



# CITY OF TAKOMA PARK

## City Manager Comments

**Report for City Council Meeting of September 12, 2018**

### ***Information to Share***

#### **Planning for Hurricane Florence (also posted as a blog earlier today)**

As Hurricane Florence continues to barrel towards the east coast, City staff are preparing for potential local impacts. Public Works crews have been conducting inlet checks, evaluating low lying areas, and ensuring that contract tree maintenance personnel are on hand to assist our staff if necessary. Over the next few days, you may also notice barricades being staged in areas prone to flooding so they can be more readily available if flooding occurs.

The storm is currently projected to impact areas further south than was anticipated up until this morning and then stall once inland. For Takoma Park, there is a lot of uncertainty about how much rain and wind we are likely to see, and when we might see it. Storm impacts may not affect Takoma Park until the beginning to middle of next week, but it will be raining off and on up through then anyway, as it has all summer. Because the ground is already so saturated, it's likely that even a relatively small amount of additional rain will result in localized flooding. With just a small increase in wind, trees may come down causing damage and affecting power lines.

Despite the uncertainty – actually because of it! – it's vital that residents be prepared. Restock your emergency preparedness kit to include food and water sufficient for at least three days, medications, a flashlight, batteries, cash, and first aid supplies. A good source of information on how to be prepared is online at Ready.Gov.

Regarding power outages:

- Plan in advance to charge mobile devices
- Keep fresh batteries available for flashlights, lanterns and battery powered radios
- Have a plan if you need to leave your home
- Call Pepco at 1-877-737-2662 or use their Mobile app
- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed to preserve items
- Use generators only outside in a well ventilated location
- Let someone know from your trusted contacts that you are OK
- Check on your neighbors to make sure they are OK

In the event of flooding:

- DO NOT drive through high water ("Turn Around Don't Drown")
- Have a plan if you need to leave your home
- Be aware of electrical devices and potential of electrocution; water and electricity do not mix, disconnect items if flooding occurs in your home

To report weather related concerns such as downed trees or rising water, please contact the Takoma Park Police Department at 301-270-1100. If it is an emergency situation, call 911. Our Police Department and Public Works staff are prepared and will be monitoring and responding as necessary.

As always, we'll post any weather-related schedule changes on the [City's website](#) and through the [Takoma Park Alert system](#).

### **New Service for Streaming and Archiving Meeting Video**

The City has contracted with Open.Media for streaming and archiving of meeting videos, moving away from our previous service, Granicus. Open.Media is an open source and nonprofit organization with a focus on government transparency. Municipalities of our size are eligible for a 50% matching grant from the Open Media Foundation to use the software. With the grant, we will be paying \$3,000 per year, a savings of \$12,000 per year.

Open.Media partners with YouTube to provide high quality and flexible video streaming of meetings accessible from any device that can access YouTube. We expect this change to resolve issues our residents have sometimes encountered when viewing our meetings online.

As with our prior service, meetings can be indexed by agenda item to make it easy to jump to a particular point. With YouTube, closed captioning of archived meetings in multiple languages is available for free. The agendas and captions are searchable by keyword, and any search matches bring people to the relevant point in the video. Archived meetings can be replayed at slower or accelerated speeds. The City Council online video archive, which goes back to 2006, is being migrated to our Open.Media site.

Although meetings can be viewed live on YouTube, we encourage people to access the video through our website so that the meeting agenda and indexing will be available:

<https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/city-council-video/>

### **Montgomery Planning Development Moratorium on Blair/Northwood Clusters**

Montgomery County has announced a moratorium on residential development in the Montgomery Blair High School cluster and the Northwood High School cluster for FY19. The development moratorium is based on the projected utilization of school facilities. The FY19 Annual School Test results are based on projected enrollment and capacity in Montgomery County public schools for the 2023-24 school year. The moratorium applies to applications for preliminary plan of subdivision (before the Montgomery Planning Board) and could apply to projects that may only require a site plan or building permit where the project is requesting approval of more than three residential units. The moratorium does not apply to commercial development projects.

