

Martin's Edition

A Newsletter for the Village of Martin's Additions to Chevy Chase

March 2020

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FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Martin's Additions Residents,

It is kind of hard to believe that March is almost upon us - the winter has flown by (knock on wood)! As we shake off the doldrums, please know that your Council remains hard at work to ensure that our Village is run efficiently and effectively.

The Village manager search process is making progress. The Council has received approximately 15 applications, many of them with significant directly relevant experience.

We have conducted phone as well as in-person interviews and are positive about the direction we're heading. We will let you know as soon as there is more news on that front!

We are also continuing to move forward on some outstanding projects. We will soon start a review of our financial processes that will ensure that we continue to use sound practices. When we put out a request for proposals (RFP), 8 respondents proposed their solutions; two were interviewed; and one was chosen. Similarly, with the RFP to update our geographic information system or GIS (think mapping system that shows lot locations, front setbacks of houses, Village trees, and utilities), 13 responses were received; four entities interviewed; and one selected. Our RFP for a cyber security posture review closed today. We are looking forward to reviewing those responses, interviewing, and making a selection on that front as well.

But, all work and no play makes for a boring Council, so we are also delighted that the Village Community Engagement Committee has organized a Midwinter Happy Hour for our adult residents at La Ferme this Sunday, March 1st, from 4:30-6:30 PM (please be sure to



[RSVP](#)). We're also thankful that our Elections Committee is once again diligently facilitating our democratic process and is now taking names for Council Candidates. More information on that front may be found on the Committee's webpage [here](#). Please be on the lookout for election related information as well as annual meeting, including fiscal year 2021 budget, information in the coming weeks and months.

Lastly, we appreciate the words of encouragement and support so many residents have offered during this period. It is great to live in such a community!

On behalf of the Council,
Tiffany Cissna
Chair

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UPCOMING EVENTS



- **February 24:** Walkability Study Kick-Off Meeting at 7 PM in the Village Office
- **March 1:** Adult Midwinter Happy Hour, 4:30-6:30 PM at La Ferme
- **March 14:** Bulk Trash Pick-Up ([details](#))
- **March 19:** Monthly Village Council Meeting at 7:30 PM in the Village Office
- **March 23:** Candidates Statements and Conflict of Interest Forms due by 5 PM

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SPOTLIGHT

****2020 Election****

The Martin's Additions Election Committee Answers Your Questions

The **Village Council Election** will be on **Thursday May 7** this year. The polls will be open from **5 to 8 pm**. We look forward to seeing you at the voting table during the Village Celebration on the Sidewalk on May 7. Look for the voting station at the south end of the block, in front of the shops on Brookville Road.



Martin's Additions has an independent Election Committee to make sure that our Village elections are fair and open, and we're always glad to answer questions from our neighbors. Here's the latest round-up of interesting comments and questions.

1. Who can vote in the Village election?

Anyone who resides or owns property in Martin's Additions, and is age 18 or older on Election Day, is eligible to vote. Last year more than 260 Martin's Additions residents turned out to vote.

2. What do I do if I'm a new resident or a new voter?

The Election Committee is happy to welcome new neighbors - if your name is not yet listed in the Village Directory, just bring some ID with you on Election Day that shows your Martin's Additions address (e.g., a driver's license or utility bill) so we can add you to the voter roll. Whether you're a renter or a homeowner, you have the right to vote. When you have a minute, please call or stop by the Village Office to add your name to the VMA Directory.

If you're a new voter who just turned 18, please bring ID that shows your age on Election Day - we'll sign you up as a Martin's Additions voter and hand you your first official ballot.

3. Does Martin's Additions have early-voting days or absentee voting?

Work, family, or travel obligations can make it hard to vote on Election Day, and early-voting is a great convenience. But it takes a huge time commitment and a large team of election officials to do that. The logistics of repeatedly staffing the polling tables during an early-voting period would overwhelm VMA's little volunteer Committee.

However, Martin's Additions does provide for absentee voting. You can request an absentee ballot for yourself or for any member of your household who will be out of town or otherwise unable to vote in person on Election Day.

The absentee ballot period will start on April 15 this year - 21 days before the Election. The request form will be available in early April. It's easy to fill out an absentee ballot request form and email it to VMAelections@gmail.com, or drop it off at the Village Office for the Election Committee. We handle every absentee ballot request as fast as possible. Sending out the absentee ballots is labor-intensive - it takes time to verify and process all the requests - but we want every voter to be able to cast a ballot.

The Election Committee checks each absentee request to make sure the voter is on the official VMA voter roll or has produced proof of residence and age-eligibility. For voting security and privacy, each absentee ballot is also assigned a unique random control number, so absentee ballots cannot be duplicated or forged. The Committee gives the absentee voters their confidential security numbers when we give them their ballots; they must write that number on the outside of their ballot envelope to vote. On Election Day, the Committee then checks each absentee ballot envelope received. Only ballot envelopes that show a valid security number go into the vote-counting.

4. Is it okay for candidates to team up to run together as a slate?

Some people believe that candidate slates are fine; others believe that slates can create a perception of unfairness. We consulted the Village attorney about this question. We were advised that candidates have a legal right to run as a team, as a matter of freedom of speech and association. The decision whether or not to run as a slate is up to the candidates themselves.

On Election Day, on the ballot, all of the candidates are presented as individuals. The Election Committee rotates the candidates' names on the ballots to prevent any voting bias based on the order of the names, and no slates are shown or indicated in any way on the ballot.

5. What can make a ballot invalid?

The basic rule of election law is that if the election officials can reasonably ascertain the intent of the voter, that vote should be counted. But if someone votes for three people in an election for only two seats, there's no way for the election officials to determine the voter's intent. The Election Committee is not allowed to decide which two of your three votes we will count. So the whole ballot becomes invalid. That's called "over-voting." A ballot can also be invalid if it is illegible - for example, if there are no boxes checked next to any of the candidates' names and no legible write-ins.

The voting instructions are always printed right at the top of the ballot. This year there will be three Council positions open and your ballot will say, "Vote for no more than 3 people." A name on the write-in line counts as a vote. A write-in vote is valid if you enter the name of someone who is eligible to run (e.g., that person is a resident of Martin's Additions), and the election officials can read the write-in name.

6. Do I have to be a U.S. citizen to vote in the Village election?

Consistent with Martin's Additions' voting tradition, and with what several other local jurisdictions do, there is no U.S. citizenship requirement for voting in local VMA elections. Martin's Additions is fortunate to have a number of international residents - diplomats, journalists, scientists, academics, medical specialists, care-givers, government officials, and other distinguished neighbors. They have a legitimate interest in local governance and decision-making, because those decisions directly affect them. We value their input and perspective. The law authorizes incorporated towns and villages like VMA to decide this question with respect to local elections, and as a matter of public policy, we think it's good to be inclusive when it comes to civil rights. So the only requirements here are that the voter must be 18 or older by Election Day, and must reside or own property in Martin's Additions.

7. We have a wonderful nanny who lives with us. Our next-door neighbors' household includes a home-health aide. Can they both vote in the Village election?

If a childcare worker or a home-health aide lives with you as a member of your household, she or he is a resident of Martin's Additions and is eligible to vote in the VMA election. If they are not listed by name in the VMA Directory, please ask your nanny or aide to bring proof of residence on Election Day (e.g., a driver's license or a bill or other official mail sent to them at your VMA address) so we can add them to the Martin's Additions voter roll.

8. Can college students vote?

Yes, by law, any student age 18 or over who is away at school but whose legal address is still her/his parents' home in Martin's Additions is considered a resident and is entitled to vote here. There's no legal basis to exclude students, and we wouldn't want to exclude them. Good citizenship starts early - we encourage young voters to value and exercise their right to vote, starting right here at home. There are procedural safeguards in place. For example, if a parent requests absentee ballots for children who are temporarily away at college, for voting security the ballot is emailed directly to the student, not to the parent's email address. It's up to the student to cast the vote. The Election Committee does check for written proof of residence if there's any question about eligibility.

9. How can I become a candidate?

We strongly encourage residents to run for the VMA Council. Serving on the Council is an important way to give back to our community. It's a great way to get more involved, connect with good neighbors, and have some meaningful input on Village decisions. You can nominate yourself or a neighbor. If you think you might be interested, please email the Election Committee at VMAelections@gmail.com or call the Committee chair at 301-654-0176. We'll send you all the information you need. It's a very open process - getting on the ballot is simple and straightforward. Just send your candidate statement and ethics form to the Election Committee by 5 pm on Monday, March 23. You can see the format for candidate statements [here](#), and the short ethics form [here](#).

10. How can I learn more about the candidates and the issues during the election?

All of the people running for Council seats are asked to provide written candidate statements to give some information about their background, identify what they see as key issues for the community, and describe what they would do about those issues if elected. The Election Committee does not edit the content of the candidate statements in any way. We print the statements in the official election packet that is mailed out to all VMA households.

We also host the annual community forum, where residents have the opportunity to raise concerns and ask the candidates pretty much anything. **This year's "Meet the Candidates" Forum will be from 7:30 to 9 pm on Thursday, April 23, at the Village Office. We hope to see you there!**

If you can't participate in person, and there are some particular issues that you would like to have the candidates address this year, please send an email to VMAelections@gmail.com by April 20. The Committee can ask the candidates to respond at the forum. If you'd like to submit an anonymous question for the candidates, we can do that for you. The audio recording of the forum should be available on the VMA website shortly after the program.

As a VMA resident, you're also welcome to hold informal "meet and greet" coffees or wine-and-cheese events for candidates at your own home. Invite your neighbors over to discuss the issues and ask the candidate(s) questions. You don't need permission from anyone to do that. If you keep the total expenses under \$50, that is under the threshold of the election finance laws about reporting an event as a campaign "gift." It's a nice way to bring neighbors and candidates together to have an interesting and productive discussion about community concerns.

Good local government matters. We hope that you might consider running for a Council seat this year or in the near future. If you have any questions about the Martin's Additions elections, please send us an email any time at VMAelections@gmail.com or call the Election Committee chair (301-654-0176). We'll be glad to help.

*Your 2020 VMA Election Committee:
Marty Langelan (chair), Lauren Shweder Biel, Lorie Mitchell, Halie Soifer, and Jesse Tampio*

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NOTES FROM THE VILLAGE OFFICE

Audio from Council Meeting on February 20, 2020 Posted

Audio from the February meeting is now available on the Village website [here](#).

Composting: Get with the Program!

The VMA Composting program began in January! For those still interested in signing up, please insert the code "VMACOMPOSTS" when asked for a "Coupon code or referral" on the Compost Crew's website registration page [here](#). To date, there have been 5 Pickups from VMA's 55 participants. At approximately 10 lbs/customer, VMA residents have composted about 2750 lbs or 1.375 tons (the weight of a small car!) since start of the program.

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AGENDA FOR THE COUNCIL MEETING(S)



----Draft Agenda for the Monthly Council Meeting----

**Village of Martin's Additions
7013 Brookville Road (Suite B, 2nd floor)
Chevy Chase, MD 20815-3263**

Thursday, March 19, 2020
7:30 PM

The Village Council may entertain a motion during the open meeting to close a portion of the meeting, in accordance with Section 3-305(b) of the Open Meetings Act (Maryland Code, General Provisions Article).

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 7:30 PM | Call to Order: Chair |
| 7:31 PM | Opportunity for Council to hear residents' comments: Chair |
| 7:41 PM | Committee Update(s) |
| 7:50 PM | Building Administrator's Report: Lohmeyer |
| 7:55 PM | Financial Matters, including introduction of the FY 2021 Budget and Tax Rates:Treasurer |
| 8:05 PM | Manager's Report: Staff |
| 8:20 PM | Opportunity for Council to hear residents' comments: Chair |
| 8:30 PM | Adjournment: Chair |

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BUILDING BLOCKS



TO: The Village of Martin's Additions Council
FROM: Doug Lohmeyer
DATE: February 15, 2020
SUBJECT: Building Administrator's Report

3506 Bradley Lane.

A demolition and building permit application was submitted to the Village office. The staff is reviewing the information.

7204 Chestnut St.

The Village issued the building permit on April 3, 2019. The construction of the additions is ongoing. The staff has requested a certified "Wall Check" that indicate the setbacks for the additions at the front and right side of the house. A variance was previously granted for those additions. The Village building permit will expire on April 3, 2020.

The homeowner has also requested a right of way licenses agreement for the new white address post, which is waiting the homeowner's signature.

7210 Chestnut St.

The Village issued their building permit on Oct. 11, 2018. The applicant estimates the project will be completed in 2 to 3 months. The Village building permit has been extended. The applicant has poured the new driveway along the left side of the lot. The proposed driveway and other improvements cannot exceed the 30% non-vegetative cap in the front yard. The staff will monitor the progress.

3521 Cummings La.

The property owner is looking into the possibility of removing the apron close to Brookville Rd. and installing another fence in the Village right of way.

3508 Shepherd St.

The Village has issued a building permit to the new owner for the construction of an enclosed back porch and balcony at the right rear of the house. The new addition conforms to the Village Code setbacks and does not exceed the R-60 building coverage cap.

3412 Taylor St.

The Village building permit has been issued on Feb. 4, 2019. The house construction is ongoing. The applicant has raised the elevation of the house because of a high ground water condition. The height survey indicated the new roof peak is 6 inches higher than what the Village Code permits.

The "Stop Work Order" has been lifted and construction is proceeding.

The Village Building Permit must be extended and the applicant has been notified.

3407 Thornapple St.

The Village issued their building permit on May 30, 2019. Work has begun on the new house construction. The applicant has submitted a "Wall Check", which indicated the new house is in conformance with the approved site plan and the Village Code.

Miscellaneous Items

The staff is presently working with the following properties:

1. The MSHA staff is investigating the ponding water situation at the Brookville Rd. and Quincy.
2. The MSHA staff is reviewing the ponding situation at Brookville Rd. and Cummings La.
3. The staff has been in contact with three property owners regarding future improvements to existing houses in the Village.

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HEARD ON THE SIDEWALK

Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) in Friendship Heights:

The [MVA](#) mobile office will begin its second year of service in [Friendship Heights](#), between 10 AM and 2 PM on the dates listed below to provide limited MVA services during the first half of 2020. The MVA mobile bus parks on Friendship Boulevard adjacent to the the Village Center. If you need a list of services the mobile service offers please visit this [link](#) or contact the MVA Call Center at (410) 768-7000

- Tuesday, February 25, 2020
- Tuesday, March 24, 2020
- Tuesday, April 21, 2020
- Tuesday, May 19, 2020
- Tuesday, June 23, 2020

Chevy Chase At Home:

On Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2 to 4 p.m. CC@H's intrepid world traveler and expert photographer Jan Augustine will transport us from the CC Village Hall to Ethiopia, with perhaps a stop or two at one of her other recently visited spots (the Balkans, Madeira). This program promises to be informative and entertaining, and a great antidote to Cabin Fever!

Chevy Chase At Home (CC@H) is a non-profit organization that helps local seniors "age in place." Full members have access to many exciting cultural, educational, social and health & wellness events. They also enjoy a broad array of volunteer-provided services, including home safety visits, rides to medical and other appointments, and computer assistance. All adults (60+) may join as Members, and adults of any age may become Associates and Volunteers.

