CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 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, Public Works Director Braithwaite, City Clerk Carpenter

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 legislative update.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Traffic Calming

A. 8000 Block of Wildwood Drive Traffic Calming

The following residents commented on high volume traffic and safety issues on the 8000 block of Wildwood Drive and were in support of the installation of traffic calming.

- Jason Small
- Tyler Cole
- Christopher Hinton

B. Darwin Avenue Traffic Calming

The following residents commented on traffic safety issues on and near Darwin Avenue and were in support of the installation of traffic calming.

- Virginia Ripley Wolf
- Elizabeth Wallace
- Nicolas Broussard
- Daniel Hale
- Patti Jo Douglas
- Anicca Jansen
- Karin Rives

C. Stormwater Management Fee System

- Paul Huebner urged the City to reject the new stormwater fee system. He said the property evaluation is inaccurate.
- Susanne Lowen urged the Council to follow the lead of the County and offer assistance to mitigate stormwater on private property.
- David Blockstein supported the stormwater fee structure as proposed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON VOTING ITEMS

• Elizabeth Wallace requested that the Council confirm whether the appointees to the Reimagining Public Safety Task Force are City residents.

OTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

• Elizabeth Wallace commented on the stormwater fee system and supported the idea. She also commented on improvements needed to the City website.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Kovar reported on a meeting he held regarding qualities for a new City Manager. He reported on a call with Pepco regarding the ongoing transmission line construction work. Mr. Kovar also remarked that he would like to find a way to recognize residents who have passed away due to COVID-19.
- Mr. Seamens stated his concerns regarding the lack of COVID-19 vaccines in the area.
- Ms. Dyablla reported on the recent New Hampshire Avenue Bikeways meeting.
- Ms. Searcy urged the residents to complete the online survey regarding the Recreation Center development. She reminded residents about food availability through the Feed the Fridge program.
- Ms. Stewart reported that she will be serving on a COG Board Task Force to consider D.C. statehood. She congratulated the Old Takoma Business Association for receiving a Maryland Main Street grant. Ms. Stewart encouraged residents to fill out the City Manager search survey.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Ms. Ludlow's comments are attached.

VOTING SESSION

2. Resolution Providing for Appointments to the Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety

Ms. Searcy and Mr. Jamal Holtz of Link Strategic Partners provided an overview of the selection process.

The resolution was moved by Councilmember Searcy and seconded by Councilmember Dyballa. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Seamens, Searcy; VOTING NO: Smith).

Resolution 2021-4 (attached)

3. First Reading Ordinance Approving FY 2021 Budget Amendment No. 4

Mr. Seamens moved the ordinance. Ms. Kostiuk seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Seamens, Searcy; ABSENT: Smith).

First Reading Ordinance 2021-8 (attached)

WORK SESSION

4. Discussion of Resolution Adopting Council Priorities

Ms. Stewart explained that some of the language in the priorities document was revised based on Council discussion from the last Council meeting. The Council reviewed and discussed the priorities document and made additional changes. The City Council also reviewed and discussed the list of priority goals.

5. Stormwater Management Fee System and Draft Code Amendment

Council discussed the proposal to change to a tiered structure for single-family residential properties. Councilmembers discussed the details of an appeals process and expressed interest in phasing in the new fees or capping the fee for the first year. There was also interest in developing a program to provide credits. The Council supported moving forward pending receipt of additional information from staff.

6. Police Promotional Process Contract

Ms. Ludlow explained the request to contract with an impartial firm to identify the skills necessary for a police officer move up to the next rank and to conduct the process.

7. Property Tax Adjustment Options

Ms. Ludlow gave an overview of FY22 property tax adjustment options. (Presentation attached.)

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 11:40 PM.



City of Takoma Park City Manager Comments

Report of February 24, 2021



February is Black History Month

Shirley Chisholm

This week, I am remembering <u>Shirley Chisholm</u>. When she ran for President in 1972, I did not realize how extraordinary it was. She seemed presidential to me. After serving in the New York State Assembly and U.S. Congress, she was the first African-American candidate for a major party's Presidential nomination and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination.

