

## Item 8 - Correspondence

**From:** [Carolyn Wilson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Gatling, Tsaiquan](#)  
**Subject:** Fw: Corso Chevy Chase Preliminary Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 7:54:01 AM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My address is 3704 Taylor st Chevy chase Md 20815

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

I have lived on Taylor St. across the street from the proposed development for 30 years. As such I am writing to voice a few areas of concerns.

The town of Chevy Chase will increase their tax base substantially with the addition of the Corso property and yet the town will not have to bear any of the burden. The town of Chevy Chase will not have any right of ways or vehicle traffic going into their community. The town will retain the tree buffer it currently has.

The town has entered into a win-win situation with Corso.

However Section 3 of Chevy Chase is the area most affected by the Corso redevelopment

Half of our section will face the Corso project. and yet the residents have not been consulted by corso.

If it is decided a traffic light is needed to control traffic coming and going from the Corso development that will result in all 3 traffic lights between Chevy Chase Circle and East West highway will be in Section 3, which is only made up of four streets adjacent to Connecticut Ave, two of which face the Corso project. The burden placed on the 282 homes in Section 3 relates to traffic, any changes to the intersection at Taylor st. , Set backs on Conn. Ave and the purposed commerical space.

The Preliminary Plan 120240020 includes 5,000 square feet of commerical space. There has never been any commerical space on Connecticut Ave between Chevy Chase Circle and East West Highway. This has always been a residential neighborhood. This is an enormous change to the fabric of our community, and not for the better. Chevy Chase residents have the benefit of retail space north of East West highway, south of Chevy Chase Circle along with the retail space just four blocks east of the purposed Corso site. on Brookville Rd.

Corso has stated "The commerical uses and walk-up residential units, have been oriented toward Connecticut Ave to activate and enliven this major thoroughfare" Corso also stated "Connecticut Ave is a non Residential Street" . Both statements are false. We are very much Residential and Why do we need to be enlivened? As it is Connecticut Ave traffic is near capacity. Currently Trucks are banned but

they continue to travel the Ave unmonitored.

Additionally most Senior communities Have a bank , hairdresser, convenice shop in their building but they are not dependant on consumers outside of the residents. Once the planning board allows commerical zoning on Connecticut Ave that will be the end of homes along the Ave. One only needs to look at the history of Arlington rd. where homes lined the street. Would the planning board allow commerical zoning on Mass Ave. between Little Falls Pkwy and Westmooreland circle? How about on Montgomery Ave in Historic Rockville between Falls Rd. and Nelson St.?

I understand the county is enticed by having 500 residents added to the tax base that will not add to our school population or county services, but our community does not need

commerical space at 7100 Connecticut Ave.

Sincerely.

Carolyn Wilson

Taylor st

Chevy Chase, Md

**From:** [Andy Leon Harney](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on the Corso Chevy Chase site plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 6, 2024 3:49:58 PM  
**Attachments:** [Comments on Corso Chevy Chase for site plan hearing.pdf](#)

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board,

Attached please find comments on the Corso Chevy Chase Site Plan Application signed by Larry Lanpher, our Vice Chair reflective of the thinking of the entire Council of Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase. Thanking you in advance for your consideration on Feb. 8th.

--

Andy Leon Harney  
Village Manager  
(301) 656-9117

# SECTION 3 OF THE VILLAGE OF CHEVY CHASE

P.O. Box 15070

Chevy Chase

Maryland 20815

301/656-9117

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[www.chevychasection3.org](http://www.chevychasection3.org)

Comments to the Montgomery County Planning Board on the Corso Chevy Chase Site Plan Application (820240030)

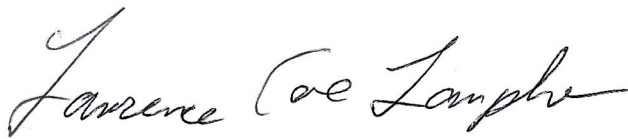
Chair Harris and Members of the Planning Board

The collaborative efforts between the Town of Chevy Chase, the developers of Corso Chevy Chase, Section 3 and members of the Planning Board Staff has been impressive. We appreciate the hard work and thoughtfulness that everyone, including members of the State Highway Administration brought to the table. It is a challenge to create a facility on such a large parcel that has been dormant for so long.

