



Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G

Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne
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COMMISSIONERS

3/4G-01 - Lisa R. Gore, Vice Chair 3/4G-02 - John Higgins, Treasurer
3/4G-03 - Randy Speck, Chair 3/4G-04 - Michael Zeldin 3/4G-05 - Connie K. N. Chang
3/4G-06 - Peter Gosselin, Secretary 3/4G-07 – [Vacant]

Minutes
ANC 3/4G Special Public Meeting on
DC Ward Redistricting
December 1, 2021
Zoom Meeting 7:00 – 10:32 pm
[Meeting Link](#)

00:00:00: Introduction of Commissioners and Purpose of Meeting

The special meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm with Commissioner Randy Speck, Chair (3/4G-03), presiding. Also present were Commissioners Lisa R. Gore (3/4G-01), John K. Higgins (3/4G-02), Michael Zeldin (3/4G-04), Connie K.N. Chang (3/4G-05) and Peter Gosselin (3/4G-06). Chair Speck declared a quorum (being four Commissioners present). Speck said the only issue on the agenda was discussion of DC ward redistricting and a possible vote.

00:02:42 Explanation of Redistricting Issue and Meeting Format

Vice Chair Lisa Gore said the principal focus of the meeting was whether or not the Commission should take a position on whether the current boundary between Wards 3 and 4 should be changed. The current boundary along Broad Branch Road splits the Chevy Chase community in two. Gore said the Commission’s decision to hold a special meeting

grew out of remarks at the ANC's Nov. 22, 2021 regular meeting by Councilmember Cheh and residents of the most affected neighborhoods, western portions of Chevy Chase proper, Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods. She said the Commission wanted to hear further from residents before deciding whether to act.

Gore described the format as follows; Three panels of about four residents would testify for or against the idea of changing the Ward 3-4 boundary, then previously submitted written testimony would be read into the record. Finally, community members who had not previously asked to speak would be able to comment. Each speaker would be allotted three minutes. She asked all involved to be polite.

(In the interest of concision, the following sections provide what are intended to be representative quotes from speakers. For their full statements, readers may click on the timestamp for each panel, written comments and further comments. They will be linked to the section of the videotape where the speakers appear or their remarks are read.)

00:07:04 **First Panel: Mona Benach, Lee Mayer, Ed Meyers and Kathleen Burke**

- **Mona Benach**, Barnaby Woods: “It seems this (the idea of changing the ward boundary) is a solution without a problem...There doesn't seem to be a reason to move us over to Ward 3.”
- **Lee Mayer**, Hawthorne: “Some may argue that staying in Ward 4 we have two representatives. That's not really the case. If the Ward 3 councilmember takes a particular stance on the (Chevy Chase Small Area Plan), the Community Center or the Library...I can't vote for or against them. In essence, I have no councilmember representation in my neighborhood.”
- **Ed Meyers**, Hawthorne: “I see a lot more similarities between Hawthorne ...and neighborhoods in Ward 4...than I do with Ward 3 neighborhoods...We have great councilmember representation in Janesse Lewis George.”
- **Kathleen Burke**, Hawthorne: “Where we live, right next door to the (Rock Creek) Park , we're not that close to Ward 3. We are not necessarily close enough to be interested in what's happening over on Connecticut Avenue.”

00:23:10 **Second Panel: Andrea Rosen, Loretta Kiron, Ferial Bishop and Mary Rowse**

- **Andrea Rosen**, Barnaby Woods: “Many of us care deeply about how (Connecticut Avenue) is redeveloped. UT the Avenue is in Ward 3 so we Ward 4 west residents have no levers to express our needs and desires, no one to toss out of office if we're unhappy with the process or result.”

- **Loretta Kiron**, Chevy Chase: "...Natural boundaries should be considered when redistricting maps are drawn. Rock Creek Park is a huge natural boundary, which separates Ward 4 west from the rest of Ward 4."
- **Ferial Bishop**, Hawthorne: "We have bigger issues in this city than to be worrying about who's going to be in what section... We need to be concerned with everything that's going on, whether I'm west of the park or east of the park."
- **Mary Rowse**, Chevy Chase: "I hope the ANC will pass a resolution seeking the reunification of our entire geographic area...It's about keeping our community together."

