
TOWN GOVERNMENT

By the turn of the century, the development of Chevy Chase by the Land Company straddled the Maryland-District of Columbia line along Western Avenue. Chevy Chase south of Western Avenue was part of the District of Columbia, which provided it with the services of a city. Chevy Chase north of Western Avenue was part of the State of Maryland and had to look for services to Montgomery County.

Because Montgomery County then was rural and sparsely populated, services were geared mainly to meet the needs of a farming constituency. The county did not yet have home rule. It was governed by a Board of County Commissioners under the state's authority. The county seat was in Rockville, ten miles north along a rough road. In spite of the presence of a commissioner who lived in Bethesda, the commission's interests were rural.

The First Associations

As a consequence, the residents in the increasingly suburban south organized themselves into citizens' associations to provide many missing services for themselves. First to form in 1895 was the "Chevy Chase Association," which met monthly in "Library Hall" located on Connecticut at Kirke Street. It maintained a "Free Library" at that site with open hours on Wednesday and Saturday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Next came the "Bethesda Citizens' Association" in 1904, meeting each month and working through committees for Law and Order, Roads and Highways, Education, Health, "Farms, Gardens and Domestic," and Transportation. In 1909, residents of Section Three and Four formed the "Chevy Chase Citizens' Association of Section Three and Four," also meeting monthly to deal with matters similar to those of the Bethesda Association. At that time, the "Chevy Chase Taxpayers' Committee" was active in the area and included among its officers a health officer, Dr. Conrad of Section Four, and a building inspector.

The developers of Chevy Chase had a general plan for their new community. They envisioned a village of only single-family residences, detached houses, with a minimum value. They laid out wide streets to allow for sidewalks and green parking strips with street trees; more space between homes for privacy; and large yards, open in the front with stables and accessory buildings only in the rear. Corner lots had to comply with even greater setbacks to insure the openness of the commu-

nity. The Land Company applied covenants to the deeds of their properties to achieve these goals, and later developers of surrounding properties did the same.

The early residents no doubt chose their properties because of these amenities. It is not surprising that the local citizens' associations sought not only improved services but the authority to preserve the general plan and to insure that the requirements of the deeds were met. Since local authority was given by the state, they sought the help of the State Legislature.

In 1910, the Maryland State Legislature passed what was known as "The Municipal Control Act" (PLL 1910, Chapter 383) under which the sections of the Village of Chevy Chase were given the ability to seek self-government as Special Taxing Districts. In this Act, the Village was described as Sections Two, Three, and Four, and Martin's Addition. As such, each section, or any combination of sections, would be empowered to levy and collect taxes to open and maintain their streets, sidewalks, drainage and sanitation; to provide for police protection and other public services; and to require that building and land restrictions were strictly followed. The process for becoming a taxing district was invitingly simple. An advertised public hearing, a petition of the majority of a section's voting residents, and an evaluation of all taxable properties upon which to base a section tax rate were to be in the hands of the county commissioners by the 15th of April in any year. The taxes collected would then be paid to the treasurer of the incorporated association and used for the purposes enumerated in the enabling legislation.

Not Quite Rural

Although much of the suburb was platted, it was still in its undeveloped state in 1910. Rolling land with wooded crests descended into meadow land, some of it made soggy by the numerous artesian streams just below the surface. While making some areas too wet to plant and build on, these streams provided the area's water, which was stored by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission in its water tower at Rosemary Circle. Coquelin Run ran free northward to the Columbia Country Club. The building of houses was concentrated along Connecticut Avenue, Bradley Lane, Rosemary Street, Elm Street (now Stanford), and along Meadow Lane on the east side. The building boom was to come in the 1920s. Adjacent to Section Four to the north was a Shannon and Luchs development known as

Chevy Chase Park, and beyond that only woodland up to Cypress Street, which was later to form part of East-West Highway. On the west, outside the section along Bradley Lane, lay another development known as Norwood Heights that had a small church on the corner of Bradley Lane and Wisconsin Avenue. All the rest of the



Olive and Mary Imirie leave their Bradley Lane residence in a 1915 Hupmobile

COURTESY, MR. AND MRS. SCOTT IMIRIE

area along Wisconsin Avenue to the B&O Railroad was in open lands owned by the Barrett and Walsh families, later to be purchased by the Chevy Chase Land Company as Section Eight, and sold for residential home sites in the 1920s.

Of the original Village of Chevy Chase, the first section to take advantage of the "Municipal Control Act" and the opportunity for self-government was Section Two, including part of Section One. They became a Special Taxing District in April, 1914 (Md PLL 1914, Chapter 610), and are known today as Chevy Chase Village.

During this same period, owners of building lots and the approximately 25 families who lived in Section Four of the Village of Chevy Chase formed the Section Four Citizens' Association and also sought self-government. Its chairman was Dr. William Blum, a former professor of Chemistry at the University of Utah, who had come to work at the U.S. Bureau of Standards in 1910. He lived on what is now Stanford Street with his wife and son.

