

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2021**

MINUTES

Minutes adopted July 7, 2021.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Present: Mayor Stewart, Councilmember Kovar, Councilmember Dyballa, Councilmember Kostiuk, Councilmember Seamens, Councilmember Smith, Councilmember Searcy

Also Present: City Manager Ludlow, Deputy City Manager Clarke, City Clerk Carpenter, Housing and Community Development Manager Cook-Gaines

The City Council convened at 7:30 PM on Zoom.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Ms. Stewart provided an update on future agendas.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ann Ciekot, the City's legislative advocate, provided the update.

Ms. Stewart updated Council on two County Zoning Text Amendments.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Kovar commented on a recent meeting with the State Highway Administration regarding local safety matters and a meeting with Montgomery College staff and their construction firm regarding stormwater and the Science building.
- Ms. Kostiuk commented on the meeting with the State Highway Administration. She announced Transit Equity Day a day honoring Rosa Parks and promoting transportation as a civil right.
- Ms. Searcy commented on the meeting with the State Highway Administration and Ward 6 issues; a Northern Gateway Wayfinding community engagement event; and provided an update on applications for the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force.

- Ms. Stewart announced that a community conversation would take place regarding the city manager search and the role of a city manager and noted availability of an online survey.
- Ms. Dyballa had also attended the meeting with SHA. She reported on several projects discussed.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

City Manager comments attached.

VOTING SESSION

1. Second Reading Ordinance Approving FY21 Budget Amendment No. 3

The ordinance was moved by Ms. Dyballa, seconded by Mr. Kovar. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuik, Seamens, Smith, Searcy).

Ordinance 2021- 6 (attached)

WORK SESSION

2. Update Recreation Center Redevelopment Community Engagement Process

Ms. Cook Gaines introduced LaToya Thomas from Brick and Story.

Ms. Thomas provided the update (presentation attached).

3. Discussion of Council Priorities for the 2021-2022 Term

Council discussed a draft of its 2021-2022 priorities document and considered a list of additional strategies. Additional discussion is scheduled for February 10.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 11:21 PM.



City of Takoma Park City Manager Comments

Report of February 3, 2021

February is Black History Month

As we celebrate Black History Month during this pandemic, it is a good time to celebrate African American Public Health Heroes. Here are 17 heroes to celebrate: *W.E.B. DuBois, Adah Belle Samuels Thoms, Ionia Rollin Whipper, Roscoe Conkling Brown Sr., Numa Pompilius Garfield Adams, May Edward Chinn, Virginia Margaret Alexander, Charles R. Drew, Mary Beatrice Davidson Kenner, Henrietta Lacks, Joycelyn Elders, Patricia Bath, Faye Wattleton, Nancy Boyd-Franklin, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, Mae Jemison, and Sherman A. James.* For more information about each, go to: <https://publichealth.nyu.edu/events-news/news/2020/02/27/17-african-american-public-health-heroes-you-need-know>

Thank you, Public Works!

Our street and sidewalk snow clearing staff did an awesome job during this week's winter storm. You can always tell that Takoma Park is different and better during a storm! Thank you, staff!

COVID-19 Related Information

We continue to advocate for more, and more fairly-distributed, COVID-19 vaccinations. Go to the [Montgomery County Vaccine Information](#) page to learn more and to pre-register if you are in a category that can do so. You can also call 240-777-2982 to pre-register with the County. There are more ways to sign up for vaccines through the [Maryland Vaccine Website](#). The categories eligible for vaccines on the State site often differ by site, and registration availability changes day to day. As the federal roll-out of vaccines gets underway, there may be additional portals to use to sign up for a vaccination.

The City of Takoma Park will do our best to get accurate information out. The best options are to check in frequently with the [Montgomery County Vaccine Information](#) website page and the [Maryland Vaccine Website](#).

While the beginning availability of vaccines provides hope, the more contagious variants of the coronavirus are now in the United States and some have been detected in Montgomery County. **More than ever, it is important to wear a well-fitting mask.** Many people are now double-masking for extra protection. That may be a good idea – and I've started doing that - but masks only work if they cover your nose and chin and fit snugly on the sides. Maintain social distancing and minimize your presence in groups. Be vigilant all of the time!

COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park

Even though all of the attention is on vaccinations right now, it is still important to have regular COVID-19 testing. Free, no appointment COVID-19 testing is being held most Wednesdays and Saturdays at the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue from 10 am to 5 pm. For this and other testing options, please see the information here: [Montgomery County Testing Sites](#)

Update on COVID-19 Response

A detailed presentation was provided to the City Council at its Priorities Retreat on January 16. The presentation has been posted on the website: [COVID-19 Response Presentation 01162021](#)

Each week, the City's COVID-19 Dashboard is updated. The most recent one is here: [COVID 19 Dashboard](#)

County CARES Reimbursement Received! We are glad to report that Montgomery County's reimbursement to the City of Takoma Park for COVID-19 relief expenditures was received yesterday. The amount received was \$403,650.62. Because some of the money was expected for reimbursement for FY20 expenses, only a portion of the funds, \$279,499.65, will be considered revenue for FY21.

