



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 8, 2020 Agenda Item 1

### **Voting Session**

Resolution reappointing Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O'Toole for a two-year term

### **Recommended Council Action**

Approve the Resolution.

### **Context with Key Issues**

By a unanimous vote at its meeting on June 16, 2020, the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission approved a request for the reappointment of Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O'Toole for a second two-year term dating from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2022. Ms. O'Toole has agreed to the reappointment.

During the past two years, Ms. O'Toole has been a valuable asset in promoting poetry by serving as emcee for the Third Thursday Poetry reading series and helping the Arts and Humanities Division develop new themed readings featuring a diverse range of poets, including bilingual poets, immigrant poets, and Black men who were previously incarcerated. She also is planning poetry workshops with local school and senior groups that have been put on hold due to coronavirus restrictions. The Commission would like to see those projects carried out.

Established in 2005, the Takoma Park Poet Laureate program honors the achievements of a local poet who provides literary leadership in the community. The designation of a poet laureate is intended to not only to support and promote Takoma Park poets but also stimulate interest in poetry among City residents and visitors. To be considered for appointment, an individual must be a resident of Takoma Park, a published poet recognized by the literary community, and a volunteer engaged in teaching, public speaking, or other endeavors. Previous poets laureate have included Donald Berger (2005-2007), Anne Becker (2007-2011), and Merrill Leffler (2011-2018).

### **Council Priority**

Promoting Arts and Humanities

### **Environmental Considerations**

N/A

### **Fiscal Considerations**

The Poet Laureate will receive a \$1,000 stipend each year during the two-year reappointment.

### **Racial Equity Considerations**

Kathleen O'Toole is a white woman. All of Takoma Park's poets laureate have been white.

### **Attachments and Links**

Resolution reappointing Kathleen O'Toole for two years as Takoma Park Poet Laureate.

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**RESOLUTION 2020-XX**

**REAPPOINTMENT OF TAKOMA PARK POET LAUREATE KATHLEEN O'TOOLE**

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Poet Laureate program was established in 2005 as a means of honoring the achievement of a local poet, while encouraging young and old to strive for greater expressive abilities and creating a wider appreciation of poetry and literature; and

WHEREAS, a poet laureate is a symbol of the important role the arts play in our civic life and creative expression and can be a source of pride for all Takoma Park residents; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission has been impressed by the work of Poet Laureate Kathleen O'Toole, a respected poet and Ward 3 resident, over the past two years and would like to see her continue in that position so she can complete some delayed projects; and

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park Arts and Humanities Commission unanimously recommended the two-year reappointment of Kathleen O'Toole as poet laureate at its meeting on June 16, 2020.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK hereby reappoints Kathleen O'Toole as Takoma Park Poet Laureate for a two-year period beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022.

Adopted this 8th of July 2020.

Attest:

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Jessie Carpenter, CMC City Clerk