



# CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

## City Manager Comments

### Report for City Council Meeting of July 12, 2017

#### **“I’m back!”**

Thanks so much to Deputy City Manager Jason Damweber for doing an excellent job as Acting City Manager while I was out on Family Medical Leave. I really appreciate how staff helped keep things running smoothly during this time.

#### ***Follow Up to Last Council Meeting***

##### **Tree Boxes in Old Town**

Councilmember Kover asked when tree boxes would be installed in Old Town and whether the City or a contractor would be doing the installation. The City is in the process of installing the boxes, which are much more time consuming and difficult to assemble than originally anticipated. The plan is to install a couple per week for the next several weeks. We hope to have them all in place by early August. Public Works staff has been in contact with the Old Town Business Association about the progress of the work.

##### **Survey on the Desired Qualities and Characteristics of a Police Chief**

In addition to English and Spanish, we are in the process of developing an Amharic version of the community survey regarding the qualities and characteristics of the next Police Chief. Because of language limitations of our survey software, the survey will only be available in paper copy. We will get the word out about the Amharic version as soon as it is ready.

#### ***Information to Share***

##### **RFP Update**

The deadline for submission of proposals for both the County-level legislative advocate and the executive search firm was last Friday, July 7<sup>th</sup>. We received four proposals in response to the legislative advocacy RFP and six in response to the executive search firm RFP. Staff is in the process of doing an initial review of the proposals.

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

The housing and economic data analysis phase of the project is well underway and is to be finalized later this month. The second phase of the project, to be completed in August, is intended to provide an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats identified by the community through a community survey (completed), stakeholder interviews (almost complete); and a Facebook Live listening session (completed). The final phase of the project – the development of the Strategic Plan – is expected to be completed in October.

## **Operation Chill**

The Takoma Park Police Department is proud to partner with 7-Eleven in its “Operation Chill” program, which aims to reduce crime and build rapport between kids and law enforcement. “Operation Chill” is a great way of teaching the importance of making good decisions, being kind and doing the right thing. Through “Operation Chill,” Takoma Park Police patrol officers can “ticket” area youth caught in the act of doing good things with coupons for free Slurpees. Appropriate “offenses” might include helping another person, practicing safety (wearing a helmet during bike riding), participating in a positive activity in the community, or just for having a pleasant conversation with an officer. The coupons are great for officers who are on patrol in the community. It's an icebreaker and a way to encourage dialogue in a non-threatening, non-law enforcement situation.

## **Ongoing Mosquito Abatement**

As you may know, a group of residents associated with the Committee on the Environment (who call themselves the “Buzz Killers”) is working in coordination with staff to help raise awareness about mosquito abatement. As part of these ongoing efforts, Public Works has ordered GAT (Gravid Aedes Traps) mosquito traps, which are pesticide free and that will be available to members of the public to purchase - at the City’s cost plus tax - in the near future. The traps are designed to collect gravid *Aedes* mosquitoes looking for a “safe” place to lay their eggs. We’ll get the word out when the traps are available to be purchased.

## **Steps and Timeline for Banking Transition**

Some members of the Nuclear Free Committee have asked for information about next steps and the timeline regarding the proposed banking transition. This past February, the Committee came before Council and the Council directed that the City take approximately 18-months to consider issues, contract with a financial consultant, and move the city’s financial holdings, if that is the direction that is finally approved by Council. The following schedule is suggested, but is aggressive.

- Summer/Fall 2017: Prepare for and hold discussions with Council about banking, investments and priorities (such as: nuclear weapons industry; fossil fuels; defense industry; community investments; environmental sustainability; costs and services, etc.); engage financial consultant to assist with determining “levels of tolerance” on these priorities as well as the financial implications of switching banks
- Winter 2017: Council resolution establishing banking/investment goals and priorities; develop banking RFP to determine the extent to which banks are able to meet the City's goals; evaluate the proposals and determine financial and ethical costs and benefits of each
- Winter/Spring 2018: Possible public hearing on financial and ethical cost and benefit tradeoffs; staff makes recommendation to Council on action; Council votes on whether or not to move the City’s financial holdings; expected costs of any action to be included in FY19 budget
- Summer 2018: If City’s financial holdings are to be moved, begin transition of assets

### **Assistance to Families of Persons with Special Needs**

Some concern has been expressed lately to County Councilmembers and State Delegates about the level of service by the City of Takoma Park to families of persons with special needs, and, in particular, expressing concern that service to these persons will be lessened as Takoma Park Library construction takes place. A letter is being prepared that explains the current services provided by the City and assures the Parents of Special Needs Adults that there will be no diminution of service during Library construction. A copy of the letter will be provided to the Council and to other elected officials. It should be noted that most social services are the responsibility of County government.

### ***Kudos***

Kudos and thank you to **Captain Tye Collington** for his hard work over the last two months serving as Acting Chief. He did an excellent job, in collaboration with the other Captains, to ensure that the Police Department operated smoothly during his tenure. Beginning today, Captain Rick Bowers will begin his two month rotation as Acting Chief.

Kudos to **Lucy Neher and forty-five volunteers** for their work with 29 participants in the iCan Shine Bike Camp, held the week of June 26-30. The riders started out on specially designed roller bikes and all progressed to their own two-wheelers by Friday, most riding independently. Parents, volunteers and visitors watched with amazement as the riders gained stamina and ability, enjoying their newfound freedom. The Maryland State Highway Administration funded the program with a match from the City of Takoma Park. Takoma Bicycles served as the bike shop partner and Toole Design Group supported the camp by sending nine volunteers on company time. One mother shared her son's story: "We are biking every day – he is doing great! And for the first time [he] biked with his sister. Even in the rain today. This is huge for him. Thanks for making a difference in his life."

### ***Hiring Update***

We recently welcomed Kristen Boone to the City team as the new Recreation Manager II in the Recreation Department. Among other things, Kristen will be overseeing the newly created (and yet to be filled) half-time position geared toward youth success. Kristen received her BS in Exercise and Sports Science as well as an MS in Kinesiology with a concentration in community and youth sports development from UNC-Greensboro. Kristen served in AmeriCorps for two years, where she implemented sports and play programming for over 400 underserved youth in Washington D.C., and most recently worked as a Program Manager for a national nonprofit called Playworks, where she oversaw and evaluated program quality, stewarded community partnerships, and trained youth development professionals.

We also expect to bring a new IT Manager on board later this month.

We are currently advertising for the following open positions: Code Enforcement Officer, Art Coordinator, Crossing Guard, Right-of-Way Maintenance Technician. We expect to begin advertising for a new Police Chief in late July or August.

**My Schedule** – I will be out most of Thursday and Friday this week due to Friday's Memorial Service for my husband.

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