The areas outstanding of concern to our residents are parking, the possibility of cut-through traffic and access to the site from Connecticut Ave. The binding element on parking is reassuring and we will monitor compliance carefully.

The Council of Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase is firmly in support of a signalized intersection at Corso's access points on Connecticut Avenue. We feel the entire intersection will be safer for pedestrians and motorists if the most recent concept plan presented to the Board and the public is adopted. We appreciate the Planning staff's strong support for this full signalization. We ask that the Planning Board make clear in paragraph 7 of the stated conditions that a full signalization, as presented to the Board, should be installed at this location.

Sincerely,



Lawrence C. Lanpher

Council Vice Chair

**From:** [Don Robertson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Corso Development - Hearing 2/8/24  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 11:47:54 AM  
**Attachments:** [COMMENTS-Corso Hearing 2-18-24.pdf](#)

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Please see the attached.

Law Offices of Donald B. Robertson  
4520 East West Highway Suite 700  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814  
Phone: (240)743-2397  
Fax: (301)951-8631  
[donrobertson@dbroffice.com](mailto:donrobertson@dbroffice.com)

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Donald B. Robertson  
7003 Delaware Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

February 7, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

Re: Corso Development Plan

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Planning Board:

This relates to the Corso proposal on Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and issues related to it.

I have resided on Delaware Street, in Section 3 of Chevy Chase, for 60 years (and, before that, off and on in Section 3 since 1932). I have no axe to grind with respect to the issues that, in my opinion, should have been considered in this process. My only interest is, to the extent consistent with the public interest, in protecting Section 3 and, more broadly, Chevy Chase as a whole.

When the Corso proposal first arose, the Village Council of Section 3 submitted a questionnaire to the residents. That questionnaire asked residents to identify those issues raised by the Corso proposal about which they had concern. My responses, together with an accompanying letter, are attached.

As you will see, I believe that a number of issues should have been of concern and addressed by Section 3. Although I and others wrote several additional letters to the Village Council--and made comparable oral presentations--urging action, there appeared to be no will to do so. Similarly, there appeared to be no desire to separate the presentation of Section 3 from that of Section 4 (the Town of Chevy Chase). As the letter from

February 7, 2024

Carolyn Wilson indicates, the interests of Section 3 and 4 are not the same--that fact, apparently, never was recognized by Section 3.

As the matter progressed, I wrote several letters to the Village Council urging the retention of experienced representation and more aggressive action by the Council. The Council's position did not change.

Enclosed is a copy of my most recent letter. As noted there, even if one accepts what has happened to date, the current setback situation, the commercialization of Connecticut Avenue, and the traffic controversy on Connecticut Avenue at Taylor Street deserve attention and serious consideration.

As others have noted, there is no indication that any consideration was given to requiring some or all of the traffic exiting Corso to use other than Connecticut Avenue. Had such consideration been given, it is quite possible that there would not be the present problems on Connecticut Avenue at Taylor Street.

Attention also should have been given to, among many other things, the proposed commercial strip on Connecticut Avenue. As has been indicated by others, that proposal would represent a significant departure from the use to date of Connecticut Avenue in that area.

Finally, the setback proposed by Corso, and so far approved, has never been seriously challenged by Section 3 or anyone else. As referred to in my letter of August 1, 2023 (attached), and referred to in the comments of D. Stephen Mathias, that problem can be addressed by the denial of, or restrictions placed upon, Phase 2 of the proposed development.

In short, notwithstanding the lack of assistance from the various parts of Chevy Chase, in acting upon this site plan, the Planning Board needs to decide what it intends Connecticut Avenue in Chevy Chase to be in the future.