00:43:26 **Third Panel: Joe King, Harry Barnes**

- **Joe King**, Chevy Chase, "The Connecticut Avenue corridor ...is about to be subject to a redevelopment plan. We want to have a voice in that. It makes no sense to have this arbitrary separation of 3/4."
- **Harry Barnes**, Barnaby Woods, "I'm very concerned with the redevelopment of (Connecticut Avenue) and I think we should have a voice in that."

00:52:54 **Written Comments Read into the Record**

The Commission received written comments from 13 residents, which Vice Chair Gore read into the record. Residents' full statements can be found [here](#).

01:16:25 **Further Comments from Residents**

- **Robert Gordon**: "Twenty years ago, I was an ANC commissioner and I was a delegate to the redistricting. Passions were running very high against hiving off (portions of) Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne among most citizens...But it was pretty much a baked cake and consequently the three areas were hived off."
- **Nina Dodge**: "I'm for staying the way we are... I'm persuaded that we do have representation in fact in the Connecticut Avenue redevelopment plan and it is up to each of us , if we feel strongly about it, to be activists."
- **Ellen Walker**: "Most of my life and my children's (lives) centered around the Connecticut Avenue corridor. At Halloween, everybody goes there and the kids do trick-or-treating on the Avenue. There's a library. There's Magruder's. There's a post office . here are restaurants...I took a look where equivalent services are in Ward 4 ...and it's impossible..."

- **Kristina Penhoet:** “There are a number of people that have argued that the park is not a physical barrier because we have roads. And that may be true if you have a car. I have children that ride bikes and I am a pedestrian and I walk and I cannot, under any circumstances, easily get through the park and go to the rest of my ward, where I can easily get to rest of Ward 3.”
- **Bill Hoffman:** “To get any voice in (the redevelopment of the Connecticut Avenue corridor), we really do need to be in Ward 3. What I’m hearing tonight from a number of people is ‘Oh, we ...do have input into what’s going on on Connecticut Avenue.’ But to my mind, all of that is at sufferance. It’s a question of what individuals are listening, but it’s not a matter of right. We don’t have representation in Ward 3, which is where all that redevelopment is going to take place.”
- **Carolyn Cook:** “When I started out this advocacy...I was all about reuniting all of Ward 3 because fundamentally I think it’s wrong (that the community straddles Wards 3 and 4). We do not have representation because we live outside the boundaries of both of these wards. We might as well live in Rock Creek Park.”
- **Lee Schoenecker:** “...If you don’t do something about at least making a noise about bringing Ward 3 together, it may be too late (by the next Census) ...10 years from now.”
- **Elizabeth Patton:** It seems to make so much sense for us to be back in Ward 3. Where I shop and everything is about Ward 3.”
- **Margaret Flannigan:** “When I leave my house, I spend roughly 80% of my time in Ward 3. My church is on Chevy Chase Circle. My doctor and dentist, drug store, bank, grocery store, dry cleaner, public library, and community center are all located on Connecticut Avenue in Ward 3. The only time I go to Ward 4 is to visit my family buried in the Rock Creek Cemetery.”

02:19:27 **Commission Discussion & Vote Seeking Reunification with Ward 3**

While acknowledging arguments on both sides, Vice Chair Gore introduced a resolution, second by Commissioners Gosselin and Zeldin, calling on the DC Council to approve a redistricting proposal that returns the portion of Chevy Chase and the entireties of Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods transferred to Ward 4 two decades ago back to Ward 3. She said the move would serve the interests of racial equity and reunite the neighborhoods politically to the community they already are part of socially and economically. Gosselin said that, for various reasons, the Commission was coming to the issue of ward redistricting late. He said the Council was likely to approve a plan that made no change in the Ward 3-4 boundary. Nevertheless, he said, it was still important the ANC approve a

“message to the future” that it believes neighborhoods west of Rock Creek Park now in Ward 4 should be reunited with Ward 3. He said it would provide a precedent for community leaders dealing with redistricting in the wake of the next decennial Census in 2030.

Characterizing Gosselin’s position as “defeatist,” Zeldin said he still had hope the Council would agree to alter the Ward 3-4 boundary and that, in any case, the ANC should advocate for it because “this is the right thing to do.”

