

## **Chevy Chase Village Environment and Energy Committee Annual Report, April 2021**

The Environment and Energy (E&E) Committee is pleased to present this annual report to the Board on its activities over the last year. The Committee was very active supporting County and State regulations on the use of non-essential pesticides in lawn care. Marilyn Bracken and Marea Hatzios are Co-Chairs. Members include Betsy Stephens, Ralph Stephens, Oliver Davidson, Jonathan Lyons, Peter Kilborn, Charlotte Kramer, Diana Pape, and Dina Lassow. Gary Crockett (Board Contact), and Ellen Sands (Village Liaison) are ex-officio members.

The Environment and Energy Committee's overarching goal is to help make the Village become a truly green community in which residents enjoy the benefits of a healthy environment and where nature enhances the health and welfare of the entire community. Our mission includes advising the Board on environmental sustainability issues including new County regulations affecting the Village, educating residents about green practices that not only help households reduce their environmental footprint but contribute to the Village's overall environmental sustainability, and working with other Committees in the Village and surrounding neighborhoods to adopt similar practices in keeping with a healthy ecosystem approach. Committee meetings were held virtually during the Pandemic. The E&E Committee's activities are described below:

### **1. Montgomery County's Pesticide Law Adopted by the Board.**

The Committee provided ongoing briefs to residents and the Village on the status of Montgomery County's legislation on the use of non-essential pesticides (aka the "Healthy Lawns Act 52/14"). Following the law's successful passage through the courts, the Committee organized talks and published regular updates in the Crier on how the law's implementation would apply to public and residential property, and on the use of safe alternatives to synthetic pesticides. As an independently incorporated municipality the Village is not automatically subject to this County code. The Chevy Chase Village Board of Directors unanimously agreed on January 11, 2021 to adopt an Ordinance to incorporate, by Village Code, Chapter 33B "Pesticides" of the Montgomery County Code. The goal of the Law is to inform the public about pesticide applications and minimize the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes while not restricting the use of pesticides in agriculture, for the protection of public health, or for other public benefit. The Law does not prohibit the use of chemicals for the control of biting insects, and disease vectors, such as mosquitos and ticks. Opting into the Pesticide code protects the residents of the Village from exposure to banned pesticides, limits confusion for residents and their contractors about which pesticides can safely and legally be used, and allows the Village to take advantage of the County's education and enforcement activities.

### **2. Greener Energy Use and Community Solar.**

During 2020 the E&E Committee's Sustainable Living Lecture featured a representative from Neighborhood Sun, one of several B Corporations facilitated by the state of MD to introduce

Community Solar as a way of promoting access to locally generated renewable energy at lower cost—without the need for household investments in infrastructure and at discounted rates for electricity relative to current utility (e.g. Pepco) rates. The event was very well attended and led to a successful outreach campaign resulting in a number of Village residents electing to subscribe to the Neighborhood Sun’s Community Solar Farm in Fort Washington, MD. Additional speakers on greener energy use and reducing your home’s emissions will be featured during 2021.

#### **4. Enforcement of Existing Noise Limits/County Ordinance on Leaf Blowers.**

Following the successful campaign at the end of 2019 to ban the use of gas-powered leaf blowers in the Village in which the Board voted unanimously to adopt a ban similar to the one passed in the District, prohibiting the sale and use of gas-powered leaf blowers, effective January 1, 2022, the E&E Committee has been working closely with the Town of Chevy Chase, the Town of Somerset and other communities nearby to adopt similar bans. As a result, earlier this year (2021), both Somerset and the Town of Chevy Chase have enacted additional restrictions on the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, including a complete ban effective January 2023 (Somerset), and a partial ban on gas blowers (from January – August) effective 2021 in the Town of Chevy Chase. A full ban in the future is being considered by the Town, possibly to coincide with Somerset’s ban, effective January 2023. In both cases, the ban enacted in the Village served as a catalyst for action to restrict gas blowers in these adjacent communities. In the meantime, momentum has been building across Montgomery County to enact a full ban on gas-powered blowers, similar to the one passed in the Village and in the District of Columbia. Draft legislation to this effect is now being prepared by the County Executive’s office to submit to the Montgomery County Council this spring.

#### **5. Waste Management.**

Although the Village’s recycling program and residents’ voluntary composting of food scraps has reduced the amount of solid waste being transported out of the County for incineration or to landfill, the disposition of recycled waste from the Village continues to be a problem, particularly with single stream recycling, in which paper and other valuable waste is contaminated by broken glass, residues and plastics which cannot be recycled. This problem cannot be solved at the Village level, but requires an area-wide solution, at either the County level or a consortium of neighborhoods working together to develop recycling protocols and service providers that will ensure more effective processing outcomes for recycled waste.

#### **6. E&E Youth Initiative.**

The E&E Committee, in coordination with Bikes for the World, recently announced a proposal to involve Village youth in a round-up of used sports equipment to donate to charities for refurbishing and reuse. A kick-off event will be held on April 16 and 17 at the Village Hall to receive donations of used bikes. Bikes of the World, an NGO whose mission is to make affordable, good quality used bikes available to low-income people in developing countries, will be on hand to receive the bikes. Bikes that cannot be dropped off at the Village Hall will be picked up at residents’ homes by members of the E&E Committee, by appointment. Emily Lawson is the program coordinator for this youth initiative. If this pilot is successful, the plan is

to open up the collection of other types of athletic equipment to be donated to charities for refurbishing and reuse later in the year. Other possible projects to engage Village youth include encouraging the planting of pollinator gardens of native plants and milkweed for Monarch Butterflies during their summer and fall migrations.

#### **7. Montgomery County Climate Action Plan.**

The Climate Action Plan is Montgomery County's strategic plan to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035. After receiving community input on the Draft Climate Action Plan, the County plans to finalize the Plan in Spring 2021. Marilyn Bracken is attending the meetings and reviewing the Plan.

Going Forward, the E&E Committee will continue to focus on the issues and programs described above. Write ups will be published monthly in the *Village Crier* and in the *Village Blast* on special activities. Reports on Mosquito Management, Tick Management and other timely articles will continue to be published. The Committee will also continue to coordinate efforts with Village Management, the Board, and other Committees to identify common concerns related to health, climate change and protecting nature and wildlife.

Submitted by:

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