COVID-19 Related Information

We continue to advocate for more, and more fairly-distributed, COVID-19 vaccinations. Go to the <u>Montgomery County Vaccine Information</u> page to learn more and to pre-register if you are in a category that can do so. <u>You can also call 240-777-2982 to pre-register</u> with the County. There are more ways to sign up for vaccines through the <u>Maryland Vaccine Website</u>. The State is changing how people can register for vaccines as they open new mass vaccination sites.

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. For this and other testing options, please see the information here: <u>Montgomery County Testing Sites.</u>

Update on COVID-19 Response

Each week, the City's COVID-19 Dashboard is updated. The most recent one is here: <u>COVID</u> 19 Dashboard

Eviction Information: Staff of the City of Takoma Park, Gaithersburg and Rockville met with Captain Robin Lewis of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office to review residential eviction information and work together to reduce evictions where nonpayment of rent is the primary issue. There have been almost no evictions over the past year due to the health pandemic. Right now, the courts are only hearing cases involving extreme landlord and tenant cases and not standard failure to pay rent claims or tenant holding over claims. The backlog of cases is approximately 14,000 and the court is developing plans now to return by mid-March or early April. One major point is that for the calendar year 2020, there were 3,022 Eviction Writs

Suzanne R. Ludlow, AICP, CPM / Takoma Park City Manager | <u>SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov</u> 7500 Maple Avenue Takoma Park, MD 20912 | 301-891-7229 received by the Sheriff's Office; of these there were 235 actual evictions. <u>A copy of the material</u> shared by Captain Lewis is being posted with these Comments.

This week, Housing Manager Grayce Wiggins and staff of MUSST are meeting one-on-one with residents of Hampshire Tower who have outstanding rent balances.

Turning the Page

Next week, we say goodbye to longtime Takoma Park Maryland Library Director Ellen Arnold Robbins. Later in March, we are excited to welcome Jessica Jones to the position.

After 47 years with the City of Takoma Park Library, Ellen Robbins is retiring and it is hard to imagine the Library without her! Her quiet but strong presence has simultaneously kept things under control but excited children to the pleasures of reading. We will have various ways to say best wishes and I encourage people to send an email with memories of Ellen to: KarenM@takomaparkmd.gov.

And, we welcome Jessica Jones! Ms. Jones currently serves as Branch Manager of the Larry J Ringer Library in the Bryan College Station Public Library System in Bryan, Texas. Prior to that, she was Library Director for the Northern New Mexico College Library in Espanola, New Mexico. She has a BA in History, American Studies from the University of Texas at San Antonio and a Master of Science in Information Science, Library and Information Services from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

As a library director and manager, Jessica has experience and informed perspectives on library trends, technologies and best practices. She has administered on-site and remote database access, and evaluated, procured and configured physical and virtual collections. Her approaches to staffing, materials selection and programming feel to be an excellent fit for Takoma Park. Jessica has also managed and directed through two major library construction projects and has navigated during institutional change.

In introducing herself to Takoma Park, Jessica wrote: "As our country confronts both the urgency of a pandemic and a transformative social movement to amplify marginalized voices, libraries are more important than ever to meet the needs for access, information, stability and engagement. I believe in leading with empathy and compassion and that these traits reflect the best parts of public service."

Jessica begins serving as Library Director on March 29. She will be leading remotely until she moves to the area in May or June.

Public Safety Radio Switchover Accomplished Successfully

Earlier this week, all public safety agencies in Montgomery County switched over to the new P25 radio system. Takoma Park's switchover occurred at 6:30 a.m. Tuesday. There were no

Suzanne R. Ludlow, AICP, CPM / Takoma Park City Manager | <u>SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov</u> 7500 Maple Avenue Takoma Park, MD 20912 | 301-891-7229 difficulties with the transfer. There was a good amount of preparatory work done before the switch and then there were follow up with the systems once we were sure the process was completed safely.

This \$44 million project will dramatically improve public safety communications in Montgomery County. Some highlights of the upgrades are listed below:

- The number of tower sites doubled from 11 to 22.
- Numerous technical features were added to enhance capabilities and system capacity.
- The new system will provide better coverage, will be more robust, and more reliable.

