



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – March 1, 2017 Agenda Item 1

### **Public Hearing**

City Election Date Change and Sharing Polling Places with Montgomery County in the 2018 General Election

### **Recommended Council Action**

Receive public comments.

### **Context with Key Issues**

In 2015, voters showed their support for having the Council consider changing the date of City elections to coincide with Maryland statewide general elections. Holding City and State elections together will increase voter turnout in City elections and increase the diversity of residents who turn out to vote.

To enable a change to begin in 2018, the City Charter would need to be amended to: a) change the date from odd-numbered years to even-numbered years; and, b) set a one-year term for the Mayor and Councilmembers elected in 2017. Regular two-year terms would resume beginning with the November 2018 election.

The City Council wants to hear from residents before beginning the charter amendment process, since holding the State and City elections in separate rooms in the same polling place was not anticipated when the advisory question was presented to the voters. With this proposed change, in 2018, residents arriving at their polling place would check in, receive a ballot, and vote in the state election. Next, they would go to a separate room, check in, receive a ballot, and vote in the city election.

Voting by mail (absentee voting) would be separate, as it always has been. Takoma Park voters would apply to the City Clerk's Office for a vote by mail ballot. To receive a State ballot, Takoma Park voters would apply to the Montgomery County Board of Elections.

Early voting for the City contests would also be separate. While voters would be able to vote early at one of the 11 Montgomery County early voting sites for the State election, early voting for the City election would be separate. City early voting would take place in Takoma Park, most likely at the Takoma Park Community Center. One or more other locations might be added.

### **Council Priority**

Engaged, Responsive & Service Oriented Government

**Environmental Impact of Action**

N/A

**Fiscal Impact of Action**

The costs for a Takoma Park election using shared polling places is still being determined. Many more election workers will be needed to cover five polling places on the day of the election. Other costs will depend on whether or not scanners are rented to count ballots, how the ballots are prepared, and whether accessible voting technology is leased. As information is gathered and plans developed, the City's Board of Elections will put forth a proposed budget for the 2018 election.

**Attachments and Links**

Draft Charter Amendment Schedule

Link: [Election Date Change information in the Project Directory](#)

**DRAFT CHARTER AMENDMENT SCHEDULE (ELECTION DATE CHANGE)**

First newspaper notice of Public Hearing  
(Once a week for two successive weeks.)

**Thursday, March 9, 2017 in the Montgomery County Edition Washington Post  
Also advertise in the March edition of the Takoma Park Newsletter**

Second newspaper notice of Public Hearing

**Thursday, March 16, 2017 in the Montgomery County Edition Washington Post**

Public Hearing on proposed Charter Amendment  
(No sooner than 10 days after the second notice of public hearing.)

**Charter Amendment Public Hearing - Wednesday, April 5, 2017**

First Reading of Charter Amendment Resolution  
(First reading can take place the same evening as the public hearing.)

**First Reading Charter Amendment Resolution - Wednesday, April 12, 2017**

Second Reading of Charter Amendment Resolution (No sooner than 14 days following the public hearing.)

**Second Reading Charter Amendment Resolution - Wednesday, April 26, 2017**

Publication of Fair Summary of Charter Amendment  
(Published four times - at weekly intervals - within a period of at least 40 days after the adoption of the resolution.)

**Thursdays, May 4, May 11, May 18, May 25 in the Montgomery County Edition Washington Post  
Also publish in the May edition of the Takoma Park Newsletter**

Effective Date - The Charter Amendment becomes effective on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after passage of the Charter Amendment Resolution, unless a valid Petition for Referendum is received on or before the 40<sup>th</sup> day (June 5).

**Effective Date of Charter Amendment - June 15, 2017**