



**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.anc3g.org> | YouTube: ANC3G

**COMMISSIONERS**

3/4G-01 - Lisa R. Gore, Chair 3/4G-02 - Bruce Sherman, Secretary, 3/4G-03 - James Nash, 3/4G-04 - Michael Zeldin 3/4G-05 - Peter Lynch 3/4G-06 - Peter Gosselin, Vice Chair 3/4G-07 - Zachary Ferguson, Treasurer

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**Special Meeting (#4) to Consider  
DC Office of Planning's Proposed Zoning  
Amendments for Upper Connecticut Avenue  
April 25, 2024  
Minutes**

**00:00:16: Meeting called to order.**

**00:00:19: Commissioner introductions:** Gosselin, Gore, Lynch, Zeldin. (Commissioners Ferguson, Sherman and Nash join later.)

**00:03:16: Agenda is adopted, 4-0.**

**00:03:42: Summary: zoning proposal, past discussion, community concerns regarding overdevelopment.**

**00:07:05: Commissioner Gosselin provides oral overview of two draft resolutions.**  
Process issues: ANC 3/4G will seek multi-ANC challenge to Zoning Commission's (ZC) rule change. Substance: ANC supports major provisions of proposed zoning changes, reserving judgement on maximum floor area ratios, side yard requirements, and parking. In the second draft, the ANC will support a single zone of 70' maximum height, and language on preserving green space.

**00:12:50: Community comments on height, small businesses, community views on development, ANC representation, community engagement, zoning strategy, accessibility, affordable housing and surplus:** several constituents urge the ANC to honor their earlier resolution calling for a maximum of 60' at the Civic Core site. One constituent says the issue is not height per se but preserving the character of the community. Small family businesses that line the Avenue now would be displaced by higher rents in the wake of development, replaced by

characterless chain stores. Numerous residents decry the city's poor track record at managing existing housing stock and following through on promises to the community. One constituent asks that the ANC Civic Core survey be added to the resolution, to which commissioner Gosselin agrees. Several argue city actions, including the ZC decision to designate the proposed changes as "rulemaking," were based on a mistaken belief that there is majority community support for redevelopment, which the survey belies. Many call on the ANC to respect the voice of the community and vote so as to support their views. One constituent asks that the two proposed zones be divided into two separate zoning cases. Placing housing on top of a library and community center, sharing a playground, has never been done anywhere in the city. One constituent calls attention to the fact that no one has yet built to the currently allowable 55 feet and suggests that be allowed to happen before jumping to 70 or 80'. One neighbor feels the survey does not truly represent community sentiment, others disagree and support the survey results. Some claim the community has been engaged in the process but others claim they have been left out of the process. Several think the requirements of the civic core site are complex and need a separate zone. Some argue the RFP does not require affordable housing. One resident argues giving away public land to a private developer will be the ANC's legacy. Growing up in Shepherd Park, their family drove to the Chevy Chase library because of the ample free parking. Now they have mobility issues. If the site is to be developed for affordable housing, it should be developed by the city and be all affordable.

**00:40:24: Commissioner discussion: housing figures, and community views.**

Commissioner Nash calls attention to Office of Planning (OP) figures showing our neighborhood has met only 10% of affordable housing goals. Commissioner Sherman has published a new survey with about 400 responses in three days. This survey is just on proposed zoning changes for the Connecticut Avenue corridor: 61% oppose, 33% support. Results mirror ANC fall survey illustrating concerns about development.

**00:44:43: Discussion amongst Commissioners on what bidders are saying they will offer, whether those**

promises can be relied on, and the process of how bids will be assessed.

**00:55:20: Community comments: surveys, parking, accessibility, RF zones, family businesses, street walls, light, height, urban planning, developers, affordable housing goals, and maintenance.** One constituent expresses doubt of the reliability of new survey results, and contests others' claim of lack of community engagement. Another makes an appeal for guarantees of accessible community parking for those with disabilities. If the ANC recognizes parking is important, why are they allowing OP to rezone three parking lots to encourage housing there? At the March 27 ANC meeting Joel Lawson claimed the RF zones were only added at the bequest of the community. When told the community was against the RF zones he offered to remove them, yet they are still in the proposal. One family moved to this neighborhood because of the accessibility and now they are taking it all away. Others echo concerns about the loss of small family businesses with redevelopment. One local architect criticizes the plan, which will result in "street walls," transforming the neighborhood, blocking light, limiting access and destroying shared civic spaces. She raises questions about how penthouse and building heights will be measured, particularly due to the 16' grade change across the Civic Core site. Questions are also raised about the city's overall urban planning, given post-Covid changes. With 22% vacancy rates in office buildings and 25% vacancy in first floor retail, the downtown needs to be a focus. The proposed plan needs to be reconsidered. Several constituents agree developers will build to maximum allowable heights and lot coverages. A representative states WinWard3 has met with ALL development groups interested in the Civic Core site, which are listed on the DMPED website. They claim developers are

