



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of May 3, 2017

Follow Up to Last Council Meeting

Status of Sidewalk Work at Maple and Philadelphia

Councilmember Kovar inquired about the status of the sidewalk work at the intersection of Maple and Philadelphia Avenues, a State Highway Administration project that is far behind schedule due to the need for a redesign and, more recently, inclement weather. The contractor for SHA has been intermittently working on site over the past few weeks and we were told that the work should be completed this week, weather permitting. Concrete was poured just today, which is a good sign.

Traffic Signals at the Junction

Councilmember Qureshi requested that staff evaluate the timing of the SHA operated traffic signals near the Takoma Junction. Staff believes the timing is actually better now than it was initially following the closure of the Carroll Avenue Bridge. However, we are taking a closer look at queuing and timing and will alert SHA if we believe there is a real need for another signal timing adjustment. It may be that SHA would be reluctant to do another analysis until the Carroll Avenue Bridge reopens, which is expect to occur this summer.

Garbage/Recycling

Mayor Stewart passed along a concern about seeing Solid Waste crews dumping recycling bins into City garbage trucks. Our crews are very careful and discerning when collecting solid waste, and they do occasionally need to dump recycling into the garbage truck when they see that garbage has been comingled with recyclables or when recyclables have otherwise been contaminated. Unfortunately, there have been a lot of problems with folks dumping garbage into public recycling containers. Public Works staff is looking into options for new bins in some public areas to make them more easily identifiable as being for garbage or recyclables. We also plan to distribute stickers to go on residential recycling bins that remind residents which items are recyclable. The City's website has a "Waste Wizard" feature to easily determine whether an item is recyclable: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/public-works/curbside-collection-services/recycling-collection/>. This is a useful tool for avoiding comingling of garbage and recyclables.

Information to Share

Changes to the Language in Notices of Violation

The April 21 storm downed many trees in the City and caused damage to several homes and vehicles. Our staff was quick to respond in removing trees and debris where necessary and inspecting damaged property in the interest of public safety. In the course of their evaluation, the Neighborhood Services Team issued several "Notices of Violation" (NOV) where homes were damaged. NOVs essentially serve as a courtesy

notice – they are not legal or formal documents or citations – and are part of the process for staff to document where they have determined there are public safety issues. We received complaints from at least one resident who received a NOV because the boilerplate way it reads makes it unclear whether or not it is a legal notice and can come off as unnecessarily harsh or adversarial, especially for residents who are actively doing everything in their power to address the issues identified. After receiving the complaint and reviewing the language in the document, staff determined that the resident was absolutely correct. While staff has followed up in person with the resident, we also plan to amend the language in the NOVs to make it clear that it is not a citation, but rather a notice that the City has taken note of the code violation(s) and looks forward to working with the resident to ensure that appropriate steps are taken to address it.

We offer a sincere apology to those residents who were indeed taking appropriate actions to address issues with their property after the storm, received the NOVs and felt put upon by their government. We did not intend to add insult to injury and deeply appreciate their efforts.

Kudos

Kudos to **Alesha Wajid-Ali and Alexis Blackwell** and many others for organizing an awesome “National Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day” event! About 20 kids and grandkids participated in a day jam-packed with fun and educational activities including a tour of a Police vehicle (the sirens were quite impressive!) and the Dog Park, an interactive discussion about trees and their importance in the community, an opportunity to “build a City” with blocks, and much more. The event was very successful thanks to all the staff who lent a hand throughout the day allowing the parents to work and the young ones to learn a lot about the place their parents work.

Hiring Update

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

We are currently advertising for the IT Manager position and have a few 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.