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## CCCA April 2023 Newsletter

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### Time to Renew Your CCCA Membership

Thank you to everyone who has renewed their household or business membership! We need everyone’s support to continue sponsoring our community events and activities. Household dues are only \$20 a year. **If you have not yet renewed or joined, please go to our website at <https://www.chevychasecitizens.org/>. Click on the join button.** If you are a member, you may need to click on the “forgot password” button to reset your password.

If you prefer to pay by check, send a check for \$20 to CCCA, P.O. Box 42210, Washington, DC 20015. Thank you and we appreciate your support!

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### Announcements – Mark Your Calendar

## Zoom Webinar: Earth Month – DC Sustainability Plan April 27, 7PM

Join the Chevy Chase Community Association for a special Earth Month Webinar on April 27 at 7pm. Learn from the experts about going solar and installing EV chargers at your home. And learn about how you can participate in DOEE's efforts to update the District's Sustainability Plan from Chevy Chase native Jamie Donovan.

CCCA has assembled local experts to speak with our community about ways to reduce energy demand and costs and help our community become more sustainable. Jamie Donovan is the Clean Energy DC Program Manager with DOEE and he is revising the District's Sustainability Plan. Jamie would love community feedback and participation about how to take the current plan to the next level.



Sheryl Ponds, a native Washingtonian, is the founder and CEO of Dai Technologies Corporation, which provides tailor-made, turnkey installations of EV charging stations for your home or business. Sheryl will walk participants through the process and answer questions about what is needed to install EV chargers at your home or business.



Kurt Zwally is Director of Development for Sustainable Energy Systems, a leading solar installer for residential and commercial solutions in the DC area. Kurt will discuss the specifics of going solar, incentives from the Federal Government, the local Solar Renewable Energy Credit Market (SREC), and the right questions to ask your solar installer!



This session will be moderated by Shelley Cohen, CCCA Board Member and Director of Clean Technology Business Development for Ameresco. The webinar will be recorded and posted on CCCA's website for future viewing. Register in advance for this webinar:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_5tl29lX7RhaR7xB7LGPnhg](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5tl29lX7RhaR7xB7LGPnhg)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

## **CCCA Hybrid Meeting (Chevy Chase Community Center and by Zoom) on the "Civic Core," May 2: 6:30 PM**

The Chevy Chase Community Association is inviting all members in good standing to participate in this informational meeting about the future of the "Civic Heart." The D.C. government wishes to add housing to the Library and Community Center site. We plan to discuss the latest initiatives by the city to create a special new zone called NC-19 at the site that allows for greater height, density, FAR, and land coverage than current zoning. We will discuss the deed restrictions on the property since it was purchased by the City in 1909 and whether they will be honored.

Additional topics include:

- Defining affordable housing.
- RFP and proposal processes.
- Surplus and disposal process.
- Potential legal challenges to the deed restriction; and
- Provide answers to attendees' questions.

You are invited to a Zoom webinar.

When: May 2, 2023, 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Topic: CCCA's Civic Core Update and Discussion

Register in advance for this webinar:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_bqauie1WQieAO1AQqv2vw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bqauie1WQieAO1AQqv2vw)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

## The Northwest Neighbors Village Monthly Program

NNV has several planned events that are open to the community. NNV also organizes lunches, museum outings, special interest groups, bingo, support groups and yoga for members and volunteers. Information on all activities can be found on NNV's website at [nnvdc.org](http://nnvdc.org). Have a little extra time and energy? Become a Volunteer. NNV is about neighbors giving neighbors the practical help to thrive while staying healthy, engaged and connected to the community.

Upcoming virtual speakers:

- April 27, 1 pm - Gilded Age Mansions of Dupont Circle with speaker Ralph Buglass
- May 2, 11:00 AM - Bird Brother: A Falconer's Journey and the Healing Power of Wildlife, Rodney Scotts
- May 11, 2 pm - The Real Work: Accomplishment, Achievement, and Their Discontents, Adam Gopnik

## Friends of Chevy Chase Circle Special Events – May 5 -7

([info@friendsofccc.org](mailto:info@friendsofccc.org))

Chevy Chase Spring Fling: Two Communities, One Circle is happening May 5, 6 and 7th with a whole weekend of events aimed at celebrating the newly renovated and landscaped Chevy Chase Circle and the two Chevy Chase's, the one in DC as well as the one in Maryland that claim the circle as their landmark. The kick-off event will be Friday, May 5th.

