



City of Takoma Park

City Manager Comments

Report of March 25, 2020

Information to Share

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Update

At Governor Hogan's press conference this morning, he began by saying that this crisis is just beginning and we do not have certainty about the duration or impact. He knows how unsettling uncertainty is. He said, though, that the pandemic won't be over in a matter of days or weeks. He asked that we stay in our homes as much as possible to help get it under control for our community.

The major announcement of the press conference was that school buildings would remain closed through April 24 and that school districts will be working to educate students during this time.

The website for MCPS (www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org) has excellent information on it about how distance learning will occur and how to get food and Chromebooks for students.

The City of Takoma Park facilities will be closed to the public for the duration of the public health emergency. Most events and meetings have been canceled through April. We are reaching out to people and families that participate in or have signed up for classes, afterschool programs and camps through April to provide information on refunds and options.

This week Takoma Park residents will be receiving a postcard in the mail that directs them (in four languages) to the City's website for Takoma Park [Covid-19 information](#). We have been working very long days to compile this (frequently changing!) information and have it available for the public. The website has a translation option in the upper right corner to help translate text into many different languages.

In Takoma Park, the City staff have stepped up in marvelous ways. We have our heroes – the police officers and public works crews – who are here every day to serve the public by keeping our community safe and clean. We have staff doing exceptional work

serving the public from their homes by phone and online. Our IT staff has taken the lead on connecting us and making sure our systems are protected even while we are working remotely. And our extraordinary City Clerk, Jessie Carpenter, is coordinating the process of making sure the Council can meet remotely – but publicly – to do their work and hear from the community.

One of the areas that staff has been focusing on is helping our small businesses and people looking for work. Economic Development Manager Samira Cook Gaines has led the effort on this and will be getting out information on a special micro-grant program this week to help our businesses. We have also been in communication with Adventist HealthCare about matching vendors and workers to medical center needs. It is not known if the Washington Adventist Hospital site will be used during this health emergency. However, supplies and personnel will be needed at medical facilities throughout the region and we have businesses and people wanting to serve.

Some of the really exciting work our staff is doing is playing out on social media – YouTube, Facebook, etc – with arts performances, children’s activities, and many other ways to reach out and connect. The Takoma Park Maryland Library’s Facebook page has had some terrific programs and the Takoma Park Arts YouTube page has wonderful performances to watch. The Recreation Department has started some virtual community activities (like Chalk a Walk and Phone a Neighbor) and will be having many fun programs soon. And, we’ve got a Friday noon online needleworking group called KinderFiber that you can join.

So whether you have serious information or service needs or you just want to have some fun with your Takoma Park neighbors, we are trying to compile information on the options for you on our website.

Finally, please stay safe. This is an extremely serious request for you to practice social distancing and good health habits. Social distancing is important for you and your family, for your neighbors, for our Takoma Park Police Officers and other City staff, and for the larger community. Social distancing is hard on all of us, but if we do it, our Takoma Park family will be safe.