The First Town Fathers

As chairman, Dr. Blum wrote a letter in April 1915, to the Montgomery County Commissioners, beginning a process seeking the special taxing status and incorpo-

ration for the section. Three years later, on April 10, 1918, action of the Maryland Legislature in Senate Bill 403 (Md PLL 1918, Chapter 177), created another Special Taxing District in the Village of Chevy Chase, to be known as the Village of Chevy Chase Section Four.

These Enabling Acts for Section Two (later called The Village) and Section Four (later called The Town) are exactly the same language throughout and gave both the legal authority to govern themselves and to preserve and protect the general plan of development first envisioned and specified by the Chevy Chase Land Company.

The five members of the organizing citizens' committee became the governing "Citizens' Committee" in the enabling legislation, with William Blum designated as chairman and E. Percival Wilson, J. W. Imirie, J. C. Pearson, and Henry H. Glassie as committee members.

These names were listed formally in the legislation. In the minutes of that first meeting, at which he was elected secretary-treasurer, E. P. Wilson noted that "all members present [at the Imirie home] called upon Judge Butterfield at his home in Bethesda at about 7:15 p.m. and took the oath of office as prescribed in Senate Bill 403, after which "the members returned to Mr. Imirie's home and there discussed generally the provisions and interpretations of said Bill," finally adjourning "without coming to any decision."

What the members of this first government undertook to do was to levy taxes "for the purpose of opening, improving, repairing and lighting the streets, roads, lanes, alleys, sidewalks, parking, drainage, sewerage, sanitation, and other village maintenance and improvements, and for furnishing police protection, clerical and other public service, including the removal of ashes [from coal-fired furnaces], garbage and other refuse, and the disposal thereof; for the employment of a building inspector to enforce the requirements of all deeds of conveyance for properties situated in said village; for enforcing building, sanitary, and other regulations; for the incorporation, election and succession of the Citizens' Committee who shall appoint a Treasurer to receive and disburse said funds; also direct the said Board of County Commissioners to pay over to the Treasurer of said village for opening, improving, main-

taining and repairing the County and other public roads, streets, and lanes, the money collected on the account of the County road tax in the same amount and manner as is now required by law to be paid to incorporated towns . . ." as stipulated in the Enabling Act. The Citizens Committee also had the power to make special assessments, to acquire, condemn or otherwise obtain property for public purposes, and to borrow money for these purposes.

The minutes kept by the Citizens' Committee from 1918 to 1920 were not found in the archives. One can only assume that the committee met and did take the place of the Land Company in managing Section Four. Although the section was entitled to receive \$570 in each of the first two years for road taxes collected by the county in the section, as well as the \$1,153 per year based on \$.20 a hundred dollars of assessed base on all properties, they may very well not have received the money. Letters written after 1920 requesting the payment of funds due the section from the county treasurer were very frequent.

On May 10, 1920, the Citizens' Committee was ready to conduct a general association meeting at the county school on Valley Place. The main business was to elect members of the Citizens' Committee for a term of one year, and to set the tax rate. Incumbent members were reelected, and the tax rate of \$.20 continued for another year.

At the first regular committee meeting in June, at which the oath of office was sworn to, a schedule of meetings was set. They were to be held monthly, except for July and August when they would be at the call of the chair. Two committees were appointed, one headed by the chairman to write regulations for the governing of the section, and the other to plan for the repair of roads. It was also decided not to change the method for collecting subscriptions to the electric light fund for street light, namely a "volunteer contribution" by each household.

At a special meeting on June 17, 1920, the Bill of

Recommendations and Regulations as prepared and submitted by the subcommittee was discussed. According to the minutes, "Mr. Blum stated that he had gone over the report of his committee very carefully with Messrs. Glassie and Imirie and that they were in accord with same." After making some changes, the recommendations and regulations being "the same as adopted and now in vogue in Sections II and III Chevy Chase, Maryland," were accepted. The document was referred to the general meeting of residents later in June. A paragraph-by-paragraph reading by the 25 residents in attendance resulted in additional changes and additions from the floor, with final approval of the document that evening. On July 13, 1920, the County Commissioners approved the "Regulations for the Welfare and Government of Section Four of the Village of Chevy Chase." At a cost of \$500, a booklet was printed and one distributed to each residence.

At an August meeting, the committee made two important and required appointments, those of Building Inspector and Health Officer.

The committee appointed Edwin A. Schmitt, of Ridge-



The J.W. Bowie house, Blackthorn Street, was built in 1913.

COURTESY, ANNE HERRING

wood Avenue, to be the first Building Inspector, a part-time position whose salary was one-half of the fees collected from builders for a required building permit. His duties also included making sure that fences were no more than five feet high, that no garages were being lived in, and that no one was dumping trash on empty lots. By 1926, the position became one of Superinten-

dent under "Judge" A. Moore Berry, also a section resident. He got a straight salary of \$50 a month and two handymen to assign to making "repairs" to the streets, cutting overgrown shrubs on street corners, painting hydrants white, and other odd jobs to keep the section tidy. He was most conscientious in keeping an eye on illegal and untidy practices by home owners, which earned him a raise in pay to \$75 a month.

