



**Government of the District of Columbia
ADVISORY NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION 3/4G**

Chevy Chase, Barnaby Woods, Hawthorne
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**ANC 3/4G Resolution on the Ward Boundaries of
Portions of Chevy Chase and the
Entirety of Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne**

1. The District of Columbia is conducting the legally mandated decennial redistricting of its ward boundaries.
2. The 2020 Census data indicates Ward 3 and Ward 4 have stable population levels within the statutorily specified limits. As such, no changes to the ward boundaries legally are required.
3. ANC 3/4G (“the Commission”) recognizes – and asks the D.C. Council Committee of the Whole to recognize – that residents of portions of Chevy Chase and the entireties of Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods, all of which belong to the Neighborhood Cluster commonly known as Chevy Chase and all of which are now in Ward 4, have a profound interest in the outcome of the redistricting process.
4. The Commission further recognizes that the current ward boundaries have been in place for twenty years. The Commission believes that the redrawing of these boundaries in 2001 resulting in the transfer of parts of Chevy Chase and all of Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne from Ward 3 to Ward 4 had more to do with politicians looking out for their own electoral interests than the best interests of the Ward 3 and Ward 4 communities. In fact, the redrawing of the Ward 3 and 4 boundaries created a great deal of confusion and resentment within the Ward 3 and Ward 4 communities.

5. While the Commission recognizes that as a part of Ward 4 for the past twenty years, it has built positive bridges across Rock Creek Park and has engaged fellow Ward 4 Commissioners, neighbors, and Councilmembers on a variety of issues that affect the District as a whole, these relationships do not justify the present boundaries of Wards 3 and 4.
6. On October 22 and 28, 2021, the Council’s redistricting Subcommittee held public hearings on possible changes to the Ward 3 and Ward 4 boundaries, respectively. It also held a District-wide public hearing on November 5, 2021. ANC 3/4G Chair Speck testified at both Ward 3 and Ward 4 hearings in his individual capacity. The Commission as a whole took no official position at the hearings because Commissioners were under the impression that a change in the boundary between Ward 3 and 4 was not meaningfully under consideration.
7. Only after the Subcommittee’s final report dated November 18, 2021, was released to the public did the Commission learn that the Councilmember representing Ward 3 had proposed possible boundary changes to the Councilmember representing Ward 4. Had Commissioners known of the Ward 3 Councilmember’s proposal and a willingness to entertain boundary changes to Wards 3 and 4, the Commission would have taken a formal position on the matter. Had the community known about the proposal, it is likely that turnout at the Council Subcommittee’s ward-level redistricting hearings would have been substantially greater.
8. Based on the scant testimony at the public hearings and no other independent investigation that the Commission could discern, the Subcommittee concluded it could not detect a consensus among the neighborhoods regarding the possible transfer of portions of Chevy Chase and the entirety of Barnaby Woods and Hawthorne from Ward 4 back to Ward 3.¹ The Subcommittee noted that the populations of both wards were within the required range. Thus, it determined that changing the boundaries was unwarranted.²
9. Further, the Subcommittee considered a change that would unify Census tracts 14.01 and 14.02 by transferring to Ward 3 the area bounded by Broad Branch Road, Northampton Street, Utah Avenue, and 27th Street. The Subcommittee rejected the change, because in its unilateral view it failed to address the main problems created by the existing

¹ (2021). Retrieved 1 December 2021, from https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/silverman/pages/1548/attachments/original/1637270532/2021-11-18_Redistricting_Act_Report_Draft.pdf?1637270532

² It is not clear how or even whether the Subcommittee determined what the consensus of the community was before making its pronouncement given that it was not known to the community that changing the boundaries of Wards 3 and 4 was a real possibility. Absent greater community involvement, the Subcommittee’s, “findings” of no consensus should be rejected by the Council.

boundaries and potentially did not command the support of residents.³ The Subcommittee noted that in the absence of neighborhood consensus or a need to change this boundary to balance ward populations, it would not recommend any change to the existing boundary between Ward 3 and Ward 4.

