

Relations with Other Organizations

The Hawthorn Citizens Association

After World War II, the Hawthorn area rapidly developed. Although this area had been within the boundaries of the Chevy Chase Citizens Association since 1919, the new residents wanted to have their own association to preserve the character of the new homes and to resolve problems of a new community. In 1951 Miles D. Pillars and Roy F. Thurston co-chaired an ad hoc committee to draft a constitution and prepare a list of nominees for officers of a new association. Hawthorn property owners met on October 8, 1951, in the Chevy Chase Community Center and formed the Hawthorn Citizens Association with these boundaries: On the east by Rock Creek Park, on the north by Western Avenue, on the west and south by the following streets and including all private property adjacent to the west and south sides thereof: Greenvale Street from Western Avenue to Chestnut Street; thence east on Chestnut Street to 32nd Street; thence south on 32nd Street to Beech Street; thence east on Beech Street to Rock Creek Park.

James F. Perrin was elected president; Doris Uppercue secretary; and Raymond M. Beall treasurer. Committees were established for education, entertainment, laws and legislation, membership, parks and playground, programs, public safety (fire and police protection), public utilities, highways, health and sanitation, publicity, and real estate planning. Dues were set at \$5.00 per year. Subsequently, the constitution was amended to increase the boundaries to the triangle bounded by Rock Creek Park, Western Avenue, and Beech Street and to reduce the dues to \$2.50. Between 1956 and 1962, membership was restricted to white adults living in or owning property in the area who were of good moral character and not members of a subversive organization designated by the U.S. government..

The first major problem confronting the Hawthorn Citizens Association was the proposal to have U.S. 240 (now Interstate 270) enter the District through Rock Creek Park and follow the park to the downtown area. This proposal was abandoned after vigorous public opposition by residents of Maryland and the District and by many national groups interested in protecting our parks. Other important projects undertaken were bus transportation for the Hawthorn area, monitoring of property assessments and taxes in Hawthorn, and control of the Japanese beetle by inoculating the soil with a parasite.

During the 1960s, Hawthorn joined Chevy Chase in opposing the rezoning of the Bonnie Brae Estate on Oregon Avenue to permit construction of an embassy-chancery building by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. After this case was settled, Hawthorn and Chevy Chase opposed the dense development of Bonnie Brae with townhouses. The number of townhouses permitted on Bonnie Brae was reduced, but the citizens were not successful in having the National Capital Parks purchase the property for a playground or to have single-family residences constructed instead of townhouses.

The Hawthorn Citizens Association encouraged aesthetic landscaping and maintenance of properties by their owners. Decorations for the holiday season each December were encouraged. Prizes were awarded each year for the best holiday decorations of doors, windows, and overall effect of houses and property. The home beautification programs have resulted in Hawthorn's being the best landscaped area within the boundaries of the Chevy Chase Citizens Association.

The lack of local issues in the 1970s caused a gradual lack of interest in the Hawthorn Citizens Association by its residents. In 1977, the group ceased to function. Since many residents were members of both the Hawthorn and Chevy Chase Citizens Associations, the last officers (James E. Clark III, president; Jesse Johnson, vice president; and the late James S. Holmes, treasurer) approached George Haley, president of the Chevy Chase Citizens Association for the year 1982-83; a total of 204 memberships were given to Hawthorn members. Hawthorn assets were placed in a special account to sponsor worthy projects that enhance the Chevy Chase–Hawthorn community.

Chevy Chase and the Two Federations

Since early times, citizens associations have been established in many parts of the District of Columbia to bring local problems to the attention of the governing bodies—then the House and the Senate District Committees—and the D.C. Commissioners. On matters of citywide scope, unified action by the citizens associations was important to be successful in achieving goals. The Federation of Citizens Associations was formed in 1910 and incorporated in 1940 to provide collective leadership for its member bodies and forum for citywide problems. Because of the segregation existing in the District at that time, this federation consisted only of white citizens associations. The black communities organized their own civic associations and in 1919 formed their own central organization—the Federation of Civic Associations. These federations did much lobbying, mostly of the D.C. Commissioners appointed to govern the District, but also with the two congressional committees concerned with the District of Columbia.

The Chevy Chase Citizens Association was one of the founding members of the Federation of Citizens Associations. Several Chevy Chase members have served as president of the Federation and many others have chaired committees. The association withdrew from the Federation in 1971 both because it continued to exclude blacks and because it assessed member associations on the basis of membership but accorded each association the same number of votes. Chevy Chase, with the largest membership, thus paid the most dues but was repeatedly outvoted in trying to effect change. After the Chevy Chase withdrawal, the Federation made constitutional changes and Chevy Chase rejoined in 1977.