Also required by the regulations was the appointment of a practicing physician to the position of Health Officer. The first was Dr. Ryan Devereux of Bradley Lane; he was followed by Dr. Thomas Conrad, who had been active in the first Chevy Chase Association and in the Chevy Chase Taxpayers' Committee. The duties of the Health Officer included having the county school on Valley Place fumigated regularly, investigating contagion, and quarantining houses. He complained at a 1922 general meeting that he was not being informed either by residents or their physicians of births, deaths, and contagion which were to be reported to the state. The Health Officer received no compensation for his work, but was reimbursed for expenses. The last Health Officer was appointed in 1946, after which time the health responsibility was assumed by the county for the state.

In the fall of 1920, the Citizens' Committee in response to residents' objections to what seemed like unusually high rates of assessments in the section, called a special citizens' meeting for October 13. To it was invited Mr. Hunt, the Bethesda Commissioner, who could then hear from taxpayers directly. With so few services from the state, how could taxpayers be assessed so much for them?

The upshot was that the county "saw the injustice in such assessments" and ordered reassessments in a number of cases. This action on behalf of its citizens cost the committee \$100 in revenues for the year, reducing the total from \$1,798.19 to \$1,694.43.

Later, during the regular committee meeting for October 1920, the section's first budget was agreed upon: for roads—\$800; for street lighting—\$400; for everything else—\$300. The treasurer was authorized to open an account at the Bethesda Bank for the deposit of all section funds.

A tip from the county treasurer to the section treasurer regarding revenue sources in Tangible and Intangible Property Taxes resulted in the preparation of an alphabetical list of all property owners. All furniture over a value of \$500, as well as automobiles were taxed at a rate of \$.45 per hundred value of which \$.15 came back to the section. Pressure on the Girls' Seminary to pay

section taxes, and the requirement of the Chevy Chase Land Company to do the same, did add to revenues a bit.

By the January 1921 winter meeting and election of Citizens' Committee members, a regularity had been established. New committee members were elected for a term of one year, all five at one time, with the annual tax-setting meeting held in the spring. The committee met each month, usually at the home of the chairman, even in July and August in spite of their intention to skip those two months.

By 1925, annual election of all five was discontinued in favor of election only in the even years for a term of two years. In 1950, this changed again to three persons elected in the even years and two persons on the odd years, keeping the term of office at two years. Each new committee elected its own officers for the year. The annual winter meeting was discontinued in favor of just one annual citizens' meeting in the spring for both electing the committee members and tax rate setting.

In 1921, the committee entered into a contract for the regular removal of trash and garbage from the rear of each residence. The garbage, which had to be free of glass and tin, was then trucked out of the section to be fed to hogs. Trash was collected separately and simply dumped into designated sites within the section and burned. Complaints of untended trash fires were frequent. While garbage and trash were removed weekly, ashes were picked up twice weekly from October through April and dumped into low spots in the streets.

Chevy Chase Park

Adjacent to Section Four to the west and north was Chevy Chase Park, which shared lower Ridgewood and Maple Avenues with the section. Land to the north and west was open and still undeveloped. The desirability of including Chevy Chase Park in Section Four was realized in 1924, when the charter was modified to include it within the section boundaries. Land to the north belonging to the Chevy Chase Land Company and known as Section Four-B was undeveloped and was not to become part of Section Four until its annexation in 1967. Chevy Chase Park increased the section tax base by \$251,000, bringing the revenue up from \$6,735 to \$7,912.

Besides enlarging the area of the section, the 1924 charter change authorized the committee to borrow money, to issue bonds, and to contract indebtedness for the maintenance and repairs to streets and for other improvements, including the purchase of equipment.



Eastward view of Rosemary Street from the water tower in 1927

ROBERT A. TRUAX COLLECTION

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission was made responsible for water and sewerage in the section, and for making all water and sewer connections.

Dispute About Streets

With its new charter-authorized ability to borrow money for street work, the committee proposed a plan by which it could have the necessary funds in hand with which to do it. With streets of crushed stone regularly disappearing in mud and pot holes, they felt that residents would welcome tackling the job at one time and applying a macadam surface which would hold up better. The residents, first by a post card vote and later at the annual meeting, rejected the plan because of its front foot assessment requirement. In desperation, the committee decided to go ahead with the plan to float a bond, but the residents countered with a petition to nullify the action. The Circuit Court responded positively to the petitioners, and nullified the committee's actions. So opposed were residents to front foot assessments that they agreed to a large increase in the tax levy from \$.25 to \$.45 in 1925, and again in 1926 to \$.50, the rate limit authorized by the charter.

