

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
JOINT PRIORITIES MEETING  
20<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT DELEGATION AND TAKOMA PARK CITY COUNCIL**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2022**

**MINUTES**

**Confirmatory Swearing In of Mayor and Members of the City Council**

Prior to the start of the meeting, Karen Bushell, Clerk of the Montgomery County Circuit Court, administered the oath of office to Mayor Searcy.

Mayor Searcy administered the oath of office to members of the City Council.

**Present:** Mayor Searcy, Councilmember Fulcher, Councilmember Dyballa, Councilmember Gibson, Councilmember Seamens, Councilmember Honzak, Councilmember Small

**Also Present:** City Manager Fox, Acting Deputy City Managers Gregory Clark and Rosalind Grigsby, City Clerk Carpenter

**20<sup>th</sup> District Delegation:** Senator Will Smith, Delegate Lorig Charkoudian, Delegate David Moon, Delegate Jheanelle Wilkins (via Zoom)

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:45 PM.

**Welcome and Overview – Mayor Talisha Searcy**

Mayor Searcy welcomed everyone to the meeting to share the City's priorities and the Delegation's priorities. The goal of the meeting is collaboration.

**Public Comments**

Mary Jane Muchui requested the Delegation to investigate the State's Department of Rehabilitation Services and Division of Developmental Disabilities. She detailed problems encountered with the agencies.

**Presentation of Takoma Park Legislative Priorities**

Ann Ciekot, Legislative Advocate, reviewed the City's priorities.

- Capital project funding & opportunities (Takoma Park Maryland Library)
- Fiscally sustainable government (new revenue streams such as opioid settlement money, cannabis revenue, MML priorities)
- Transportation & infrastructure investment (pedestrian safety)

- Housing issues (just cause eviction legislation, affordable and energy efficient housing development, emergency rental assistance, homeownership assistance)
- Climate Change (meaningful and achievable goals for municipalities)

### **Delegation Comments**

Delegate Charkoudian addressed the City's priorities and shared other bills she is working on.

- For pedestrian safety, seeking structural changes in the way the State Highway Administration makes decisions before starting projects and to make it easier to fix problem areas. She welcomes the Council's advocacy on this legislation. Regarding housing, increasing the State's investment in energy efficiency upgrades and bring more of the health and safety money to the upgrades as well.
- Passed legislation making utility assistance available for people who pay utilities through their rent. Now we need to publicize to renters that this option is available.
- Seeking categorical eligibility for safety net programs, so people do not have to submit multiple applications to access different types of benefits. It would be more efficient for the state and more efficient for the individuals.
- To meet our emission reduction goals, we need to massively increase clean energy. We also must prepare for additional offshore wind development.
- Mental health: Medicaid funding for school based mental health to increase the amount of services available to students in schools, Improve the treatment process when people are hospitalized.
- Bills that support local healthy food in institutions and a pollinator corridor bill to address the area under power lines.
- Delegate Charkoudian encouraged Council and residents to cc her on communications related to problems with Pepco as she does a lot of advocacy for constituents with Pepco.

In response to a question, about pedestrian safety along University and New Hampshire, Delegate Charkoudian recognized the historic lack of investment in the area. In terms of the Purple Line, the Delegation has been seeking a signalized crosswalk at Seek and University after the pedestrian fatality. That has been delayed for a variety of reasons but the advocacy continues. The bill regarding SHA would require a signalized crosswalk every fifth of a mile in areas where there are 10,000 people per square mile and high dependence upon transit. She welcomes the chance to work with the Council on this issue and other state highways.

Delegate Wilkins indicated that in her role as Chair of the Legislative Black Caucus, she will have the opportunity to work on income inequality and building wealth, housing, education equity, cannabis legislation. Some of the bills she is working on:

- Just cause eviction legislation (to ensure that landlords have a reasonable cause to not renew a lease at the end of a lease term). It is enabling legislation for counties to adopt legislation.
- Housing voucher funding targeting vulnerable communities, veterans, people with disabilities, families with children. With additional funding from the state, people will not have to wait as long for vouchers.
- Income inequality – close the tax loophole that enables millionaires to not pay the estate tax.
- Permanent expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit.

In response to a question about recreation facilities in underserved communities, Delegate Wilkins indicated that the Delegation could work with the Council on State bond bill funding for various capital projects related to recreation, such as the City's Recreation Center. Additionally, she and Senator Smith worked on a bill to create a pot of money that communities could apply for to address community identified needs. Youth services and youth engagement are certainly an aspect of it.

Delegate Moon addressed some of his priorities.

- Legislation to provide more power to lower speed limits.
- Funding for engineering changes to state highways to build some of the more expensive pedestrian safety treatments (using the school bus camera fines).
- Stop the County from requiring as many parking spaces near the Purple Line and stop landlords from requiring a parking space with each unit, which jacks up the cost of housing.
- Reproductive rights.
- Gun safety to expand areas where guns are prohibited.
- Given the budget surplus, fully fund mental health and substance abuse services in every county.
- Ensure that when Maryland procures voting machines that they are capable of handling Takoma Park's ranked choice voting system.

Senator Smith is Chair of the Judicial Proceedings Committee. He noted some issues that will be addressed.

- Reproductive rights are protected in the Maryland Code but not in the Constitution. A constitutional amendment will be needed for Maryland.
- Protection of the privacy of people who come to Maryland for services.
- On gun safety, he wants to push the line for public spaces where guns are prohibited and push the line on criteria for issuing carry permits.
- Continuation of police reforms and support municipalities with police departments having a role on county police review boards.
- Working on issues around juvenile justice and ending direct charging of youths.
- Noted the importance of appointments to the Public Service Commission.

Members of the City Council noted additional areas of interest.

- Stormwater issues and mitigating the financial impact of flooding.
- Electrical upgrading of homes and having Pepco provide needed electrical service.
- Making solar more common on buildings and homes.
- Water quality – PFAS and atrazine in water. Low income residents don't have the means to have water filtration.
- Prioritize mental health and recreation services for youth.
- Addressing school crowding.

### **Summary and Closing**

Ms. Searcy closed this portion of the meeting and called a brief recess before continuing with the next presentation.

Searcy support delegation

### **Introduction to Legislative Processes**

Ann Ciekot, Public Policy Partners, is the City's legislative advocate. She made an introductory presentation on the Maryland legislative process. (Presentation attached.)

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 PM.