



TOWN OF CHEVERLY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS: STAFF AND COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY REPORT

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Strategic Planning Process Overview

In October 2021, Cheverly embarked upon a five-year strategic planning process designed to support the town in setting priorities, focusing human and financial resources, strengthening internal operations, and ensuring that key stakeholders are working toward common goals.

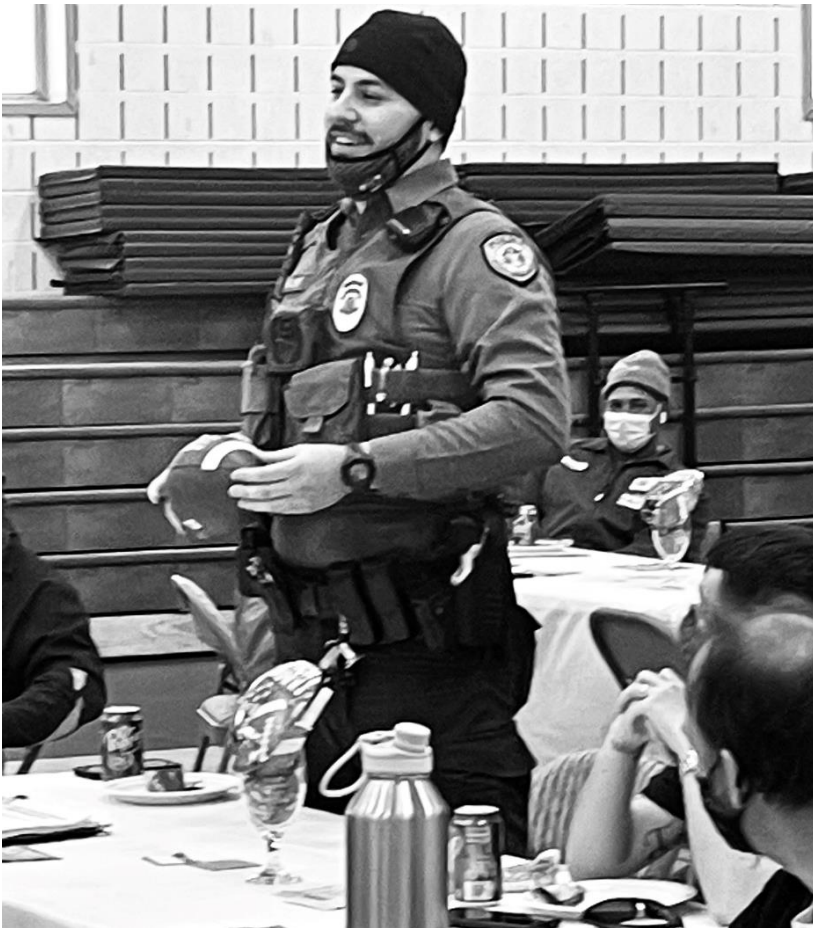
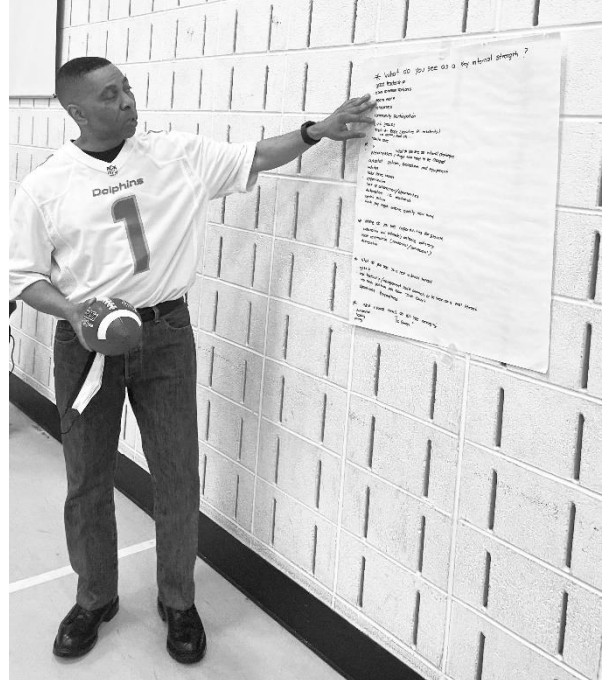
The process—slated to end in February 2022—involves all key stakeholders (i.e., Mayor, Council members, Town Administrator, staff, and residents) and will culminate in the development of a strategic plan document. The plan document will outline the town's vision, mission, strategic priorities, and a set of high-level goals it seeks to accomplish over the next five years. Following development of the plan document, implementation and communications workplans (with human and financial resource allocation) will follow each year.

