



March 28, 2023

Dear ANC Chairperson Gore,

An assumption that has been expressed during the development of the Mayor’s Rock Creek West Plan, the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan, in various ANC-held meetings, and on the Chevy Chase listserv, is that there are no or few affordable living units in Chevy Chase, D.C. This assumption has precipitated the City’s plan to surplus and dispose of part of the property now housing the Chevy Chase Library and Community Center to build an apartment building with affordable units. As you know as well as anyone, the process is accelerating to the stage of creating an RFP for developers’ responses. At a recent meeting organized by DMPEd, the community spoke out against this plan by a margin of 3 to 1.

First, I challenge the notion that few affordable units are available in Chevy Chase under any definition of “affordability.” Many apartment buildings in Chevy Chase accept federally funded housing vouchers that allow for even the lowest-income people to live here. As an example, the Connecticut Heights apartment building at 4850 Connecticut Avenue NW, has available units with modest rents: studio - \$1,477, 1 bedroom - \$1,653, 2 bedroom – coming soon.¹

Another example, the Regency House, at 5201 Connecticut Avenue NW, is a nine-story, high-rise that serves senior and disabled residents. It has 160 units. The property is managed by a Public Housing Authority and all the rents are based on tenant incomes. Tenants make “a monthly contribution toward rent equal to 30% of their adjusted income. A housing authority may establish a minimum rent of up to \$50.”

Shown in Figure 1 is a compilation of rents comparable to the Regency House across the neighborhood: **Figure 1. Below are rent ranges for similar nearby apartments²**

Bedrooms	Average Size	Lowest	Typical	Premium
Studio	467-469 Sq Ft	\$1,321	\$1,682	\$2,890
1 Bed	657 Sq Ft	\$1,550	\$2,157	\$3,670

¹ [Connecticut Heights Apartments in DC - Van Ness - 4850 Connecticut Avenue Northwest | EquityApartments.com](#)

² [Regency House Apartment - 5201 Connecticut Ave NW Washington, DC | Apartments.com](#)

2 Beds	1114 Sq Ft	\$2,420	\$3,011	\$5,561
3 Beds	2136 Sq Ft	\$3,550	\$4,833	\$7,500
4 Beds	2618 Sq Ft	\$4,496	\$4,986	\$5,500

Second, I challenge the oft-repeated notion that the contemplated apartment building will provide more than 30 percent of its units for affordable housing. I predict that if the RFP process proceeds, no for-profit developer will propose even 30 units of affordable housing. I further predict that there will be **zero** family-sized, three-bedroom affordable units.

3. The ANC executed an agreement with the developer of 5333 Connecticut Ave NW during its planning stage that enumerated several provisions that the Apartment owner had to comply. One was providing 19 or 20 affordable units. To the best of my knowledge the ANC has not audited the owner for compliance. This should be done. We can learn from the 5333 Connecticut experiences with this program for future apartment development in the neighborhood.

I conclude that this important decision regarding the future of the Chevy Chase Civic Center should be based on real local housing data. I request that before the neighborhood moves forward with the surplus and RFP process, the ANC completes an inventory of affordable units in the neighborhood. This should not be difficult or time consuming. ANC has funds to do this. Let's see if losing a valuable community asset in exchange for a small increase in available affordable housing units in the neighborhood is justified. It would seem not to be if there is excess available affordable housing at present that is not being used.

For the record, CCCA fully supports diversity, inclusion, and equity in our neighborhood. We believe that there are other ways than the DMPED plan to address any lack of affordable housing in Chevy Chase. Let's come up with better ways than giving away the only publicly owned green space along Connecticut Avenue.

Sincerely yours,



Robert Gordon, President

Cc: Honorable Matt Frumin
Commissioner Bruce Sherman
Commissioner James Nash
Commissioner Peter Lynch
Commissioner Peter Gosselin
Commissioner Zach Ferguson