



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of October 18, 2017

Follow Up to Last Council Meeting

Tree Removal Permit – 102 Geneva Avenue

Councilmember Seamens said that he had become aware of a tree removal permit application filed for 102 Geneva Avenue with an appeal date of October 13th, but that he noticed it was not posted to the City's website until October 11th. He requested that the appeal window be pushed out to permit additional time for potential appeals. After looking into the issue, I learned that while there was indeed a delay in getting the information on the website, that the property was posted at the required time so sufficient notice was given. In any case, an appeal was submitted so the matter will go to the Tree Commission. Regarding the website notice, posting on the property meets notification requirements but we always strive to get things up on the website as quickly as possible and will continue to endeavor to do so. We regret the delay in this case.

Sligo Mill Overlook – Status of Petition for Traffic Calming on 5th Avenue

Councilmember Qureshi said that it had recently come to his attention that a petition was being circulated in support of traffic calming on 5th Avenue between Eastern and Westmoreland Avenues. He inquired about whether those boundaries could be extended. Although the petition is for traffic calming "between the streets Eastern and Westmoreland Ave," because the signatures extend to Orchard, the boundaries that will be evaluated can indeed be extended to Orchard. The petitioners are now required to hold a community meeting, which we understand is in the process of being scheduled. Staff will plan to attend to discuss the petition and recommendations.

Information to Share

Takoma Park Receives Sustainable Maryland Certified Award and Named 2017 Sustainability Champion!

I am proud to share the news that the City of Takoma Park has achieved recertification for its sustainability efforts and has been named Sustainability Champion 2017! Takoma Park accumulated 650 points, 500 above the minimum requirement of 150 and completed the mandatory priority actions necessary for certification. Priority actions consisted of implementing a community garden, performing municipal energy audits, developing a municipal carbon footprint, passing a green purchasing policy, creating a watershed plan, and developing a stormwater management program.

Update Regarding Washington-McLaughlin Property

On October 11, the U.S. District Court conducted a hearing on motions filed by the City and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) seeking to dismiss a federal complaint filed by Fairview Investment Fund II seeking to establish the priority of its lien over the lien held by HUD and clear its way to foreclose upon the City's property. The court declined to dismiss the case, but accepted the City's argument that Fairview is precluded from filing the claim if it did not file its claim within six years of the accrual of its claim. The court decided that when the claim accrued is a question of fact that could be decided only after the development of evidence on that question through the discovery process and consideration of a subsequent motion for summary judgment. The judge referred the case to mediation and will require

Fairview, HUD, the City, and the owner of the non-City owned portion of the Washington-McLaughlin to attend. This information is included on the [Project Page for Dorothy's Woods](https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/dorothys-woods/) (<https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/dorothys-woods/>).

Pepco Tree Pruning

The City has been notified that Pepco, through their contractor Asplundh, will be doing distribution line pruning in the southern portion of the City in November. Maps showing the areas included in the pruning can be found on the Project Page under [Utility Work](http://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/utility-work/) (<http://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/utility-work/>). The area where pruning is expected to take place includes Walnut Avenue as the northern limit, Eastern Avenue as the western limit, Sligo Mill Road as the southern limit and Cockerille Avenue as the eastern limit.

Recommended Process for Potentially Changing Street Names

The Commemoration Commission submitted its recommendation on a process to consider changes to Takoma Park street names. The recommendation is attached to this report.

Follow Up to Safe Routes to School Pop-up

Safe Routes to School installed a low-cost, temporary, public engagement event October 2 – 13, 2017, where the wooden staircase between TPES and the Community Center parking lot was closed to foot traffic. The objectives of the event were to create an opportunity to educate parents and students about the risk of exiting the wooden staircase into the middle of the Community Center parking lot and to discourage the use of the parking lot as a remote pick up point for TPES and PBES students. Based on staff observations and interviews with pedestrians, the following recommendations were put forward for my consideration:

- Keep stairway **closed** with orange fencing (maybe board it up). Make plan to permanently close stairs.
- Install two speed bumps in the parking lot (can be done during already scheduled resurfacing work).
- Install raised crosswalk on Grant Avenue adjacent to charging station.
- Install a stop sign at the Grant Avenue exit of the parking lot and a No Thru Traffic sign at the Philadelphia Avenue entrance.
- Install parking stops in all parking spaces adjacent to the sidewalk to prevent cars from overhanging the sidewalk.
- Cut foliage way back to allow full use of sidewalk.
- Install split rail fence along asphalt pathway to discourage pedestrians from creating a new path.

As I consider these recommendations and next steps, we plan to leave the stairway closed.

Flower Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway Intersection Redesign Plans

A community meeting took place on Monday, October 16 to review the proposed design for a traffic calming project at the intersection of Flower Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway. The location is within Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission property and must be coordinated with that agency. The design plans can be found on the Project Page under [Flower and Sligo Creek Traffic Calming](https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/flsi/) (<https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/flsi/>). Comments on the proposed plans can be directed to the Public Works Director at daryl@takomaparkmd.gov.

Land Transfer Discussion

To follow up on your most recent discussion regarding the Recreation Center property on New Hampshire Avenue, I wanted to let you know that staff had a preliminary meeting with staff from

MNCPPC's Planning and Land Acquisition offices to discuss steps to determine the current condition and value of the properties in question (including the City owned strip near Long Branch) and determine whether there are any title issues. Once we have gathered the information necessary, we will regroup – probably in November – to share what we learned and begin negotiations for a potential swap. We will keep you posted on developments as they occur. Of course, you will be involved formally when the time comes to make decisions.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising for a number of positions, including Planner, Council Intern, Police Intern, Arts and Humanities Intern, Housing and Community Services Intern, Custodian, Licensing Specialist, Economic Development Specialist (limited-term position), Dispatcher, Parking Enforcement Officer, Sanitation Driver, Sanitation Driver, Right-of-Way Tech, Recreation Program Leader, and Recreation Program Assistant.

The executive search firm selected to administer the Police Chief recruitment process has begun their first level screening of applications.

October Work Schedule

The International City-County Management Association (ICMA) Conference will be held October 22-25 in San Antonio, Texas. I will be attending the Conference October 21-25, but will be present for the Council meeting on the 25th. Jason Damweber will be at the Conference as well, but will return to the office October 30.

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Commemoration Commission

Re: Recommendation on Process to Consider Changes to Takoma Park Street

Names Date: October 9, 2017

The Mayor and Council have requested that the Commemoration Commission submit recommendations on a process to consider changes or modifications to Takoma Park streets' named after Civil War era generals and other Civil Warera individuals.

Recommendation

The Commemoration Commission proposes to hold one or more public meeting(s) in January, 2018 to discuss the issue of street name changes. The meeting(s) would:

- 1) Focus on the five streets that we know for certain were named after Civil War generals (Lee, Sheridan, Grant, Hancock & Sherman). We would leave aside, for now, those streets, such as Davis, which we believe were named for local families.
- 2) Discuss the formal process for an official name change and solicit public comment on this process
- 3) Discuss options available for street name changes including, but not limited to:
 - A) Rename a street through a formal process.
 - B) Continue to use the current street name for the purpose of maintaining current postal addresses, but rename the street for the purpose of making a social statement by adding a commemorative name and signage to provide historical context on each street.
 - C) Leave the current street names.
- 4) Solicit names of noteworthy individuals or organizations that deserve citywide recognition.

After the public hearing(s), the Commemorative Commission would forward a series of recommendations to the Mayor and Council by April 10, 2018.