



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of January 17, 2018

Information to Share

Message sent to Long Branch / Sligo Neighborhood Residents

After hearing from Long Branch-Sligo residents frustrated by ongoing but sporadic Washington Gas utility work in their neighborhood, I wrote a message for Councilmember Dyballa to share. The message noted that the contractor for Washington Gas began work without the 72 hour notice that was supposed to be given to residents and was sometimes closing streets mid-block, which was causing traffic problems. In addition, there have been a number of cases in which residents and City staff smelled gas. Staff have contacted Washington Gas and their contractor regarding the City's 72-hour notice provision and best ways to close streets where work is being done. We have reported the instances of gas smells to Washington Gas and to the Fire Department. At least one cracked gas line has been repaired where the gas smell was reported. We continue to urge people to call 911 and ask for the Fire Department if the smell of gas is noted.

There is still utility work to be done. The gas main replacement project is nearing its end. There are several more properties that still need to get their house service replaced and some street trenches that need to be permanently patched. All impacted streets will be repaved in the spring.

We have contacted Congressman Jamie Raskin's office to help urge for greater responsiveness by Washington Gas officials. I am aware there is interest in a community meeting with a representative from Washington Gas, but it is not clear if and when that may take place. City staff will continue to be in communication with utility officials to the extent that we are able.

A Community Dialogue: Dockless Bikeshare Pilot Program in Silver Spring & Takoma Park

Earlier today, we received notification from Montgomery County DOT that they, along with County Council President Hans Riemer, will be hosting a community dialogue on Monday, January 22 to hear ideas and receive feedback from community members about the dockless bikeshare pilot program. In addition to County Council President Riemer, MCDOT Director Al Roshdieh, Silver Spring Citizens Advisory Board/Transportation Committee Chair Jonathan Bernstein, and representatives from the bikeshare companies will be present to participate in the dialogue.

The dialogue will take place on Monday, January 22 from 7:00-8:30pm in the Great Hall of the Silver Spring Civic Center located at 1 Veterans Place in Silver Spring.

Empty Bowls

In conjunction with Takoma United for an Engaged Community's Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service and Evening Program, the Recreation Department hosted an "Empty Bowls" project. The Empty Bowls project is an international grassroots campaign that encourages engagement through a one-day event to shine a light on the issue of hunger and the impact on those at risk. People could donate \$20 or more and then select a food-safe bowl decorated by youth and teens that participate in Takoma Park Recreation Department programs. C.H.E.E.R. was the fiscal agent and will donate the proceeds of the sale of the bowls to Adventist Community Services food bank to support efforts to reduce hunger and increase access to healthy and nutritious food in Takoma Park. All 30 bowls were sold and we raised \$690! Shenekia Grimshaw, a reporter from Local WDVM was on hand to do a piece for their evening news. <http://www.localdvm.com/news/i-270/takoma-park-honors-unsung-heroes-raised-awareness-on-hunger-during-mlk-celebration/918335079>

It's Budget Time!

City staff has begun working on their respective departmental or project budgets. Once the two City Council Retreats are held, the departments will focus their budgets to reflect the Council Priorities. Preparation will continue through March, resulting in a Proposed Budget to be presented to the Council on April 4. We will be holding a Budget Open House on the afternoon of Saturday, April 7 and then there will be public and Council discussion of the budget through mid-May.

Residents, there is no need to wait until April to contact your Council representatives about items you would like to see added to or cut from the City's budget. In particular, your recommendations on City priorities are most helpful if they are shared before the Council sets their priorities in the upcoming Retreats.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising for a number of positions, including Police Dispatcher, Sanitation Driver, Recreation Program Leader, Recreation Program Assistant, Planner, Economic Development Specialist, Arts and Humanities Intern, and Housing and Community Services Intern.