



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of March 15, 2017

Follow-up from Last Council Meeting

Takoma Junction Survey

Last week, Mayor Stewart requested information on the breakdown of respondents to the Takoma Junction survey by Ward. We should be able to share that information next week and include information from the second survey, which is out.

Information to Share

New Hampshire Recreation Center Letter of Interest Solicitation

Late last week, staff shared a draft letter of interest solicitation with the Council for their review and feedback. We have heard back from two Councilmembers and will be reviewing their comments and suggestions and determining final language. We may need to follow up with the Council on a few items, but hope to release the letter early next week.

WSSC Work on Willow Avenue

We learned late last week about some problems that arose related to work done by WSSC when replacing a section of failing sewer line on Willow Avenue. During the course of the work, they excavated a trench very close to two very large (38 diameter) tulip poplar trees. WSSC, their contractor and City staff had discussed the project and also met on site on a couple of occasions prior to the work to detail the work area. WSSC agreed to do the excavation by hand and root prune, agreeing not to use any excavation equipment in the backyards to do the work. Their own arborist notified the project manager and contractor that they would need to go through the City's permit process if the work zone was determined to impact any trees. Unfortunately they did not notify us prior to doing work that impacted the trees. While it may be that nothing could be done to change the pipe location, they should have informed us before doing the excavation close to these trees (about 9 feet for one and 12 or 15 for the other).

WSSC has spoken to the impacted property owners and the WSSC arborist has recommended tree removal for at least one of the trees (we are still evaluating the other). We agree that the impact to the one tree is significant and the tree will become unstable as a result of the work. The owner has agreed to the removal and we are awaiting an executed tree removal application. WSSC would be responsible for the removal and replanting per our Code. The number of replacement trees is 13 or 19 depending on whether we require 2% or 3% canopy replacement. The removal will likely cost about \$8,000, if it is necessary to use a crane.

In addition to the impact on these two trees, WSSC also installed the sewer line across the top of our existing storm drain system between two residences on Willow. Apparently, the original sewer line was encased in the concrete of the lid of the stormdrain trench when it was installed in the early 1900's. The contractor decided to reinstall in the same location - which resulted in

35 feet of our storm drain trench top being jackhammered and replaced with another poured in place concrete top.

We were not happy to learn this information and have expressed to WSSC that they should have contacted the City as soon as they encountered our stormdrain structure. According to our maps, the structure was located further back on the properties – that information turned out not to be correct. Unfortunately instead of notifying us and letting us collectively determine a course of action, WSSC proceeded to replace the sewer line and put it back in the same location. The options were certainly limited, but we would have preferred to be informed before, instead of after the fact. 100 years from now when WSSC is back there doing work, they will likely be very confused when they uncover the encased sewer line.

We plan to issue a formal letter of complaint from the City to WSSC in order to go on record about the lack of communication regarding the work on the stormdrain system and regarding the violation of the City's tree law.

Efforts Related to Mosquito Control

In light of the emergence of the Zika virus last year, City staff took a number of measures to ensure that information was available to residents about the disease, how it spreads, and the precautions people can take to protect themselves. Information went out in the form of blogs, handouts, email messages, community meetings (put on by the County, and publicized by the City), and information sharing at City outreach events. When there was a Zika scare in the Piney Branch area, we even had a staff person accompany a County health official and go door-to-door in the area to help educate residents and address concerns.

As it starts to warm up, we wanted to let you know that we plan to continue to stay informed of new information on Zika by participating in regular intergovernmental meetings on the topic, working with an Explorer Scout doing a project on Zika awareness, and pushing the information out to residents in multiple formats.

Neighborhood Services Team – Sidewalk Snow Removal

Consistent with the new City regulations, the NST has been out and about inspecting sidewalks in front of commercial buildings and residences. I understand that a few citations have been issued to businesses who failed to clear their sidewalks, but do not have any additional details at this time.

Kudos

Kudos to the **Police Department staff** for orchestrating and hosting a well-attended and successful luncheon and seminar focused on recent Executive Orders related to immigration and how they might impact area families and youth. It was a great opportunity for leaders from area schools to engage in conversations with one another about the experiences and concerns of their students and their families, and to hear from an expert who was able to clarify immigration processes and dispel some myths. Kudos also to the **Recreation Department staff**

who assisted with meeting logistics. Thank you to **Captain Tyrone Collington** for his leadership in spearheading the event. Thanks as well to the many Councilmembers who attended.

Kudos as well to **Mr. Bryan Goehring and the Difference Makers** who serviced at least 75 houses yesterday after the snow. You can see pictures of the Snow Angels doing their thing on the Difference Makers Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/makeadifferencewithus>. Kudos also go to **Paula Lisowski**, Seniors Program Manager in the Recreation Department, for her efforts in coordinating with residents and the Difference Makers.

My Schedule

I will be out of town on Friday, March 17 through Sunday, March 20. From now through April 5th, I will be focusing on budget preparation so may not be as accessible as usual. Deputy City Manager Jason Damweber is providing able assistance during this time.