

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 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, Public Works Director Braithwaite, and Human Resource Director Smith

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.

**FOR THE RECORD**

**Troop 33 Centennial Proclamation (attached)**

Lee Howard and John Hammerstrom, leaders from Troop 33, were present for the reading of the proclamation.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

- Paul Huebner made recommendations for the hiring of the new City Manager.
- Seth Grimes commented on Montgomery County proposed Zoning Text Amendment 20-07.
- Chantal Worzala commented on the City stormwater management fee.
- Peter Igbukolu expressed his gratitude to the City staff that assisted him when he lost his home in a fire.
- David Borden commented on COVID-19 safety recommendations for apartment buildings.
- Byrne Kelly commented on the hiring of a new City Manager and on stormwater management.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

The City Council was updated on legislative matters by Ann Ciekot, the City's legislative advocate.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- Ms. Kostiuk commented on an NLC Human Development Federal Advocacy Committee meeting she attended.
- Mr. Kovar commented on the SSI Park renovation and on local food distribution efforts. He asked for clarification on the policy for parking permits for people living in accessory dwelling units and requested additional information on Police Department internal affairs investigations. He also noted Congressman Raskin's role as lead manager for the impeachment trial.
- Ms. Searcy commented on the City Manager Search community conversation and provided an update on the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force application process. She thanked Tami Watkins of Pepco and the Public Works Director for efforts in trying to have double poles and Pepco construction debris removed.
- Mr. Smith announced the date of a grab and go food distribution event. He commented on recent car break-ins along Roanoke Avenue. He urged the Council to assist in creating a systematic approach in getting food to people in need.
- Mr. Seamens commented on the food distribution events in the City. He urged community members to volunteer to help.
- Ms. Dyballa announced a meeting to discuss the New Hampshire Avenue Bikeway Project.
- Ms. Stewart reported that the Council of Governments Board sent a letter to specific federal government leaders urging them to increase funding for Metro. The Board heard a briefing on right-wing extremism. She echoed the need to volunteers for food distribution, commented on the need for more cross-jurisdictional events with our neighbors in the District of Columbia, and noted the Black History Month posters in City bus shelters.

## **CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

Ms. Ludlow's comments are attached.

## **WORK SESSION**

## **2. Discussion of City Manager Search**

Catherine Tuck Parrish, from the Novak Group, the search firm hired to conduct the City Manager search, was present at the meeting along with Tracy Smith, Human Resources Director. Ms. Tuck Parrish is preparing the recruitment brochure to be sent out.

Councilmembers reported out on the recent community conversation with residents about the desired qualities in a new City Manager. Residents were encouraged to fill out the online survey as well.

## **3. Stormwater Management Fee System**

Ms. Braithwaite gave an overview of the proposed stormwater fee system that would change the current flat rate system for single family properties to a tiered rate. An appeals process would be set up as well as a process to provide credits for those who have installed systems to manage more stormwater on their property, such as properly installed permeable pavers or rain gardens.

The Council discussed and wanted to consider adding a cap on increases for a single-family residential property for the first year and make sure the appeals process is not overly cumbersome for residential property owners.

A public hearing on the new fee system is scheduled for February 24.

## **4. Continued Discussion of Council Priorities for 2021-2022**

Ms. Stewart gave a brief overview on the Council priorities. Ms. Ludlow gave a presentation on staff recommendations. The City Council is scheduled to have a final priorities discussion at the next City Council meeting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Council adjourned for the evening at 11:22 PM.



# Mayoral Proclamation

## Centennial of Takoma Park Troop 33

**WHEREAS,** Troop 33 has been a unit of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) since 1920, demonstrating a long history of community engagement and service during its tenure in the Scouting movement; and

**WHEREAS,** it is rare for a troop to celebrate a centennial birthday, and even more so to be chartered by the BSA at the same organization for the entire duration; and

**WHEREAS,** Troop 33 has been proudly chartered by the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church since day one, and both the Church and the Troop are institutions in Takoma Park; and

**WHEREAS,** the unit has fostered the advancement of 164 Scouts to the level of Eagle Scout, the highest achievement level in the Scouting program; and

**WHEREAS,** Troop 33 continues to engage in civic participation, conservation and outdoor education, life skills development, and wellness training; and

**WHEREAS,** in the new year, Troop 33 reaffirms its commitment to further the aims and values of Scouting in the United States to prepare youth to make good ethical and moral decisions over their lifetimes.

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, KATE STEWART, MAYOR OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND,** on behalf of the Council, staff, and residents, do hereby recognize the centennial of Troop 33 of the Boy Scouts of America.

Dated this 10th day of February, 2021.

