



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of March 14, 2018

Information to Share

Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

We learned this week that the City of Takoma Park has once again received Government Finance Officer Association's (GFOA) Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting Award. Per the letter sent by GFOA, "the Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management." The award is given to state and local governments who go beyond the minimum requirements of generally accepted accounting principles to prepare comprehensive annual financial reports that evidence the spirit of transparency and full disclosure. A special thanks to Susan Cheung, Finance Director, and Alisa Trammell, Budget Specialist, and the entire Finance team for their hard work and dedication to accuracy and transparency.

Updates on Dorothy's Woods

Just yesterday, we learned that Fairview Investment Fund had filed a motion in the Washington-McLaughlin School's bankruptcy proceeding asking that the court lift the automatic stay in bankruptcy so that it may proceed with its foreclosure action against the City's property. By way of background and explanation, under federal bankruptcy law, when an individual or business files for bankruptcy, the filing results in an automatic injunction that halts any pending lawsuits by creditors against the debtor. In this case, Washington-McLaughlin Christian School's bankruptcy filing in 2017 halted Fairview's (the bankruptcy creditor) foreclosure action that was pending in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County against the two owners of the property subject to Fairview's lien, the City of Takoma Park and Washington-McLaughlin Christian School (the bankruptcy debtor). The Bankruptcy Code authorizes the lifting of the automatic stay when there is good cause, and expressly requires the court to lift the stay when the debtor does not have an equity interest in the property at issue. Because Washington-McLaughlin Christian School no longer holds an interest in the City's property, we anticipate that the bankruptcy court will lift the stay and allow the foreclosure action to proceed.

For additional information and background, please visit the Dorothy's Woods project page: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/dorothys-woods/>

Update on PEPCO Takoma-Sligo Project

Weather permitting, PEPCO's contractors plan to start work at the DC line on Takoma Avenue on March 26th at around 9:00 am. Before the 26th, they will spray-paint the layout out on the pavement and beyond. Likely a week before construction starts "No Parking" signs with future dates and times will go up at the project location.

As the crews work, materials will be trucked in and out of the project site. This alleviates most of the need for storage on site or during the work. It will be long project and temporary asphalt or steel plates will be present whenever the crews are not actively working.

The Urban Forest Manager is working with the crews to determine which tree limbs need to be trimmed before they get damaged by work. There will be minimal tree impacts as most of the work will take place inside the asphalt roadbed. PEPCO applied for and was granted permits to remove the few directly impacted trees.

Additional information is always available at the links below. As we see the need for updates we will amend our site.

PEPCO's direct website

<http://www.pepco.com/SmartEnergy/ReliabilityImprovements/Pages/Takoma-to-Sligo-Underground-Line.aspx>

City's Utility Work Project Page

<http://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/utility-work/>

Snack Options for City Programs

Council recently requested information regarding the types of snacks provided in association with City Recreation programs. Per Greg Clark, Recreation Director, for the past few years the department has been implementing healthier snack and food options for its aftercare and teen programs, moving as close as possible to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards with the resources that we have. Our aftercare program offers one fresh-healthy snack per week (apples, oranges, grapes, carrots, etc). On Fridays we have fresh popcorn. Additional snack options for this program include fiber granola bars, cheerios, whole wheat mini squares, veggie straws, animal crackers, fruit leather, mini muffins, crunchy honey and oats bars, pretzels, string cheese, and yogurt. We try to keep the snacks high in fiber, and low in sugar and carbohydrates. Here is the listing of snacks offered during a two-week period in February:

Monday 2/5 - Goldfish

Tuesday 2/6 - Belvita Crackers

Wednesday 2/7 - Apples

Thursday 2/8 - Animal Crackers

Friday 2/9 - Popcorn

Monday 2/12 - String Cheese

Tuesday 2/13 - Gogurt

Wednesday 2/14 - Carrots

Thursday 2/15 - Cheerios

Friday 2/16 - Popcorn

Most of our teen programs do not receive daily snacks. However, we do occasionally provide food at our special events and sometimes with a pre-planned class/activity. This year we began providing snacks during Power Hour (after-school homework time for grades 6-12). In the past staff would order pizza for participants. Now we provide teens healthier options like veggie straws, Nutrigrain bars and granola bars, puffed rice and corn snacks, 100% juices, and cheese crackers.

In January 2017, the Recreation Department worked with Councilmember Kovar and Real Food for Kids, a community group, to offer healthier options in City vending machines. As a part of a new vending agreement, all City vending machines now contain healthier snack options that are smaller in portion and lower in sugar. During this process staff found it extremely difficult to secure a vending company that fully complied with Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. Apparently, doing so does not make business sense for many vendors.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising for a number of positions, including Police Dispatcher, Police Officer, Sanitation Driver, Recreation Program Leader, and Contract CDL Driver.