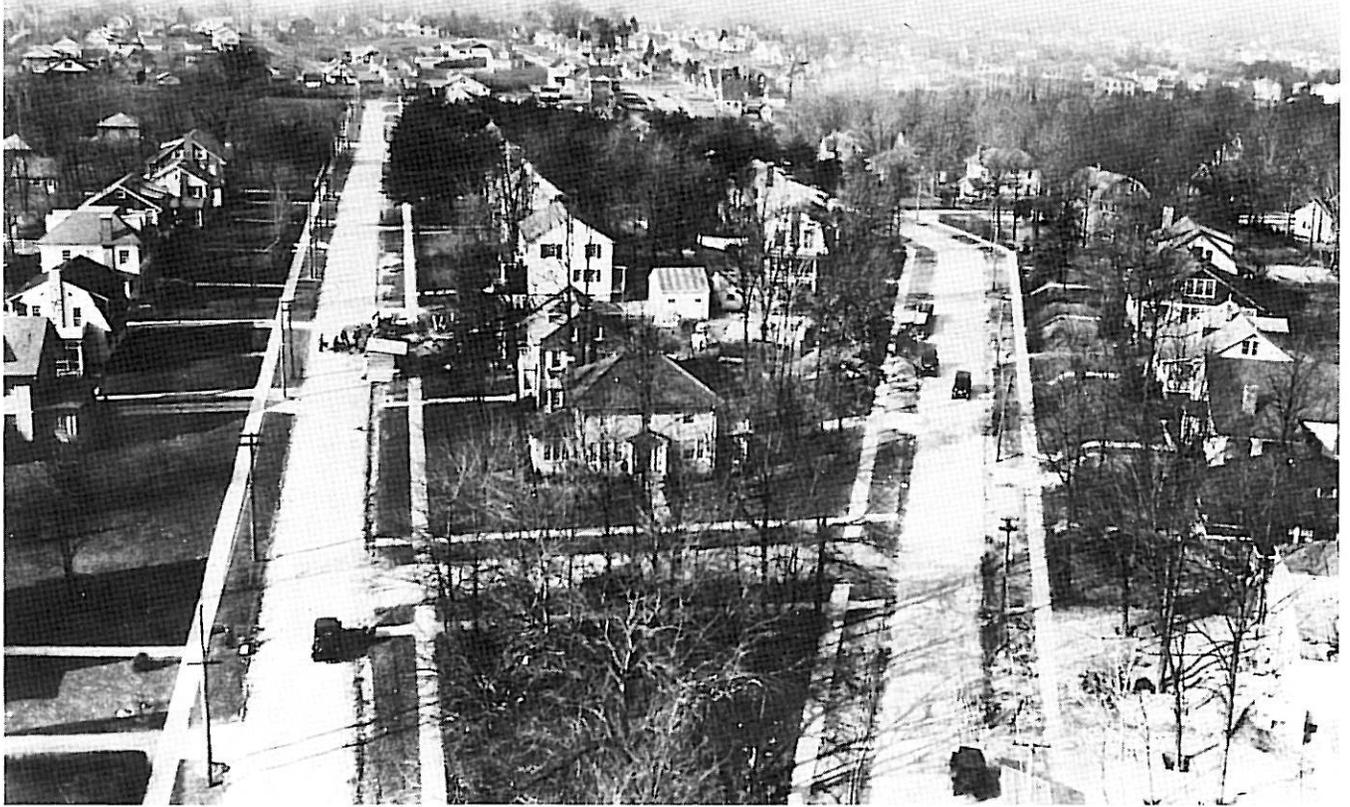
While each of the sections of the Village of Chevy

Chase was concentrating on internal matters, outside forces were at work that needed watching. Representatives of the sections met in 1921, not only to share information, but also to discuss ways of working together when necessary. A proposed "Community Welfare League" was not established, but an understanding was reached that all would stay in touch and in close communication in an emergency.

Apartment Threats

The first threat came in 1923 from the Chevy Chase Land Company, proposing a small but elegant commercial development on its land north of Thornapple Street on the east side of Connecticut Avenue. It was angrily challenged in a public meeting of the Chevy Chase sections, resulting in backing down by the Land Company. Its president wrote later in a letter that this "would have been the handsomest thing of its kind in this part of the country," but since the residents did "not seem to want it, there seems no reason why we should go ahead with this expense." It would have cost \$50,000.

When again in 1929 the Chevy Chase Land Company proposed the rezoning of its land along the east side of Connecticut Avenue for apartments, the outcry in the



Looking west from the water tower along Rosemary and Stanford Streets in 1927

ROBERT A. TRUAX COLLECTION

form of section resolutions to the County Council was vehement. The County Council turned down the rezoning request and no apartments appeared.

Land on the corner of Connecticut Avenue and Bradley Lane had been deeded in 1898 by the Land Company to the school board for school construction. Not all of the area was used for that purpose, so the board sold it in 1904 to a Bradley Apartment Company. Curiously, it was sold without the covenant restricting its use to single-family residential use. When, in 1925, an apartment company representative approached the section committee asking for assurance that a building permit would be issued to it, they were chagrined to learn that this was not probable. They proceeded, nevertheless, to make a formal request for the permit, and were denied it by the committee.

Again, all the neighboring sections raised a cry against the proposal, supporting Section Four in its position and offering to raise funds to oppose the proposal legally if necessary. When the company went ahead to break ground for its building, the committee had the foreman arrested. In turn, the company took the section to court

for refusing the permit—and won. Fearing high costs in appealing the ruling, the committee verbally agreed to issue a permit. The company still decided to have a writ of mandamus served on each of the committees, just to make sure it got the permit. Then in June of 1926, the company attorney requested a return of the \$100 deposit for the permit. For reasons of its own, the company had simply abandoned the project. Subsequent sale of the property included the covenant.