10. On November 15, 2021, ANC 3/4G Racial and Social Equity Standing Committee (Standing Committee) prepared a written statement to the Commission. While the Standing Committee did not take a position on changing the Ward 3 and Ward 4 boundaries, it highlighted two principles that it felt were paramount in the redistricting discussion from an equity perspective: (1) the Commission should reject any arguments implying that portions of Ward 4 should be returned to Ward 3 because they are racially more homogeneous; and (2) the Commission should advise the Council that it should make no decision about the boundary between Wards 3 and 4 without first hearing from the affected Black residents. The Standing Committee noted the potential for boundary changes to further dilute Black voting strength in both Wards 3 and 4.⁴ The Commission took no action on the Standing Committee’s statement other than accepting it into the record.
11. On November 22, 2021, Ward 4 Councilmember Janeese Lewis-George issued a letter to the ANC 3/4G community regarding the Ward 3 and Ward 4 boundaries, which was read at the Commission’s regular public meeting held on November 22, 2021.

Councilmember Lewis-George wrote, in part:

“...As you know, last week the Council subcommittee on redistricting voted to approve a map updating Ward boundaries reflecting the 2020 census. The approved map made no changes to the makeup of Wards 3 or 4, thus leaving the eastern part of Chevy Chase and the entirety of the Hawthorne and Barnaby Woods neighborhoods intact as part of Ward 4. While recognizing the inherent challenges of maintaining the split within the broader Chevy Chase neighborhoods, I support the subcommittee’s recommendation that preserves the status quo.”

12. At its regular November 22, 2021, public meeting, the Commission also heard from Ward 3 Councilmember Mary Cheh who expressed the view that absent community agitation for change, she saw no need to propose any changes to the existing boundaries. Given Councilmember Cheh’s observations and the fact the Commission had not held a hearing

³ Of course, this invites the question that if the Subcommittee was aware that the existing boundaries were problematic, why it did it not endeavor to fix them rather “punt.”

⁴ The boundary changes in 2001 that divided Ward 3 in fact diluted Black voting strength at the time. Restoring that which was lost in 2001 is an important reason underlying this Resolution

on the boundaries question, the Commission decided it needed to give the community an opportunity to fully express its views and consider whether to take any further action before the Council casts its first votes on December 7, 2021.

13. On November 24, 2021, the Commission issued a notice to the community that it would hold a special meeting on December 1, 2021, to provide community members an additional forum to share their viewpoints on ward boundaries. The notice specifically highlighted the six principles of redistricting that the Subcommittee identified to guide its redistricting mapmaking process. The principles were:

- Equal Representation. The North Star of redistricting comes from the constitutional principle of one person, one vote. Legislative districts must be roughly equal in size plus or minus five percent (each ward will have an average of 86,193 residents within a range between 81,883 and 90,503).
- Racially Equitable. According to D.C. law, redrawn legislative boundaries cannot dilute “the voting strength of minority citizens.”
- Compact and Contiguous. Boundaries need to be geographically sensible.
- Communities of Interest Kept Together. Identifiable neighborhoods should stay intact and not be divided among legislative districts to the extent possible.
- Whole Census Tracts. As much as possible, Census tracts should remain whole to make data collection more accurate and understandable.
- Ward Continuity and Stability. Given the volatility of the pandemic, make boundary changes guided by federal and local law but avoid unnecessary radical change.

14. Only consideration of the first two principles — equal representation and racial equity — is mandatory. The other principles may be desirable but are not required. The redistricting process expressly does not include consideration of such factors as police district or patrol service boundaries, public school feeder pattern boundaries, current parking zones, or boundaries related to any other government services.⁵

15. The Commission recognizes that changes in one ward boundary can have ramifications across the District, and further recognizes that the District is under constitutional stricture to ensure equal representation and that the boundary-drawing process is complicated.

⁵ Redistricting Subcommittee Report, pages 3-4.

Notwithstanding the level of complexity of the task, the Commission views this to be the responsibility of the Council. The Commission's duty in this area is to solicit public opinion and, in light of it, articulate what it believes to be in the best interests of the community.

16. On December 1, 2021, the Commission held its special meeting and provided community members an opportunity to express their views on the boundaries. Community members offered compelling oral and written testimony both in favor of leaving the Ward 4 boundaries unchanged and returning the affected neighborhoods to Ward 3. The video recording of the meeting containing both the written and oral community comments can be found on the ANC 3/4G website.