Please let me know if you have any questions about any of the foregoing.

February 7, 2024

Thank you for your attention to my views.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Donald B. Robertson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Donald B. Robertson

Enclosures



**Don Robertson**

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**From:** Don Robertson  
**Sent:** Friday, July 8, 2022 4:50 PM  
**To:** Andy Leon Harney <villagemanager@chevyCHASEsection3.org>  
**Subject:** 4-H Center Development Survey

Andy,

I have returned the survey about the 4-H development.

The survey did not provide enough room for all of the additional thoughts that I have in connection with the proposed development. Accordingly, I am listing them below, although I am by no means sure that, as to some, there is any remedy at this point.

I am sure that you and the members of the Council have thought of most of these issues, but in case you have not:

1. Theater - Will the theater be used only for residents and staff or will it be used for commercial purposes? Is it available for rental or other use by members of the community for various events?
2. Shops - Why are the various shops available for the public in addition to the residents and staff? What are the implications of a commercial strip at this location?
3. Parking - Do the plans contain sufficient parking for the residents, staff, and visitors? If not, what is the intention?
4. Trees - I understand that the existing trees will be left standing, but what is the commitment for the future? May the trees be eliminated? Will new trees be planted? Who will maintain the trees?
5. Expansion - May the owners expand, or seek authority to expand, and, if so, what are the implications?
6. Transition - If all of the existing buildings will be torn down, what is the commitment of the owners to restore the property in the future if the planned facility is not successful? In part at least, this may be their problem if they own the property.

\* \* \*

Please let me know if you have any questions about these matters. I am sure there are many more issues, but these are the ones that came quickly to mind.

Best,

Don

Donald B. Robertson  
Handler & Levine, LLC  
4520 East West Highway Suite 700  
Bethesda, Maryland 20814  
Main: (301) 961-6464 X 2397  
Direct: (240) 743-2397  
Fax: (301) 951-8631  
[don@handlerlevine.com](mailto:don@handlerlevine.com)

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As you know, the site of the former National 4-H Conference Center on Connecticut Ave has been sold to Galerie Living, Atlanta developers of senior living facilities and Community Three, a DC area real estate development firm. It's a 12-acre site that since 1893 has served as a hotel, a women's college and since the 1950's, the home of the 4-H and a hotel for its members. A public hearing ( for a Local Map Amendment) to alter the zoning and lay out patterns of access and circulation will be held in August or September. Your Section 3 Council wants your input so we can effectively represent the Section at hearings and in discussions with the developers. We would appreciate your responses by July 11 so we can discuss it at the July 13 Council meeting.

#### Background information

The 4-H Center was a place where young people in 4-H came to Washington, DC for educational purposes. In recent years, church groups and other nonprofit organizations have also used the facility as a place to stay, visit Washington, DC and hold meetings.

The Town of Chevy Chase, where the site is located, has been actively engaged with the developers. Their plans are available for your review on the Town website, [townofchevyCHASE.org](http://townofchevyCHASE.org). Just put 4-H and or "Corso Chevy Chase" into the search engine on the Town home page and you can review the developer's power point presentations and correspondence between the Town and the developers.

Section 3 has reached out to the developers to let them know that we too wish to be involved in a dialogue with them as we too have concerns about the proposed development. To date, we have had a single Zoom meeting to get a sense from them as to their current thinking and plans going forward.

The current plan, as envisioned by the developers, involves removing all the existing buildings but retaining the current entrance and exits. They envision some 507 units of which 297 will be for independent living, 190 for assisted living and 30 for memory care. Some of the new buildings of the proposed Corso Chevy Chase complex will be set back from Connecticut Ave just 18' & 19' from the inside edge of the

sidewalk. Three acres at the rear which slopes dramatically, is heavily treed will remain a forest preserve with walking trails which will extend to 3 sides of the perimeter of the development.

The developers envision public access to the walking paths, a coffee shop, an ice cream store, a florist and a large meeting room or "theater".