For the first time ever, the fountain will have lights, in its interior and around the base. Friends of Chevy Chase Circle is inviting everyone to the “countdown” at 8:30 pm sharp to witness history and the inaugural lighting of the fountain. A brass band will be on hand to add to the festivities so bring out the whole family.

Chevy Chase Main Street will be hosting all of Saturday and the plan will include special retail events up and down Main Street, a scavenger hunt for kids, pop-up vendors and a special “plein air” painting event around the circle and a free yoga class too! All will conclude in the evening with The Avalon’s Centennial Gala. Finally, on Sunday, between 12 and 4 pm, join the Garden Club of Chevy Chase’s Garden tour of residential gardens in the Village of Chevy Chase.

Most events are free but for ticket information to the The Avalon Gala or the garden tour, go to: [FriendsofChevyChaseCircle.org](http://FriendsofChevyChaseCircle.org) for more information.

- May 5 - Inaugural Lighting of the Fountain

8:00 pm – Block Party with the Crush Funk Brass Band

8:30 pm – Countdown to inaugural lighting. Bring noisemakers.

- May 6 – Chevy Chase Retail Event Specials
  - - 8:30 am – plein air painting, scavenger hunt, pop-up retail, yoga
    - 2:00 – 4:00 pm – Plein air art show
    - 5:30 pm – Avalon Theatre’s Centennial Gala
- May 7 – 12:00 – 4:00 pm - Garden Club Chevy Chase: A tour of seven charming gardens in historic Chevy Chase Village.

## Issues and Public Policy

### Update on Bicycle Lanes on Connecticut Avenue

*Lee Mayer, President*

*Save Connecticut Ave.org*

*Email: [Lee@saveconnave.org](mailto:Lee@saveconnave.org)*

In March, Save Connecticut Avenue (SCA) met with Mayor Bowser and presented her with its business and residential petitions opposing the bike lanes. The Mayor

understood SVA and instructed DDOT to revise its plan. In a hearing before the DC Council's Transportation Committee, DDOT Director Everett Lott said that they are now considering combining the northbound and southbound bike lanes on one side of the street. Furthermore, he said that they are committed to ensuring all commercial areas have parking on one side of the street.

The bike lane plan, originally scheduled to be made public in the spring, will now be delayed until late 2023. While Mr. Lott stated that there is no finite timeline for the project, [DDOT's website](#) shows project completion in the Winter of 2028, after 24 to 30 months of construction.

The loss of curbside access and the elimination of nearly 80% of all parking has Connecticut Avenue businesses worried about their survival. Additionally, DDOT projects two plus years of construction, further hurting businesses.

SCA is dedicated to stopping bike lanes from being added to Conn Avenue and asks for common sense safety measures like speed cameras and hawk traffic lights at crosswalks. For more information go to [Save Connecticut Ave.org](#).