Reimagining Public Safety Task Force Applications Open Until February 5

Last night there was an informational meeting on the schedule and what to expect for potential members of the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force. The video of the informational session is now available to review. The deadline for applications had been this Friday, but has been extended for a week to Friday, February 5. While it will require a significant commitment from Task Force members, the work of the Task Force is to end by June 5. We are very excited to have an excellent facilitation team to ensure that the meetings are productive. This is a great opportunity to imagine public safety in all of its aspects for Takoma Park. Here is the link to the project page: [Reimagining Public Safety Task Force](#).

Laurel Avenue Closure on Valentine's Day

Sunday, February 14th is a very busy day for Park Florist. This year will also be a day when the Farmer's Market will be taking up their rear parking area. For this reason, we will be closing the one through lane of Laurel Avenue on that day to allow Park Florist to use it for its deliveries. They will have 8 vehicles with four loadings each during the day, each with about 12 flower arrangements for delivery, so it is a big production. Park Florist will have a staffed tent on the median for the loading work and the staff can help direct pedestrians and vehicles that do enter the lane. Parking on the street will not be permitted during the loading period. We are working with the Old Takoma Business Association and Police staff to ensure the area is safe and to address the possible concerns of other businesses.

Stormwater Fee Letters Sent to Single-family Property Owners

A letter was sent to owners of single-family residential properties in the City to inform them of discussions to be held this month by the City Council on changing the stormwater fee from a flat rate to a tiered rate based on impervious surface area. The total amount of revenue from the combined residential and commercial stormwater fee remains the same – about \$700,000 – but is more equitably charged among the properties. Information is included in the February Newsletter and is online at: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/public-works/stormwater-management-program/> A presentation will be given to Council on February 10 and a public hearing held on February 24. After that, more site-specific information may be sent to individual property owners based on the Council discussion. Please watch the presentation on February 10 and contact Daryl Braithwaite at DarylB@takomaparkmd.gov with any questions.

Takoma Park Recreation Center

Council Update

Wednesday, February 3, 2021
7:30pm

Presented by Brick & Story



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Agenda

- Engagement Process and Timeline
- Engagement Tools and Activities
- Challenges and Lessons Learned
- Final Steps to the Final Report
- How to Use the Report Findings



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Team Overview

- LaToya Thomas (Principal & Team Lead)
- Yerodin Avent (Direct Outreach and Engagement)
- Mariam Bekele (Amharic, Social Media)
- Molly Jamison Juarez (Spanish)
- Anna Rozzo (French)
- Carolina Cabezas-Tadesse (Spanish)



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Process and Timeline

Community Engagement

Engagement Launch	September 2020
Visioning and Goal Setting	October - December 2020
Defining Community Priorities	January - February 2021
Summarize Community Priorities	March 2021

Development Process

Preparation of Request for Proposals (RFP) for Developer Community	Summer/Fall 2021
Potential Partner Outreach	Summer/Fall 2021
Issuance of Developer RFP	January 2022



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Engagement Tools and Activities To Date



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Engagement Activities and Tools

- Fall 2020 Launch Event (1 In-Person, 2 Virtual)
- Visioning and Goal Setting Virtual Sessions (12 total)
 - *Friends of the Takoma Park Recreation Center*
 - *Takoma Park Youth Council*
- Community Art Contest (open until Feb 7)
- Community Wide Survey (coming Feb 2021)
- Pop-Ups and Pop-Ins
 - *Halloween Pop-Up at Cambridge Apts*
 - *Crossroads and Downtown Farmers Markets*
 - *Flyering in Crossroads-based businesses (en espanol)*
 - *Yoga Storytime*
 - *Spanish Circle Time*



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Engagement Activities and Tools

- Kuorum
- Social Media (Facebook as primary tool)
- Other existing networks and resources
 - *Parks & Rec*
 - *BlueDot*
 - *Books-To-Go via Takoma Park Library*
 - *Schools*
- Building Property Managers (*Takoma Overlook, Hampshire Towers, Hillwood Manor, as well as properties along Maple Ave.*)



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Challenges and Lessons Learned in COVID

#1 - Limited ability to connect in-person

- Work with resident leaders/organizers to get residents online
- Creatively designed in-person opportunities when possible
- Social Media

#2 - Diverse Language Needs

- Supplement written materials in preferred languages with direct outreach from native speaking staff or engagers to make deeper connections

#3 - People access information in different ways

- Find as many communication resources as possible to share information broadly



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Challenges and Lessons Learned in COVID

#4 - Technology Challenges

- Privacy issues in partnering with an international company that follows EU privacy rules that don't yet exist in the US
- Building out a new platform and attempting to on-board users
- Brand familiarity



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Final Steps to Final Report

Community Survey

- Early Feb - Early March 2021
- Identify community PRIORITIES in a new recreation center
- Will be issued online, hardcopy, and by phone and Zoom

Virtual Sessions to recap Community Priorities

- Mid-March 2021

Final Report

- Details of overall engagement process
- Results of community survey
- Recommendations for future engagement



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Use of Report Findings for Next Steps

1. Identify **preferences and priorities** for the design and programming of the new recreation center
2. Offer **creative strategies to engage** the diverse populations in Takoma Park
3. Provide the start of a **framework for effective public engagement** going forward



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