



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of November 1, 2017

Follow Up to Last Council Meeting

Pilot Crosswalk Lights in Front of Community Center

Councilmember Seamens noted that the LED crosswalk lights we are piloting at Grant and Maple were not functioning. The issue had already been reported to Public Works and a replacement part is on order. Several weeks ago, we also noticed that one of the LED walkway lights (also part of the pilot) directly in front of the building was out. It has since been repaired. While the lights are a great amenity, it should be noted that they are still in a pilot phase, and thus being experimented with, so there may be issues that need to be worked out.

Information to Share

Campaign Signs

Up until October 26, Neighborhood Services Team staff removed a total of 28 signs representing six candidates from various political races from public rights of way. It seems that a number of signs may have been removed by others, leading to concerns about whether signs were stolen. Moving forward (since October 26), we will be issuing Courtesy Notices when signs are removed from the public right of way and it is reasonably clear who may have put up the sign (an adjacent home or business, for example). In doing so, we hope to not contribute to any misunderstandings where signs have been reported missing or stolen. Signs should be placed on private property (with the consent of the property owner) and should not be placed in parks or on other public property, unless specifically permitted at a voting location. The area between property lines that includes the street and sidewalks is usually "right of way" so signs should not be placed between a sidewalk and the curb. However, the right of way lines in Takoma Park are often not standard and not every street has sidewalks. A helpful map can be found at the following link: http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/gis/interactive/transitway_row.shtm A person can enter an address and get a good idea of the area that is right of way and so know where to place a sign that is clearly on private property.

Traffic & Parking Disruptions at Community Center Parking Lot and Grant Avenue

There will be a number of projects beginning later this week that will impact the flow of traffic and parking at and around the Community Center. The first event is milling the back parking lot (near Philadelphia Avenue), as well as on Grant Avenue between the Community Center and the school. This work is scheduled to begin on November 3 and will take about 10 days. Once the milling is complete, paving will begin in these same areas. We expect that will occur the week of November 13. In order to cause as little disruption as possible during high traffic times, it is our intention to have the contractors stop major work at 3pm, before school lets out. We are also being careful about minimizing impacts to those coming to vote. In addition to this work, much of the back parking lot will be closed during the day on November 9, as contractors will be installing two new HVAC rooftop units, which requires the use of a large crane.

We appreciate your understanding and patience for the duration of these projects.

Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for FY 2017 Complete

Maryland State law requires that every general purpose local government publish, within six months of the close of each fiscal year, a complete set of audited financial statements. The financial statement of the City of Takoma Park is audited by CohnReznick, LLC, an independent auditor. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and the Uniform Financial Reports (UFR), completed on October 31, have been submitted to the Legislative Services Department and the U.S. Census Bureau, as required. The CAFR will be available on the City's website later this week, and a presentation of the report is scheduled for the November 29 Council Meeting.

Open House: Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan

The Housing and Community Development Department is hosting two open houses in the upcoming weeks to provide residents with an opportunity to learn more about the City's Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan. Once completed, the plan will provide guidance to future City Councils on how they can work to ensure that a range of housing options are available to residents of varying incomes and respond to future economic development opportunities.

The first open house is scheduled for this coming Tuesday night from 6:00-8:00pm on the third floor of the Community Center. Residents are encouraged to swing by after they vote and let us know how the recommendations included in the preliminary plan may impact them, their neighbors and the community. And, we want to know: did the consultants get it right? If the Council moves forward with the recommendations, will we be on the right track?

The second open house will be held the following week on Monday, November 13 from 6:00-8:00pm in the Board Room of the Takoma Langley Crossroads CDA (7676 New Hampshire Avenue, Suite 303).

Humanities Lecture: "The Angie Zapata Story: Transgender Life in American Law"

We encourage the Council to attend tomorrow's humanities lecture. Takoma Park resident, Liz Seaton, will be discussing how the 2008 murder of Angie Zapata, a transgender Latina, helped to expand the federal Hate Crimes Law and protect transgender people. The lecture will begin at 7:30 pm in the Auditorium, followed by a Q&A with Ms. Seaton.

Montgomery County Residents Survey

Montgomery County is undertaking a residents survey – their first survey since 2009. They mailed out surveys to 5000 randomly chosen addresses, but are allowing others to complete a survey as well. People may go to <http://bit.ly/MCMD2017> to complete the survey. It will be available between November 1 and November 15 and can be taken in English, Spanish or Chinese. The City of Takoma Park will be undertaking a residents survey in several months. Residents are encouraged to take both!

New Arts Coordinator – Brendan Smith

We welcomed our new Arts Coordinator, Brendan Smith, to the Housing and Community Development Department this week. Brendan is a D.C.-based mixed-media artist, arts writer, and art teacher. After growing up in North Carolina and New Mexico, he worked as a journalist for more than 20 years for various newspapers, magazines, and websites across the country. He also leads videoconferences for school classes and senior groups in the distance education program at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

Kudos

Kudos to staff from the Recreation and Police Departments, and to the Jr. Explorers for putting on another excellent and fun-filled Monster Bash! And a special shout out to **John Webster** for his efforts organizing and leading the event preparation. We estimate there were about 900 people in attendance (we gave out 860 treat bags).

Kudos also to Finance staff, especially **Susan Cheung and Alisa Trammell**, for their work preparing the CAFR for FY 2017. While it's something that must be done each year, it is a very time and labor intensive task and they continuously do a great job!

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, and Recreation Program Leader.

We are currently reviewing application materials of the top 14 candidates for the Police Chief position.