



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of January 31, 2018

Follow Up from Last Council Meeting

Property Tax Credits for Homeowners and Renters

Councilmember Seamens requested that we help inform residents about property tax credits for homeowners and renters. We will be compiling links to the main programs on one site and promoting the programs via social media. There are three main types of programs for residents of Montgomery County. Montgomery County and the City of Takoma Park give additional credits for the Homeowners' Property Tax Credit program automatically to those who receive the State credit.

The first type of tax credit is for Maryland homeowners who have lived in their home for more than one year. This is called the Homestead Tax Credit, which has a cap on the amount property taxes can increase each year. The link to information on the Homestead Tax Credit is:

<http://dat.maryland.gov/realproperty/Pages/Maryland-Homestead-Tax-Credit.aspx>

The second is for Maryland homeowners and renters with limited incomes. The Homeowners' Property Tax Credit information is at this link:

<http://dat.maryland.gov/realproperty/Pages/Homeowners%27-Property-Tax-Credit-Program.aspx>

The Renters Tax Credit information is at this link:

<http://dat.maryland.gov/realproperty/Pages/Renters%27-Tax-Credits.aspx>

We do not have the capabilities to develop a calculator on the website or embed state tax forms (and there may be liability issues for the City for doing so), but we will be helping people access these forms.

In addition to these State programs, there are also other tax credit programs in Montgomery County for certain seniors and veterans. Information and applications can be found at this link:

<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Finance/bill-42-16.html>

Information to Share

Update on Discussions Regarding Possible Street Renaming

At the Commemoration Commission's public hearing on possibly changing certain street names in Takoma Park, a number of residents expressed concern about property owner legal obligations and costs that may be triggered by a street name change.

Rosalind Grigsby, Takoma Park Community Development Manager, spoke with Matthew Mills, Acting Principal Counsel for Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission about these concerns. Mr. Mills said there was nothing in the process that would require a property owner to retain legal counsel. Home owners would not be required to get a new mortgage for their property due to a street name change; the address on deeds and mortgages would change when the property sold or refinanced. Even then, because addresses do occasionally change over time, deeds focus on the legal property description, which remains constant.

The manual related to street naming in Montgomery County provides the following information regarding which agencies are notified by the County of a street name change and which notification steps are the responsibility of the property owner or resident.

Agencies Notified: In addition to internal divisions within the Montgomery County Planning Department, the following government agencies will be notified by the Planning Department's

Development Application and Regulatory Coordination Division of any new or modified address assignments: U.S. Postal Service, AMS (Address Management System) Unit; Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation; WSSC ; Neighboring municipalities (City of Gaithersburg, City of Rockville); Montgomery County agencies: - Fire and Rescue Services - Police Department - Department of Technology Services-Geographic Information Systems (DTS-GIS) - Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA) - Housing and Opportunities Commission (HOC) - Department of Permitting Services (DPS) - Zoning - Building Construction, Permit Processing - Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Division of Solid Waste Services - Department of Transportation (DOT), Commuter Services

Owner/Developer Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the Owner/Developer to notify other agencies once a new street address is approved. Below are examples of agencies that will need to be contacted when an address is changed: Maryland Department of Motor Vehicles for driver's licenses and vehicle registration; Montgomery County Public School Schools; Voter registration-Call Board of Elections; Tax assessment-Call Revenue Office; Utility companies-Water, electric, gas, cable and telephone; Bank accounts/Printed checks; Social Security and pension records; Insurance policies-Home, auto, life, health, etc.; Credit cards/Charge accounts; Mortgage or leasing company; Subscriptions; Employer; Private schools/daycare; Business/Personal stationary; Personal friends/Family members; Memberships; Doctors/Dentist. The property owner is responsible for changing the address display on the premise per Montgomery County Code Chapter 22 – Fire Safety Code and Section 22-97- Address numbers.

When the City of Takoma Park went through Unification, changing the County line so that the third of the City that had been in Prince George's County became part of Montgomery County, the City prepared a standard notice that residents could copy and use to explain the change to insurance companies and other entities that needed to be notified of the change.

Community Grants Program

The Grants Review Committee announced earlier this week that it is accepting Preliminary Applications for the FY19 cycle of the Community Grants Program. The Community Grants Program provides financial support for specific programs, projects and events that improve residents' quality of life by providing greater access and opportunities for participation in the arts and sciences. Eligible projects include arts and humanities focused projects and events; and Science, Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) programs and events.

The Preliminary Application, due on Monday February 26, is available online. To assist prospective applicants, the Housing and Community Development Department is offering two informational sessions: Monday, February 5 from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. and Thursday, February 8 from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Both sessions will be held in the Hydrangea Room at the City of Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue. Participants will also learn more about the Takoma Foundation's upcoming grant opportunities.

Additional information on the Community Grants program and the Preliminary Application can be found online at <http://bit.ly/2EuQrTK>

Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan - Housing Forum

We invite the community to join us on Monday, February 26 at 7:00 p.m. when we continue the conversation about the City's interests in providing a range of safe, quality, and stable housing opportunities for residents of varying incomes throughout our community. The City Council and representatives from Mullin & Lonergan will be present to discuss the housing elements of the City's Strategic Plan. We welcome your input. Community members unable to participate in person will be able to watch the event and weigh in on the discussion on Facebook Live. Residents are also encouraged to submit their comments on the Strategic Plan project page.

To learn more about the City's pending Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan and to provide comment, please check out the project page at <http://bit.ly/2gTfWU1>

Labor Negotiations

There have been a number of inquiries about the status of labor negotiations with the City of Takoma Park and about the level of pay and benefits we have for our employees. The City has two collective bargaining units, AFSCME represents most non-management employees and UFCW represents police officers below the Sergeant level. We have had a contract with UFCW since July 2017. We have been in negotiations with AFSCME since December of 2016. Because we remain in negotiations with AFSCME and deeply respect the collective bargaining process, City management cannot comment on the specifics being discussed. We have always been, and continue to be, committed to negotiate in good faith with our two unions.

For residents interested in the level of pay of our employees, information on salaries can be found at this link: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/human-resources/salary-range-table/> Please note that no full-time employee earns less than \$40,000 per year. All full-time employees receive full employee health insurance as well as many other benefits.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising for a number of positions, including Police Dispatcher, Sanitation Driver, Recreation Program Leader, Recreation Program Assistant, Housing and Community Services Intern, and Contract CDL Driver.