This report provides background and additional context into the strategic planning process and offers a high-level summary of key outcomes from Phase II: Staff and Community Input.

Strategic Planning Phases & Key Outcomes from Phase II

- I. **Background Research and Preparation (Oct. 18 – Dec. 19, 2021):** Below are key activities performed during Phase I of the strategic planning process.
 - A. **Background research and data collection:** Background research and data collection was conducted to ground the planning process and to gain a better understanding of the town's organizational structure, internal operations, resident and community demographics, neighborhood Wards, current and planned initiatives, etc.
 - B. **Leadership team interviews:** Following research and data collection, confidential one-on-one interviews were conducted with the Mayor, Council members, Town Administrator, Interim Chief of Police and Director of Public Works. The purpose of the interviews was to:
 - Gather additional information and insight to support the planning process
 - Identify key challenges and possible priorities
 - Obtain feedback into what leaders envisioned for Cheverly's future
 - Identify several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and trends

- II. **Staff and Community Input (Dec. 2, 2021 – Jan. 14, 2022):** Below are key activities and outcomes from Phase II of the strategic planning process.
 1. **Staff and Community Input Opportunities:** A series of two, 2-hour input sessions were conducted to gather feedback from staff and residents into the strategic plan. More than 20 staff members—from the Town Administrator and department leaders to laborers, admin staff and police officers—participated in an interactive, NFL-themed input session on Dec. 2, 2021. Similarly, nearly 25 residents and three elected officials attended a holiday themed community input session on Dec. 8, 2021. *NOTE: A virtual input session was planned for Dec. 16, 2021, but was rescheduled due to a conflict with a Hospital Hill community meeting. The rescheduled session, planned for Jan. 6, 2022, was cancelled due to a severe power outage caused by the first snowstorm of 2022. The storm left our Strategic Plan Facilitator without power and internet for four days.*



Pictured above are photos from the Staff NFL-themed Input Session

Residents unable to attend the in-person session had an opportunity to provide feedback via the Community Input Survey from Dec. 16, 2021 – Jan. 14, 2022. Surveys were completed by 73 residents from all six Wards and included a diversity of perspectives and feedback from new and longstanding residents (those living in Cheverly from two to more than 35 years).

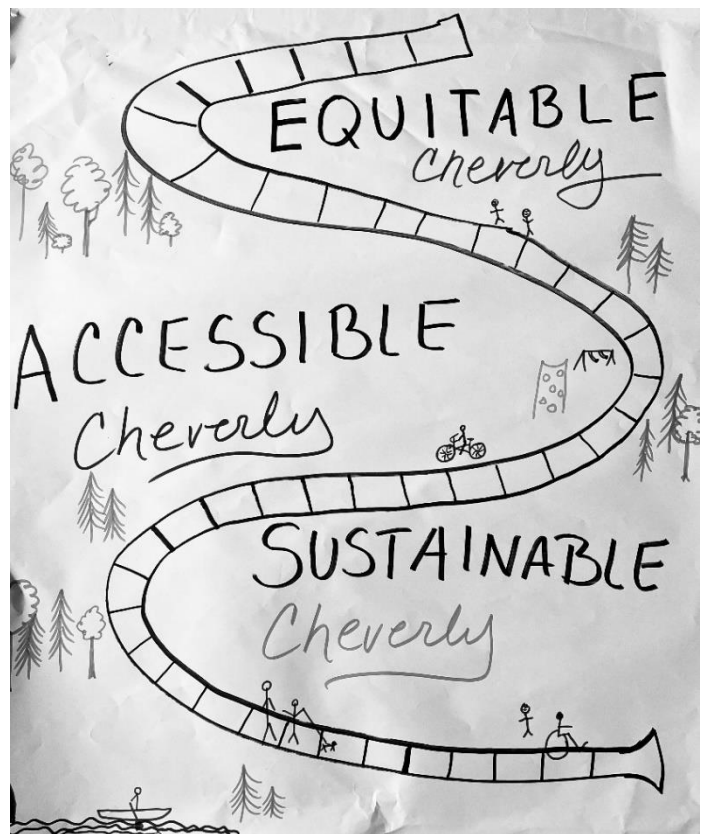
All feedback from the staff and community input sessions and virtual survey is captured on pages 8-11 and will be integrated into three key areas of the strategic plan: Vision, S.W.O.T.T. Analysis, and Key Priorities:

