



## Takoma Park City Council Meeting – September 16, 2020 Agenda Item 3

### **Work Session**

Committee Code of Conduct

### **Recommended Council Action**

Discuss draft resolution and code of conduct. Consider adoption on September 23.

### **Context with Key Issues**

To further its goal of improving and formalizing systems for the City's boards, commissions, committees, and task forces, (together referred to as "committees") the Council is considering adoption of a code of conduct that committee members must agree to at the time of appointment or reappointment.

### **Council Priority**

Engaged, Responsive, and Service-Oriented Government including a goal to improve and formalize systems for the City's committees, commissions, boards and task forces

### **Environmental Considerations**

N/A

### **Fiscal Considerations**

Good internal control practices include ensuring that there are not conflicts of interest.

### **Racial Equity Considerations**

Adoption of a code of conduct is intended to set a standard for members of boards, commissions, committees, and task forces that all members agree to when appointed. The open, respectful and equitable operation of these groups is essential to a well-functioning City government and to ensuring that volunteers of all races and backgrounds feel welcome and respected.

### **Attachments and Links**

- Draft Resolution
- Draft Code of Conduct

**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS OF  
CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, AND TASK FORCES**

**ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2020-X**

**1. Act in the Public Interest**

Recognizing that stewardship of the public interest must be our primary concern, I will work for the common good of the residents and community of Takoma Park and not for any private or personal interest, and ensure fair and equal treatment to all persons, claims and transactions coming before the committee.

**2. Comply with the Law**

I will comply with the relevant laws of the nation, state, county, and the City of Takoma Park in the performance of my public duties, including: the United States and Maryland Constitutions; the Takoma Park City Code and Charter; laws pertaining to conflicts of interest, election campaigns, financial disclosures, open meetings, and open processes of government; and City regulations, policies and procedures.

**3. Conduct of Members**

I will refrain from rudeness, disrespectful comments, insults, name-calling, abusive conduct, personal charges or verbal attacks upon the character or motives of other committee members, other committees, elected officials, the staff or public.

**4. Respect for Policy Process**

I will perform my duties in accordance with the city processes and rules governing the deliberation of public policy issues, meaningful involvement of the public, and implementation of policy decisions of the City Council. I will respect and adhere to the City's government and decision-making structure.

**5. Conduct of Public Meetings**

I will prepare myself for meetings, listen courteously and attentively to all public discussions before the body, and focus on the business at hand. I will refrain from interrupting other speakers, making personal comments not germane to the business of the body, or otherwise interfering with the orderly conduct of meetings. I do my part to make everyone feel safe in expressing their opinions, views, and concerns. I will commit to regular attendance at meetings to the best of my ability, understanding that missing three meetings without notifying the chair and/or relevant city staff may result in my removal.

**6. Conflict of Interest**

I will not use my official position to influence governmental decisions in which I may have a material financial interest, organizational responsibility or personal relationship, which may give the appearance of a conflict of interest. I will use my position or title only when conducting City business, and not for personal gain or to promote ideas that my committee has not approved.

I will disclose conflicts with investments, interest in real property, sources of income, and gifts; and I will abstain from participating in deliberations and decision-making where conflicts may exist. I will use the Ethics Chapter of City Code as a guide, seek an advisory opinion from the Ethics Commission if necessary, and recuse myself from a specific discussion or decision where warranted.

**7. Independence of Committees.**

I will value the function of independent committee advice in the public decision-making process, and will not permit City Council members to unduly influence the deliberations or outcomes of board, committee, commission, and staff deliberation proceedings.

**8. Positive Environment.**

I will help maintain a positive and constructive environment for my committee, city staff and for residents and businesses dealing with the City. I will bear in mind my special role in working with City staff and in no way create the perception of inappropriate direction to staff.

**9. Compliance**

I understand that this Code of Conduct is intended to be primarily self-enforcing, and that I have the primary responsibility to ensure that these standards are met. I will adhere to and embrace its provisions. I understand that I may be sanctioned or removed as a member in good standing, if I violate one or more of these standards. As a committee member, it is my responsibility to report actions of individual members that appear to be in violation of the Code of Conduct.

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Committee Member Printed Name

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Committee Member Signature

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Date

Introduced by:

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND**

**RESOLUTION 2020-**

**ADOPTING A CODE OF CONDUCT  
FOR CITY BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, AND TASK FORCES**

WHEREAS, the Takoma Park City Council (Council) has a priority to advance an engaged, responsive, and service oriented government including a goal to improve and formalize systems for the City's committees, commissions, boards and task forces (referred to as committees); and

WHEREAS, the Council also has a priority to ensure a livable community for all with a goal to identify programming needs in the community and develop approaches to meet those needs, emphasizing youth, families, seniors, and our more vulnerable residents, such as those with lower incomes, immigrants, and people with developmental disabilities all while ensuring racial equity in the City; and

WHEREAS, the Council values and actively seeks community engagement in its decision-making and policies through resident participation on the City's committees; and

WHEREAS, the open, respectful and equitable operation of these groups is essential to a well-functioning City government; and

WHEREAS, the Council and the public expect members of these committees to conduct themselves with the highest integrity and ethical standards; and

WHEREAS, the Council will establish the standards of conduct for volunteer committee members; and

WHEREAS, committee members themselves have the primary responsibility to ensure that these standards are understood and met, so that the public can continue to have full confidence in the integrity of local government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT a volunteer code of conduct is created for City boards, commissions, committees, and task forces; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT appointment to any committee is contingent upon acceptance of this Code of Conduct; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT all members shall pledge to uphold and comply with this code upon appointment and thereafter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the chairs of committees have the responsibility to intervene within the scope of their authority as chair and report the matter; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT violations of this Code of Conduct shall be considered a failure to reasonably perform pursuant to Section 2.16.010(C)(5) of the City Code; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the City Council, by majority vote, may also impose sanctions on members whose conduct does not comply with these standards. Such sanctions may include removal from the committee pursuant to Section 2.16.010(C)(5).

This resolution shall take effect immediately.

Adopted by the Council of the City of Takoma Park, Maryland this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_.

Attest: