

Dear Residents,

At the regular December Council meeting the Council decided to present to the residents for their consideration an ordinance revising the building permit process. Residents are invited to the February 13th Council meeting held at the Chevy Chase Village Hall, 5906 Connecticut Avenue, at 7:30pm to express their opinions and concerns about this proposed ordinance.

As you know over the last seven or eight years Section 5 has seen a considerable number of its houses changed substantially by renovations. Also, for the first time in the history of the town, some small homes have been demolished and replaced by very large houses. Many residents have expressed their concerns to the Council about these building projects but because Section 5 was never given zoning authority from its inception in 1922, the town has not been able to exercise any control over these construction projects.

However, in the 2006 State legislative session, a bill was passed which granted Section 5 as well as other towns in the area, limited zoning authority. When the Council learned that this bill was being considered, it began to think about how it would address its new zoning authority. The Council's first step was to survey the residents about their desire for the Council to pursue zoning authority. An overwhelming majority of the residents expressed an interest in the Council pursuing zoning authority.

With the new zoning authority and the residents' expressed interest in the Council exercising this authority, the Council decided its second step would be reviewing the building permit process. At the June 2006 Council meeting it voted to engage Alan Beal, owner and manager of a home inspection service, **to review the town's building permit**

application and permit process and determine compliance with building codes. In addition to Mr. Beal reviewing the permitting process, he will also monitor each building site. For example, he will ensure that the site is free of garbage, porta-Johns are correctly placed, public trees are not damaged, and street safety is maintained.

Because the current building permit **application fees for house construction and fence installation are \$5 and \$2 respectively, the Council has set new fees which are listed in the proposed ordinance at a rate to cover the time we anticipate it will now take to review and oversee the building permit process.** The Council plans to review the building application process for house construction and fence installation in six months to determine whether these fees are appropriate—whether or not they are sufficient to cover the costs of the permit and inspection process.

The fee process is set out in the attached proposed ordinance and the meeting on February 13th will provide you with an opportunity to express your views.

Sincerely,

Section 5 Council