



## City of Takoma Park **City Manager Comments**

---

### **Report of February 24, 2021**



#### **February is Black History Month**

##### **Shirley Chisholm**

This week, I am remembering [Shirley Chisholm](#). When she ran for President in 1972, I did not realize how extraordinary it was. She seemed presidential to me. After serving in the New York State Assembly and U.S. Congress, she was the first African-American candidate for a major party's Presidential nomination and the first woman to run for the Democratic Party's Presidential nomination.

#### **COVID-19 Related Information**

We continue to advocate for more, and more fairly-distributed, COVID-19 vaccinations. Go to the [Montgomery County Vaccine Information](#) page to learn more and to pre-register if you are in a category that can do so. You can also call 240-777-2982 to pre-register with the County. There are more ways to sign up for vaccines through the [Maryland Vaccine Website](#). The State is changing how people can register for vaccines as they open new mass vaccination sites.

#### **COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park**

Even though all of the attention is on vaccinations right now, it is still important to have regular COVID-19 testing. Free, no appointment COVID-19 testing is being held on Saturdays at the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue from 10 am to 5 pm. For this and other testing options, please see the information here: [Montgomery County Testing Sites](#).

#### **Update on COVID-19 Response**

Each week, the City's COVID-19 Dashboard is updated. The most recent one is here: [COVID 19 Dashboard](#)

Eviction Information: Staff of the City of Takoma Park, Gaithersburg and Rockville met with Captain Robin Lewis of the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office to review residential eviction information and work together to reduce evictions where nonpayment of rent is the primary issue. There have been almost no evictions over the past year due to the health pandemic. Right now, the courts are only hearing cases involving extreme landlord and tenant cases and not standard failure to pay rent claims or tenant holding over claims. The backlog of cases is approximately 14,000 and the court is developing plans now to return by mid-March or early April. One major point is that for the calendar year 2020, there were 3,022 Eviction Writs

received by the Sheriff's Office; of these there were 235 actual evictions. [A copy of the material](#) shared by Captain Lewis is being posted with these Comments.

This week, Housing Manager Grayce Wiggins and staff of MUSST are meeting one-on-one with residents of Hampshire Tower who have outstanding rent balances.

### **Turning the Page**

Next week, we say goodbye to longtime Takoma Park Maryland Library Director Ellen Arnold Robbins. Later in March, we are excited to welcome Jessica Jones to the position.

After 47 years with the City of Takoma Park Library, Ellen Robbins is retiring and it is hard to imagine the Library without her! Her quiet but strong presence has simultaneously kept things under control but excited children to the pleasures of reading. We will have various ways to say best wishes and I encourage people to send an email with memories of Ellen to:

[KarenM@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:KarenM@takomaparkmd.gov).

And, we welcome Jessica Jones! Ms. Jones currently serves as Branch Manager of the Larry J Ringer Library in the Bryan College Station Public Library System in Bryan, Texas. Prior to that, she was Library Director for the Northern New Mexico College Library in Espanola, New Mexico. She has a BA in History, American Studies from the University of Texas at San Antonio and a Master of Science in Information Science, Library and Information Services from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

As a library director and manager, Jessica has experience and informed perspectives on library trends, technologies and best practices. She has administered on-site and remote database access, and evaluated, procured and configured physical and virtual collections. Her approaches to staffing, materials selection and programming feel to be an excellent fit for Takoma Park. Jessica has also managed and directed through two major library construction projects and has navigated during institutional change.

In introducing herself to Takoma Park, Jessica wrote: "As our country confronts both the urgency of a pandemic and a transformative social movement to amplify marginalized voices, libraries are more important than ever to meet the needs for access, information, stability and engagement. I believe in leading with empathy and compassion and that these traits reflect the best parts of public service."

Jessica begins serving as Library Director on March 29. She will be leading remotely until she moves to the area in May or June.

### **Public Safety Radio Switchover Accomplished Successfully**

Earlier this week, all public safety agencies in Montgomery County switched over to the new P25 radio system. Takoma Park's switchover occurred at 6:30 a.m. Tuesday. There were no

difficulties with the transfer. There was a good amount of preparatory work done before the switch and then there were follow up with the systems once we were sure the process was completed safely.

This \$44 million project will dramatically improve public safety communications in Montgomery County. Some highlights of the upgrades are listed below:

- The number of tower sites doubled from 11 to 22.
- Numerous technical features were added to enhance capabilities and system capacity.
- The new system will provide better coverage, will be more robust, and more reliable.

### **Adventist Healthcare Request to Reduce Hours of Urgent Care**

The Maryland Health Care Commission (MHCC) is considering a request by Adventist Healthcare to reduce the hours of operation of its urgent care center on the site of the former Washington Adventist Hospital from 24 hours per day to 8 am to 8 pm daily. The existence of the urgent care center and its 24-hour operations are conditions of the Certificate of Need that allowed the moving of the hospital to White Oak. The MHCC has asked the City of Takoma Park for its comments on the application by March 3. Consistent with past discussions of the City Council, I will be preparing a letter that explains our disappointment in the consistent removal of health services from Takoma Park. I will also describe the shabby appearance of the facilities at the former hospital site that reduces the number of persons who may wish to receive services there. I will express our desire to see Adventist Healthcare work with the City and the District 20 Delegation to better provide the health care that the community needs, such as mental health services and greater primary care services. The pandemic has shown the critical need for these health services in Takoma Park.

### **In Memorium - Deaths in early February**

Alec Frazier - a resident of Takoma Park and nationally known advocate for disability rights. Alec was autistic and used his platform as a public speaker, lobbyist, and author to promote disability-related issues. unexpected death.

Amelia Randal - a tenant of Hampshire Towers - unexpected death. She was the executive director of Riggs - CTraining an application training company designed to assist first-time users with no knowledge about computer applications. She was also an avid tennis player and develop several relationships through tennis in Takoma Park.