



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – December 2, 2020 Agenda Item 4

Voting Session

Removing Housing and Community Development Director Position from the “Hold List”

Recommended Council Action

Approve Resolution

Context with Key Issues

The Housing and Community Development (HCD) Director position has been vacant for over 1½ years. With the pandemic hitting just as the FY21 City budget was being considered, the City Manager suggested that the position not be filled before December 2020. Funding for the position for the period of January through June 2021 was put on the budget “hold list” by the City Council, to be revisited later in the year.

Since that time, it is clear that the position is critically needed. The City’s extremely heavy COVID-19 response work rests primarily on the staff of the Housing and Community Development Department. Oversight of departmental personnel, legal matters and budget preparation requires professional management and a significant amount of time. In addition, a number of land development proposals and planning efforts will require coordinated attention in the coming year. City Manager Suzanne Ludlow has been assisting with planning, legal and budget matters for the department while the position is vacant, but she will be retiring on July 1, 2021.

The City Manager would like to begin advertising the HCD Director position so that it may be filled in January, when work on the proposed budget begins in earnest. Budget preparation alone requires several months of heavy work each year by department heads.

Council Priority

Engaged, Responsive, Service-oriented Government

Environmental Considerations

Many of the strategies in the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan advance the sustainability and climate change response and resiliency goals of the Council. However, current staff is limited in their capacity to move forward on the activities of the Strategic Plan while they try to handle COVID-19 response work as well as management duties.

Fiscal Considerations

Funding for the position for half of the fiscal year is in the budget. The position is a Grade 130 in the City’s personnel schedule, with a salary rate that begins at \$108,000 and has a market rate of \$126,500. Filling the Director position is in the short and long-term financial interest of the City as it ensures that staff can provide needed assistance to the public, that funds and legal matters are managed wisely, that large grants can be pursued and managed, and that coordination with County, State and other partners can be developed so that the resources of those entities can be devoted to Takoma Park.

Racial Equity Considerations

The absence of a department head hampers the City's ability to fully respond to the COVID-19 crisis as well as implement the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan, thus disproportionately impacting residents of color in Takoma Park.

Attachments and Links

- Draft Resolution

Introduced by:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2020-XX

**REMOVING THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
POSITION FROM THE BUDGET “HOLD LIST”**

WHEREAS, the Housing and Community Development Director position was vacant as the City Council was considering the FY21 Budget early on in the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, concerns over the uncertain fiscal impacts of the pandemic led the City Manager to recommend not filling the Housing and Community Development Director position until January 2021 and the City Council placed funding for the position for the remainder of the fiscal year on the “hold list” of budget items that would not be expended until after consideration by the City Council later in the fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has placed extraordinary pressure on the staff of the Housing and Community Development Department as they responded to the critical financial and health needs of residents and businesses affected by the pandemic, including developing grant and other assistance programs, coordinating with County and other agencies, and providing time-intensive one-on-one assistance to people in the most difficult of circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the staff of the Housing and Community Development Department also must do the regular work of personnel management, financial management and reporting, contract and grant management, communication with the public and other units of government, and continue with the Council priorities-based work plans of the planning, housing, and economic development divisions; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager has requested that the City Council remove the Housing and Community Development Director from the “hold list” so that the position could be filled in January 2021, to oversee and coordinate the heavy work of the Department, and to prepare the Department’s proposed budget, an activity that begins before January and requires several months of work annually; and

WHEREAS, filling the Director position is in the short and long-term financial interest of the City as it ensures that staff can provide needed assistance to the public, that funds and legal matters are managed wisely, that large grants can be pursued and managed, and that coordination with County, State and other partners can be developed so that the resources of those entities can be devoted to Takoma Park.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of Takoma Park removes the Housing and Community Development Director from the FY21 Budget “Hold List.”

Adopted this ____ day of December, 2020.