## Background on the "Civic Core"

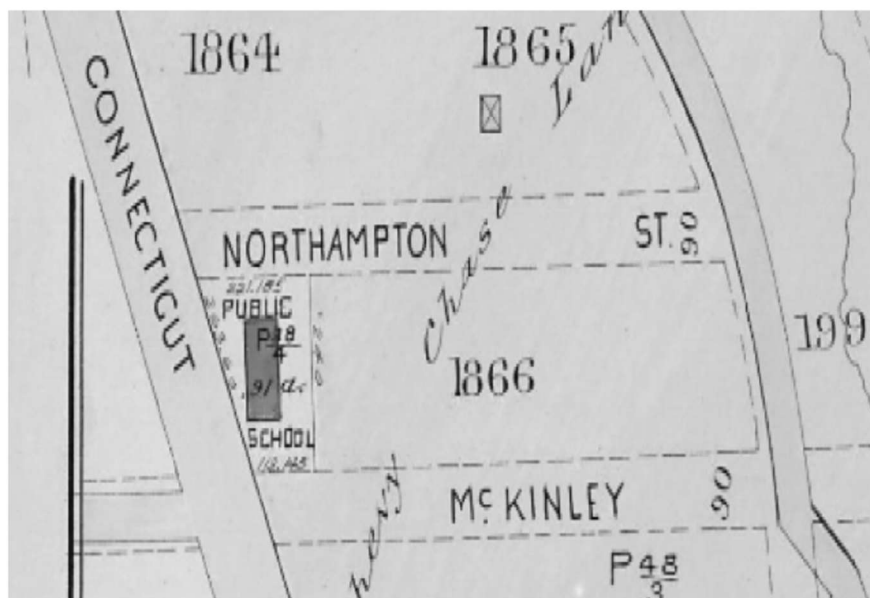
*Opinion by Robert Gordon, CCA*

Over the next few months, if you follow the controversy about the Chevy Chase Library and Community Center (CCCC), you will hear a dazzling array of legal sounding terms: "text amendments, deed restrictions, future land use map, comprehensive plan amendment, area median income, workforce housing, surplus and dispose" and more. Breaking it down: the D.C. Government wants to surplus public land and dispose it to a developer to build luxury apartments interspersed with a few affordable units thrown in. The developer will pay a small amount for the land (maybe \$1 per year) and will cover the cost for the apartment building (with lots of financial help from local and federal programs). The District will pay the bill for a new library and community center.

By way of background, in 1897 the Chevy Chase Land Company (CCLC) deeded the property along Connecticut Avenue to the D.C. government, specifically to establish a school and in the following year built the schoolhouse. At the time, Chevy Chase DC was barely settled. Most of the students came from Chevy Chase, MD; the school opened with 25 students ranging in age from six to sixteen years. According to the first teacher, Miss Ella Given, "In 1898 the school building had four rooms, outside pump

and toilets, and a wooden plank walk crossing the mud to enter the school. In the rear were dense thickets.”

**Figure 1. Library of Congress Map – Baist Map 1907 (Before the 1909 parcel was added)**



**Figure 2. Washington Post article March 18, 1897**

**Chevy Chase School Site Selected.**

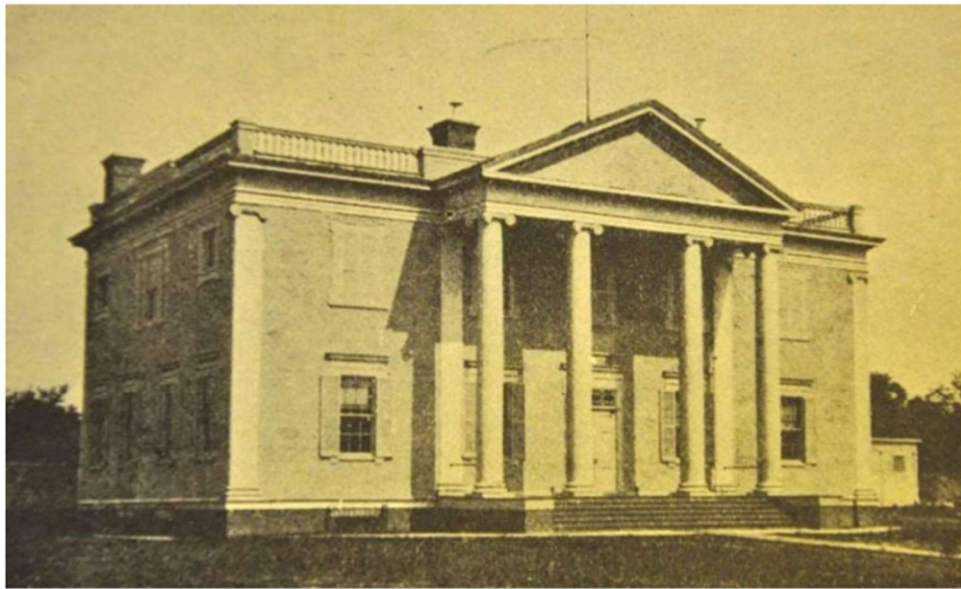
*The Washington Post* (1877-1954); Mar 18, 1897; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The Washington Post (1877 - 1990) pg. 10

**Chevy Chase School Site Selected.**

The Commissioners yesterday accepted, conditionally, a proposal of the Chevy Chase Land Company to sell the District the piece of ground containing 40,000 square feet, located on the east side of Connecticut avenue extended, between Second and Third, East and West streets, below the Chevy Chase Circle. The price asked is \$6,000, and the Commissioners say they must have a title to the land, approved by the attorney for the District. This will be the site of the Chevy Chase school.

The school became overcrowded by 1909 because the Chevy Chase, D.C. land section opened for housing. In response, parents and teachers met to organize the first Home and School Association in D.C. The Chevy Chase school doubled in size to eight rooms in 1910 and the CCLC sold adjacent property to the DC government to provide outdoor space for the larger school population. The deed restrictions (including the restrictions against an apartment building and stables) were included to ensure that the City used the land only for school purposes while maintaining the value of adjacent property. Preserving the entire property was sensible because the school was expanded to sixteen rooms in 1919 and more later. The land has been serving the public for over 125 years and has always been used for “public purposes.” See the fascinating account at [CCCA Historypic.pdf \(chevychasecitizens.org\)](https://www.ccca-historypic.pdf) for more information.