The Chevy Chase Citizens Association considered joining the Federation of Civic Associations during the late 1970s but a boundary dispute first had to be resolved. The western boundaries of the Chevy Chase Citizens Association have existed since 1920 and overlapped the boundaries of the Friendship Citizens Association, a member of the Federation of Civic Associations, in some places between Wisconsin Avenue and Reno Road. The Federation wanted Chevy Chase to reduce its boundaries where there was an overlap, which Chevy Chase was disinclined to do. The dispute was finally resolved when the Federation agreed to accept the Chevy Chase boundaries provided Chevy Chase and Friendship had no objection to boundaries that overlap. Since the two associations had been working together in joint ventures without friction, including the Friendship Neighborhood Coalition and the Wisconsin Avenue Corridor Committee, the Federation of Civic Associations was satisfied that a boundary issue did not exist and approved the application of the Chevy Chase Citizens Association for membership in the federation on January 21, 1981.

The two federations remain very active in affairs of the District, raising their collective voices on issues of concern to District residents. The two frequently support each other's resolutions or statements to the District or the federal government. Although tradition keeps them separate, their member organizations have changed, and differences are less sharp. The elder and once dominant Federation of Citizens Associations now has 38 member associations. Many of them are also members of the Federation of Civic Associations, which has 43 member organizations.

Being active in both federations allows the Chevy Chase Citizens Association interchange with other organizations and enables it to be a part of sociopolitical Washington, D.C.

Chevy Chase and the Government of the District of Columbia

When the Chevy Chase Citizens Association was established in 1909, the District of Columbia was governed by three Commissioners, who were responsible to Congress. All legislation concerning the District originated in either the Senate or House District Committees. The residents were disenfranchised of representation by both Congress and the D.C. Government. In this environment the two federations and their member citizens and civic associations were able only to petition the Commissioners and the Senate and House District Committees to have streets paved, water and sewer lines installed, schools built, trash collected, and other essential city functions performed.

The Chevy Chase Citizens Association conducted mail surveys on issues such as amusement, gasoline, local income, and sales taxes; election of delegates to party conventions; juvenile delinquency; daylight savings time, financial responsibility of taxicab drivers; horse race betting; liquor sales near churches and schools; two-person street-cars; parking meters; and voting for D.C. Commissioners and for the President and Vice President of the United States. This means of determining public sentiment was used to petition both the D.C. Commissioners and Congress. In 1938 members facetiously suggested that the proposed new flag of the District of Columbia depict a pair of handcuffs to denote the lack local suffrage. The residents of the District had to wait another thirty years before the first glimmer of suffrage appeared.

In 1967 the three-commissioner form of government was abolished by President Lyndon B. Johnson and Congress. It was replaced by an appointed mayor and a nine-member council. Congress gave D.C. residents the right to elect a twelve-member school board in 1968 and a nonvoting delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1970. The D.C. Statehood Party was formed in 1970, spearheaded by the civil rights leader Julius Hobson, Sr. During the Johnson administration, innovative changes in welfare and socioeconomic practices were introduced. A United Planning Organization (UPO) was established by the federal government, with a large budget to be matched by local governments. More people became involved in routine government practices and activities.

In the District of Columbia, twenty Neighborhood Planning Councils (NPC) were established, each electing its own officers and establishing and administering job programs for underprivileged youth. The five councils in "nonpoverty areas" worked together to ensure receipt of budgeted funds, since they represented a large number of young people and paid a large share of local matching funds. The programs consisted of recreational jobs, musical programs, neighborhood clean-up campaigns, and research

on historical projects about the District of Columbia. Many councils served as training grounds for future political leaders in the District: For example, Council members Willie J. Hardy, H.R. Crawford, Nadine F. Winter, and Board of Education member Barbara Simmons chaired councils in their communities.