As explained in the May and June issues of News & Views, the first hurdle for the developers is to apply for a local map amendment (LMA) which will redefine the zoning and access to and circulation on the site. This will be our first opportunity to have our voices heard in a public forum.

Please take a moment to fill out this 10 question survey and let us know your thoughts.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning it's not of concern and 5 meaning the issue is of considerable concern please fill out the survey below

1. Traffic : There are many aspects regarding traffic that need to be examined. Specifically, the existing separate entrances and exits which they propose to retain. How will these entry/exit points affect Connecticut Ave. traffic both during and after construction?

Lower Range      1                      2                      3                      4                      5      Upper Range  
                                                                                       

2. There is also concern that there will be cut-through traffic in our community. Please note that Section 3 has the ability to limit entry into the community as we do at Raymond and Shepherd Streets now. We could do so at Taylor St. if it appeared necessary, but that has an impact on our residents as well. We need your feedback.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
                                                                                       

3. The facility as proposed estimates they will have trash pickup twice weekly, commercial food service deliveries 3-4 times a week, laundry pick-up/ delivery twice a week and of course staff coming by both public transportation and their own vehicles. Close to half of the development (220 units) are reserved for assisted living and memory care which require higher staffing levels. This is all in addition to visitors to the site and driving residents. What is your level of concern?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
                                                                                       

4. The developers are promising a signalization (traffic light) study for a possible light on Connecticut Ave. which would likely be at Taylor St. Is this an issue of concern?

1

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5. Density: The project proposes to develop 9 of the 12 acres reserving the 3 steeply sloped acres at the rear as a forest conservation area. Corso Chevy Chase developers estimate a little less than 11% open space on the site, primarily on the edges. The buildings are clustered so that there is a tree-lined buffer on three sides facing Town of Chevy Chase residences. All the residential buildings (507 units) are projected to be five stories high.

1

2

3

4

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6. Setbacks: Section 3's front setback rule mandates that no house can be built closer than 30' from the front property line. Most of Montgomery County, including the Town of Chevy Chase, has a minimum 25' setback with some exceptions based on the size of the lot. According to the proposal, the Corso Chevy Chase buildings facing Connecticut Avenue will be about 18 and 19' from the property line at the inside edge of the sidewalk. Let us know your response to these setbacks.

1

2

3

4

5

7. Heights & Massing: The proposal calls for six residential buildings along with a clubhouse and other amenities. Each has a closed or semi-open courtyard. The maximum height at the roof peak for a most single-family homes in our area zoned R-60 is 35'. The Corso Chevy Chase draft documents indicate they will have 70' tall (5 story) residential buildings, two of which are massed close to Connecticut Ave.

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8. Parking: The proposed plan for the development is to have 503 parking spaces plus 42 tandem spaces. The developers note the average age of their Atlanta residents is 85. Do you think the number of spaces is sufficient considering the number of residents, staff and visitors that will be frequenting the site? Please note, Section 3 already has a permit parking ordinance on the books which could be enforced to make certain only Section 3 residents were parking on our streets.

1

2

3

4

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9. Zoning: The Town of Chevy Chase and Section 3 are zoned for single family homes. This parcel has been used as a hotel, college and the 4-H National Center since 1893. Do you think the use should be returned to single family zoning.

1

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3

4

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10. The developers are proposing up to 5,000 square feet of commercial space open to

the public to include a small café, an ice cream shop and a florist. What is your thinking about commercial uses as part of this development?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

Are there other issues of concern that you think the Council should address and if so, what are they?

Because I cannot fit my comments within the space limitations, a separate e-mail is being sent to the Village Manager.

118/500

Are there specific questions you would like answered?

