

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

**MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023**

**MINUTES**

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**REPORT OF CLOSED SESSION OF JANUARY 23, 2023**

The City Council convened on Zoom at 6:30 PM on Monday, January 23 to vote to convene in closed session to meet with the City's Labor Attorney to receive legal advice, including matters related to collective bargaining negotiations, and to meet with the City Attorney to receive legal advice regarding the Takoma Junction project. The meeting was to be closed pursuant to Annotated Code of Maryland, General Provisions Article, §3-305(7) and (9). Present: Mayor Searcy; Councilmembers Dyballa, Gibson, Seamens, Honzak, and Small; Absent: Councilmember Fulcher.

The Council was initially scheduled to vote in the Auditorium but due to a building plumbing emergency, the Community Center closed at 6:30 PM. Notice of the change was posted at 6:00 PM and anyone in the Auditorium was notified that the vote would take place on Zoom so that they could observe if they wished.

Councilmember Dyballa made a motion to convene in closed session. Councilmember Gibson seconded the motion. VOTING FOR: Mayor Searcy, Councilmembers Dyballa, Gibson, Seamens, Honzak, and Small. ABSENT: Councilmember Fulcher.

The Council reconvened partly on Zoom and partly in the Council Conference Room for the closed session. Present: Mayor Searcy, Councilmembers Fulcher, Dyballa, Gibson, Seamens, Honzak, Small. Also present: City Manager Fox, Acting Deputy Managers Gregory Clark and Rosalind Grigsby, City Clerk Carpenter, City Attorney Skip Cornbrooks, and the City's labor attorney Garrett Wozniak.

The Council was brief on status and received advice from Mr. Wozniak regarding collective bargaining negotiations and from Mr. Cornbrooks regarding Takoma Junction. No actions or votes were taken. The meeting adjourned at 9:24 pm.

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**JANUARY 25, 2023**

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

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

**Also Present:** Acting Deputy City Managers Gregory Clark and Rosalind Grigsby, City Clerk Carpenter, Public Works Director Braithwaite, Library Director Jones, Acting Planning &

Development Manager Freeman, Economic Development Manager Kowler, and Housing Manager McNally

Mayor Searcy called the meeting to order at 7:30 PM in the Auditorium of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue.

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

Ms. Searcy provided an update on future agendas.

### **FOR THE RECORD**

Ms. Searcy read proclamations recognizing the closure of Mark's Kitchen, Kenetic Artistry, and Takoma Framers. (Proclamations attached.)

### **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

The City Council was updated by Legislative Advocate Ann Ciekot on Maryland General Assembly legislative matters.

Mr. Small volunteered to testify on a bill related to requirements for the State Highway Administration.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Lori Boes, Roanoke Avenue, commented on issues with plastic. She urged the City to provide more education on plastic bags and to encourage residents to reduce the use of plastic bottles.

Laura Barclay, Old Takoma Business Association, commented on the long-time businesses that were closing in Takoma Park. She thanked Mark's Kitchen for feeding and supporting the community. She thanked Takoma Framers for beautifying homes and protecting special memorabilia. She thanked Kinetic Artistry for putting Takoma Park on the map as the DC area premier supplier of props, special effects, and lighting.

Tara Egan, representing the Takoma Park Independence Day Committee, she thanked Mark's Kitchen on behalf of their support in celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.

Joan Eisenberg said that she has been going to Mark's Kitchen for 32 years. She thanked Mark for being a critical part of the community.

Vincent Richardson, Founder and Co-Owner of Richardson School of Music, thanked the departing businesses. He thanked the community for their help and donations. He said that the business could still use some help as there was still much work to be done on the new location.

Laurie McGilvray, Ward 3, stated that she was a member of the Public Service Commission Workgroup that drafted regulations for community choice energy and announced an upcoming public hearing. She commented on the minor master plan, affordable housing, and sustainability and climate action. She urged the Council to pay attention to these matters. She said there was a tremendous opportunity to address the challenges and get ahead of the curve.

Karen Elrich, Ward 5 resident and member of Climate Action Coffee, commented on local and regional climate issues that were of concern to the Climate Coffee members and spoke on some possible solutions. She said that the Climate Coffee members would like to see an expansion of the role and transparency of the Green Team and forge a link between the two groups.

Paul Huebner, commented on the fiscal health presentation given at the January 18 City Council meeting. He asked what are the City Council's solutions to the deficit.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mr. Small stated that he was proud of the efforts the municipal workers make to be responsive to the City residents. He said that reports presented to City Council and the public should be accurate and that there was no value to misrepresentation especially in regards to economic issues.

