

CHEVY CHASE VILLAGE LOCAL ADVISORY PANEL  
TO THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY

April 17, 2017—Report to Chevy Chase Village Board

Membership:

Our panel consists of: Gail Feldman, Myra Kovey, Mark Nadel, Helene Sacks, Betsy Stephens, Peter Wellington, and Tom Bourke.

Background:

In 1998 the County Council designated the “Chevy Chase Village Historic District” as the area generally bounded by Cedar Parkway on the west, Grafton Street on the south, Brookville Road on the east, and Bradley Lane on the north. Exterior changes there require an Historic Area Work Permit (“HAWP”) in addition to a normal building permit which may also be required. HAWPs are reviewed by the County’s Historic Preservation Commission (“HPC”), which meets every two weeks. Our Local Advisory Panel (“LAP”) provides community input to the HPC, which is legally required to give “considerable weight” to our recommendations. Therefore, strictly speaking, the LAP is not a Village committee; rather it is an advisory group for the County HPC.

Philosophy:

Our members are very mindful that part of our goal is to mitigate a sometimes cumbersome process for the residents. We have generally found that the HPC and the County Staff who prepare the reviews are very professional, but may tend toward stricter control. There have been no instances in recent memory where a majority of the LAP felt County Staff was too lenient. We also know that the Village Board has traditionally been concerned that the County process may infringe on the judgments and preferences of the residents. Therefore part of serving on the LAP is recognition that we place a high priority on promoting compromise and flexibility.

Our Operating Procedures:

The HPC meets twice per month, on a very tight, bi-weekly schedule. We receive a county staff report and must provide our input within a matter of days; so we review and provide input through an exchange of emails. Our LAP was in agreement internally on all our applications this year. In the past, if there was not a full consensus, we reported our divergent views to the HPC. In the interest of transparency, all of our email is automatically cc’d to the Village office for archiving. These emails are available to Village residents for review.

Current Work:

Since the last CCV Board meeting there have been 26 applications on which we commented. Most cases have moved through without major problems. We had two instances where we had some reservations about proposed alterations to the rear of existing houses, but we agreed with the HPC that our Guidelines permitted approval of the applications. Our residents and contractors seem to be more aware of the need to submit applications for HAWPs, and our overall sense of the HPC staff is that they may be becoming less strict – permitting new windows (provided they are simulated divided light), and are less involved in hardscape alterations, rear additions etc.

Residents should also be aware that there are tax credits to defray a portion of costs if exterior work is properly documented in advance of work being done. Information is available at the County website: <http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/historic/tax-credits/> and there is a further link to State tax benefits.

Submitted on behalf of the LAP by it Chair: Thomas K. Bourke, 36 Quincy St.