1. **Vision:** Staff and community members had an opportunity to express where they want to see Cheverly in five years. Several key themes emerged as part of Cheverly's future:
 - **Accessibility:** Accessibility was a theme that took on many definitions. Stakeholders articulated the importance of ensuring Cheverly is accessible to all who reside in and neighbor the town. Accessibility was defined as ensuring a) persons with disabilities can access facilities, walkways, website, and other information, etc.; b) diverse ethnic groups have language access (e.g., materials and key information available in various languages); c) people of all income levels have access to affordable housing; and d) community amenities are walkable and accessible without having to drive.
 - **Communication:** Communications was a theme strongly emphasized by all stakeholders. The Cheverly of the future would have increased communications and connection with its residents through an improved, user-friendly website (with content maintained and updated quickly and consistently), telephone and SMS technology, posters, flyers, newsletters, and social media.
 - **Community Amenities:** Stakeholders envisioned spaces for connecting, where people can meet, socialize, eat, etc. Bike trails, a dog park, a community center, a coffee shop, improved parks and walking trails, programs, and activities (i.e., dance, exercise, martial arts [for kids], etc.) were some of the amenities envisioned for the town.
 - **Connection:** Accessibility, communication, and inclusivity were sub-themes of Cheverly's envisioned connection. Residents stated it best in the vision statement they envisioned for the town: "Cheverly: Interconnected & affordable community, with effective communications, sustainable & healthy natural environment (with local business held accountable) and a dynamic town center that supports [and connects] all town members."
 - **Diversity:** Stakeholders have witnessed shifts in the town's demographics over the years and articulated the value they see in embracing a culturally diverse town reflective of all ages, races, nationalities, genders, faiths, etc.
 - **Growth:** All stakeholder groups expressed the importance of Cheverly's growth. Ideas for growth included annexation of Hospital Hill and other areas; attracting businesses including high(er) end retail and restaurants; developing more housing options (i.e., single family homes, townhomes, condominiums); and increasing community amenities.
 - **Inclusivity:** Inclusivity was a theme that resonated with both stakeholder groups. Many expressed the importance of having diversity of perspectives included in town's activities, decision-making, etc. Being a town separated by Wards and by major highways and thoroughfares, including those not typically "at the table" was viewed as critical to a culture of inclusion.

- **Professionalism:** Enhanced professionalism from all town staff members was envisioned. Staff wanted to see more opportunities for training and development, better compensation, and other incentives as benefits.
- **Public Safety:** The Cheverly of the future is one that addresses traffic and speed via calming devices and provides 24-7 policing for theft, traffic/moving/other violations, and other issues.
- **Transparency:** Transparency in how the town functions, as well as how town organizations work was seen as key. Staff and residents also expressed wanting transparency in the process for accessing and booking facilities, amenities, and other areas. Responsiveness of and transparency from town leadership, particularly respect to decision making, was also expressed as a key component of Cheverly's future.
- **School Options:** While stakeholders recognized that improving the PG County School system was beyond Cheverly's control, many expressed wanting better school choices and information on how to navigate schooling options.
- **Solid infrastructure:** All stakeholders expressed their vision for solid infrastructure throughout Cheverly, meaning all stormwater, drainage, sidewalks, public works facilities, gas/electric, etc. are fully addressed.
- **Sustainability:** A carbon-neutral (or negative), environmentally sustainable community was envisioned for Cheverly's future. Stakeholder described wanting a "green oasis with natural functioning ecosystems, clean air and water; one that leverages solar power where applicable (via solar panels) and offers smart homes, EV charging stations, etc."