Adventist Healthcare Request to Reduce Hours of Urgent Care

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) is considering a request by Adventist Healthcare to reduce the hours of operation of its urgent care center on the site of the former Washington Adventist Hospital from 24 hours per day to 8 am to 8 pm daily. The existence of the urgent care center and its 24-hour operations are conditions of the Certificate of Need that allowed the moving of the hospital to White Oak. The MHCC has asked the City of Takoma Park for its comments on the application by March 3. Consistent with past discussions of the City Council, I will be preparing a letter that explains our disappointment in the consistent removal of health services from Takoma Park. I will also describe the shabby appearance of the facilities at the former hospital site that reduces the number of persons who may wish to receive services there. I will express our desire to see Adventist Healthcare work with the City and the District 20 Delegation to better provide the health care that the community needs, such as mental health services and greater primary care services. The pandemic has shown the critical need for these health services in Takoma Park.

In Memorium - Deaths in early February

Alec Frazier - a resident of Takoma Park and nationally known advocate for disability rights. Alec was autistic and used his platform as a public speaker, lobbyist, and author to promote disability-related issues. unexpected death.

Amelia Randal - a tenant of Hampshire Towers - unexpected death. She was the executive director of Riggs - CTraining an application training company designed to assist first-time users with no knowledge about computer applications. She was also an avid tennis player and develop several relationships through tennis in Takoma Park.

Introduced by: Councilmember Searcy

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

RESOLUTION 2021-4 APPOINTMENTS TO THE TASK FORCE ON REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

- WHEREAS, the City Council established a Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety to Ensure Racial Justice by Resolution 2020-21 on September 23, 2020 to advise and provide recommendations on ways the City can reform public safety policies and procedures to ensure racial justice; and
- WHEREAS, the Task Force is to be composed of up to 15 members appointed by the City Council; and
- WHEREAS, the Task Force may include up to three ex-officio members from City staff whose role is to collaborate with the Task Force as needed through a process driven by the Task Force members, but may not vote on Task Force recommendations; and
- WHEREAS, the City put out a call for applications to serve on the Task Force with a deadline of February 5, 2021; and
- WHEREAS, applications have been reviewed by a team of City staff members, City Council members, and the contracted facilitators; and
- WHEREAS, appointees have been recommended to the City Council by the review team; and
- WHEREAS, having reviewed the recommendations, the City Council has selected appointees to serve on the Task Force.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT the following individuals are hereby appointed to the Task Force as regular voting members:

1.	Ajmel Quereshi	2. Lauren Van Tol
3.	Christina Morado	4. Emil Parker
5.	Olajide Atoyebi	6. Sawa Kamara
7.	Duane Scott	8. Jumana Musa
9.	Xitlalli Velasquez	10. Kiminori Nakamura
11.	Leon Crowell	12. Sadie Arlene Cheston Harris

13. Cedric Boatman

14. Michael Rubin

15. Adam Braskich

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Task Force will include no more than three ex-officio members from City staff to collaborate with the Task Force as needed through a process driven by the Task Force; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Task Force shall decide how to organize itself, including developing subgroups to address Task Force goals; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Task Force may request and collect external information to aid in its decision-making including community outreach; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Task Force must submit to the City Council interim reports as well as a final report with recommendations by June 4, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Task Force may be dissolved after the Task Force's final recommendations have been presented to the Council by June 30, 2021, however, the Council may choose to extend the Task Force until a later date.

Adopted this 24th day of February, 2021.

Attest:

Jessie Carpenter, CMC City Clerk Introduced by: Councilmember

First Reading: Second Reading: Effective Date:

CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND ORDINANCE NO. 2021-___

FY 2021 BUDGET AMENDMENT NO. 4

- WHEREAS, the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 budget was adopted by the City Council on May 20, 2020 and;
- WHEREAS, since this date, information has been received that requires amendments to the FY 2021 budget; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of CARES Act is increased \$279,499.65 due to the receipt of reimbursement from the Montgomery County; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Classes is decreased \$50,500 due to the program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Sports is decreased \$73,200 due to the program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Community Center Programs is decreased \$14,300 due to the program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Special Programs is decreased \$1,260 due to the program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Summer Camps is decreased \$32,321 due to the program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Afterschool Programs is decreased \$69,112.60 due to the program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Cancellation Fees is decreased \$1,000 due to the Classes cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of Facility Rental is decreased \$18,000 due to the rental services cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
- WHEREAS, the budget for the revenue of TL Recreation Membership is decreased \$3,500 due to the membership fees cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and