Problems, Problems

The decade of the 1920s was certainly booming in growth for the section, and possibly even “roaring,” considering all the vocal and written complaints to the Citizens’ Committee. So much so fast, with so little resources to take care of maintenance and repair needs called for by a greatly increased population, developed frustrations that erupted at the first citizens’ meeting of the 1930s.

The dispute was brought to a head at the general meeting over who would have to pay for the repairs to the

broken down sidewalk on Bradley Lane. A potential contractor for the work advised against repairing the walk as more expensive in the end than simply replacing it. Front foot assessment again reared its unwelcome head. Repairs came out of general funds, while new construction for sidewalks came out of front foot assessments. Residents attending the meeting did not agree with a former committee member and resident of Bradley Lane that the work should be paid out of general funds. The Bradley resident was so outraged that he questioned whether he and other residents were getting their money's worth out of local government. He wondered if it wouldn't make sense to give up the charter and go under the Suburban Sanitary District of the County.

The ensuing heated discussion solidified in favor of his proposal that a committee be appointed to consider giving up the charter. Such a committee was appointed and ordered to report back at a special general meeting later in the year. Its conclusion after serious study was that it would not be in the best interests of the residents to make such a change, stating that members of the committee are residents acquainted with its needs, are non-partisan, take pride in the beauty of the section, and have a concern for its welfare, unlike the "political members of the County Commissioners who direct the Suburban District." What is more, members of the committee are unpaid volunteers who are civic minded in their service to the community. They recommended against a change and were supported in this by residents attending the special meeting.

Improvements Begin

The reconsideration of the charter, although the result of a civic temper tantrum, did make it possible for residents who came after 1918 to make a positive statement in favor of its value to them in 1930. The problem of sidewalks on Bradley Lane was not solved, largely due to the issue of who was responsible for it, Bradley being a state road. Not until 30 years later was a new sidewalk in place—at town expense.

Petitions by other residents for concrete curbs and gutters got street improvements underway. Storm sewer catchbasins were moved to within the parkings to prevent breaking and displacement by cars, and the dish gutters were paved with small boulders. Macadam surfaces were applied to streets, replacing gravel roads.

A program for tree plantings in the parkings was begun, using maples and dogwoods to replace the dying pin oaks. Attention was paid to tree infestations by scale and borers, in the attempt to save older trees. As houses

were erected, every attempt was made to work around the standing trees which gave the section its country-like look. Street names in the town reflect this concern in their allusions such as Oakridge, Ridgewood, Sycamore, Thornapple, Maple, and others.

Adoption of the building code in use in the metropolitan area by the Citizens' Committee was important in maintaining the quality and look of the new houses. Connecticut Avenue was paved along its west side, keeping the center strip. The section provided light poles along it and on more streets within the section as the number of houses increased. The Davis Trash Company was serving a community of 427 houses by the middle of the 1930s, a large increase from the 25 houses at incorporation in 1918.

Concern for safety resulted in night patrols from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. By 1940, the need for more official policing was recognized by the county, which appointed a Deputy Sheriff, whose duties included the inspection of empty houses, and ticketing moving and traffic violations. Cost to the section was his uniform and revolver.

The Effects of War

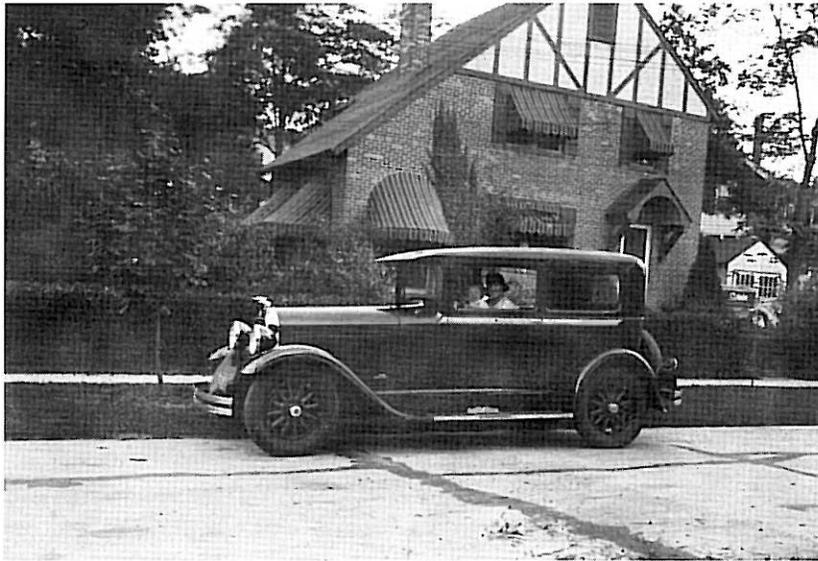
After the American entry into World War II in December 1941, blackouts, rationing, and Civil Defense programs were strictly observed by the residents of Section Four. The Chevy Chase Fire Department became active in the section on behalf of the Civil Defense effort.

