



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of April 26, 2017

Follow Up to Last Council Meeting

Building at 7714 Takoma Avenue

Mayor Stewart asked staff to follow up on a concern expressed by a resident who said that the building located at 7714 Takoma Avenue had fallen into disrepair and had become a public safety hazard (the building was formerly the Montgomery College Early Learning Center, which closed down last June). Neighborhood Services staff investigated and did not find any violations. They noted that the grass was starting to get long, but not yet in excess of permitted length, and there is some deterioration of the fence though, again, not in violation of code.

Neighborhood Services staff communicated with Montgomery College Facilities staff, who indicated that the property would be maintained on a weekly basis, at a minimum, until the property is sold. They intend to find a residential buyer and are actively seeking a realtor with experience selling in the Takoma Park Historic District.

Information to Share

Impacts from April 21 Storm

Although it blew through very quickly, the April 21 storm brought strong wind gusts, heavy rain and hail, and resulted in many downed trees, limbs, and widespread debris across the City. Four trees fell from City property, some of which damaged trees on neighboring private property, and many more trees fell from/on private property. Public Works and Police Department staff responded over the weekend and into this week, removing trees, large limbs and debris where necessary. We know of at least four homes that had to be condemned due to storm damage.

Graffiti

City and Park and Planning staff are aware of the offensive graffiti in and around Takoma-Piney Branch Park behind Piney Branch Elementary School. The appropriate crews will be working to clean it up, and both Park Police and City Police will temporarily step up patrols in the area.

Crime Statistics

In today's monthly Police Compstat presentation, we learned that crime is down 10% compared to this time last year. That reduction would be much lower were it not for over 50 "theft from autos" that occurred earlier this year. Those thefts are believed to have been perpetrated by members of a gang located in the District, one of whom was arrested yesterday.

Kudos

Kudos to Police and Public Works staff for their response to the storm. In particular, I would like to give a shout out to **Jan van Zutphen**, our new Urban Forest Manager. He started just last week and has already hit the ground running. We have received compliments for the way he handled tree issues around the City that resulted from the storm.

Hiring Update

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

We recently began advertising for the IT Manager position and have many other open positions, most of which 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 plan to be out of the office beginning on May 12 through June on FMLA leave. During that time Jason Damweber will be Acting City Manager.