WHEREAS,	the budget for the revenue of TL Facility Rental is decreased \$3,000 due to the cancellation of Facility Rentals during the Covid pandemic; and
WHEREAS,	the budget for the revenue of TL Programs is decreased \$48,850 due to the TL program cancellation during the Covid pandemic; and
WHEREAS,	the budget for City Attorney fees is increased \$125,000 to provide fee expenditure for the third and fourth quarter in FY 21; and
WHEREAS,	the budget for Equipment Replacement Expenditure is reduced \$8,360 due to the negotiated savings with the Library vendor-Userful LLC; and
WHEREAS,	the budget for Speed Camera Fines is reduced \$250,000 due to the traffic slowdown during the Purple Line construction and Covid pandemic; and
WHEREAS,	the budget for Speed Camera Capital Expenditures is reduced \$34,000 due to the postponement of several purchases due to the Covid pandemic; and
WHEREAS,	due to the financial impacts of the pandemic, the City Council wishes to provide support to househlds with limited funds wishing to participate in childcare programs for the remainder of FY21 and into FY22.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND THAT:

SECTION 1. The Fiscal Year 2021 Budget is amended as follows:

General Fund - Revenues

- 1. Increase \$279,499.65 to account 0001-33030, CARES Act Revenue, due to the reimbursement from the Montgomery County.
- 2. Reduce \$50,500 to account 0001-34600, Classes due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.
- 3. Reduce \$73,200 to account 0001-34610, Sports due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.
- 4. Reduce \$14,300 to account 0001-34620, Community Center Programs due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.
- 5. Reduce \$1,260 to account 0001-34650, Special Programs due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.
- 6. Reduce \$32,321 to account 0001-34660, Summer Camps due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.
- 7. Reduce \$69,112.60 to account 0001-34670, Afterschool Programs due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.
- 8. Reduce \$1,000 to account 0001-34680, Cancellation Fees due to the program cancellation by the City during the pandemic.

- 9. Reduce \$18,000 to account 0001-34690, Facility Rental due to the rental service cancellation during the pandemic.
- 10. Reduce \$3,500 to account 0001-34720, TL Recreation Membership due to the cancellation of membership fees during the pandemic.
- 11. Reduce \$3,000 to account 0001-34730, TL Facility Rental due to rental service cancellation during the pandemic.
- 12. Reduce \$48,850 to account 0001-34740, TL Programs due to the program cancellation during the pandemic.

General Fund – Expenditures

- 1. Appropriate \$125,000 to account 1140-61021, City Attorney, to provide funding expenditure for city attorney fees in the 3rd and 4th quarter of the fiscal year.
- 2. Reduce \$8,360 to account 9100-80003, Equipment Replacement Expenditures, due to the negotiated savings from a Library vendor-Userful LLC.

Speed Camera Fund – Revenues

1. Reduce \$250,000 to account 0060-35210, Speed Camera Fines, due to the traffic slowdown during the road construction and Covid pandemic.

Speed Camera Fund – Expenditures

2. Reduce \$34,000 to account 0060-80001, Capital Expenditures, due to a postponement of some purchasing during the pandemic.

SECTION 2. The City's Capital Improvement Program for FY 2021 shall be amended to reflect the aforementioned changes in the General Fund budget.

SECTION 3. The City Manager is authorized to prioritize participation in the City's childcare programs by those needing scholarship support for FY21 and FY22.

SECTION 4. This Ordinance shall become effective upon adoption.

Adopted this _____day of March, 2021 by Roll Call vote as follows:

AYE:

NAY:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:



Property Tax Adjustment Options City Council Discussion

- In Maryland, municipalities are very limited in the way they can raise revenue to pay for the services they provide. The primary method is real property tax.
- Municipalities have no control over the amount of income tax received and they cannot set sales tax, energy tax, phone tax or similar taxes as are done by Maryland counties or by municipalities in other states.

 Takoma Park has a relatively small commercial property tax base.

In addition, rent stabilization limits the amount of property tax from multifamily properties, as the value of those properties is partially based on rental income.

Single family property tax owners pay a higher property tax rate than other municipalities in Montgomery County; other municipalities have wealthier residents so receive more from income tax and/or have larger commercial bases to offset amount paid by homeowners; most municipalities provide fewer services.