- For more information on the Annual School Test, the FY 2019 results, placeholders and student generation rates, please visit <http://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/functional-planning/subdivision-staging-policy/annual-school-test/>
- Presentation 6/21/2018 with explanation of the process: <http://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/20180621AnnualSchoolTestPBPres.pdf>
- Subdivision Staging Policy FY 2019 School Test Results Summary: <http://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/FY2019AnnualSchoolTest.pdf>

### **Dorothy's Woods Update**

The City has entered into an agreement with Fairview Investment Fund, the owner of a Deed of Trust secured by the Dorothy's Woods property, to prevent the sale of the property via foreclosure auction and preserve the City's interest in and control over the property. Pursuant to the agreement, the City will pay Fairview \$250,000 in exchange for Fairview's release of the Dorothy's Woods property from the lien of the Deed of Trust and Fairview's dismissal of its foreclosure action against the City, in which it sought to collect approximately \$382,600 from the sale of the property.

The City Council made the decision based on its recognition of the importance of the environmental benefits of the parcel. Approximately \$100,000 of the negotiated amount will be paid for using donations from a group of people who, on their own accord, offered funds with the goal of potentially supplementing City funds in order to maintain City ownership of the parcel. The Council will be discussing where the remainder of the unbudgeted funds will come from, whether through cost savings or from reserves, at a future work session.

### **LED Streetlights – Next Steps**

The City's Sustainability Manager, Gina Mathias, recently posted a blog following the Council's discussion on the planned transition to LED streetlights in the City, which I strongly encourage people to read: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/city-blog/sustainability-and-takoma-parks-streetlights/>.

Next steps in this project are continuing conversations with Pepco to address questions raised at the Council meeting – including testing of lower wattage bulbs – and continuing to gather resident feedback. The lights will not be of the “blue” color tone. The goal is for Council to make a final decision about moving forward with this important project this fall.

Moving to LED lights in Takoma Park will provide significant benefits to our community:

- Having a positive environmental impact equal to what we would get by eliminating 912,000 miles driven by cars, each year – a major Takoma Park step to help slow climate change
- After paying \$112,000 for the transition, saving \$50,000-\$60,000 of taxpayer funds each year
- Increasing public safety by installing more appropriate lighting levels in Takoma Park
- Moving away from our current streetlights that light up the night sky and shine into house windows to ones that are Dark Sky Certified and directed down to sidewalks and streets

### **Takoma Beverage Company – Outdoor Dining in Parking Spaces**

As you may have noticed, Takoma Beverage Company is the first of our local restaurateurs to take advantage of the City's new Outdoor Café Permit, approved by the Council this past summer. The new permit allows businesses like Takoma Bev Co. to offer outdoor seating to patrons wishing to take full advantage of their menu offerings.

The permit, which allows for the use of the City's right of way (which can include on street parking spaces), requires the business to submit a site plan illustrating how the outdoor café will be laid out, provide liability coverage for the City, and be in full compliance with all food and beverage requirements established by Montgomery County. Permits can be issued for three month, six month, or twelve month periods. The outdoor locations will be monitored on a regular basis by City staff to ensure that sidewalks allow for the free flow of pedestrians and that the business is complying with a variety of other local laws including the polystyrene ordinance and the property maintenance code.

Information about the Outdoor Café Permit and process can be found at <https://takomaparkmd.gov/outdoor-cafe-permit/>.

### **Recreation Fall Registration Update**

Registration for Fall recreation classes and programs began on August 15th for residents and August 22nd for non-residents. Within the first few hours, 80% of the Department's classes and programs for Seniors were full with waiting lists. The most popular classes, Gentle Yoga and Tai Chi, both have waiting lists of 15 and 13 respectively. There are waiting lists in 13 of the 19 programs that we offer for our 55+ residents.

### **2017 Election Report Available**

The City Board of Elections report is now available online:

[https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/boards-commissions-and-committees/BOE/Reports/BOE-Report\\_November-2017.pdf](https://documents.takomaparkmd.gov/government/boards-commissions-and-committees/BOE/Reports/BOE-Report_November-2017.pdf). The report includes a good deal of information about the election and voter turnout that may be of interest.

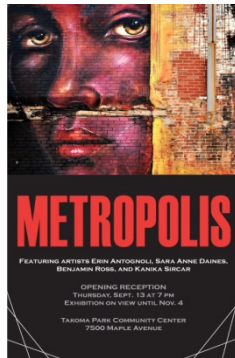
### **HCD Community Service Project – Food and Friends**

On Thursday, September 6, the Housing and Community Development Department staff participated in a community services project at Food and Friends, assembling meals and groceries for individuals with serious life challenging illnesses such as cancer, HIV/AIDS and chronic diabetic. Food and Friends ([www.foodandfriends.org](http://www.foodandfriends.org)), established in 1989, prepares and delivers over 1 million meals to clients throughout the DMV.



