



City of Takoma Park

## City Manager Comments

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### Report of May 20, 2020

#### *Information to Share*

##### **Revised Public Information Act Notice**

On the afternoon of May 19, 2020, I executed a Notice and Amended Order modifying the time for responding to requests to the City pursuant to Maryland's Public Information Act.

- [Link to Notice and Amended Order](#)

The purpose of the Notice and Amended Order is to address, to the extent possible, concerns raised by residents and elected officials regarding the scope of the prior modification. It is written more narrowly to reflect the City's original intent and commitment to transparency and open government, and clearly articulates the City's intention to continue to respond to requests within the required time unless circumstances related to the pandemic prevent it from doing so.

With respect to timing, the unexecuted draft Notice and Amended Order was submitted to the Governor's Office of Legal Counsel at 12:01 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2020. Having received no objections from that office within the required time, I executed the Notice and Amended Order on the afternoon of May 19. It was contemporaneously transmitted to the Mayor and Council, published on the City's website, and sent to Governor Hogan's Office of Legal Counsel.

[Link to Maryland Public Information Act information on the Attorney General's website](#)  
[Link to the Takoma Park web page on responding to requests for records](#)

##### **Planning for Contactless Library Services**

Every City department is looking at ways to improve services during the pandemic and consider ways to safely reopen over time. For several weeks, our Takoma Park Library staff have been reviewing how to safely allow books to be borrowed. A plan is being developed for contactless book borrowing that we hope will be able to go live in early June. But, we have one big problem – many people have not returned the library books they borrowed before the emergency declaration went into effect! So, if you are done with the books, please return them to the book return bin outside of the Library. When our safety and process systems are in place, we can check books out for people and bag them for contactless pick up. Get your book wish lists ready!

##### **Foreclosure Prevention Webinar**

In conjunction with Civil Justice, Inc., we are hosting a webinar, "Foreclosure Prevention: What You Need to Know." It will be on Thursday, May 21 from 6 pm to 7 pm. Information will be shared on:

- Mortgage forbearance and CARES Act
- Foreclosure process and your rights
- Free and low-cost resources and services available to homeowners

Register here: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_aPk7XdYUSsy8b7TP3p-P8g](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_aPk7XdYUSsy8b7TP3p-P8g)

### **New Caregiver Services Corps**

Governor Hogan has announced a new Maryland program which will deploy volunteers and other resources to the homes of seniors who need urgent assistance with everyday tasks when their typical caregiver becomes unable to help them due to COVID-19 exposure, illness, or other challenges. Those in need of these services should call 2-1-1 to be connected with the Caregiver Services Corps help center. The call center is available 7 days a week and is capable of taking calls in many languages.

### **Recreation Department Updates**

Although I was sad to announce last week that we would not be able to offer in-person summer camps this year, the Recreation Department has some awesome activities underway:

#### ChildCare Programs

- The After the Bell staff submitted a couple of craft videos to share with kids in the After the Bell Program. The craft videos have also been shared on the City's social media pages. After The Bell staff submitted a [slide show of the After the Bell program](#) to be shared with families of the program.
- Both Morning and Afternoon Addition and After the Bell have started a virtual check-in program. Participants have a scheduled time to meet on Zoom and staff lead a few simple activities but also provide unstructured time for kids to "show and tell" or talk to each other. The meet-ups take place biweekly.

#### Recreation Approved Resources (R.A.R.)

- The Recreation Department has been posting fun crafts, virtual tours, STEAM projects and more since the first week of the pandemic on the City's social media pages. There are many fun things to do for various age groups. A running list of over 40 posts is housed on the [Virtual Community Center website](#).