0/500

Please provide the name of the street you live on in Section 3

Delaware Street

15/50

If you wish to be placed on a special mailing list regarding developments around the 4-H proposed project, give us your name and the email where you'd like this information sent.

don@handlerlevine.com

21/50

**Submit Survey**

If you just opted in, you're consenting to receive marketing emails from: Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase, P.O. Box 15070, Chevy Chase, MD 20815. You can revoke your consent to receive emails at any time by using the [SafeUnsubscribe®](#) link, found at the bottom of every email. [Emails are serviced by Constant Contact](#)

Donald B. Robertson  
7003 Delaware Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815  
(301) 657-8992 (Home)  
(240) 743-2397 (Office)

August 1, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

Susan Manning  
Chair  
Village Council  
Chevy Chase Section 3  
7005 Florida Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Ellie Nader  
Secretary  
Village Council  
Chevy Chase Section 3  
7106 Fulton Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Tom Carroll  
Treasurer  
Village Council  
Chevy Chase Section 3  
3806 Shepherd Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Lawrence Lanpher  
Vice Chair  
Village Council  
Chevy Chase Section 3  
3614 Spring Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Katey Vale  
Buildings & Roads Coordinator  
Village Council  
Chevy Chase Section 3  
7103 Florida Street  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815

Re: Curso Development

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Council:

This is again to urge the Council to retain counsel, through counsel to enter an appearance in the proceedings relating to the development proposal (with respect to the former 4-H property) of Corso of Chevy Chase (Curso) before the Montgomery County Planning Board, and to seek a solution desirable from the standpoint of Section 3.

It may well be that a retirement community is either an acceptable or the best option for the former 4-H Club property (I am inclined to believe that it is, at least, the former), and it

August 1, 2023

appears that Corso has made an effort to adapt the architecture of its proposal to that of the surrounding area. But, even if one accepts one or both of the above propositions, that does not mean that all of the details of the Corso proposal are satisfactory from all standpoints and that it is what the Planning Board would agree is acceptable after all interests were presented to it. I do not know what the "right" answer is, but I suggest that an almost nonexistent setback (18 feet?) on the Connecticut Avenue side is not the proper solution.

The presentation by Corso on Tuesday, July 25th, and the earlier opinion of the Hearing Examiner, make clear that the Town of Chevy Chase (Section 4, etc.) is having its interests satisfied.<sup>1/</sup> Thus, much attention was paid to the north, west, and south sides of the proposed development, but little attention was paid to the east side, i.e. the side bordering Connecticut Avenue and facing Section 3.<sup>2/</sup>

Where is Section 3 in all of this? The truth of the matter is that Section 3 is being outgunned. We learned (perhaps the Council and Village Manager already knew) from the presentation on July 25th that Corso is represented by one of the leading land use planning firms in the County, Lerch, Early & Brewer. We also know, from the opinion of the Hearing Examiner, that Section 4 has been represented by counsel. Section 3 needs to be heard, and this will only happen with representation by experienced land use planning counsel in the Planning Board proceeding.

Even on the issue in which the Council has been most concerned, i.e., traffic on Connecticut Avenue, the presentation by Corso was not clear, and it appears that Corso has little interest in the outcome. The Corso conclusion seems to be that the matter will be decided by the State Highway Administration. I doubt that result is satisfactory to Section 3.

- 
- 1/ The presentation on July 25th talked almost entirely of the Town, and very little mention was made of Section 3, but it is not clear that the speaker (attorney) knew the difference between the Town and Section 3.
- 2/ The short-term interests of the Town of Chevy Chase may well be to protect the Town on the north, west, and south sides of the proposed development, but its longer-term interest should include protecting the Connecticut Avenue corridor as a whole.



August 1, 2023

Much more of an impression needs to be made about the interests of Section 3 generally, and with respect to the Connecticut Avenue setback and to the traffic on Connecticut Avenue in particular, in order to obtain a result that is satisfactory from the standpoint of the residents of Section 3.

Although the residents of Section 3 may not have expressed much concern about Corso to date, that does not indicate what their feelings would be if:

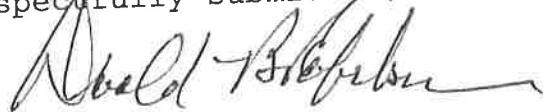
(1) Construction starts, under Phase 2, and there is almost no setback from Connecticut Avenue; and

(2) The traffic on Connecticut Avenue, caused by Corso, results in a significant problem for Section 3 residents.