Vision feedback also yielded several powerful vision statements for the town's consideration. Captured below are vision statements crafted by residents during their in-person session:

- Equitable Cheverly, Accessible Cheverly, Sustainable Cheverly
- Cheverly: Interconnected & affordable community with effective communication, sustainable & healthy natural environment and a dynamic town center that supports all town members
- Connected Cheverly: Connections in our nature
- Positive community action to support our community's needs: (Green, Diverse, Collaborative)
- What do we want? Community, Diversity, Sustainability. How do we get there? Communication, Coordination, Cooperation



Pictured above is an example of one resident group's vision statement.



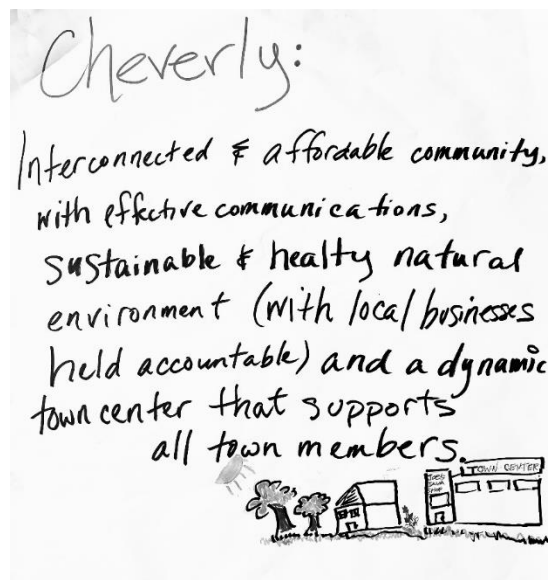
Pictured above are residents working in groups during the in-person Community Input Session. Report cover image featured right.



Present for the in-person Community Input Session were Town of Cheverly Mayor, Kayce Munyeneh (pictured right) and Council members Amy Fry – Ward 6 (pictured center) and Marverly Nettles – Ward 1 (pictured left).

The Mayor and Council members had an opportunity to hear resident feedback first-hand and were given a unique opportunity to judge a competition for the best vision statement.

The winners (with vision statement pictured right) received prizes and will have an opportunity for their vision statement to be considered as one of the options for the town's final vision statement.



2. S.W.O.T.T. Analysis: Another key component of the strategic plan is the S.W.O.T.T. Analysis. The S.W.O.T.T. Analysis is designed to assess the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, and trends. While most analyses stop at threats (as seen in the graphic below), this process also identified a few emerging trends that might support Cheverly in standing out in the marketplace. Ultimately the analysis informs the selection of the most effective goals to create change.



Image credit: Daniel Balough, Getty Images/istock

S.W.O.T.T. feedback was requested during both staff and community in-person sessions, as well as via the Community Input Survey. The key findings from the analysis are captured below and grouped by issue areas.

S.W.O.T.T. Analysis Key Findings

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	TRENDS
Small town feel; strong sense of community where residents are tight knit, active and engaged; residents volunteer, campaign and strive to keep improving the town	Over-reliance on resident volunteers (not a sustainable model for running major town functions and activities); no staff in charge of community events	Engaged and talented citizens; use resident voice in town developments, strategy development (e.g., strategic planning, green infrastructure), etc.	Volunteerism and its well-established history in the town	N/A
Existing green spaces (i.e., natural parks, woodlands, fully mature trees, streams, thriving wildlife, etc.)	Underutilized green space (excess land to use for public gathering spaces i.e., streams and waterways as amenities)	Stronger tree and park/green space protection; coordination of and education about green strategies; implementing recommendations from the green infrastructure plan	Loss of forest/greenspace	Planting of native plants; leveraging strengths of the Green Infrastructure Committee
Overall desirability (hidden gem community); appreciating home prices in recognition of the appeal of the area; relative affordability; architectural variety of homes; historic, well-maintained homes	Limited housing supply and options (no "in-between" housing option i.e., townhomes, condos); gentrification; NIMBYism	Building significant density near the metro (transit-oriented development); increased housing stock; refresh/revitalize existing housing stock; imposing moderate (vs. high) taxes to attract younger families/homeowners	Reduced affordability; rising home prices making it difficult for young families to afford to live in Cheverly; aging housing stock	Rising home prices; residents upgrading/expanding homes; more intergenerational homes; more people renting all or part of their homes; some younger families moving in; baby boomers moving out or passing away
Proximity to metro, DC, downtown, freeway/major interstates, casinos, airports, etc.	Pass thru for commuters/ traffic congestion/ speeding; air quality/ pollution (heavy truck traffic); industrial areas poorly managed (eye sore); industrial areas create loud noises	Installation of speed and traffic calming devices	Loss of metro station due to low ridership/usage	Increased traffic and speeding

