



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – September 14, 2016

Agenda Item 2

Work Session

Discussion of Proposal to Rename City-Owned Portion of Washington McLaughlin Property

Recommended Council Action

Discuss proposal and give direction to staff.

Context with Key Issues

On January 22, 2015, the City of Takoma Park was the successful purchaser at an Internal Revenue Service public auction sale of about 2.68 acres of the Washington McLaughlin School property. The property purchased by the City is located at the intersection of Circle and Woodland Avenues and is largely wooded.

Purchase of the property was done at the urging of a number of residents, many of whom donated funds to help pay for the property. In total, \$53,000 was donated towards the purchase.

Some residents have suggested that the property be named. One proposal is that it be named "Dorothy's Woods," honoring long-time resident Dorothy Barnes, whose home abuts the property.

The City Council may name the property by Resolution. Discussion points regarding the naming include:

- What should the name be of the property?
- Should a particular process be followed in choosing a name?
- Since Resolution 2015-3 notes that "some minimal development of the [parcel] may be able to be done while preserving the important natural features of the property," are there any concerns about naming the property if a portion is later sold off and/or developed?

Council Priority

Environmentally Sustainable Community

Environmental Impact of Action

N/A

Fiscal Impact of Action

N/A

Attachments and Links

- Resolution 2015-3, Expressing Support for Preserving the Wooded Area of a Portion of the Washington-McLaughlin School Property (Parcel 3)

Introduced by: Councilmember Stewart

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
RESOLUTION 2015-3**

**EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR PRESERVING THE WOODED AREA OF A PORTION
OF THE WASHINGTON-McLAUGHLIN SCHOOL PROPERTY (PARCEL 3)**

WHEREAS, the Washington-McLaughlin School property, located at 6501 Poplar Avenue, is comprised of three separate parcels, including a 2.68 acre lot known as Parcel 3; and

WHEREAS, Parcel 3 is an undeveloped, wooded area containing steep slopes and a diversity of mature trees, birds, and other wildlife, with limited access via public rights of way, in a residential neighborhood; and

WHEREAS, Parcel 3 contains water resources, including the head of a natural spring connected to existing subsurface stormwater management infrastructure, historic streambed and wetland features; and

WHEREAS, the City Charter allows for the purchase of any property for a public purpose; and

WHEREAS, the City Charter and Code allow for the acquisition of any property or easement for the purpose of maintaining plant life and ecosystems which advance the City's stormwater management goals; and

WHEREAS, the Internal Revenue Service has announced a public auction of Parcel 3 for the non-payment of taxes on January 22, 2015; and

WHEREAS, Parcel 3 is zoned R-60, allowing for development of the property for moderate density residential purposes; and

WHEREAS, the Annotated Code of Maryland, Land Use Article, Sec. 24-202 requires a two-thirds vote of the Montgomery County Planning Board and of the Montgomery County Council (sitting as the District Council) to take any action related to zoning and land use planning in Takoma Park, including subdivision, that is contrary to a Takoma Park City Council resolution; and

WHEREAS, the creation of more than one residence within the 2.68 acre parcel would require a subdivision action approved by the Montgomery County Planning Board, affording the City of Takoma Park a significant voice in any such action per Maryland State Law; and

WHEREAS, some minimal development of the Parcel 3 may be able to be done while preserving the important natural features of the property; and

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park's Tree Ordinance, and authority over stormwater management and rights of way, are key tools in implementing City goals; and

WHEREAS, the City of Takoma Park prioritizes considerations that include environmental conservation, preservation of the City's tree canopy, and neighborhood compatibility in evaluating private and public land use planning within the City.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND has identified the preservation of the urban forest, natural spring and natural topographic features of Parcel 3 of the Washington-McLaughlin School property at 6501 Poplar Avenue as an important public purpose.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council and staff shall take actions to advance this public purpose.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council shall take action to advance this public purpose by authorizing the City to submit a bid for the purchase of the property and/or by City participation in the land use development process in order to preserve the wooded area (Parcel 3) of the Washington-McLaughlin School property in its natural state.

**ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND,
THIS 12TH DAY OF JANUARY, 2015.**

ATTEST:

/SIGNED/

Jessie Carpenter, CMC
City Clerk