#### Recreation Center

- Staff were able to get the gym floor refinished while the building was closed. This was the perfect opportunity so it wouldn't impact existing programming and we will be ready when we reopen. We also added lines for 2 pickleball courts so we can begin to offer pickleball when it's safe. (Pickleball is a combination of tennis, badminton and ping pong)

#### Senior Phone a Neighbor

- There are 40 volunteers signed up to participate in the Phone a Neighbor program. 7 seniors have been matched with volunteers. We have received positive feedback from the seniors and volunteers, thanking the Recreation Department for their efforts during this time. Continued efforts are taking place to find additional seniors to participate in the program.

## Teen Programming

- Recreation Teen staff has started an Instagram page for City teens "TPTeen\_Nvasion". This teen friendly Instagram page will host different activities/events teens can participate in from home individually or with their family.
- Dance Exchange Virtual Dance Classes are being finalized and will be added to our list of virtual class offerings for youth/teens in the Virtual Community Center.
- Esports - There are 11 participants in the NBA2K20 esports tournament. Games are played at 5pm every Tuesday & Thursday and teens report their scores to Staff.
- Entrepreneurship Program - The Entrepreneurship for Teens program is full (20 students) and has 18 teens on the waiting list. This free virtual class engages and inspires teens to create their own business. GW professor Ellen M. Zavian leads students in grades 6-12 to use entrepreneurial skills and develop business ideas that create economic and social value.

## Scavenger Hunt

- On May 4th the Takoma Park Scavenger Hunt went live on Facebook. Various public landmarks located throughout all 6 wards of the City were highlighted. Residents are asked to take pictures with as many landmarks as they could to participate in the fun. Those who would like to enter for a chance to win a prize will post their picture in the scavenger hunt album on our Facebook page. The top prize is a gift card to be used at a local Takoma Park eatery or business. The second place prize is a gift card to be used with the Recreation Department. Contest ends Monday, May 25

## [Virtual Community Center](#)

- The Virtual Community Center opened on April 17th and has been well received and well attended. The Virtual Community Center has 13 weekly classes from Youth Recess to Afro Caribbean Dance Fitness to Zumba Gold; there is something for all ages. The Virtual Community Center page lists the times to join the live classes with a link. Our latest addition to the Virtual Community Center is Zoomba Gold (Zumba Gold) and Qi Gong.

## **MML Intern to Assist City**

We are pleased to announce that we have partnered with the Maryland Municipal League (MML) and the University of Maryland School of Public Policy to bring William Donald Schaefer Intern Jordyn Battle on board with the City Manager's Office this summer. Jordyn was one of two interns selected from a competitive process and is a first generation college student. The Schaefer Internship Program pays their interns an hourly rate at no cost to the municipality over the summer (MML assists with placements), then two semesters of stipends upon successful completion of the internship.

Jordyn will be working under the direct supervision of the Deputy City Manager. She will focus on implementing and documenting our Race Equity Program, identifying COVID-19 federal reimbursement opportunities, budget monitoring, best practices research, and other projects of interest.

Jordyn attends the University of Maryland, College Park and is pursuing a double major in Public Policy and Government/Politics. Her concentrations are in Education Policy and Criminal Justice. She is the President of Ignite at Maryland, an on-campus organization that promotes women in politics by engaging female leaders through workshops and discussions with elected officials. Previously, Jordyn was a Congressional Intern and a Maryland General Assembly intern. She is looking forward to gaining experience in local government, particularly around budgeting and fiscal policy. Her first day is May 26.

### **Waiver of Opportunity to Purchase**

The City has waived the opportunity to purchase 707 Hudson Avenue. This property has three units, two have which have been occupied by the property owner and the other unit is vacant.

### **Memorial Day – May 25, 2020**

The City of Takoma Park recognizes Memorial Day and so City services by phone and email will be limited. There will be no yard waste collection on Monday. The Police Department is always open for emergency services.

Memorial Day weekend is traditionally a time of gatherings. Please enjoy the weekend but follow social distancing rules, wear masks when near others and wash your hands! The Washington, DC area remains a COVID-19 hot spot and we need to get the numbers down. Please do your part to keep yourselves and others safe!