Note: many municipalities in other counties have higher property tax rates than Takoma Park.

- The amount that a homeowner pays in property taxes is the combined State/County/City tax rate times the assessable value for that year, less any credits.
- State: 0.1120 6.8%
- County+: 0.9912 60.3%
- City: 0.5397 32.9%

Total for FY21: 1.6429

For many years, Takoma Park single-family home properties were relatively affordable compared to many other areas of Montgomery County. That kept property tax payments lower than other places in the County despite a higher tax rate.

Paying property taxes can be difficult for some property owners at certain points in their lives, particularly homeowners who have owned their homes many years and whose total income has not kept up with property value increases. To help, the City provides additional funds to those receiving the Homeowners Property Tax Credit and shares info on other available credits.

- The Homestead Tax Credit is for homeowners who have lived in their homes for one year; is not income based.
- The Homeowners and Renter's Tax Credits are income based and there are other limitations. These tax credits also trigger additional assistance from Montgomery County and Takoma Park.

Takoma Park budgets \$160,000 each year for this (150 homeowners). February 24, 2021

- Popular County tax credits include the Tax Credit for Elderly Individuals and for Military Retirees, the Senior Tax Credit, and the Historic Preservation Tax Credit.
- Others include credits for Day Care Provider, Home Computer Telecommuting Incentive, and Spouse of Fallen Law Enforcement Officer or Rescue Worker.

What additional property tax adjustment options might be appropriate for Takoma Park?

- Providing option to defer property tax
- Increasing value of property allowable for a tax credit
- Increasing maximum income allowable for a tax credit
- Providing additional credits to County tax credits

Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:

- Extent to which the property owner is in need?
- Cost to the City of the program?
- Difficulty of implementing the program?
- Extent to which race equity goals would be advanced?
- Could County changes be more effective?

What additional property tax adjustment options might be appropriate for Takoma Park?

Providing option to defer City property tax

County has a program allowing deferral of County tax that exceeds the prior year; 65+; 5 year residency; income < \$80,000; cap of 50% of fair mkt value</p>

What additional property tax adjustment options might be appropriate for Takoma Park?

Increasing value of property allowable for a tax credit

- Some credits have maximum property value of \$650,000 for eligibility (Elderly/Veteran)
- Some have a cap (\$300,000 or \$350,000) for the amount on which to get a credit (Homeowners)

What additional property tax adjustment options might be appropriate for Takoma Park?

Increasing maximum income allowable for a tax credit

- Suggestion has been 80% of AMI (about \$80K for 2)
- Homeowners is \$60,000; Seniors is \$80,000; County deferral is \$120,000

What additional property tax adjustment options might be appropriate for Takoma Park?

Providing additional credits to County tax credits

Could make a determination to provide funds to those who receive certain County tax credits, particularly if they are income based Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:

Extent to which the property owner is in need?

- Already eligible for an income based program
- ▷ Some other proxy?

Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:

Cost to the City of the program?

- All credits or deferrals cost the City funds that can be used for other programs
- Is there a need for additional staffing, consultant services or technology to administer the program?

Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:Difficulty of implementing the program?

- Programs that require analysis of tax returns, land records research, or similar investigations may be difficult
- Programs that are hard to describe to potential recipients may not be effective

Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:

Extent to which race equity goals would be advanced?

- ▷ 54% of Takoma Park residents are people of color
- ▷ 74% of homeowner households are White
- Median White TP HH income is \$146,250; Median Black TP HH income is \$42,158



📕 Maryland 📕 Montgomery County 📕 Takoma Park

Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:

- Extent to which race equity goals would be advanced?
 - Is there a way to target tax adjustment options to people of color?

Issues to be considered in Takoma Park:

Could County changes be more effective for residents?

Two-thirds of property tax is County and State taxes; credits for County taxes can make a significant difference for a property owner

County is also looking to advance race equity goals

Next Steps:

- Identify any tax adjustment options to pursue
- Identify a maximum amount of City loss in revenue or increase in expenditures (staff, consultant services)
- Proposed FY22 budget being prepared now for presentation on April 7, Council vote in May

Thank you!

Suzanne Ludlow City Manager SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov