



Takoma Park City Council Meeting – July 20, 2022 Agenda Item 8

Voting Session

Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Negotiate and Enter into a Lease Concerning the City's Temporary Relocation of the Library

Recommended Council Action

Approve the Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Negotiate and Enter into a Lease Concerning the City's Temporary Relocation of the Library

Context with Key Issues

The Takoma Park Maryland Library Staff have been investigating the opportunity to lease a commercial space during Library construction since the Adventist medical offices were deemed unfit for staff and City property occupation in September of 2021. At least seven (7) commercial sites total were investigated between September 2021 and February 2022. City staff are currently narrowing in on the best option out of these and aiming to review and sign final lease terms in the coming weeks. Given the upcoming Council recess and the need to sign a lease during August in order to achieve the proposed construction timeline and begin relocation, the resolution requests Council's approval of the City Manager's authority to enter into a lease once all details are final.

The other relocation options investigated by Library staff mostly involved decentralizing operations throughout City facilities. While technically possible, it would be necessary to separate the collections into components housed throughout Takoma Park. For instance, the Children's and Young Adult (YA) books would be in the Heffner Building, Adult Fiction would be in the Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue, the Adult Nonfiction collection would likely have been in the Dance Room, and the Computer Center would be in the Atrium conference room.

Referring residents between these different spaces would be logistically difficult, especially for new residents, or residents for whom language barriers are present. It would also be extremely challenging for Library staff to deliver the service standards to which residents are accustomed.

Additionally, using other City spaces would interfere with the City's ability to host revenue generating activities in these spaces, particularly with the Recreation Department's camp and care programs. While a commercial lease does come with a cost, the City can continue to generate revenue in these spaces while paying for the lease out of construction funds.

The other option was to put Library and Computer Center materials in storage, so as to preserve City spaces for their current uses. There was no way to put materials in storage that allowed for staff to have access to specific materials, i.e., if a resident requested a specific book, Library staff would be able to access a range of the collection, rather than retrieving the one book. It would make operating unfeasible, and residents would essentially lose the function of their Library until the end of construction.

In summary, it is in the best interest of the City to enter into a lease for a commercial property for several reasons:

1. There are not many options for relocating the Library and Computer Center, and this property is not interchangeable with others, as detailed above.
2. The property cannot be held for the City by the property owners without a lease.
3. The construction timetable currently necessitates moving the Library before the end of August 2022.

Entering into a lease for a commercial property is the best way for the Library and Computer Center to continue providing services to Takoma Park residents with minimal interruption, while also preserving the City's facilities to generate revenue and extending the Library's outreach more effectively into the North and East parts of the City.

Council Priority

All

Environmental Considerations

The relocation of staff to a commercial space during construction is not expected to have a direct environmental impact compared to the emissions and other impacts of regular operations prior to demolition of the existing building.

Fiscal Considerations

The cost will be finalized in the coming weeks; the latest estimate is around \$700,000 which is within the available budget.

Racial Equity Considerations

Staff expect the location to be in Ward 6, closer to underserved residents who were historically farthest away from Library and other in person services.

Attachments and Links

- Resolution