Chevy Chase Library:

Please check out what the library has to offer by clicking here: [Chevy Chase Library](#)

Weather Outlook:

With longer days, the sun getting higher in the sky and Daylight Savings Time beginning on March 8, the feel of spring is in the air. This was a winter without a winter and will officially close-out as one of the top five warmest winters on record. Only 1/2" of snow was measured, which is the third least snowy winter recorded.

Looking ahead to March we can expect more temperature swings with some days in the 70's and others in the 40's and rainfall above average. This will set the stage for a wet spring with temperatures above normal.

However, some of our biggest snowstorms have come in March, so you never know! But any snow that comes in March never sticks around. Of note: A foot of snow fell on Palm Sunday, March 29, 1972, but was all gone two days later.

This unseasonable winter is not related to climate change, but to cyclical changes in the jetstream. However, climate change is very real and must be addressed for future generations. Happy Spring from the Weather Center!

-Keith Allen (Turner Lane)

[Keith Allen, a long time resident of Martin's Additions](#), provides weather forecasts by phone for cities across the U.S. Residents are encouraged to call 202-589-1212 for up-to-the-minute updates.

Keep our community walkable; please patronize the businesses in our Village!

Please also keep in mind these "Friends of the Village":

[A Wider Circle](#)
[Chevy Chase at Home](#)
[Friends of the Library, Chevy Chase Chapter](#)
[Live and Learn Bethesda](#)
[Manna Food Center](#)

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CONTACT INFO

VMA COUNCIL MEMBERS		
Name	Phone	Email
Tiffany Cissna, Chair	202-536-7424	cissnafamily@gmail.com
Susan Fattig, Vice Chair	301-951-9578	susan.fattig@gmail.com
Arthur Alexander, Treasurer	301-718-9787	arthur.alexander@att.net

Katya Hill, Secretary	301-718-1920	ka2shaz@gmail.com
Todd Mann, Member-at- Large	301-642-6665	toddsmann@gmail.com

NEWS

The VMA Council@googlegroups.com and any other VMA Gmail accounts are no longer active. Please see below...

The [Maryland Open Meetings Compliance Board](#) has recently stated that an e-mail discussion can be considered a "meeting" under certain circumstances if the discussion concerns the Village business. The Open Meetings Act requires "meetings" to be open to the public. Accordingly, e-mail discussions among a quorum (three) or more of the Council may violate the Act, if deemed a "meeting."

Due to this ruling and the advice of legal counsel, the Village Council has discontinued the use of the single google-group e-mail address that was previously used to correspond with all Council members at one time. Residents are still encouraged to e-mail the Council members. VMA Council wanted residents to be aware that a quorum of the Council may not engage in certain substantive discussions over email. (Please note that e-mails are considered public records, and generally open to public inspection under the Public Information Act).

<u>VMA OFFICE STAFF</u>		
Name	Phone	Email
Vacant, Village Manager	301-656-4112	manager@martinsadditions.org
Vacant, Assistant Village Manager	301-656-4112	avm@martinsadditions.org

To receive e-notifications from the Village Council, the committees, and the office (i.e., any official communication from your Village government), please contact the Village office. This is the best way to receive information on waste pickup, snow removal, and Council and committee meetings.

To receive a paper copy of our monthly newsletter, *Martin's Edition*, in the mail, please contact the Village office.

The VMA monthly newsletter is distributed to the Village on the last Monday of the month. If you wish to submit an article or news item for the newsletter, please submit your item by 5 PM on the preceding Friday. Any article or news item must meet the VMA newsletter criteria. [Policy No. 09-16-01-Policy for Contents of Martin's Edition Newsletter](#)

Please note:

The Village office does not administer the VMA neighborhood Listserv (a Google-Group). To receive Listserv emails, please contact Bill Lebovich at architecturalphoto@mac.com

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Village of Martin's Additions
301-656-4112 (office)
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www.martinsadditions.org

Village of Martin's Additions, 7013 Brookville Rd, Suite B, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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