerman Park and the results of a community survey about the plans and park amenities. Although the survey ended on January 31, residents are encouraged to continue to submit comments on the plans, which are posted on the Town website.

Council Lowers Town Voting Age to Sixteen

On January 12, following a public hearing, the Town Council voted 4-1, with Mayor Rush opposed, to lower the Town voting age to 16 for residents who wish to participate in Town elections. Mayor Rush stated his preference to permit voting by residents who turn 18 by the November election date used for state and federal elections. The charter amendment implementing this change will become effective 50 days after adoption (or March 3, 2022), barring any voter petition requiring a referendum.

Council Approves Removing Entry Restriction at Maple/Aspen

On January 19, the Town Council approved removing the entry restriction on northbound Maple Avenue at Aspen Street. This signage change, which was subject to a public hearing on January 12, will allow traffic to exit onto East West Highway via Maple Avenue instead of via Aspen Street, Chatham Road and Meadow Lane from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday thru Friday. The Council agreed to several conditions related to its decision, including the possible installation of a flashing LED Stop sign on northbound Maple Avenue at Aspen Street (pending staff determination of feasibility since the power source is solar); installation of a previously approved speed hump between Aspen Street and Blackthorn Street prior to the signage change; agreement to hold a public hearing on the installation of a Stop sign on northbound Maple Avenue at Blackthorn Street; and undertaking a traffic speed and volume study at this location one year following the signage change.

Gas-Powered Leaf Blowers Banned January 1-October 14

Residents are reminded that, effective January 1, 2022, the use of gas-powered blowers is prohibited from January 1 through October 14. The Town Council approved this ban in response to resident concerns about noise and other impacts of this type of landscaping equipment. The regulations exempt gas-powered snow blowers and sprayers. Montgomery County noise regulations also remain in effect in the Town. In February and March, the Town's Climate and Environment Committee will undertake a community awareness campaign about the ban. The campaign will include community listserv and email messaging; door-to-door distribution of placards with information about the ban; lawn signs; and outreach to landscapers who work in the Town.

Free COVID-19 Test Kits and Masks

Residents can get free, rapid at-home COVID-19 test kits and N95 masks at 19 Montgomery County Public Libraries (MCPL). More information is available on the County's COVID-19 testing page at www.MoCoCOVIDtesting.org. The Federal Government also provides free, rapid at-home COVID-19 test kits. To order these test kits, please visit <https://www.covidtests.gov>.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Green Town Series Zoom Webinar

MD Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act, Thursday, February 3, 6:30-8 p.m.

The Climate & Environment Committee is hosting a Zoom webinar to provide Town residents and other nearby communities and organizations with information about the Maryland Climate Crisis and Environmental Justice Act, a bill that has been pre-filed for the 2022 Maryland legislative session. Representatives from Climate XChange will update us on this important bill. The Act plans for our already changing climate by placing an incrementally rising fee on fossil fuel to send a market signal to businesses; reduce pollution; create revenue for vulnerable populations; and build the infrastructure we need for a new green economy across the state including in our County and Town. Please use this link to register: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8rYrzt4AQ1yazeAOzVGptw.

The following events and projects are sponsored by the Town's Community Relations Committee

Join Your Neighbors for an Online Wine Tasting

Tuesday, February 15, 7 p.m. via Zoom,

This time, we are taking a warm escape to the Southern Hemisphere with the Wines of Argentina. Amanda Page, a certified wine and spirits expert, will guide you through a fun, educational tour of what makes Argentina so unique, with its climate and elevation, while you sip on two classic wines. The program will last approximately one hour, including time for questions. Please RSVP to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org for details regarding the wine, discount code for Magruder's, and the Zoom link. No purchase is necessary to participate in this event.

Favorite Plants for Challenging Situations

Thursday, February 24, 7-8 p.m. via Zoom

Mark your calendar for another informative talk by Edamarie Mattei, owner and founder of Backyard Bounty. It's safe to say that we all have challenging garden situations, such as too much or too little sun, sloping yards, and drainage issues. Here's our chance to learn what to plant and how to deal with these and other issues. RSVP to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org to receive your Zoom link.

Cooking During COVID

Calling all cooks and everyone interested in food, including illustrators, writers, and poets

The Town's Community Relations Committee is compiling an online compendium of recipes and food-related illustrations, poems, and essays inspired by life during COVID. What have you been cooking or learned to cook to boost your and your family's spirits during the pandemic? Old standards or new favorites? Have your habits around meals changed? We're especially interested in family recipes for comfort food, but illustrations, haikus, odes, and reflections (or ideas for take-out) are all encouraged. Entries from residents of all ages are welcomed. We're eager to hear from you soon so we can try to put something together by late spring. Please email entries to townoffice@townofchevy Chase.org.

Winter Clothing Drive

February may have the warmth of Valentines, but the weather is mortally cold! Please donate clean, gently used or never used warm and/or waterproof winter wear to those in need. We send donations to Interfaith Works, which provides free clothing to thousands of needy Montgomery County families. The clothing box is on the front porch of Marjorie Shaw and Barney Rush, at 6917 Maple Avenue.

TOCC Book Club Meets March 14

The Town Book Club will meet March 14 at 7 p.m. when we will discuss *Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker* by Jennifer Chiaverini, a historical novel on the remarkable friendship between Mary Todd Lincoln and her seamstress Elizabeth Keckley, a freed slave. More information will be in the March newsletter.

Town of Chevy Chase

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Climate & Environment Tip of the Month

Interesting and Eco-Friendly Gardening

Now is a good time to be thinking about planting and yard projects you want to do once warm weather returns, so here are some tips to create an interesting and eco-friendly landscape:

- Reduce lawn size. Environmentally friendly landscape designs mean less grass.
- Plant wisely: Choose native plants adapted to our area. There are lots of local contractors and nurseries who specialize in natives.
- Layer your landscape. This extends visual interest and improves biological health.
- Plant slopes with native groundcovers such as sedges (e.g., *Carex appalachica*).
- Don't remove your leaves; they can be thinned in the spring if you need more light.
- Add pollinator friendly plants; include larval host plants (many are trees, also violets, milkweed, and parsley family members such as dill and parsley) as well as flowers.
- Plant flowering plants that bloom at different times so that there are floral resources for pollinators for the entire season.
- Aim for ground coverage with living plants (& less mulch). Include water in the garden.
- Harvest rainwater where possible. Take advantage of the County's Rainscapes program (<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/water/rainscapes/index.html>), including up to \$7,500 in rebates per household.
- Get educated: Montgomery College offers courses and Brookside Gardens, Audubon Naturalist Society, and others offer learning and experiential opportunities.