



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – September 12, 2018 Agenda Item 9

Work Session

Update on Status of New Hampshire Avenue Recreation Center Project

Recommended Council Action

None – For discussion purposes only

Context with Key Issues

The Takoma Park Recreation Center property at 7315 New Hampshire Avenue is owned by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC). MNCPPC wishes to no longer maintain the facility and is interested in trading the property for a piece of City-owned property on Long Branch creek off Jackson Avenue. This action was also a recommendation of the Takoma Langley Sector Plan. For a number of years there have been discussions about whether or not the City should assume responsibility for the property, how to continue to provide recreational services to residents on the eastern side of the City, and the extent to which the City could use the property to help meet other City priorities.

In 2015, the City contracted for and received reports on recreation and facility options related to the Recreation Center as well as a zoning analysis and concept plans related to possible reuse of the property. In 2017, a solicitation was issued for Letters of Interest from entities interested in partnering with the City on planning for and redeveloping the site. Responsive Letters of Interest from four teams were received. A major part of the work to be done would involve community discussions on recreational and other services and options for the site.

There were several reasons that the Council did not move forward immediately on choosing a development partner:

- The responses from the four entities varied greatly, with several teams presenting much more detailed information than was requested in the solicitation;
- Council elections were about to take place, with an expectation of significant change in membership; and
- Several technical questions about the property were still to be answered, including questions of vehicular access to the property from New Hampshire Avenue, an assessment of building maintenance needs, and issues related to the exchange of property with MNCPPC.

Staff requested time to explore the issues related to the transfer of the property from MNCPPC ownership to City ownership. Since that time, City and MNCPPC staff have met several times, the building maintenance needs have been assessed, land surveys and appraisals have been done of the Recreation Center property and the City property, and discussions have been held regarding establishment of an easement arrangement to continue to allow use of the current entrance from New Hampshire Avenue to access the property. Information regarding the findings of these will be presented at the meeting.

The next step is to confirm that the City Council and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission wish to pursue the land exchange, with a proposed effective date of July 1, 2019.

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All

Community Development for an Improved and Equitable Quality of Life

Environmental Considerations

To be determined. If redevelopment occurs, it would be designed and constructed to more-sustainable environmental standards. The City parcel would be preserved as open space by MNCPPC.

Fiscal Considerations

To be determined. Ownership and maintenance of the Recreation Center will have a relatively small cost to the City over the short term and there may be a decline or ending of the \$85,000 in funds from Montgomery County regarding the provision of recreational services at the location. However, redevelopment may mean greater costs or greater revenues associated with the property.

Racial Equity Considerations

To be determined. Currently the Recreation Center provides services to residents from Ward 6 and others, a majority of whom are people of color. As the community and the Council discuss redevelopment alternatives, racial equity will be considered.

Attachments and Links

- [Takoma Park Recreation Center Development Project Page](#)
- [Takoma Park Recreation Center Studies](#)
- Lot map of 922 Jackson Avenue