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	TRENDS
Accessible local elected officials who respond to most needs; good/ decent relationship between citizens and governing body	Moments of dysfunction and division among elected officials; seemingly self-serving agenda rather than commitment to the town's best interest; struggles with wise, prudent decision making (particularly on social issues that affect property owners); lack of transparency in decision making; no full-time paid elected officials	Feedback provided from strategic planning process and other surveys should be implemented vs. merely gathered and discussed	Poor/unstable leadership; allowing social and political pressures to cloud good judgement; ongoing drama among town leadership; lack of transparency around town decisions; lack of integrity/ transparency in discussing town finances; high taxes with no return	Heavy focus on political issues
Generally safe (low crime compared to surrounding areas); relatively quiet community; dedicated Police Department	Petty crime (i.e., burglary, vandalism, etc.); police reporting not consistent; lack of round-the-clock police services;	Enhanced police services (24-hrs if possible); increased training for police officers (e.g., professionalism, reporting, etc.)	Increased concern over crime; defunding and undermining Cheverly Police Department with alternative progressive policies	Increased crime
Demographic diversity; diversity of households (multi-generational, young families, etc.)	Increased diversity however, lack of inclusion; lack of perspectives from ALL residents (group think and resistance to change often prevails); racially divided	More young working families to create vibrancy; develop programming, events, and other opportunities to include and engage ALL resident groups	Old mentalities and ways of thinking and being; racial tension; disrespect of the Old 4 th Ward; tolerance of divisive comments on social media platforms	Increased diversity (in age, race, languages, etc.); demographic shifts
Community and civic groups/ organizations	No clarity, guidance nor transparency about how groups are formed, organized, etc.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Strong public works programs	Public works' fleet (vehicles and equipment) in poor shape	Commit to keeping a modern Public Works Fleet to support resident demand	N/A	Service degradation

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	TRENDS
Some community programs, events, and amenities (i.e., pool, youth sports, Farmer's Market, etc.)	Insufficient activities for youth, teens, adults, and seniors; insufficient public recreation and amenities for residents	More programs and events all resident (i.e., yoga and other group fitness activities, "Music in the Park," Christmas lights display, etc.); enhanced public amenities (i.e., expanded pool with pricing accessible to all neighbors, updated playgrounds, a real community center, a dog park, etc.)	N/A	N/A
Some dedicated town staff	Level of management and leadership training insufficient; understaffed; staff feel grossly underpaid; volume of demands from the community makes it difficult for staff to be responsive; division between departments	Hiring additional administrative staff; increasing staff compensation	Lack of education (unqualified staff), professional development; no real cross training for staff (particularly relief staff)	Increased staff stress and burnout; potential for increased staff turnover; unnoticed leave; teleworking; employees contravene Town rules
N/A	Poor connection with neighboring communities; lack of walkability to trails, businesses, shopping, etc.	Expanded trail system (with walk/bike trails) and connections to amenities; building pedestrian bridges	N/A	N/A
Some communication to town residents (i.e., newsletter, listserv, etc.)	Poor communication (newsletter and website nearly obsolete); lack of/poor accountability; town code not uniformly enforced (e.g., dogs, noise, etc.)	Create effective feedback loop from citizens to town leadership; updated website with accessibility to persons with disabilities; social media presence with real-time updates	Poorly managed expectations; poor communication; code historically has not been universally applied; resistance to necessary policy and code changes	N/A