With the influx of people into Washington, need for temporary housing spread out from the city into the suburbs. Residents took in individuals as boarders if they had the space, generally without too much objection from neighbors. But when the large house on the corner of Bradley and Connecticut advertised itself as a "boarding house," the section took measures to control such use. The committee approached the county zoning authorities regarding such use, not so much for the duration of the war, but as an opening wedge in zoning changes by default. Assured that this would only be used as a "high class boarding house" to the end of the war, the committee withdrew further action. The house, owned by a town resident, was closed in 1945, and sold for a single-family residence. However, an attempt to construct a two-family house was legally stopped, and the builder had to return the structure to a one-family use.

As early as 1942, a resident on Rosemary Street opened a day care program for children of defense

workers and was permitted to do so only for the duration of the war, with no advertising. Another house on Ridgewood Avenue ran a preschool nursery school for section residents employed in war work.

The section invested tax funds in Series "F" bonds,



The Duncan home on Willow Lane in 1931.

COURTESY, MRS. ROBERT C. DUNCAN

while curtailing new public works not essential for health and safety until after the war.

At the end of World War II, the committee found it necessary to remind home owners of the single-family use in the section. Not until 1947 was a dancing school on Meadow Lane discontinued by the owner.

In 1948, the section shed its Special Taxing District status to become a municipality "with all the powers and privileges of a body politic and corporate, and by said corporate name may have perpetual succession, sue and be sued, plea and be impleaded in any court of law or equity, may have the use of a common seal and may hold real, personal and mixed property when the best interests of said section may so demand."

In November 1950, things had quieted down so much that the Citizens' Committee held no meeting, because there was "nothing of importance to be brought to a meeting"! But, by May 1951, concern over the establishment of doctors' or other professional offices in several single-family houses raised the ire of both neighbors and the committee, which determined to enforce its regulations. The fact that county regulations did not preclude such non-family use did not hold up in the face of covenants that were enforceable in the courts.

After the outbreak of the war in Korea, the section responded by forming a Civil Defense Committee composed largely of qualified servicemen from World War II. On the 4-H grounds the appearance of quonset

huts for army personnel and provisions for 100 parking spaces were the most visible effect on residents. Since the section had ruled that no parking would be permitted on the 4-H grounds after 6:00 p.m., even this effect was minimized.

By 1955, electricity requirements for the section became so heavy that the power company sought to put a booster station in the section, housed in a residential structure near the corner of Connecticut Avenue and East-West Highway. The fear, again, was that this might set a commercial precedent, but when reassured, the Citizens' Committee permitted the use. The house has since been returned to single family use.

In 1955, the state legislature drew up "Home Rule Procedures of Municipal Corporations" under Chapter 23A of the Constitution of Maryland, further strengthening the positions of towns and cities within counties.

As a result of this historic action by the Maryland legislature, important changes were made in the town charter in 1962. In addition to changing the original "Citizens' Committee" to "Town Council," and including all amendments to the charter in the main body of it, most important was the authority to legislate on its own behalf without County Council approval. The state had, to a large degree, made the municipalities the equal of counties, and certainly much less subservient. Specific duties assigned by the state to counties, such as health, remained with the counties, and agencies like the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission and the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission were unaffected by the new legislation.

The Town Council could now legislate on its own behalf in all things, providing it was prepared to enforce its legislation. The Town Council could also accept county legislation by reference and have it enforced by the county in the town.

The Maryland Municipal League had been very active in the formulation and passage of this legislation, which gave small municipalities a stronger voice in their own management. The town, along with other smaller towns, joined the League in 1956, and has been active in it ever since.

In 1964, the town regulations, unchanged since 1924, were rewritten to provide for changes required by the passage of 40 years.

Upsetting Growth

By 1970, small-town Bethesda was beginning to have a big-city look. First two high rise apartments appeared on East-West Highway, and a high rise office building on Wisconsin at Elm Street reaching over the air space of the railroad tracks. The drug store and theater on the corner of Wisconsin and Old Georgetown Road were gone, with rumors of other small neighborhood businesses on Wisconsin Avenue losing long-term leases. And then the small six-store shopping "center" on the corner of Leland and Wisconsin was slowly being vacated with no new tenants. This was of very special concern to all residents along Leland and down into Section Four. In spite of a ban on increasing water flow into the sewer system out of the area, the Ford Motor Company of Dearborn, Michigan, having bought the site, was planning to build a high rise office building.

It had become clear to the neighboring communities and the Park and Planning Commission that the explosive high density construction set in motion by actions of an earlier County Council had to be brought under control. The 1970 Master Plan adopted by the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area had recommended a reduction in the size of the central business district, but the Park and Planning Commission could do nothing about land uses and zoning changes without suitable zoning categories. As things stood, all commercial development was in one high density zone regardless of location. Even Montgomery Triangle, a green space used by the B-CC students for touch football, was zoned at a level that later produced two tall office towers.

