



# CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

## City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of April 12, 2017

### *Follow-up from Last Council Meeting*

#### **Sligo Mill Overlook Playground**

Councilmember Qureshi asked for an update on the status of the Sligo Mill Overlook Playground. We are currently awaiting receipt of a permit for Sediment and Erosion Control from Montgomery County and contract approval by MNCPPC. We anticipate that construction will begin this summer; I understand that the contractor is anxious to move forward expeditiously. You can follow the status of the project in the Project Directory on the City's website: <http://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/sligo-mill-overlook-playground/>

### *Information to Share*

#### **Pesticide Application and Process**

There have been quite a few emails today about recent pesticide application and, particularly, about treatment in Dorothy's Woods without public notice. The treatment performed at Dorothy's Woods on April 4 was not intended. We did have our contractor providing treatment in two other locations - Circle Woods and Sligo Mill/Poplar Mill. We did not intend for treatment to take place at Dorothy's Woods at that time. This was an error by our contractor. The pesticide that was applied was AquaNeat - it contains glyphosate, the active ingredient. A copy of the product information can be provided upon request.

Here is information about our use of pesticides to help in invasive plant management and our notice provisions.

The City has an annual budget allocated for invasive plant removal from public areas. The expenditures range from \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually and primarily involve targeted pesticide application (chemicals applied by personnel with back pack containers and wands which apply the chemicals directly on the plants that are targeted.) The City arborist oversees the program and determines where to treat and what to treat.

The contractor that we have used recently is Arbor Care. We have seven areas that we have been monitoring and treating to address invasive plants as part of a planned program of forest management. Those locations are Sligo Mill/Poplar Mill woods, Circle Woods, Spring Park woods, Heffner Park woods, Forest Park woods, the hill behind the Community Center and Dorothy's Woods. The plants we have been focused on are kudzo, multiflora rose, garlic mustard, mile a minute (persicaria) and lesser celandine.

We also do manual invasive plant removal primarily for English ivy, honeysuckle and multi flora rose. That effort is overseen by our Gardens Division. They have most recently been working on removing honeysuckle in Spring Park woods. We are also aware of and support the efforts of

volunteers to remove invasives, like the effort at Dorothy's Woods and we are in regular communication with Cindy Dyballa with regard to plans for invasive removal.

The Public Works Director has established a public notice process to be followed prior to herbicide treatment. The notification is to include a large sign, posted by the City, near the entrance to the area to be treated stating that pesticides will be applied and provide the time frame and contact number, also a notice will be given to adjacent properties and an email sent to the Council member and any known list serv for the area. When treatment takes place, the contractor will apply the yellow sign required by State law "Pesticides Applied." We will be adding a project page on the website about invasives management that will describe the areas in the treatment program and that will provide general information.

### **Dog Park Update**

During a heavy rain event last week, we discovered that water runoff went under the rocks below the turf, moving the rocks around and creating an uneven area on the hill. While the dog park remained open, this section had to be fenced off temporarily until the contractor could correct the issue. The runoff issue was addressed yesterday, and we expect the contractor can make the necessary adjustments and repairs to the sub-base and turf later this week or next week.

### **Homestretch Program – Update**

The Home Stretch Downpayment assistance program, developed in response to the Council's interests in providing affordable housing for all residents, is designed to provide financial assistance to eligible individuals and families exploring homeownership. A total of \$50,000 was budgeted for this effort in FY17. Five low to moderate income households are expected to participate in the program.

To date, twenty-two (22) families have formally expressed interest in participating in the program. Of that group, thirteen (13) have submitted full applications for assistance. The Home Stretch marketing campaign will officially kick-off in May with the First Time Homebuyer Seminar scheduled to take place here at the Community Center on Saturday, May 6. As of today, there are six slots left for the seminar which has been capped due to space limitations at 20 participants.

Additional information about the [Home Stretch Program](#) is available on the City's website.

### **Takoma Park Recreation Center: Solicitation for Letters of Interest – Update**

The Housing and Community Development Department hosted an informational meeting on Monday, April 10 for firms considering responding to its solicitation for a development partner for the Takoma Park Recreation Center. A total of 17 people representing 12 firms attended the meeting. Also in attendance were representatives of The Friends of the Takoma Park Rec Center and Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

The deadline for submissions of letters of interest is Monday, May 22, 2017.

Additional information on the [Takoma Park Recreation Center Development Project](#), including the solicitation and Monday's presentation, is available on the City's website.

### **Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan – Update**

Work on the City's Strategic Plan is underway with the Cloudburst Group focusing on the initial phase of data collection and analysis. Key stakeholder interviews are being scheduled with the firm meeting with the Mayor earlier this evening. Further discussions with other members of the Council (Councilmembers Kovar, Seamens, Smith and Schultz) are scheduled for tomorrow, Thursday April 13. The firm's first deliverable – the Housing and Economic Analysis Report – is scheduled to be completed in late May.

Additional information on the [Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan](#) is available on the City's website.

### ***Hiring Update***

We have not yet been able to prepare the Request for Proposals for a County lobbyist.

We have many open positions, but most are part-time Recreation positions for the summer. Other positions include a Public Works Right of Way Crew Leader, several internships, and the always-advertised position of Police Officer. An announcement for a new Police Chief is not expected for several weeks.

### ***My Schedule***

I will be out of the office and out of town May 12-14.