## We Are Takoma Cultural Series

September marks the beginning of the 2018-2019 *We are Takoma* series. Organized by the Housing and Community Development Department with the support and assistance of the Arts and Humanities Commission, the series offers a range of monthly film screenings, lectures, poetry readings and performances free of charge to the community. This month we have the opening of a new art exhibit - "Metropolis"- and "Vintage Movie Night," curated by local filmmaker Richard Hall, featuring films about the U.S. Constitution & Government, tomorrow night. Residents will also have an opportunity to experience a diverse selection of music this month with "Through the Wall", a Latino music concert, "Sly Anansi" a mini musical featuring Caribbean dance and African drumming, and classic soul and jazz by local song writer Cicely Bumbray. To learn more about upcoming events, please check the City's website at [takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/arts-and-humanities/](http://takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/arts-and-humanities/) or send an email to [Arts@takomanarkmd.gov](mailto:Arts@takomanarkmd.gov) to sign up for the weekly Arts e-news.



Opening Reception, Thursday, 9/13

Vintage Movie Night; U.S. Constitution & Government

## Public Art

A number of small public art projects are in development and will be popping up throughout the community over the next several months in some of the most unusual of places. Keep an eye out for them and let us know what you think at [Arts@takomanarkmd.gov](mailto:Arts@takomanarkmd.gov).



"Scoochin' Down the Avenue Two by Two!"

### **Positive Feedback Regarding Bike Stations**

We received a kind note from a resident that I wanted to share about the bike stations that were recently placed around the City. It said, "My wife, three kids (aged 12, 10, and 8), and I are avid and regular recreational bicyclists. While rushing to get out of the house to bike to Rock Creek Park's planetarium west past Ziegler Park, west on the Capital Crescent to downtown Bethesda to my in-laws' home, north on Sligo Creek to Wheaton Regional Park, or southeast on Sligo Creek to the amazing new Anacostia River Trail and the Aquatic Gardens, having tools at the City-bike repair stations to make early en-route adjustments to bike seat height (due to kids growing quickly and parent weight gain) and extra air in tires that we should have checked before leaving the house has made our rides so much more pleasant. We continue to appreciate the City's support of a walk-able AND bike-able community."

### **A Visit by Authors Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin**

On Tuesday Evening September 11 – about 60 enthusiasts came to the Library from as far away as Lancaster, PA and Richmond VA to see famed *Artemis Fowl* authors Eoin Colfer and Andrew Donkin, joined by illustrator Giovanni Rigano – presenting their new graphic novel *Illegal* – dealing with the refugee crisis. This was the second of two author programs dealing with the immigrant experience. The first was a presentation by award winning picture book illustrator Yuyi Morales on September 6, who presented her autobiographical picture book *Dreamers*. A representative from Ayuda attended both programs.

### **Kudos**

Kudos to **Captain Tye Collington** who received the Exceptional Police Performance Award earlier this week at the Maryland Chiefs of Police Annual Conference. The award is conferred upon a police officer who has made outstanding contributions toward keeping the community safe by performing an exceptional amount and/or quality of police activity, developing and implementing effective policing strategies or tactics, or conducting a skillful and tenacious investigation of a complex and difficult case. Way to go Captain Collington!

### **Hiring Update**

We are currently advertising for a number of positions, including Deputy Police Chief, Communications Specialist (formerly Media Specialist), Economic Development Manager, Grants Coordinator, Contract CDL Driver (a great opportunity for someone in the community who has a CDL and is looking to make some extra money on an as-needed basis!), Police Officer, Senior Accounting Assistant (Part-time), Sanitation Technician, Recreation Program Assistant, Recreation Program Leader, HR Intern, and Planning Intern.

### **Personal Schedule**

The International City County Management Association (ICMA) Convention will be held in Baltimore, Maryland September 22–26 this year, hosted by the Maryland City County Management Association (MCCMA). The City Manager and Deputy City Manager both try to attend this valuable conference each year. As our small State Association is hosting the conference, we will be heavily involved in coordinating activities, so may be less available during this time than we normally are when attending the conference.