

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND
CITY COUNCIL MEETING**

Wednesday, April 13, 2022

MINUTES

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

Also Present: City Manager Fox, City Clerk Carpenter, Deputy City Manager Clarke, Human Resource Director Smith, Planning Manager Grigsby, and Housing and Community Development Director Cross

The City Council convened at 6:30 PM in the Auditorium.

PRESENTATION

1. County Council President Gabe Albornoz

County Council President Gabe Albornoz gave a brief overview of the County Executive's budget, Thrive Montgomery 2050, and the community's rising crime rates.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Public Hearing on the City Manager's Recommended FY 2023 Budget

Sue Miller, Ward 3, stated that it was a bad time to raise taxes. She said that the residents expected the Council to insist on necessary cuts to the staff's budget recommendations and expect the tax rate to be reduced to the constant yield rate. Ms. Miller urged the Council to address the concerns of the City residents and to get the budget back under control.

Paul Huebner, Ward 3, said that he was disappointed with the budget. He commented on the rise in assessments and the Library and Atrium construction project expenditures. He urged the Council to not increase the tax rate.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE

Ms. Stewart provided an update on future agendas.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Arthur David Olson, Hancock Avenue, commented on the redistricting process. He urged the Council to consider reducing or eliminating Council involvement in the redistricting process.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Kostiuk thanked Mr. Olsen for his comment. She asked for the Board of Elections to review the redistricting process and provide advice. She announced that the temporary stop sign was installed at Carroll and Lincoln Avenue.

Ms. Dyballa thanked Ms. Kostiuk for her work on getting the stop sign installed. She announced upcoming Ward 2 community budget meeting.

Mr. Smith announced Ward 5 virtual meeting to discuss the budget.

Mr. Kovar announced an upcoming Ward 1 budget meeting. He asked staff to inspect the condition of the trees leading up to the play area at Ed Wilhelm field. He noted that some residents were concerned about the tree roots. Mr. Kovar also mentioned concerns about the over population of deer in the area.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS

Mr. Fox announced a presentation on human health effects of lawn pesticides, to take place on April 19. He announced a Verizon small cell antenna installation on Philadelphia Avenue on SHA right of way. The company was notified that they did not follow the Montgomery County requirements. Montgomery County was asked to follow up on the issue.

Mr. Fox updated the Council on COVID in Maryland and the City workforce vaccination status. He said that the Recreation center was still hosting vaccination testing on Wednesdays. Mr. Fox announced upcoming events. He also stated that rent stabilization allowance was 7.3% effective July.

WORK SESSION

3. Amendment to the Police Employees' Retirement Plan (Ch. 4.24 of the Takoma Park Code) to Change the Application Process for the Deferred Retirement Option Program

Ms. Smith briefed the Council on the proposed amendment to the Police Employee's Retirement Plan.

The Mayor and Council agreed that staff should consult with the City Attorney and ask him to review the draft ordinance.

4. Proposed Community Development Block Grant Projects

Mr. Cross gave a presentation on a proposed Community Block Grant project. Staff recommended that the funds be repurposed and combined with other funds to be used for neighborhood improvement projects in Ward 5.

ADJOURNMENT

The Council adjourned for the evening at 8:24 p.m.