



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of May 1, 2019

Information to Share

NDC Building Size and Ownership in Carroll Ave ROW

Staff recently had a conference call with SHA representatives to discuss questions about NDC's proposed building size for the Takoma Junction development project with respect to the property size. It was determined that there is no "in fee ownership" of a parcel in the Carroll Avenue roadway in front of the City's lot. That means that the underlying City parcel goes to the center line and the calculations related to the proposed building size are based on the correct baseline information. If there is a dedication of City lot land to SHA (for example, of the layby) there is no effect on the baseline information and so the calculations related to the proposed building size are unaffected.

The reason for the confusion about the "ownership" of Carroll Avenue is likely due to the lack of certain information on the land use plats related to the ownership of the right of way easement. Originally, most of what is now MD 410 through Takoma Park was Takoma Park roadway. There is no documentation of the transfer of Takoma Park right of way to Maryland State right of way. This has been the subject of focused study over a number of years by the Maryland State Highway Administration, the City of Takoma Park, Historic Takoma, Inc., and some private property owners. In 2011, a letter of agreement was written that stated that while there was no documentation, the State of Maryland had used and maintained MD 410 through Takoma Park since the 1930s, so the State of Maryland had a prescriptive right of way easement to the roadway. After this letter, a formal Memorandum of Agreement was adopted by the State of Maryland and the City of Takoma Park regarding maintenance and operation procedures regarding the MD 410 right of way in Takoma Park.

Posting of Signs on Poles in the Right of Way

Questions have been raised about whether or not signs may be posted on light or telephone poles in the right of way. The recent removal of signs for a community budget discussion, while leaving up missing pets signs, raised the questions. Signs are not to be placed in or on fixtures in the right of way. Such signs will be removed. There has been discretion, however, on missing pets and yard sale signs. Posting of signs leaves a junky appearance, so there have been vigilant removal efforts in recent years. There was no specific direction given to staff to remove the signs announcing the Community Vision's community conversation on the City budget; that action was done proactively, as it is done each day. Besides the rules about no posting of signs in the City's right of way, there are several more specific regulations:

City Code 11.24.020 Posting signs to lampposts prohibited.

No person shall attach, place or paste any sign, advertisement or other matter on any public lamppost, lantern or appurtenance thereof. A violation of this section is a Class D offense.

MOCO Zoning Ordinance 59-6 Section 6.7.4 PROHIBITED SIGNS G. Sign Attached to the Property of Others

A sign attached to a structure or property such as a fence, wall, antenna, other sign, tree or other vegetation, or to any public structure such as a utility pole, without permission of the owner is prohibited.

PEPCO Regulations Foreign Attachments

Please do not attach anything to our poles without our prior approval. The attachment of items such as antennas or signs to our poles, wires or facilities is not allowed. We can remove any attachment without notice.

Right of First Refusal Properties

When rental properties are placed for sale in the City of Takoma Park, the tenant(s), the City, and Montgomery County all have the opportunity to purchase the property under City and County law. The owner of the property must follow the applicable laws and provide notice. City staff ensure that the correct processes are followed and notices given. Staff also provide advice as to whether or not the City may wish to exercise its right to purchase the property. If a property looks like it might be appropriate for City purchase (guided by City policy and goals), information on the property will be shared with Council for a decision. Recently, the following property was determined to not meet the criteria for City purchase:

704 Philadelphia Avenue, a single-family home

Kudos

Kudos to **Human Resources** staff who organized this year's National Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, and to staff across the organization who designed and facilitated activities that gave participants an opportunity to learn more about what we do in local government. The 25 or so children who participated learned about the importance of physical fitness when it comes to policing and got to participate in their own agility test. Finance had the older participants "Reconcile that Cash!", an activity to help them understand how to manage their money, while the younger children were with Recreation creating their future selves in a really neat art project. Information Systems staff tested the kids' knowledge about the inner workings of computers and where each part can be found. City TV hosted a "Lights, Camera, ACTION!" stop on the circuit, teaching the kids how to operate the cameras and control room. They even got to role play as on camera talent and interviewees. HR got them ready for their dream jobs (and public speaking) by conducting panel job interviews. Last, but definitely not least, Public Works staff taught them about trees and gave each participant their own seedling to plant, took them on a tour of the facility to see all the cool equipment they use to keep the City clean and safe, and even showed them how signs are made, with the added bonus of making signs with their names on them. It was an all around great event!

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising and/or interviewing for a number of positions including Human Resources Director, Custodial Crew Leader, Recreation Program Leader, Contract CDL Driver, Public Works Intern, Sr. Accounting Assistant, Audio-visual Technician (part time), and Police Officer-Lateral.