RESOLVED:

After considering the testimony of community members, the comments of Councilmembers Cheh and Lewis-George, the advice of the Standing Committee, and to the extent it is possible to determine, the policy rationale of the Subcommittee in recommending that the current boundaries remain in place, and taking into account the six redistricting principles identified above, it is the view of the Commission that reuniting the Chevy Chase neighborhood in Ward 3 is in the best interest of the community. The Commission's decision was based on the following:

- The Commission considered the impact the original redistricting had on diversity in Chevy Chase and specifically within Ward 3 overall. The Black population in Ward 3 prior to the 2001 redistricting was 6.3%. Redistricting reduced the Black population to 5.1%.⁶
- Ward 3 is the least racially diverse ward in this city and the impact of reducing a minority population, as was done in 2001, is significant and has long-term impacts that remain both unknown and immeasurable. Returning neighborhoods with sizable minority populations is one way in which the Commission can advocate for racial justice in our community and acknowledge past harm to communities of color. Reuniting Ward 3 will have an immediate positive impact on the diversity levels in Ward 3, and positively reflect upon the District's level of diversity amongst all wards.
- The history of the 2001 division of Ward 3 appears to have been driven more by politicians looking out for their own electoral interests than the best interests of

⁶ "Kingman Park Civic Association and Chevy Chase Civic Association, Appellants, v. Anthony A. Williams, et al., Appellees, 348 F.3d 1033 (D.C. Cir. 2003)", 2021.

the Ward 3 and 4 communities. It also appears that this act of political expediency was imposed on the community without transparency or consent.

- Dividing a single ward that has common interests that run across the entire ward into two clusters represented by two Council members effectively denies both parts of the ward full representation of their common interests. For proponents of reunification who reside in Ward 4, the lack of formal representation in the development planning process for the Chevy Chase Small Area Plan that is currently underway is a form of political disenfranchisement.
- Chevy Chase in all its subcomponent parts is a single neighborhood with shared interests. (For example, Connecticut Avenue is the single neighborhood shopping corridor within easy and safe walking distance from all of Chevy Chase.) Having compact and contiguous ward boundaries within one ward is important to ensure these shared interests are represented fully.
- The District is divided into equal-sized wards to ensure every person has an equal vote. By dividing ANC 3/4G into two wards it denied the community the opportunity to select one councilmember to represent their collective interests. (Note: This also is true for the selection of school board members).

FURTHER:

The Commission considers it crucial to retain the seven Single Member Districts in the current Commission. This is especially important for the Ward 4 SMDs should the Council fail to reunite the community within one ward as requested in this Resolution. The Commission is the *only* mechanism for Chevy Chase residents to have their political views heard by a single body of elected officials. This single point of contact helps provide a political voice in the entire neighborhood cluster. This has proven critical on issues such as the redevelopment of the Connecticut Avenue commercial corridor through the small area planning process, bicycles lane proposal for Connecticut Ave, school overcrowding, and feeder patterns, and the closure of Beach Drive, among others.⁷

FURTHER:

The Commission requests that the Council report the required Racial Equity Impact Statement regarding the 2021 Redistricting Plan (Report on B24-371, “Ward Redistricting Amendment Act of 2021”) to the public at least three days before any District Council action on the plan, and that the Council explain how the Redistricting

⁷ This Resolution urges the Council to organize itself consistent with ANC 3/4G so that the interests of the entire Chevy Chase community can have a single Councilmember and a single School Board representative.

Plan meets the “legal principles that are central to redistricting” as noted in Section VIII of the Council Subcommittee redistricting report.

ADOPTED at a regular public meeting notice of which was properly given, and at which a quorum of six (6) of six (6) members was present on December 1, 2021, by a vote of **4** yes, **1** no, **1** abstention.⁸



Randy Speck, Chair



Peter Gosselin, Secretary

⁸ Commissioners Gore, Chang, Gosselin, and Zeldin voted in favor of the resolution. Commissioner Speck voted against the resolution. Commissioner Higgins abstained.