A special Planning Board Citizens' Advisory Board composed of residential and business community representatives was formed, and the town was represented. In 1974, after months of concentrated effort, a plan was presented to the public and the County Council for hearings and possible changes. Under the plan, three central business district zones were formed, each having a zoning deemed appropriate for the area, with the densest zoning at the center, where Metro was to come.

Even before the hearings were held on a plan that would down-zone many areas, developers moved to get under way before a deadline down the road.

Although a deadline was no threat to the construction of the Ford Building in 1972, the sewer moratorium was. Residents of the area and the town, dismayed by the prospect of having an inappropriately tall office building overhead, made urgent requests of the County Council not to allow its construction. Picketing of the

cleared site along with public criticism had no effect on the granting of a building permit by the County Council. When the hole appeared on the corner, the Section Four Council took a legal step. It sued the County Council for issuing a building permit in the face of a water moratorium for a building that would surely need more water than the small center it replaced.

The Circuit Court denied the suit, saying Section Four was not in close enough proximity to the construction to have necessary "standing." Not wishing to use public funds for a probable lost cause by appealing, the council went no further.

A groundswell of resentment, anger, disappointment, and feelings of impotence among the residents of the area between Wisconsin and Section Four resulted in their seeking to join the town by annexation so that there would be "standing" in the future. A similar feeling of disappointment with the county's action grew in Section Four, so that annexation was seen as mutually beneficial.

The Last Addition

A lengthy and very precise process was begun by a joint committee of representatives from Section Four, Section Eight, and the Elm Street, Oakridge and Lynn Association. A hard-nosed look at the dollar costs for each of the groups indicated that it would not cost the town more to provide services since taxes from the new area would take care of that, and the annexed areas found that they would not pay higher taxes as the result of being town residents.

In a newsletter preparatory to a general meeting of the EOL Civic Association, its chairman wrote:

"The overall effect of the merger of Section Eight with Section Four would be to broaden the base of our political strength for the fight to maintain our homes and our schools against the encroachment of the Central Business District with its high-rises, traffic and parking problems, air and sound pollution—all of which are bound to be worse with Metro. If Section Eight had been part of Section Four when Chevy Chase Section Four sued to prevent the construction of the Ford Building, the judge would not have been able to deny the case on the grounds that Chevy Chase Section Four was not contiguous to the Ford Building."

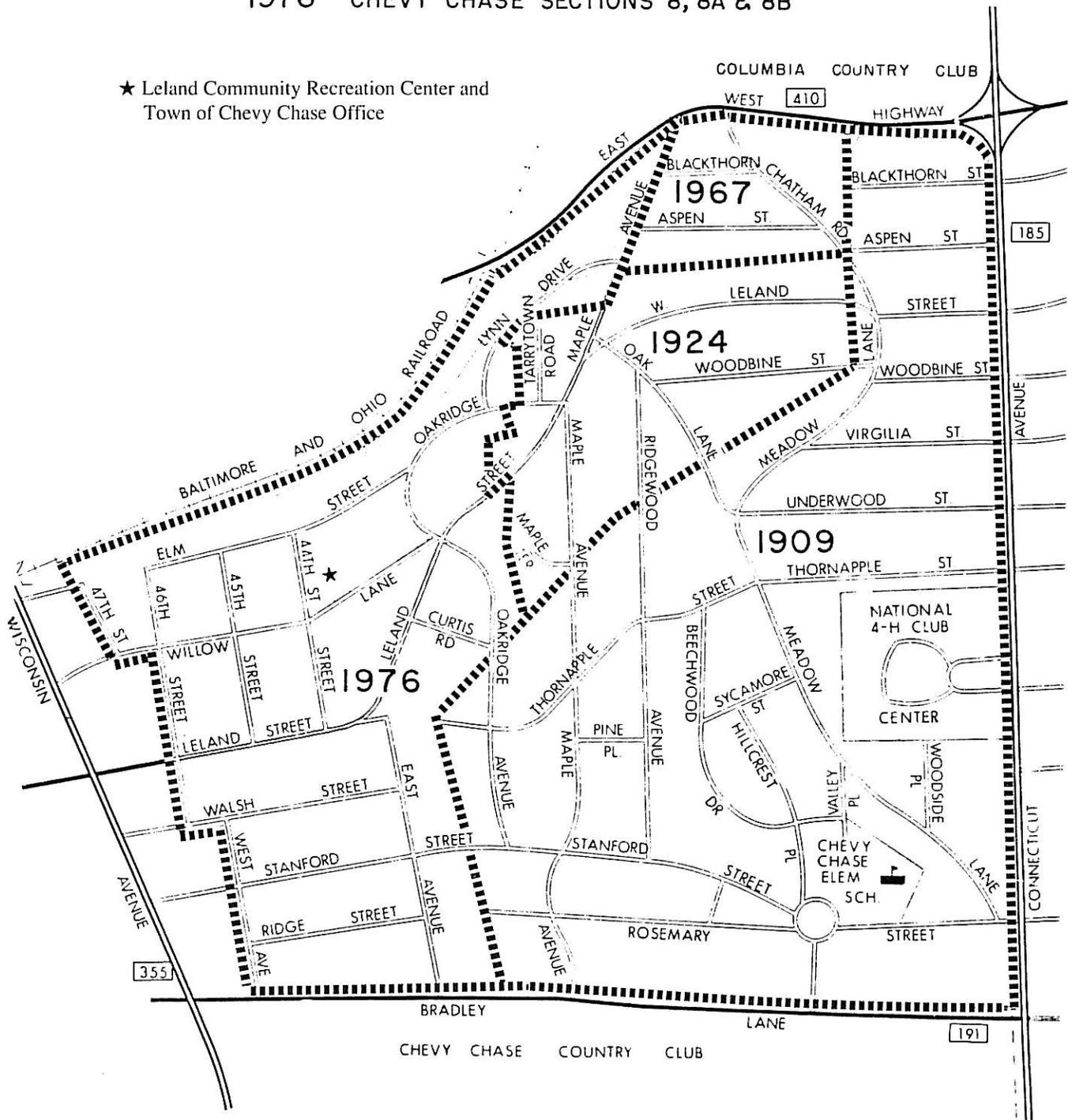
In its own newsletter to town residents, the Section Four Council wrote:

"We cannot turn our backs on what is going on

GROWTH OF THE TOWN OF CHEVY CHASE

- 1909 CHEVY CHASE SECTION 4
- 1924 CHEVY CHASE PARK
- 1967 CHEVY CHASE SECTION 4B
- 1976 CHEVY CHASE SECTIONS 8, 8A & 8B

★ Leland Community Recreation Center and
Town of Chevy Chase Office



about us. We need Section Eight every bit as much as they feel they need us, in mutual support of our common needs and the necessity to present a united front in all matters that concern our whole community. It does not make sense to have a unitary geographical area artificially divided by what is in fact a convenient land developer's demarcation long after its usefulness is past. It made sense to annex Section Four-B several years ago (1967); it makes even more sense in this day of siege by outside forces for us to annex the remaining residential area. We share the same geography, the same schools, the same main arteries which encircle us, and the same concerns for our children and our properties. We should share the same local government."

Petitions from Section Eight indicated that a majority of voters and property owners were in favor of being annexed to Section Four. In May 1976, by secret mail ballot, residents of Section Four voted overwhelmingly in favor of annexation. A resolution of annexation was passed by the Town Council, effective June 30, 1976, creating a larger Town within natural borders composed of the residential area between Wisconsin and Connecticut Avenues, north of Bradley Lane, and south of the railroad right of way and East-West Highway.

The Town of Chevy Chase

Residents of Section Eight introduced the idea of changing the name of the Village of Chevy Chase, Section Four. Several names were suggested and a postcard survey endorsed the name Town of Chevy Chase. The Town Council delayed action for a long time but finally reintroduced the legislation to change the official name to The Town of Chevy Chase. At the 1983 general election another vote was taken and residents narrowly passed a resolution supporting the name change. The Council took final action on the legislation, and the Town of Chevy Chase was official.

In 1976, Section Four had added 326 houses, 1,043 more residents, and the Elm Street Park which had been carved out of the residential block of former Section Eight between Elm Street and Willow Lane, and 46th and 47th streets. Cheek to cheek with the Bethesda central business district, the town certainly had standing, and would certainly face any threat to its integrity and value.

To protect town residents from negative effects of the heated commercial development along Wisconsin

Avenue, the council appointed a number of citizens committees to monitor the effects of traffic on town streets and the kind of development seeking to build in Bethesda. Council members have served on county committees, testified before county bodies, and joined with other Bethesda communities to protect the residential life around the commercial community.

Effects of Board of Education rulings on the two schools within the town have stimulated anxiety at the least, and community activism at the most. The Town Council, on behalf of the town, appointed committees to assist with presenting town positions and to cooperate with neighboring communities also affected.

From the first days of the Citizens' Association to the present incorporated town, the five citizens who have constituted the "government" have served as volunteers without monetary compensation. In tune with the practices of the time, early "committees" and "councils" were composed entirely of men prominent in government, the professions, or business. Not until 1955 was this pattern changed with the election of Laura Dale, a lawyer, to the council. Later she was elected its chair.

The early section committees met monthly in the home of the elected chairman, who then took charge of the files. These were moved as the chairmanship changed, stored in ordinary containers and not always easily accessible. With the employment of the first full-time town manager in 1972, and the renting of a small office in the St. John's Church, residents could say that the town had an "office." Three laborers and a part-time bookkeeper, under the supervision of the Town Manager and the Council Treasurer, constituted the town staff. Provisions were made for pensions and health coverage for town employees, putting town personnel procedures on a professional footing.

When the 4-H center requested permission to enlarge the size of the center under a special exception in 1968, they sought the support of the Town Council. In exchange for town support, the 4-H center agreed to provide the town with office space at cost, and parking space for town trucks. Town meetings were already being held at the center, so that locating the office at 4-H provided residents with a town office location easily found and accessible. Turner Hall was the site of the town office for about 15 years.

With the completion of the new Leland Community Center, the town office is located in its own home, with space designed to meet its needs, and located centrally within the town itself. The Town of Chevy Chase finally has its own "Town Hall."

Anne Bushart