



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of June 19, 2019

Information to Share

New Hampshire Avenue Recreation Center Ownership Transfer

This morning the Bi-County Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (MNCPPC) formally approved the land swap with the City of Takoma Park that transfers ownership of the Takoma Park Recreation Center on New Hampshire Avenue to the City of Takoma Park and an undeveloped parcel along Long Branch Creek to the Commission. Legal paperwork remains to be completed, but essentially the Recreation Center becomes the property of the City of Takoma Park on July 1. We are looking to have a small gathering at the Center to ceremonially transfer the property, with a date to be determined. This action is a great step forward for Takoma Park and for advancing our community's plans for the New Hampshire Avenue Corridor and residents of the eastern side of our City.

Suburban Deer Management Presentation

Members of the public are invited to attend a presentation and discussion on suburban deer management on July 17 at 6:30 pm in the Azalea Room on the main level of the Community Center (7500 Maple Ave). George Timko, a Deer Management Expert from Maryland DNR, will conduct the presentation. The presentation will last about 30 minutes and will conclude with a Q&A session. For questions please contact Rick Baravechia 301-891-7113 or email duaneb@takomaparkmd.gov.

Discussion of Tax Credits

As part of the FY20 budget discussions, we decided to tentatively schedule time in July to discuss property tax credit options. I have asked the Mayor to push back that discussion until after the August recess. Right now, our Finance Department is very short staffed (there are currently two vacant positions with an impending retirement coming), and they need to focus on the annual audit, which is required by law, as well as the work required each year as we transition from one fiscal year to the next. Jason and I are also very busy managing operations with two vacant department head positions, among other things. In short, I do not foresee an opportunity to do the prep work that would be needed for a discussion of options for property tax credits in July. I do want those discussions to happen soon, but wanted to let you know that we do not have the capacity to undertake this in the next two months.

117 Elm Avenue No Longer Tax Exempt

As of April 10, 2019, the property at 117 Elm Avenue, formerly the John Nevins Andrews School, is no longer tax exempt. The assessed value of the property as of July 1, 2019 is \$6,359,667, so the anticipated annual tax payment from the property will be \$34,323.

Maryland Municipal League Convention Next Week

The Maryland Municipal League annual convention in Ocean City will take place Sunday through Wednesday. A number of Takoma Park Councilmembers and several staff will be attending. The convention program looks pretty interesting – thanks in part to Councilmember Jarrett Smith who was on the Convention Committee. On Tuesday, Public Works Director Daryl Braithwaite will do a special presentation at 8:45 am on our cutting edge LED streetlight program and Chief Tony DeVaul will be a panelist on a 1:30 session on “Strategies for Enhancing Police-Community Relations.” As always, the opportunity to network with State and municipal officials is often the best part of the convention.

Kudos

Kudos to the Employee Appreciation Committee, spearheaded by Peggye Washington, Executive Assistant, for organizing and hosting another excellent employee appreciation event. Everything from the food to the entertainment was great and very well received by staff. We were very happy to have Councilmembers Kovar and Dyballa join in the festivities!

Kudos also to Finance Director Susan Cheung who has met all of the requirements to be a Certified Public Accountant and now can be identified as Susan Cheung, CPA. I really appreciate her attention to the highest standards of financial accountability and transparency and her deep commitment to the City of Takoma Park, its Council and residents.

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising and/or interviewing for a number of positions including Parking Enforcement Officer, Landlord – Tenant Mediator, Victim/Witness Coordinator, Budget Specialist, Mechanic, Recreation Program Leader, Planning Intern, Sr. Accounting Assistant, and Police Officer-Lateral.

We are currently interviewing candidates for the position of Human Resources Director.