



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of March 1, 2017

Follow-up from Last Council Meeting

WSSC Work on Willow and Valley View

Councilmember Kovar inquired about the utility work being performed by WSSC near the intersection of Willow and Valley View. The work is sewer line maintenance and repair that has been a long time in coming and directly impacts eight properties. WSSC and the owners of the impacted properties have easement agreements in place related to the work; impacted residents should have been notified by WSSC in advance of the work. The project was slated to take about a week so should be wrapping up soon.

WSSC has a notification system that customers can sign up for to receive notices of impending or ongoing work that may impact their mobility. For more information on the notification system, please visit <https://www.wsscwater.com/connect>.

Shred-a-thon?

Councilmember Kovar asked whether the City planned to hold a public paper-shredding event. This is not a service we have provided in the past but it is occasionally provided through the County. Residents can sign-up to receive a notification of when the next paper-shredding event is scheduled: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/sws/programs/paper-shredding.html>. The website also has contact information for businesses that provide private paper shredding services.

Information to Share

Dog Park

As you know, construction is underway at the Dog Park. Remaining items to be completed are the fencing, installation of the flexipave pathway, and laying concrete for the driveway and entrance. We expect this work will be completed over the next three weeks. We are looking to set a Grand Opening event date during the week of March 27.

PBES Facility Study

The last of four public work sessions on the PBES Facility is being held this evening. The meetings have been productive, and the consultant seems to be doing a very good job soliciting feedback and using it to develop various concepts for adding programming space at the school and addressing circulation and parking issues. In fact, a group of staff met with representatives of MCPS and their consultant completing the feasibility study to look into some options related to Grant Avenue which were designed, in part, based on ideas stemming from the public meetings. Complete summaries of the work sessions and along with copies of the meeting presentations are available at:

www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/facilities/construction/project/pineybranch.aspx.

Takoma Junction Community Consultation Meetings: The City and NDC held the first two of a series of public meetings designed to gather feedback on a variety of design elements for the development of the Takoma Junction site. The meetings were developed in partnership with the Takoma Junction Community Consultation Advisory Committee and facilitated by StreetSense.

Approximately 90 people attended the first set of meetings on February 23 and 26, which focused on the design elements of form and character. The second set of meetings will provide participants an opportunity to consider access, mobility and public space design. The meetings will be held next week on Thursday, March 9 and Sunday, March 12.

If you are interested in providing feedback on the project but have been unable to attend the meeting, we encourage you to participate in the online survey available on the City's web page at <https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/takoma-junction-redevelopment/>

Recreation Center Letters of Interest

The City will begin soliciting qualifications from potential housing and commercial developers interested in partnering with the City on the redevelopment of the Takoma Park Recreation Center with the publication of a Request for Letters of Interest on Wednesday, March 8. Responses are due Friday, April 14. The provision of recreation services would either continue at this site in conjunction with other uses or be located in the general area so as to continue to serve residents.

Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan

On Wednesday, February 8, the Council approved the execution of a contract for services with the Cloudburst Group to undertake a community-wide Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan. In the intervening three weeks, a contract for services has been prepared and presented to the firm. Minor revisions to the contract have been proposed and forwarded to the City Attorney's office for incorporation into the final document. We hope to have the contract finalized by both parties within the next two weeks. A kick-off meeting with staff and the consultant will be scheduled as soon as the agreement is executed.

Glenside Drive Sidewalk Project

The sidewalk design vote concluded on February 17 and an engineering firm was selected for the design. Surveying is scheduled to start this week. The initial community meetings to review the design will likely occur in late March or early April.

New Hampshire Gardens Repaving: WSSC's contractor is still conducting sewer work in the New Hampshire Gardens neighborhood. Once their work is complete and accepted by WSSC, it will then be referred to the WSSC Paving office. This project has been delayed significantly due to the ongoing work of the WSSC contractor and WSSC's reluctance to accept the work based on their quality standards. We are asking for updates often and this is the best information we have been able to ascertain.

Code Violations from Grace United Methodist: City staff charged the church with 14 Code violations and 3 violations for the house next door, which the church owns. The citations were

sent to the pastor, but upon going to court, staff learned that the citations must be served through the State to the agent of the LLC who owns the property. We are issuing funds to the State as required to serve the appropriate entity. Once served, we will be able to get the responsible party back in court for an abatement order.