incentivized to build affordable housing as financing is easier. Several decry the loss of mature trees and worry the extra building heights will make growing plants and trees difficult. On the issue of community engagement one neighbor gives the actual figures for attendees of SAP events, which at their highest were only one quarter of ANC Civic Core survey participants. In answer to Commissioner Nash's reference to OP's graph showing Chevy Chase West has only reached 10% of its affordable housing goals one citizen gives specific numbers for new affordable units in our area: 72 at the Wardman, at least 139 at Tenley, and 205 units at Friendship Heights. All of these are near public transportation, while units at the Civic Core will bring many more cars to city streets. Another 400 affordable units are being added at Walter Reed. The new residents in all these units will need public amenities including libraries, community centers and schools. In answer to the concern about the pressure of redevelopment on small family businesses, one constituent suggests these businesses would benefit from more potential customers. Several constituents express concern over the loss of public land and the loss of control over development. One suggests developers don't care about occupancy, but rather build so as to achieve the highest valuation for a new building, which will then increase the amount of financing they can leverage for future projects. Numerous people stress their concern that developers are not to be trusted, and that the process does not provide sufficient protection for community interests. Several urge the ANC to exercise its leverage now. Others note the current disrepair of the library and community center and urge the ANC to pressure DPR to take better care of the current Civic Core. They ask where people will go while the Civic Core is under construction. Another feels development along the corridor would increase sociability in the upper stretch of the avenue.

**01:35:23: Commissioner discussion of concerns, goals and how best to proceed:**

Commissioner Gosselin recognizes deep concern about overdevelopment, but questions how best to achieve desired goals. Commissioner Lynch details the many community activities currently hosted at the Civic Core site, including many that require shared open space. He notes the M&T building is 40' tall, and OP's current proposal would result in buildings at the Civic Core twice that height. He notes the general unhappiness with tall buildings in the neighborhood, specifically the "Twin Towers" on 30th Street. The residents of Northampton should be given consideration.

**01:42:11: Commissioner Sherman urges the ANC to use survey data as leverage with ZC.**

Across three surveys, from 2019 to 2024, opinions haven't changed. Residents are concerned about overdevelopment. The credibility of the ANC is at risk if they consistently ignore what the community is saying. Commissioner Lynch argues that taking into account current building heights, allowing 60' heights at the Civic Core would add 47' of building height for housing. Looking at all the activities that need to be accommodated, no increase in lot coverage should be allowed. Lot coverage should remain 40%. In deference to neighbors on Northampton height should be concentrated on the McKinley corner.

**01:49:37: Commissioner discussion of possible changes to the proposed resolution.**

Amid general discussion Chair Gore emphasizes the importance of maintaining the ANC's commitment to a 60' height limit, both in their resolution, and in their consideration of bids in response to the RFP. Commissioner Ferguson makes two points: speaking with other young families happily raising their children in the Chevy Chase neighborhood, they lament that their children will likely not be able to afford to raise their own families here due to rising costs, and that the high cost of housing in Chevy Chase might send the message to children that they would do better to forego careers like teaching or firefighting and become hedge fund managers. Gosselin agrees to amendments creating a resolution with the following features:

one zone, 60' height restriction all in throughout, 60% lot coverage for residential, adding the contents of both the ANC Civic Core survey and Commissioner Sherman's recent survey on the Connecticut Avenue corridor, and strengthened language around parking.

**02:15:49: Chair Gore calls for the vote.** One constituent interjects, questioning the ANC's position on the RF zones. The ANC accepts the proposed RF zones.

**02:20:58: Chair Gore calls for the vote a second time.** Vote 4-3 (Gosselin, Zeldin, Gore, Sherman in favor, Ferguson, Nash, and Lynch opposed).

**02:22:01: Discussion of process: both meeting process and the process issue raised by ZC's actions are discussed.** The ZC rule changes are mentioned in the resolution but will be addressed later. Discussion of who will testify at the April 29 ZC hearing.

**02:27:23: End of meeting.**

Peter Gosselin, Vice Chair



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Bruce Sherman, Secretary



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