If either of these results were to come to pass, and perhaps others, many more residents of Section 3 would be concerned.<sup>3/</sup>

For all of these reasons, I urge the Council to act now. The hour is late, but, in my opinion, it is not too late for Section 3 to be heard.

Respectfully submitted,



Donald B. Robertson

cc: Andy Leon Harney  
Village Manager

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<sup>3/</sup> Even now, several Section 3 houses on Connecticut Avenue are on the market. If there is construction without assurance of a significant setback from Connecticut Avenue, or if the traffic pattern is detrimental, we can expect many more houses to go on the market.

**From:** [D Stephen Mathias](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Corso - Statement of Stephen Mathias  
**Date:** Wednesday, February 7, 2024 3:08:00 PM

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**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

My address is: 3800 Taylor St., Chevy Chase MD 20815.  
Thank you.  
Stephen Mathias

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

My name is Stephen Mathias. My wife, our children, and I have lived in Chevy Chase Section 3 on Taylor Street, across Connecticut Avenue, opposite the former 4H property, for more than 25 years.

Let's assume for the moment that we all believe that a new 700,000 square foot senior living facility would be a positive development for the down-county community. Even in that case, it would be necessary to ensure that the property on which it was constructed had sufficient infrastructure for it to operate without damage to the surrounding community.

That is not the situation of the proposed Corso development. Chevy Chase Section 3 was developed over 120 years ago. Many of its residences front little more than 30 feet from Connecticut Avenue. The local streets are narrow. On Taylor Street, two cars cannot pass each other going in opposite directions. Connecticut Avenue itself is backed up on both weekdays and weekends, sometimes as far south as the DC line and as far north as the Beltway. To add hundreds of residents, employees, visitors, customers, and the cars in which they would arrive, including in the small hours of the morning, into such a situation would be to knowingly and deliberately create problems for local residents in terms of safety, noise and congestion, and cause further delays to those traveling on Connecticut Avenue.

I have two suggestions to make that, while not eliminating the problems I have identified, would ameliorate them.

First, I understand that the developers plan to build the development in two phases. I suggest that any approval for the part of the site plan relating to Phase 2 be subject to review following the completion of Phase 1. This review could assess the effects of Phase 1 as to traffic, noise, and congestion. If the effect is insignificant, Phase 2 could proceed. So, my first proposal to the Planning Board is to do no more than conditionally move on the site plan relating to Phase 2, or take other action with a similar consequence.

Second, while currently a median strip separates the north- and south-bound lanes of Connecticut Avenue at the development site, the site plan provides direct access from the Corso development across Connecticut Avenue onto Taylor Street and through Chevy Chase Section 3 to Brookville Road, a through street with commercial activity, making Taylor Street a secondary access road to and from the development. This proposal, I would observe, has been made while Chevy Chase Section 4, which is where the development is actually located and which will receive tax revenue from it, has essentially cordoned itself off from all incoming and outgoing traffic. Taylor Street, and, indeed, Section 3 in general, is in no position to absorb added traffic. Its houses are modest by Chevy Chase standards and a great many of its residents are parents of young children; its streets are narrow, with intersections that are difficult for modern vehicles to maneuver; and it is already absorbing increased traffic from development further up Connecticut Avenue, sometimes including trucks, buses, and construction vehicles that are, in size and weight, beyond the dreams of its original builders. The residents of Taylor Street oppose both the elimination of the median and the proposal of a traffic signal at Taylor Street. Even in the case of the much smaller 4H development, it was seen best to prevent direct access to and from Taylor Street. To change the rules now for the much larger Corso development would be to change, irrevocably and for the worse, the volume of traffic on the 120-year-old street and the nature of the Village itself.

I thank the Planning Board for their attention and request its consideration of my two proposals.

D. Stephen Mathias/February 4, 2024