



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – June 24, 2020 Agenda Item 1

Presentation

Presentation and Discussion of Grants Review Committee's Recommendations for the FY21 Community "Quality of Life" Grants Program

Recommended Council Action

Presentation and discussion only. An ordinance approving the grant awards is scheduled for July 1.

Context with Key Issues

The Community Grants program is designed to provide 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. The primary focus of the program is on providing benefit to residents with low and moderate incomes. Additional information on the parameters of the program is provided in the accompanying guidelines.

A total of twenty-two (22) organizations, responding to an open call for applications issued by the Department of Housing and Community Development staff in January 2020, applied for funding. Twenty-one (21) of these organizations were deemed eligible and their proposals were forwarded on the Grants Review Committee. Of the twenty-one (21) full applications submitted by the March 13, 2020 deadline, ten (10) are recommended for funding by the Committee.

Representatives of the Grants Review Committee, Nicole Ferriolo (Ward 1), and Susan Rosenblum (Ward 3) will present the Committee's funding recommendations. Also serving on the Committee are Nadine Bloch (Ward 3), Rachel Branaman (Ward 5), and Jay Keller (Ward 3).

Council Priority

A Livable Community for All

Environmental Considerations

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in numerous impacts on the environment and the climate. The shelter in place orders have slowed the spread with daily carbon dioxide emissions declining as much as 17 percent globally. This drop in global emissions is the biggest emission decline since World War II. U.S. emissions declined one-third for part of April 2020, due in large part to reduced mobility, manufacturing, and electricity demand. As Montgomery County begins Phase Two of its reopening efforts, we expect emission rates will increase slightly. Fortunately, the grants recommended under this program are capable of being performed virtually or in some instances executed with small groups using social distancing and other precautionary measures.

Fiscal Considerations

The FY21 budget includes \$80,000 for the Community "Quality of Life" Grants program.

Racial Equity Considerations

The Community Grants Program is designed to benefit low to moderate individuals and households. Many of the current and past recipients of the programs funded under this grant are people of color.

Starting in FY20, the Grants Review Committee identified a committee member to serve as lead on the Council's priority of racial equity in all decision making. This member had recently completed the City-funded "What's My Bias?" training program and made a presentation to the Committee on the subject of race equity in decision making. Additionally in FY20, as part of the new online application, each applicant was provided a link to Mayor Kate Stewart and Councilmember Jarrett Smith's statement on race equity and the Council Priorities and was specifically asked to address race equity in the proposed projects.

In FY21, the Grants Review Committee continued its commitment to race equity in all decision making. The Committee again required all applicants to review the City's resolution committing itself to systematically and deliberately applying a race equity lens in all decision-making and asked every applicant to explain how they would incorporate racial equity into the proposed project.

Additionally, while not required for funding, the Committee encouraged applicants to highlight in their proposals any elements of their arts and sciences programs that also promote workforce development and job-readiness for low-and-moderate-income Takoma Park residents.

In FY21 as in FY20, all decision making by the Grants Review Committee took race equity into serious consideration, and the resulting slate of FY21 Grantee Recommendations reflect the Council's race equity priorities and the needs of residents. Therefore, we believe that by adopting the Grants Review Committee's FY21 funding recommendations, the Council will improve access to science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) opportunities for people of color, including immigrants and refugees.

Attachments and Links

- FY21 Summary Report on Funding Recommendations
- Community Grants Program Guidelines