

Legislative Policy to Exclude Certain Front Steps, Stoops and Associated Porticos from the Definition of “Structures” for the Purposes of the Covenant Compliance as required by Section 8-9(c)(3) of the Village Code for Variance Requests

RECITALS

1. Chevy Chase Village is an incorporated municipality established pursuant to Article XI-E of the Maryland Constitution.
2. Pursuant to §§5-202 and 5-211 of the Local Government Article of the Maryland Code, as amended, the legislative body of each municipal corporation in the State of Maryland IS authorized to adopt ordinances, including a Building Code, that such legislative body deems necessary to assure the good government of the municipality, to protect and preserve the municipality's rights, property and privileges, to preserve peace and good order, and to secure persons and property from danger and destruction, and to protect the health, comfort and convenience of the residents of the municipality.
3. Section 77-14 of the Chevy Chase Village Charter authorizes the Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers to pass ordinances as it may deem necessary for the health, safety or welfare of Chevy Chase Village; for the protection and preservation of Chevy Chase Village property, rights and privileges; for the preservation of peace and good order and for securing persons and property from violence, danger and destruction; and for the suppression and abatement of nuisances.
4. Pursuant to §20-509 of the Land Use Article of the Maryland Code, a municipal corporation in Montgomery County, such as Chevy Chase Village, is authorized to regulate the construction, repair, erection or remodeling of single-family residential houses and buildings.

5. Chevy Chase Village possesses a special character which includes, but is not limited to, open vistas along streets and sidewalks.
6. Section 8-9(c)(3) of the Village Code requires a finding that “For all variances the structure authorized by the proposed variance would not violate any covenant applicable to the property.”
7. The Board has found numerous properties where stoops, or stoops and steps, whether uncovered or with associated porticos, which are necessary to address the change in elevation from the ground to the entrance of a house, encroach into the standard twenty-five (25) foot front setback required by the covenants applicable to most properties.
9. Although the Board has in the past interpreted the term “structure”, as used in the covenants imposed by the Chevy Chase Land Company, to include stoops, steps and porticos, the Board finds that either: a) the covenant authors did not intend steps and stoops, whether uncovered or with an associated portico, which are necessary to address the change in elevation from the ground to the primary entrance of a house, and to allow for reasonable, safe access, to be deemed structures for the purposes of the twenty-five (25) foot front setback for properties in the Village; or b) that the numerous uncovered steps and stoops which encroach into the twenty-five (25) foot setback would render the twenty-five (25) foot setback difficult to enforce.
10. The Board finds that, for determining covenant compliance under Sections 8-9(b) and (c), stoops, or stoops and steps, whether uncovered or with an associated

portico, that are installed as a matter of necessity to address the change in elevation from the ground to the primary entrance of a house, which steps, stoops and associated portico are the minimum necessary to provide reasonable, safe, access, including for wheel chairs, should not be deemed “structures.” For purposes of this policy, the dimensions of an associated portico shall be comparable to the stoop and shall include only those posts necessary for support.

11. All steps, stoops and associated porticos should continue to be deemed structures for the purposes of the setback requirements in Section 8-16 of the Village Code.

Now, therefore, on this 9th day of February, 2015, the Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers, acting under and by virtue of the authority given it by the Act of Legislature approved March 28, 1951, and Acts subsequent thereto, Division II of the Local Government Article of the Maryland Code, and the Chevy Chase Village Charter that:

1. Recitals. The recitals set forth above are incorporated in this Policy as the findings of the Board of Managers.
2. Policy. For the purpose of determining covenant compliance under Village Code Section 8-9(c)(3), stoops, or steps and stoops, whether uncovered or with an associated portico which are necessary to address the change in elevation from the ground to the primary entrance of a house, and are the minimum necessary to provide reasonable access, including for wheel chairs, shall not be considered “structures.”

3. Setbacks. All steps, stoops and associated porticos shall continue to be deemed structures for the purposes of the setback requirements in Section 8-16 of the Village Code.
4. Term. This policy shall become effective immediately upon its passage and shall remain in effect until repealed by the Board of Managers.
5. This policy is intended to supersede and replace in its entirety the policy adopted by the Board of Managers on the 14th day of February 2011, entitled “Legislative Policy to Exclude Certain Uncovered Front Steps and Stoops from the Definition of ‘Structures’ for the Purposes of the Covenant Compliance as Required by Sections 8-11(b) (3) and 8-11(c)(3) of the Village Code for Special Permit and Variance Requests”.

Michael L. Denger, Chairman
Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers

ATTEST:

Richard Ruda, Secretary

DATED: _____