Mr. Gibson thanked the public for their comments of appreciation for the departing Takoma Park businesses. He announced a Ward 3 public safety community meeting taking place Thursday, January 26 at 7 p.m. in the Azalea room of the Community Center. He commented on the stormwater resilience study and encouraged the residents to review the information which was posted on the City website.

Mr. Seamens thanked the residents for their comments on the departed Takoma Park businesses. He thanked Mark and said he was a great value to the City not just for his food and hospitality but for his support for many nonprofit organizations in the City.

Ms. Honzak thanked the residents for their public comments. She agreed with Ms. Lori Boes comments regarding plastic. She said she looked forward to discussing with members of Climate Coffee about the issues mentioned during public comments.

Ms. Dyballa commented on the two Council of Government meeting she attended. She also commented on a Chesapeake Bay policy meeting.

Ms. Fulcher thanked the departing businesses especially Kenetic Artistry and Mark's Kitchen. She said the businesses helped make people want to visit Takoma Park. She said as sad as it was to see the business close she said she was excited to see them have an opportunity to retire.

Ms. Searcy said she had great appreciation for all the wonderful businesses in the community. She reminded the residents to support the community's businesses. Ms. Searcy announced that she would be attending the Kindness Day event on Saturday at Piney Branch Elementary School in honor of Tommy Raskin. She also announced that she would be attending the Ward 3 public safety meeting and the Montgomery Chapter MML meeting with the County Executive on his priorities and to hear an update on the tax duplication amount.

## **CITY MANAGER COMMENTS**

Mr. Fox said that the vaccine policy remained in effect. He updated the Council on the Collaborative Strategies contract and the new City website. He thanked staff for their hard work.

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Mr. Small moved to adopt the December 7, 2022 City Council meeting minutes. Ms. Dyballa seconded the motion. (VOTING FOR: Searcy, Dyballa, Fulcher, Honzak, Gibson, Seamens, Small.)

## **PRESENTATION**

### **1. Minor Master Plan (Project Background and Process to Date)**

Alex Freeman noted that the City informed the Council that the City does not have its own zoning authority. He introduced the Down County Planning Chief, Elza Hisel-McCoy.

Mr. Hisel-McCoy gave a brief overview of what the planning division does. He introduced Ms. Melissa Williams, lead on the Takoma Park Master Plan.

Ms. Williams explained what a master plan is and identified the area in Takoma Park that is included in the Minor Master Plan area. She explained how the plan could enhance the livability within the plan area. Ms. Williams gave a brief overview of the existing condition of the area included in the plan and gave an update on community outreach and engagement. (Presentation attached.)

### **2. Strategic Plan Updates - Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan**

Mr. Kowler and Mr. McNally presented an overview on the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan.

Mr. Small stated that there were unresponsive landlords in particular areas. He encouraged staff to be direct about the long-term potential of areas where residents can benefit from future development.

Mr. Seamens asked about metrics to track how successful the emergency assistance program has been in keeping residents housed.

Mr. McNally said that he would follow up with information.

Mr. Gibson stated that a metrics would be helpful in all of the City's programs.

Ms. Dyballa asked for an update on the electrification and building improvement program funds.

Mr. Kowler responded that that the program fund is exhausted. All funds have been spent.

Ms. Dyballa requested information on the number of proposals that the Department was not able to fund.

### **3. Strategic Plan Updates - Sustainability and Climate Action Framework**

Ms. Braithwaite gave the Council an update on the Sustainable Climate Action plan that included an update on carbon emissions, the main climate goals in Takoma Park, and FY23 electrification and energy efficiency grants. (Presentation attached.)

### **4. Request for Legislative Bond Initiative for Library Construction**

Ms. Jones presented an overview of the state capital grant proposal. She explained the purpose of the grant and the process going forward.

Mr. Small stated that he was concerned that the grant request was not brought before the Council sooner.

## **VOTING SESSION**

### **5. Resolution Regarding Legislative Bond Initiative for Library Construction**

Mr. Small moved the resolution. Ms. Fulcher seconded the motion.

Ms. Fulcher moved to amend the resolution by adding an additional clause regarding the allocation of ARPA funds.

Mr. Small seconded the motion. The motion carried. (VOTING FOR: Searcy, Dyballa, Fulcher, Honzak, Gibson, Seamens, Small)

The Council voted on the resolution as amended. (VOTING FOR: Searcy, Dyballa, Fulcher, Honzak, Gibson, Small; VOTING AGAINST: Seamens.)

**Resolution 2023-1 (attached)**

**ADJOURNMENT**

The City Council adjourned for the evening at 11:36 p.m.

Minutes adopted May 24, 2023