**Figure 3. E. V. Brown School circa 1930**



In 2022, the ANC judged that the draft Small Area Plan portion regarding the Civic Core was inadequate and offered suggestions about how to improve it. The ANC proposed important edits to the Civic Core text that were ignored by the Plan’s drafters. Indeed, in the “Reimagined Civic Core Recommendations” section -- over its objections -- the ANC is excluded as an implementor. The public had no vote on the acceptance of the plan. Subsequently, the ANC voted to accept the entire plan and the Council enacted it.

However, in February 2023, the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) introduced a unique zone for the CCCC Core that allows for a



building standing 80 feet high (plus 13 more feet for a penthouse) with 80 percent ground coverage. Members of the ANC are upset by this overreach.

The origin story of the “Civic Heart” shows that it was not created to be racially exclusionary. It was an economic and political decision by the CCLC and the D.C. government to build a school, provide for future expansion, while preserving the value of adjacent properties. The deed restriction is legal, it protects those who live adjacent to the property, and will preserve green space and play areas that the community needs.

We intend that the D.C. Government honors the community’s wishes and listens to our concerns. We ask that DMPED slow down the process of upzoning the property, issuing an RFP to developers, and surplus/dispose this valuable community asset.

## **Chevy Chase in DC: Reflections on CCCA, the ANC and the Small Area Plan**

*Carl Lankowski*

In 2023 we celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the resumption of partial home rule for the District of Columbia. The new DC Council and the system of advisory neighborhood commissions (ANCs) gave voice and influence to all our residents. The reforms created a much greater degree of autonomy for the city to manage its own affairs vis-à-vis Congress. They also transformed the power relations within our majority minority population. Under the system of presidentially appointed commissioners, racially restricted citizens associations resisted home rule, as they had also fought against desegregation. Adjustment to a diminution of power and prestige was a challenge for the citizens associations. The Chevy Chase Citizens Association did not remove the whites-only membership requirement from its constitution until after the home rule reforms. But it went on to elect three African Americans to lead it in the period between 1990-2006. Enlightened leaders found a winning formula by focusing on delivering programs that unified the community in all its diversity. Examples are Chevy Chase Day, candidate forums and information sessions on various topics. CCCA has earned the admiration and appreciation of the neighborhood for bringing us together. That is what it should continue to do.

As neighborhood-based elected bodies, ANCs were created to manage the interplay of interests in community affairs. The ANC is a sounding board, but it is also the key conduit to city-wide administrative agencies in our governance structure. The ANC system is a network uniquely positioned to reflect neighborhood desires in light of city-wide issues and developments. Chevy Chase has been blessed by knowledgeable

and dedicated ANC commissioners. When it comes to developing positions on major development issues, such as the renovation of our civic core—the campus now occupied by the library and community center—all concerned residents should focus their energies on the ANC.

In 2022, after a year of deliberation (and at least two years of preliminary work), the ANC adopted the small area plan (SAP), a visioning exercise for reimagining the future of the Connecticut Avenue corridor between Livingston Street and Chevy Chase Circle. It is a remarkable document that allowed the neighborhood to define a set of values for the first time since 1907 when the first houses were built on the plots defined by the Chevy Chase Land Company in DC. Those values included a welcoming community for a more diverse population. Reflecting that desideratum, the civic core was conceived as a mixed use campus; it would include affordable housing units. The SAP was finalized by the DC Office of Planning and sent to the DC Council, where it was adopted last autumn.

Anyone following neighborhood affairs in Chevy Chase knows that a lively discussion is in progress about the design of the civic core. As for myself, I worked to involve our community in the process and welcome the result so far. I believe a mixed-use campus will send the right signal that we in Chevy Chase desire to contribute to addressing issues shared city-wide. This approach will also address the unbalanced streetscape on our portion of Connecticut Avenue. The ANC has been hard at work, its individual members in constant communication with their constituents and with city officials. A special committee has been created to maximize local influence in defining the parameters of the project, on the basis of which a request for proposals will be generated.

Though DC's quest for home rule is incomplete, all this is very heartening. The system is working.

If you have any comments or suggestions about the articles in this newsletter, please send them to [president@chevychasecitizens.org](mailto:president@chevychasecitizens.org). We welcome your feedback.

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