Commissioner Chang asked what Councilmember Cheh’s rationale was for initiating an exchange with Councilmember Lewis George about returning Ward 4 neighborhoods west of the park to Ward 3. Citing remarks by Cheh and residents about the need to integrate communities, she also asked how that matter fit into the debate.

Chair Speck reiterated his long-held position that the ANC is more effective because it straddles Wards 3 and 4, has been well served by councilmembers in each ward and has improved connections between the populations of the two wards.

Commissioner Higgins expressed concern that moving of the neighborhoods in question from Ward 4 to 3 would cause a population imbalance between the two jurisdictions that would threaten the principle of one person-one vote and that trying to correct the imbalance with shifts between other wards would set off a domino effect. For these reasons, he said he was not for reunification.

Higgins acknowledged that failing to move the neighborhoods back to Ward 3 could mean that the ward remained less diverse than it once was. But suggested a resolution or friendly amendment, calling on the Council to obtain a racial equity report on the redistricting plan before enacting the plan.

Vice Chair Gore read into the record an email that Ward 3 Councilmember Cheh wrote to Ward 4 Councilmember Lewis George about the possibility of moving the neighborhoods in question from Ward 4 to Ward 3:

“Hi Janeese,

I wanted to share two possible proposals to amend the Ward 3/Ward 4 boundaries in Chevy Chase. I offer both as I’m not altogether sure what the subcommittee may suggest for Ward 4’s other boundaries, and how that may affect your Ward’s total population. Both proposals flow from the sentiment that’s been expressed to me by many—including going back to the last redistricting process in 2010—to reunite Chevy Chase in one Ward. Recognizing that the +/- 5% ward population requirement under the redistricting statute makes moving large numbers of census blocks difficult without substantial cascading changes to a Ward’s border, I am limiting my proposals to Chevy Chase. Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne would remain in Ward 4.

As you know, our redistricting process aims to keep neighborhoods unified. To achieve that goal, my larger proposal would be to shift the border between Ward 3 and 4 from Broad Branch Road to Utah Avenue. This would reunite Chevy Chase within Ward 3 while also

moving the small bit of Forest Hills between Military Road and Broad Branch back into Ward 3. The concerns of the residents that live in the area that would be redistricted back to Ward 3 more generally align with Ward 3 rather than Ward 4. They feel geographically disconnected from the rest of Ward 4, as they live west of Rock Creek Park. And, the major commercial areas they frequent and engage with are along Connecticut Avenue, particularly the Chevy Chase commercial corridor. Even now, the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, which imagines redevelopment of this portion of Connecticut Avenue, including redevelopment of the Chevy Chase Library and Community Center, directly affects them.

If, however, the population breakdown between Ward 3 and 4 would not support all of Chevy Chase being reunited in Ward 3, I do have a more modest proposal that would both reunite all of Forest Hills and bring several blocks of Chevy Chase back to Ward 3. In this scenario, the border between 3 and 4 would remain Broad Branch until just south of Lafayette Elementary, where the border would become Northampton over to Utah.

Maps reflecting each of these scenarios are below, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

Regards,

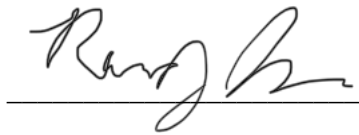
Mary

Commissioner Chang said that two factors carried the most weight for her, the illogical and seemingly back room deal in the early 2000s that resulted in the neighborhoods being moved from Ward 3 to Ward 4 and the testimony of residents who said they can and do walk to the Connecticut Avenue commercial corridor in Ward 3, but cannot and do not walk to Georgia Avenue or other commercial areas in Ward 4. She said the walkability of a community is a crucial characteristic.

On a vote of 4 (Yes – Gore, Zeldin, Chang and Gosselin), 1 (No – Speck) and 1 (Abstain) -- Higgins), the Commission approved the resolution calling for the reunification of portions of Chevy Chase west of Broad Branch Road and the neighborhoods of Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods to Ward 3.

03:31:25 **Adjourn**

APPROVED at a regular public meeting notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of four (4) of seven (7) members was present on January 24, 2022, by a vote of **7** yes, **0** no, **0** abstentions.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Randy Speck", positioned above a horizontal line.

Randy Speck, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peter Gosselin", positioned above a horizontal line.

Peter Gosselin, Secretary