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Kate Stewart  
Mayor

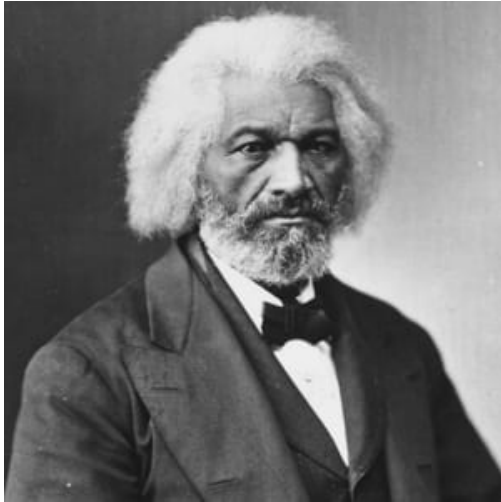


## City of Takoma Park City Manager Comments

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Report of February 10, 2021

### **February is Black History Month**



#### **Happy Birthday, Frederick Douglass!**

Frederick Douglass was born in February of 1818 in Talbot County. He chose to celebrate his birthday on February 14. There is always more to learn about him that is interesting and inspiring. When it reopens, I urge a visit to his Cedar Hill House in Washington, D.C.

I remember a February when my brother Martin was in about second grade in Arlington, Virginia. His teacher asked the class, "What important Americans have birthdays in February?" Martin's hand shot up, and he said, "Frederick Douglass!" The teacher was dismayed he did not say George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and his answer was reported back to my parents.

### **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. Right now, it is every person for themselves. Please help neighbors sign up with as many sites as they are eligible for. As the federal roll-out of vaccines gets underway, there may be additional ways to get vaccinations, and hopefully it will be simplified and more equitable. In the meantime, **keep wearing your masks!**

#### **COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park**

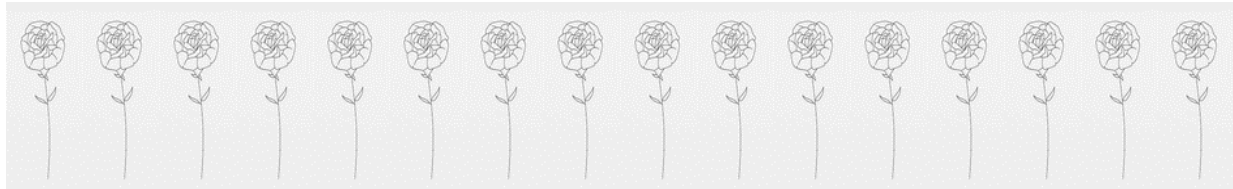
Even though all of the attention is on vaccinations right now, it is still important to have regular COVID-19 testing. Free, no appointment COVID-19 testing is being held on Saturdays at the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue from 10 am to 5 pm. It sounds like the Wednesday testing dates have ended while the County focuses on vaccinations. 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](#)

Remembering the 33 residents of Zip Code 20912 who have died from COVID-19 as of last week. May their memories be a blessing.



## Feed the Fridge Grand Opening!

We are happy to announce that the group [Feed The Fridge](#) has partnered with the City of Takoma Park in setting up a refrigerator outside of the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue, that is stocked with prepared meals free for people to pick up. We will have a Grand Opening next week, exact date and time still to be determined, but the fridge is stocked now. **If you need a meal, please stop by.**

If you want to support the restaurants who are donating the meals, please go to the [Feed The Fridge](#) link to donate money to the effort. Please note, for health safety reasons, others should not add meals to the refrigerator.



### **More Wintry Weather is Coming!**

Amazingly, we have more winter weather predicted for Wednesday evening into Friday! We will work to have trash, recycling and food waste collections each day, but some delays may occur. We will get the word out if there are any changes. In the meantime, please prepare to stay safe, and shovel if needed, as you are able.

### **Budget Preparation Work is Underway**

While the Takoma Park City Council and residents will not begin reviewing and considering the Proposed FY22 Budget until the first week of April, City staff are hard at work gathering background information, projecting how services will be provided as vaccinations allow for greater in-person classes and assistance, and preparing to have documents, infographics and charts that meet our budget goals of transparency and clear communication.

Meetings of department heads with budget, human resources and city management staff are underway. The purpose of each of these meetings is to identify major budget issues for the department, determine the impact of the pandemic on service delivery and projected costs and revenues, and review the timeline for entry of numbers into the budget system. Often there are services or issues that cross departmental lines that require coordination, or approaches from which multiple staff units can benefit.

It is important to note that one year ago, neither the Deputy City Manager nor the Budget & Accounting Manager were on staff yet, and this is only the second time our Human Resources Director has gone through the City's budget process. And, of course, last year was not typical – the pandemic lockdown occurred right in the middle of the most intense budget prep work.

Staff are to have their first round of proposed capital budget worksheets prepared by February 19 and their operating budget numbers entered into the budget software by February 26. The following week is another round of meetings to review and modify the numbers. At the same time, there will be discussions with Councilmembers and review of revenue information from State and County resources. By mid-March, I will have determined what major components will be included in the proposed budget and what property tax rate will be recommended.

Because of Maryland law, I must advertise a property tax rate that is high enough to accommodate any Council additions or any unanticipated reductions of revenue or increases of expenditures that occur during budget consideration. **The advertised property tax rate can be reduced at the time of budget adoption, but it cannot be increased.**

### **Presidents Day Holiday**

City offices and facilities will be closed on Sunday, February 14 and Monday, February 15 to honor Presidents Day. The Police Department is always open for emergency services.