



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

Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne

5601 Connecticut Avenue N.W. P.O. Box 6252 Washington, D.C. 20015

3G@anc.dc.gov | <http://www.the-districtw.anc3g.org> | YouTube: ANC3G | Office: 202.363.5803

**COMMISSIONERS**

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3/4G-06 - Peter Gosselin, Vice Chair      3/4G-07 - Zachary Ferguson, Treasurer

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**ANC 3/4G Resolution**  
**Assessing the**  
**Community Center-Library Survey**  
**With Recommendations**  
**December 11, 2023**

**SUMMARY**

The ANC has conveyed to the District the results of its recent survey of residents about the future of the Chevy Chase Community Center-Library. This resolution assesses the project in light of those results and recommends next steps.

**BACKGROUND:**

- 1) The District’s proposals for the Community Center-Library site include three elements:
  - Redevelop the site to build new or renovate the existing Community Center and Library and incorporate housing, including affordable housing;
  - Declare a portion of the site no longer needed for public purpose and therefore available for sale or lease to support affordable housing through a process known as “surplussing.”
  - Recommend new zoning for the site to permit structures as tall as 80 feet with 60-percent lot occupancy.

- 1) Since at least 2019, the District [has framed its proposals](#) for the Community Center-Library site as part of a broader plan to increase density along upper Connecticut Avenue NW and elsewhere to alleviate a citywide shortage of affordable housing. Its goal is to encourage development of 12,000 new, affordable units by 2025, including 1,990 in Rock Creek West, a District-designated planning zone that encompasses much of Ward 3 and parts of Ward 4, and includes Chevy Chase DC.
- 2) The Commission has consistently supported the idea that the Chevy Chase community should contribute to solving the affordable housing problem faced by the District, including by developing affordable units at the Community Center-Library and/or adjacent sites. Among examples of support by the ANC majority:
  - A [July 24 2023 vote](#) “strongly” supporting the need for affordable housing and committing to work with the District to help produce it;
  - A [May 8, 2023 vote](#) calling for removal of a century-old deed restriction on the Community Center-Library property to allow affordable housing at the location;
  - A [May 9, 2022 vote](#) calling for affordable housing at the Community Center-Library as part of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan.
  - A [March 22, 2021 vote](#) on a series of proposals by its Task Force on Racism that, among other things, called for at least half of housing at the Community Center-Library site to be affordable, with an emphasis on affordability for households making 50 percent or less of median family income;
  - A [February 10, 2020 vote](#) calling for changes in amendments to the District’s Comprehensive Plan to, among other things, require a Chevy Chase small planning process to work through density and affordable housing issues with residents and to ensure “affordable housing (in Chevy Chase) that will promote income diversity and enrich our civic life.”
- 3) The District agreed to a Commission request for a small area planning process, but from the outset some District agencies and advisers appeared to view community input more as a barrier to change than a basis for consensus. For example, a 2019 District-commissioned study that laid the groundwork for the Rock Creek West effort [called for](#), among other things, use of marketing techniques to elide local concerns and creation a fund “to counter the economic power of residents” who opposed affordable housing. Although the fund idea ultimately was rejected, many of the study’s techniques and verbiage were embraced by the District.
- 4) While the ANC has supported the community helping to solve the city’s affordable housing problem, it has repeatedly defended the right of residents to have a strong voice in shaping the future of their community, including at the Community Center-Library site. Among examples:

- A [July 24, 2023 vote](#) to, among other things, urge DMPED and OP to delay pursuing zoning changes for upper Connecticut Avenue until the agencies receive results of the recent survey;
- A [January 23, 2023 resolution](#) opposing for the time being “surplussing” or transferring a portion of the Community Center-Library site to private ownership in return for affordable housing and saying that surplussing “cannot even be considered unless and until DMPED works with the Commission to develop and execute a substantial community engagement process that gives residents the opportunity to offer suggestions and site priorities prior to a surplussing decision and issuance of a Request for Proposal (RFP).”
- A [May 9, 2022 resolution](#) that makes the Commission approval of the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan (CCSAP) contingent on, among other things, the ANC and community having “a seat at the table” as the plan for upper Connecticut Avenue, including the Community Center-Library site is implemented.
- [April 26, 2021](#) and [February 22, 2021](#) resolutions expressing frustration with OP’s management of the small area planning process for the Connecticut Avenue corridor and the Community Center-Library site and calling on the District to adopt a “more engaged and collaborative process” with the community in planning for its future.

## **SURVEY**

- 5) The survey is the latest effort by the ANC to gauge community views and convey those views to the District. A survey committee composed of ANC Chair Lisa Gore and Commissioners Bruce Sherman, James Nash and Peter Gosselin – set itself two goals: to ensure “the community is heard on key issues of concern” and to provide data “to make actionable recommendations (to the District) that reflect key community development preferences” for the Community Center-Library site. The committee met weekly for four months to draft the survey instrument (June 13, 20, [27](#); July [6](#), [11](#), [18](#), [25](#); Aug. [1](#), [8](#), [22](#), [29](#); Sept. [5](#), [12](#), [19](#), [26](#); Oct. 3 and 13
- 6) The resulting online survey was fielded from October 13 to November 12, 2023. Full results are available on the ANC website here. The Commission conveyed the results to the city in a [\[\[December XX, 2023 resolution.\]\]](#)

## **ASSESSMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7) The Commission’s assessment is that the survey represents an important step in the community’s engagement concerning the future of the Community Center-Library site, housing and affordable housing.

- 8) Further, the Commission's assessment is that the District is intent on redeveloping the Community Center-Library site with housing and affordable housing, although it may be delayed in pursuing this goal because of financial challenges.
- 9) In such circumstances, the Commission concludes:
- The right course for the Commission and the Chevy Chase community -- and the one most likely to preserve the community's ability to influence development at the Community Center-Library site -- is to continue seeking to contribute to a solution to the District's affordable housing problem, including at the site.
  - The most productive use of the survey results is in pursuit of the survey committee's second goal -- to make actionable recommendations to the District for inclusion in its pending Request for Proposals (RFP) for the site that "reflect key community development preferences."
- 10) Therefore, Commission [reaffirms its position](#) that some housing should be built at the Community Center-Library site; that at least half of the housing built should be affordable with a focus on affordability for households making 50 percent or less of area median income; that the development should include a mix of affordable and workforce housing for families including, to the maximum extent practicable, ownership by residents, and that the District should work with a coalition of nonprofit and for-profit developers, the ANC and the community in shaping and overseeing the redevelopment of the site.
- 11) The Commission calls on DMPED to include in the RFP that will guide developers in framing proposals for the Community Center-Library site the following key community development preferences that emerge from the survey, together with the survey results supporting the preferences. It asks OP to make further adjustments in proposed zoning changes intended to facilitate redevelopment of the site.
- Open/green space with recreational facilities:  
Residents, including fervent affordable housing advocates, have consistently told the ANC they want to see open/green spaces with recreational facilities at minimum similar to what currently exists in any redevelopment. The Commission has conveyed these preferences to OP officials, who have responded by reducing the proposed maximum permitted share of the site that buildings could occupy from 80 percent to 60 percent, a change that, if adopted, would leave more space for open, green and recreational facilities. While the 60-percent building coverage figure is still higher than what exists now and therefore means that open/green space could be reduced from current levels, the OP action is a move

in the right direction and an important one given the strong support for open/green space as evidenced by the survey. Two examples:

- Asked to allocate 15 points among five likely primary elements of a redeveloped site, respondents [allocated a cumulative 7,475 points](#) to this category behind only the top two point-getters, a “new or renovated library” and “... Community Center.”
  - [Asked to choose](#) seven outdoor amenities they would like at the site from among 16, nearly 80 percent chose “benches/outdoor seating,” 78 percent chose “outdoor green space/gardens” and 66 percent chose “mature trees.”
- **Building height:**  
Residents in large numbers have warned against over-large buildings being erected at a redeveloped Community Center-Library site and expressed a strong preference for structures with a consistent scale and style to those in the immediate surrounding neighborhood. As with open space, the ANC conveyed these preferences to OP officials, who responded by reducing an originally proposed maximum possible height for buildings at the site from 93.5 feet to 80 feet. Again, the reduction is an adjustment in the right direction, but the survey results suggest that further reduction is needed.
    - Among all respondents, only 393 of 2,564, or slightly more than 15 percent, [said they would support](#) a maximum building height of 80 feet (6-7 stories). Among ANC respondents, the share [saying they would support](#) 80 feet was only 13 percent.
  - **Public land:** Since DMPED first publicly raised the possibility the District might “surplus” or transfer a portion of the Community Center-Library site to private ownership in return for affordable housing a year ago, the idea has galvanized opposition. The dimensions of that opposition was apparent in the survey; no other question produced a more lop-sided a response. Among all respondents, [more than 59 percent answered “no”](#) when asked whether they support such a transfer. Among ANC residents, [the “no’s” accounted for 62 percent](#).  
DMPED officials have said that any development in which the District contributes public land for a low price or long-term lease in return for the production of affordable housing would require the property to be surplussed. But there has been little exploration to date of ways that public stewardship of part or all of the Community Center-Library site could be retained, for example via a land trust that has public representation on its board.  
Given the depth of opposition to surplussing, the Commission asks DMPED to consider giving a preference in the RFP to development proposals with a structure that allows the public to retain stewardship of the entire Community Center-Library site. In addition, it calls on DMPED to include

the survey results on this issue in the material it issues as part of the RFP to indicate that the community is likely to look more favorably on a proposal with such a structure.

- 13) Given the need for open/green space expressed in the survey, the Commission asks OP to consider a further reduction in the proposed lot coverage maximum from 60 percent and DMPED to include in the RFP a preference for development proposals that come closer to maintaining the current amount of open space and existing mature trees.
- 14) Given the concern about building heights, the Commission asks OP to further reduce the maximum permitted height and asks that DMPED include a preference in the RFP for proposals for buildings lower than the 80 feet now being proposed.
- 15) Given the depth of opposition to surplussing, the Commission asks DMPED to include a preference in the RFP to development proposals with a structure that allows the public to retain stewardship of the entire Community Center-Library site and to work with the ANC in exploring whether a community land trust could provide a vehicle for continued public stewardship.
- 16) Beyond these specific elements, the Commission asks DMPED to provide any potential bidder responding to the RFP with the results of the survey as well as the ANC's resolutions related to the results.

**APPROVED** at a regular public meeting, notice of which was properly given and at which a quorum of four (4) or seven (7) members was present on December XX, 2023 by a vote of **X** yes, **X** no, **X** abstentions.

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Lisa R Gore, Chair

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James L. Nash, Secretary