Reorganization of Recreation Department Staff

Recent departures of some Recreation Department staff have given us an opportunity to rethink how some of the positions in the department are organized. In the interest of being better situated to address Council Priorities focused on youth success, we plan to split an existing vacant position into two 20/hour per week positions, one of which will have a sole focus on youth success initiatives. I will keep you posted as things progress.

Community Grants Program Updates

The second of two informational sessions for the FY18 cycle of the Community Grants Program will be held tomorrow evening, Thursday, March 2 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Hydrangea Room. Seven prospective applicants attended last week's informational session, held on Wednesday, February 22.

The [Community Grants Program](#) is designed to provide financial support for specific programs, projects and events that provide greater access and opportunities for participation in the arts, science, technology, engineering and math. Examples of eligible projects include science and/or math clubs, robotics clubs, computer programming classes, concert and film series, public art, maker spaces, and technology-based internship or apprenticeship programs. The deadline for submission of Letters of Inquiry is Monday, March 13 at 4:30 p.m.

Community Partnership RFPs

RFPs for the Community Partnership Program will be released this week. Two of the four were posted today, which request proposals for a "Summer Meals and Enrichment Program" and a "Teen and Young Adult Mentoring Program." Two others that will be forthcoming pertain to food scarcity and farmers market services. Staff will be making sure local service providers are aware of the RFPs. Copies of the RFPs are available on the City's website:

<https://takomaparkmd.gov/services/bids-contracts>.

On the Road: New Housing and Community Services Division Housing Tour

On Monday, February 27, staff from the Housing and Community Services Division met with residents at the Maple View Apartments. Located in Ward 4, Maple View is a 120-unit high-rise building experiencing extensive capital repair needs and a recent change in management. During the visit, staff met with about 20 residents and management staff and talked about the building and changes they hope will be implemented in the future.

The tour is an opportunity for constituents who are renting to interface with the City's housing staff regarding their tenancies and Takoma Park's laws governing rental properties. The tour begins with a focus on the larger, traditional multifamily properties in the City and will conclude with a focus on smaller rental sites that have fewer than ten units, at the close of the year.

Ethan Allen Gateway Streetscape: Pre-bid Meeting

A [Request for Bids](#) for the construction of planned streetscape improvements at the intersection of New Hampshire and Ethan Allen Avenues has been published and a pre-bid meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 2, 2017 at 10:00 am in the Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium. Qualifications are due by 3:30 pm on Friday, March 31, 2017. Bids are due by 3:30 pm on Tuesday, April 18, 2017.

New Staff

I am pleased to let you know that, as of this week, the new Neighborhood Team Services Supervisor (Police Department) and Planner (Housing and Community Development) are on board.

- **NST Supervisor:** Duane “Rick” Baravechia was recently hired as the Neighborhood Services Team Supervisor. Rick began working for the City in 2015 as a Nuisance Abatement Officer. Prior to working for Takoma Park, Rick worked for the Arlington County Fire Department, retiring after 30 years of service at the rank of Captain. While at the fire service he worked on inspections and enforcement of both hazardous materials and fire codes. In addition to a degree in Fire Science, Rick holds a Master’s degree in Public Administration. Rick is very interested in innovative recycling programs and is looking forward to working with community members and other staff on the educational outreach responsibilities of the position.
- **Planner:** Dan Sonenklar joined the City of Takoma Park this week as a Planner with the Department of Housing and Community Development. As an Urban Planner with more than seven years of experience, he has worked on transportation, land-use, community, and environmental planning issues at local and regional levels of government. Most recently, he spent a year and half living in Bogotá, Colombia implementing a Road Safety Initiative with the City's Department of Mobility and the Bloomberg Philanthropies. Prior to that he worked as a Transportation Planner with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and as a Community Planner with the Prince George's County Planning Department. Dan has a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Virginia Tech, and a B.S. in Environmental Science and Policy from the University of Maryland, College Park.

Kudos

Kudos to Finance Director **Susan Cheung** for successfully passing her second of four tests required to become a Certified Public Accountant!

My Schedule

I will be out of town from mid-day Monday, March 6 until the evening of Tuesday, March 7.