The pressure for Home Rule continued throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s and on December 24, 1973, the Home Rule Act was passed by Congress, largely through the efforts of Delegate Walter E. Fauntroy. This act required a plebiscite of D.C. voters on home rule, which was held on May 7, 1974. This plebiscite also sought the views of voters on the establishment of Advisory Neighborhood Councils (later changed to Commissions). All wards voted in favor of limited home rule and the Advisory Neighborhood Councils. Each ward endorsed home rule by 80 percent or more except Ward 3, which approved it by 58 percent. In November 1974, Walter E. Washington was elected Mayor and Sterling Tucker was elected chairman of the D.C. Council. The other council members were: At large: Marion Barry, Jr., Julius Hobson, Sr., Douglass E. Moore, and Jerry S. Moore; Ward 1: David A. Clarke; Ward 2: John A. Wilson; Ward 3: Polly Shackleton; Ward 4: Arrington Dixon; Ward 5: William R. Spaulding; Ward 6: Nadine P. Winter; Ward 7: Willie J. Hardy, and Ward 8: James E. Coates.

The first Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners were elected in November 1975. Albert E. Golin and Charles N. Mason of the association were very active in establishing the boundaries of the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions and the single-member districts in Ward 3.

The District of Columbia's eight wards were redistricted effective in January 2002. The Chevy Chase neighborhood long had been located wholly within Ward 3, but population shifts prompted the City Council to redraw boundaries that ended up shifting about 8,700 residents, essentially those living east of Broad Branch Rd. and north of Military Road N.W., to Ward 4. The Advisory Neighborhood Commission was informally redesignated as ANC 3/4G to reflect the fact that its members represented areas in two wards.

During 1974 and 1975, several meetings of the association were devoted to Home Rule and Advisory Neighborhood Council plebiscites and to the election for mayor and council members. A very well attended meeting of the association occurred on September 4, 1974, before the primary elections. It featured Clifford L. Alexander and Walter E. Washington, candidates for mayor, and Joel D. Joseph, Kay C. McGrath, Robert E. Miller, Polly Shackleton, and Mary Lela Sherburne, were candidates for Council member from Ward 3. Since then the Association has provided a platform for candidates to address members before

most elections, although the Association has never endorsed a candidate. In recent years such meetings have been held jointly with Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3/4G.

The movement for greater self-determination has continued. An amendment to the U.S. Constitution was passed that gave D.C. voters the right to vote for President and Vice President and for delegates to the national conventions. Walter E. Fauntroy, Delegate to the House of Representatives, proposed a second amendment that would give the District voting representation in both the House and the Senate. Meanwhile the Statehood Party was active and obtained the necessary signatures to have an initiative for statehood placed on the ballot in the November 1980 election.

The Statehood Initiative was approved by a 3-to-2 margin; the final vote was 905,333 for and 670,972 against. The initiative was not vetoed by Congress, so a Statehood Constitutional Convention began to draft a state constitution for the District of Columbia. Five representatives from each ward and five representatives at large were chosen by the voters on November 3, 1981. The members of the convention submitted a constitution on May 21, 1982, which was accepted by the voters, after vigorous debate, on November 2, 1982, by a vote of 49,300 for and 42,177 against.

During the period 1980-1982 the association, in conjunction with Advisory Neighborhood Commission 3G, held several meetings on the initiative and the proposed constitution to inform the members of the issues involved. Neither the association nor ANC 3G took a position on the issue of statehood or the constitution.

The association has consistently demonstrated its support for achieving voting rights for the citizens of the District. At the first Chevy Chase, DC Day in 2005, DC Vote, a nonprofit dedicated to securing full voting rights, was invited to set up a table, distribute material, and recruit signers to a petition supporting the cause. In April 2007, an association contingent marched, carrying the CCCA banner, in the largest demonstration for voting rights in recent years. In 2009, an association membership meeting was devoted to the issue, featuring staff from DC Vote and DC Appleseed discussing the fight for legislation to be considered by Congress.

When the Advisory Neighborhood Commissions were elected, there was some concern about relations between the commissions and the citizens and civic associations. In some parts of the District, there has been friction; ANC 3/4G and the Chevy Chase Citizens Association, however, have had good relations. Joint meetings have been held many times. Members of the Association

have been commissioners, including at least six chairpersons: Albert E. Gollin, Karl F. Mautner, Gail Carlson, Allen E. Beach, Lee Schoenecker, and Anne Renshaw. Some of the tasks formerly performed by the association are now performed by ANC 3G. The

two organizations have been supportive of each other on most issues; one exception was traffic congestion on McKinley Street west of Connecticut Avenue. The association favored widening the street so that there would be two lanes for traffic when there was a bus stopped on each side. ANC 3G opposed widening McKinley; the Commission felt widening the street would create more traffic. The street was not widened.