



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of March 20, 2019

Information to Share

Happy Spring!

As you are thinking of spring yard work, remember to use the safest methods to get a healthy lawn and garden. For information, including links to our videos on organic turf management, go to the City's [Safe Grow](#) web page.

Maryland General Assembly Approves \$150,000 for Library Project!

Thanks to State Senator Will Smith and Delegates Charkoudian, Moon and Wilkins, the Takoma Park Library will receive \$150,000 in Bond Bill funds towards the cost of its construction. This is the second Bond Bill it has received and we deeply appreciate the work of the District 20 Delegation in assisting the Takoma Park community. Thank you!

City Budget Preparation

City staff will be focused on preparation of the Proposed FY20 Budget over the next two weeks. During this time, the Finance Director and her staff, the Deputy City Manager and I will be heavily occupied with preparing the recommendations, working with senior staff on writing the narrative of the budget and preparing the presentation information for Council. We may not be able to respond to inquiries as rapidly as we normally do, and I ask for your patience.

With 37% of Takoma Park's residential properties having a lower assessment this year, four straight years of City tax rate cuts, and the fact that County Executive Marc Elrich's proposed budget includes no increase in the tax duplication payments we are owed by Montgomery County, we are facing significant budget challenges. We have been holding a series of meetings with key staff to determine where cuts could be made and what the implications of those cuts would be. I will be presenting the FY20 Proposed Budget to the Council on April 3. Following that, we will have budget open houses, budget public hearings, and a series of Council Budget Work Sessions as the Council considers the proposed budget into May.

Report on DRC Meeting Regarding Takoma Junction

The Montgomery County Development Review Committee (DRC) held a meeting yesterday morning with Neighborhood Development Company (NDC) representatives to discuss County and other agency staff comments on the proposed site plan and preliminary plan for the [Takoma Junction Project](#). The meeting allowed NDC to follow up on DRC staff comments such as Fire Department access points and other technical clarifications.

Two major points from the meeting and related notes: 1) The County's Department of Transportation and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) stated the review of the transportation elements of the project will be delayed until after the SHA's [Vision](#) project of the Junction intersection is completed this fall, thus delaying the project and the consideration of the project by the Planning Board. NDC will be following up with SHA about this. 2) Questions remain about the position of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the plans. The staff person for the HPC provided written comments that seemed to conflict with Master Plan provisions and traditional historic preservation principles. Few existing commercial properties in the Takoma Park Historic District would meet the criteria identified by the staff person, so clarification is needed. NDC has been meeting with the HPC staff person and then will be

meeting with the Commission in April to learn the position of the Commission concerning the proposal.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising and/or interviewing for a number of positions including Records Specialist/Office Assistant, Arts & Humanities Intern, Recreation Program Leaders, Contract CDL Driver, Public Works Intern for Special Projects, Communications Officer (Police Dispatcher), and Police Officer-Lateral.

Suzanne R. Ludlow, AICP CPM
City Manager, City of Takoma Park
SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov
301-891-7229