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS	TRENDS
N/A	Dated internal processes and systems	Continue to update processes and systems	N/A	N/A
N/A	Infrastructure issues (water/flooding, above ground utilities, roads, sidewalks, air quality, etc.); lack of expertise in dealing with infrastructure issues; high taxes with minimal return on infrastructure upgrades	Use federal and state funds to address infrastructure issues (i.e., buried power lines, storm water drains, air quality testing and remediation, etc.);	Aging infrastructure; ignoring flood plans during a climate crisis; poor air quality	N/A
N/A	Lack of good commerce (restaurants, grocery store, businesses, coffee shop, etc.); decentralized town/ no town center; limited areas for neighbors to meet/connect; lack of integrated community planning; lack of long-term vision	Economic and community development (inclusive of enhanced retail, restaurants, pubs, businesses, a library, housing and other transit-oriented development, town center, etc.)	N/A	N/A
N/A	Too much industrial stagnation and development	Annexation (e.g., Hospital Hill, medical terrace); residents could influence area development; increased tax basis because of annexation; ensure Hospital Hill benefits Cheverly community	Failure to annex Hospital Hill; mismanagement and/or poor development of Hospital Hill; over-industrialization of the area creating noises, booms, pollution, etc.	N/A
N/A	Overall poor/failing local schools; lack of school choice	Shared resources with other PG County towns; town to support residents with navigating school options		N/A

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3. **Key Priorities:** Staff and community members also weighed in on what they considered key priorities for Cheverly to address over the next five years. Below are themes from both the input sessions and survey:
- **Better community amenities and connectivity:** Amenities listed included a dog park, coffee shop, bike and pedestrian trails (enhancing connectivity to amenities), a grocery store, a community center with programming/activities for all stakeholders including youth, upgraded gym, upgraded/expanded pool with toddler splash park, improved Public Works facility and fleet (to continue and enhance services).
 - **Better school options:** Support from the town in improving schools and navigating school options.
 - **Enhanced communication:** More frequency, transparency, and use of better tools (e.g., updated website, social media, free WiFi, etc.); improved communication between elected officials and residents; improved communication between administration and internal departments; more collaboration and communication with neighboring towns.
 - **Enhanced public safety:** Traffic and speed calming devices; expanded policing (24/7 if feasible) to support with crime prevention; improved community-police relations.
 - **Growth through economic and business development:** Annexation of and increased engagement in Hospital Hill and other future developments; incentivizing businesses to move to Cheverly (e.g., high[er] end retail and restaurants); increasing housing stock (condos, townhomes, etc.) via Hospital Hill and other development opportunities; expanding affordability of housing in Cheverly.
 - **Responsive and transparent leadership:** Increased transparency and communication with respect to decisions made in the town; leaders to cultivate an atmosphere that is welcoming and receptive of all people and perspectives, including those shared among leaders.
 - **Solid infrastructure:** Infrastructure and other major issues fully addressed (i.e., water and sewer, air quality, gas and power lines, roads and sidewalks, etc.)
 - **Staff retention and recruitment:** Better compensation for staff; additional administrative (and other) personnel; training and development; collaboration and communication between divisions.
 - **Sustainability:** A cohesive green infrastructure plan/policy that supports improved and protected natural areas (i.e., forests, green spaces, etc.); addresses environmental issues with surrounding businesses; makes better use of green and other public spaces; and that provides green strategies that residents can implement (watering gardens, replacing trees, etc.).

III. Strategic Planning Retreat: The Mayor, Council members, Town Administrator and several members of Cheverly's staff met for a full-day planning retreat on January 22, 2022. The purpose of the retreat was to hear all feedback gathered during Phases I and II and to:

- Develop Cheverly's final vision and mission statements
- Discuss S.W.O.T.T. Analysis key findings and recommendations
- Set priorities and goals for the next five years
- Discuss next steps for implementation and communications planning

IV. Strategic Plan Development: Following the leadership team retreat, and the analysis of all data and information, a draft of the plan will be developed, vetted, and approved by the leadership team. The plan will be shared with all stakeholder groups and made available electronically.

Special thanks to:

- Mayor Kayce Munyeneh
- Council members
 - Marverly Nettles, Ward 1
 - Micah Watson, Ward 2
 - Ted McCann, Ward 3
 - Joseph Dalaker, Ward 4
 - Charly Garces, Ward 5
 - Amy Fry, Ward 6
- Dylan Galloway, Town Administrator (Internal Strategic Plan Champion)
- Tonya Jones, Acting Town Clerk (Internal Strategic Plan Coordinator)
- Cheverly Staff
- Residents and community leaders

Cheverly