



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

City Manager Comments

Report for City Council Meeting of October 16, 2019

Information to Share

2020 Census

Jurisdictions across the country are gearing up for the 2020 Census. Getting accurate counts is extremely important, as the numbers are used to determine how federal and state dollars are distributed at the local level. City staff have been working closely with the County in planning for how we get the word out. We have educational materials that will be posted online and distributed throughout the City including to businesses and in apartment buildings, a new website that provides pertinent information about the Census and a social media campaign in the works, and we'll also be assisting the County with recruiting efforts for canvassers needed to confirm address lists and characteristics of the types of dwellings (this information ensures that residents will be invited to participate in the census and that the census counts residents in the correct location).

The 2020 Census will be available to complete online as well as in print and over the phone. More information can be found [here](#).

Library Detailed Design and Floodplain Study Moving Along

To kick off the detailed design process, the City's architect, Greg Lukmire, met with Library staff last week to reorient them to the current [concept designs](#) and solicit feedback about operational needs and interests. There had been some delay related to the preparation and review of the contract with the architect after the Council's last action regarding the project. Detailed design, including the preparation of construction documents and permitting, is expected to last 12-13 months. Consistent with the Resolution passed by Council, the architect is expected to come back before Council when they reach the point where more specific information on construction cost estimates can be obtained, which would be before any work on construction documents would begin. This should be about halfway through the detailed design process, sometime in spring 2020.

The floodplain study is also proceeding – if you see surveyors on the property, that's probably why!

Home Energy Efficiency

Autumn is a good time to assess and address your home's efficiency as we wait for recommendations on City actions to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Did you know you can borrow a thermal scanner or a wattage meter from the Library? And the City's sustainability program web page lists City and utility [rebates for single family](#) homes. Besides excellent utility programs, the City also offers up to \$500 in rebates based on energy savings. For low- and moderate-income households some efficiency upgrades are free. And there are separate offerings for [multifamily buildings](#).

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 properties were determined to not meet the criteria for City purchase:

- *127 Lee Avenue (multi-family building with six occupied units)*
- *54 Walnut Avenue (vacant single family home)*
- *7727 Carroll Avenue (vacant two unit building)*

Hiring Update

We are currently advertising and/or interviewing for a number of positions including Budget and Accounting Manager, HR Coordinator, Audio/Visual Technician (part-time), Photo Enforcement Specialist, Economic Development Intern, Landlord – Tenant Mediator, Mechanic, Recreation Program Leader, Police Officer (entry-level and lateral), Crossing Guard, and Youth Success Program Leader (Contract position).

Mental Health

In several recent meetings with staff, I have spoken about how we need to take care of ourselves, including our emotional health. The City has a good employee assistance program that we encourage use of on an individual basis and also bring in for groups of staff when there is a traumatic event. Stressful situations are all around us and we often confront them in our jobs as well as in our personal lives. We tend to only address mental health in specific situations, but that's not really the best way to think about it. Recently I read a tweet from my son, Langston that put this in words better than I could:

“My only #WorldMentalHealthDay advice is that mental health is like physical health. It's not a clean line between healthy and not. Sometimes you get hurt, sometimes you get sick, sometimes you need treatment, but you can always be more healthy.”

My Schedule

Deputy City Manager Jason Damweber and I will attend the International City County Management Association (ICMA) National Conference in Nashville, October 19-23. We will not be in attendance at the October 23 Council meeting.

Suzanne R. Ludlow, AICP, CPM
Takoma Park City Manager
7500 Maple Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
301-891-7229
SuzanneL@takomaparkmd.gov