

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
VOTING SESSION AND WORK SESSION**

**Wednesday, April 20, 2022  
Minutes**

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

**Also present:** City Manager Fox, Deputy City Manager Clarke, and City Clerk Carpenter

The City Council convened at 7:30 PM in the Auditorium.

Prior to the meeting, at 6:45 PM, the City Council held a reception welcoming City Manager Fox.

**FOR THE RECORD**

**Introduction of Montgomery College Scholarship Recipients**

Ms. Stewart introduced and congratulated the Montgomery College scholarship recipients.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA / AGENDA SCHEDULING UPDATE**

Ms. Stewart provided an update on future agendas.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Arthur David Olsen, Hancock Avenue, commented on the property tax and constant yield rate increase. He said that he hoped that the Council would add the tax increase information to the budget and that the Council would limit the property tax rate to .55 cents. Mr. Olsen provided some budget figures and suggestions.

Mary Jane Muchui, Ward 2, commented against the property tax increase. She thanked Small Things Matter for the food distribution and noted her support for reparations for Black people who were born in the United States.

Sandra Grant stated that she was a Takoma Park resident for 14 years and she urged the Council to assist her and other community members with housing displacement. She said that her apartment building was sold and the new owner gave the building tenants notice of 60-days to vacate the property. She commented on the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act. She asked the Council for real support.

## **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Smith announced that there was a virtual budget meeting scheduled on Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. He thanked Ms. Muchui for her comments.

Ms. Kostiuk commented on a site visit she took of Per Scholas in Silver Spring with a member of the Grants Committee. She thanked City staff and the Grants Committee for the work they have done to provide grants to Per Scholas tech training programs. She gave an update on a Transportation Planning Board meeting on the results of the climate change mitigation survey.

She announced that Takoma Park was awarded two Transportation Land Use grants for bike and pedestrian improvements relating to the Metropolitan Branch trail upgrade as well as the New Ave Bikeway. She also announced a Ward 3 virtual budget meeting taking place tomorrow evening and next Thursday.

Ms. Dyballa thanked the Recreation Department for the Eggstravaganza event. She announced that she will hold two budget meetings next Tuesday.

Ms. Searcy thanked the residents for their public comments. She announced that there was concrete work being done on Merwood Drive between New Hampshire Avenue and Wildwood Drive in preparation for resurfacing in the summer. She also announced the Crossroads Farmer's market kickoff next Wednesday, 10:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Mr. Kovar thanked the residents who participate in the budget meetings held yesterday. He commented on the construction of a building near the Takoma Metro station adjacent to Ward 1 and said there was a meeting scheduled on April 25<sup>th</sup> hosted by the Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners.

Ms. Stewart thanked Laura Barkley and the OTBA for setting up a clinic for vaccinations. She announced the Montgomery College peace jam event. Ms. Stewart said that the County voted on the building energy performance standards and it passed unanimously.

## **CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

Mr. Fox thanked everyone for the reception. He commented on the two transportation land use grants awarded to the City. He recognized staff that applied for the grant. He commented on the departure of City staff members.

## **VOTING SESSION**

**1. Resolution of Appreciation for Human Resources Director Tracy Smith; Resolution of Appreciation for Housing and Community Development Director Alex Cross; Resolution of Appreciation for Housing and Community Services Manager Grayce Wiggins**

Ms. Stewart read the resolutions in appreciation of the contributions made to the City by each the staff members.

Ms. Searcy moved the resolution of appreciation for Tracy Smith. Ms. Kostiuk seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Seamens, Smith, Searcy).

**Resolution 2022-9 (attached)**

Mr. Kovar moved the resolution of appreciation for Alex Cross. Mr. Seamens seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Seamens, Smith, Searcy).

**Resolution 2022-8 (attached)**

Mr. Seamens moved the resolution of appreciation for Grayce Wiggins. Ms. Dyballa seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuk, Seamens, Smith, Searcy).

**Resolution 2022-10 (attached)**

**2. Resolution Endorsing FY21, FY22, and FY23 Community Development Block Grant Projects**

There was no Council discussion.

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

**Resolution 2022-11 (attached)**

**3. First Reading Ordinance Amending Chapter 11.04 to Regulate Signs in Public Areas and Public Rights of Way**

City Attorney Cornbrooks explained the changes to the ordinance since the last work session: to clarify the Council's purpose in updating the ordinance, clarifying the meaning of public space and removing references to rights of way and adjacent to rights of way, increasing the maximum size of signs to 24 inches in any dimension, and adding express language permitting removal of non-compliant signs.

Mr. Kovar requested the 24 inches be replaced with 26 inches in any direction, because campaign signs are typically 26 inches.

There was no objection.

Mr. Kovar moved the first reading ordinance. Ms. Searcy seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuik, Seamens, Searcy; VOTING AGAINST: Smith).

#### **First Reading Ordinance (attached)**

#### **4. First Reading Ordinance Amending Chapter 4.24 of the Takoma Park Code (Police Employees' Retirement Plan) to Change the Application Process for the Deferred Retirement Option Program (HR Director Smith)**

There was no Council discussion.

Ms. Dyballa moved the first reading ordinance. Ms. Kostiuik seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Stewart, Kovar, Dyballa, Kostiuik, Seamens, Searcy, Smith).

#### **First Reading Ordinance 2022-11 (attached)**

#### **WORK SESSION**

#### **5. Update from Adventist HealthCare on Proposed Healthcare Services in Takoma Park**

Mr. Andrew Nichols, Deputy General Council and Director of Government Relations for Adventist HealthCare gave a presentation on the updated proposal that was first presented to the Council in November 2021. (Presentation attached)

The Council had some follow-up questions that Adventist Healthcare would look into.

Ms. Stewart said that the City would prepare a letter for the Maryland Healthcare Commission once Adventist HealthCare shared their letter of request.

#### **6. FY 2022 Budget Amendment No. 4**

Mr. Fox explained that the proposed budget amendments were reductions and delays in projects to help with developing the FY23 budget. Some projects would move into a future year, some projects would be moved to ARPA, and there was a freeze on job positions, some positions were relocated into the City Manager's office.

Council wanted to receive more warning of changes to the budget. Members asked for clarification on what was cost cutting and what was being delayed to FY23; how much of the FY22 budget is not going to be done; and requested more clarification and clearer descriptions on the agenda item and ordinance.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Council adjourned for the evening at 10:09 p.m.