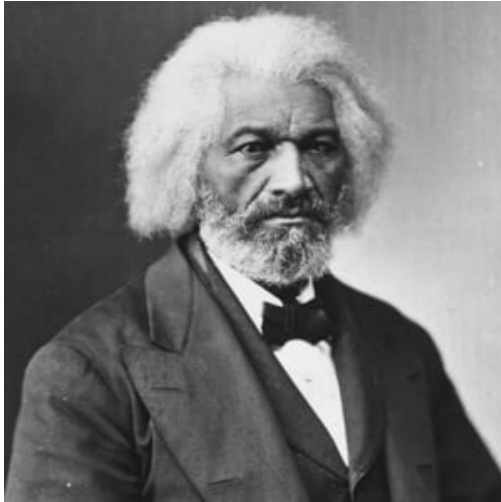




City of Takoma Park City Manager Comments

Report of February 10, 2021

February is Black History Month



Happy Birthday, Frederick Douglass!

Frederick Douglass was born in February of 1818 in Talbot County. He chose to celebrate his birthday on February 14. There is always more to learn about him that is interesting and inspiring. When it reopens, I urge a visit to his Cedar Hill House in Washington, D.C.

I remember a February when my brother Martin was in about second grade in Arlington, Virginia. His teacher asked the class, "What important Americans have birthdays in February?" Martin's hand shot up, and he said, "Frederick Douglass!" The teacher was dismayed he did not say George Washington or Abraham Lincoln and his answer was reported back to my parents.

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 categories eligible for vaccines on the State site often differ by site, and registration availability changes day to day. Right now, it is every person for themselves. Please help neighbors sign up with as many sites as they are eligible for. As the federal roll-out of vaccines gets underway, there may be additional ways to get vaccinations, and hopefully it will be simplified and more equitable. In the meantime, **keep wearing your masks!**

COVID-19 testing in Takoma Park

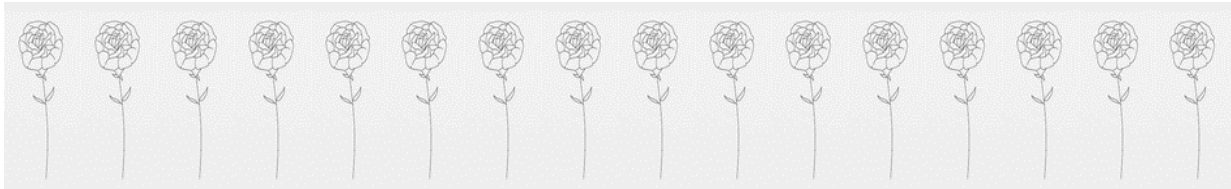
Even though all of the attention is on vaccinations right now, it is still important to have regular COVID-19 testing. Free, no appointment COVID-19 testing is being held on Saturdays at the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue from 10 am to 5 pm. It sounds like the Wednesday testing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

Update on COVID-19 Response

A detailed presentation was provided to the City Council at its Priorities Retreat on January 16. The presentation has been posted on the website: [COVID-19 Response Presentation 01162021](#)

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

Remembering the 33 residents of Zip Code 20912 who have died from COVID-19 as of last week. May their memories be a blessing.



Feed the Fridge Grand Opening!

We are happy to announce that the group [Feed The Fridge](#) has partnered with the City of Takoma Park in setting up a refrigerator outside of the Takoma Park Recreation Center, 7315 New Hampshire Avenue, that is stocked with prepared meals free for people to pick up. We will have a Grand Opening next week, exact date and time still to be determined, but the fridge is stocked now. **If you need a meal, please stop by.**

If you want to support the restaurants who are donating the meals, please go to the [Feed The Fridge](#) link to donate money to the effort. Please note, for health safety reasons, others should not add meals to the refrigerator.



More Wintry Weather is Coming!

Amazingly, we have more winter weather predicted for Wednesday evening into Friday! We will work to have trash, recycling and food waste collections each day, but some delays may occur. We will get the word out if there are any changes. In the meantime, please prepare to stay safe, and shovel if needed, as you are able.

Budget Preparation Work is Underway

While the Takoma Park City Council and residents will not begin reviewing and considering the Proposed FY22 Budget until the first week of April, City staff are hard at work gathering background information, projecting how services will be provided as vaccinations allow for greater in-person classes and assistance, and preparing to have documents, infographics and charts that meet our budget goals of transparency and clear communication.

Meetings of department heads with budget, human resources and city management staff are underway. The purpose of each of these meetings is to identify major budget issues for the department, determine the impact of the pandemic on service delivery and projected costs and revenues, and review the timeline for entry of numbers into the budget system. Often there are services or issues that cross departmental lines that require coordination, or approaches from which multiple staff units can benefit.

It is important to note that one year ago, neither the Deputy City Manager nor the Budget & Accounting Manager were on staff yet, and this is only the second time our Human Resources Director has gone through the City's budget process. And, of course, last year was not typical – the pandemic lockdown occurred right in the middle of the most intense budget prep work.

Staff are to have their first round of proposed capital budget worksheets prepared by February 19 and their operating budget numbers entered into the budget software by February 26. The following week is another round of meetings to review and modify the numbers. At the same time, there will be discussions with Councilmembers and review of revenue information from State and County resources. By mid-March, I will have determined what major components will be included in the proposed budget and what property tax rate will be recommended.

Because of Maryland law, I must advertise a property tax rate that is high enough to accommodate any Council additions or any unanticipated reductions of revenue or increases of expenditures that occur during budget consideration. **The advertised property tax rate can be reduced at the time of budget adoption, but it cannot be increased.**

Presidents Day Holiday

City offices and facilities will be closed on Sunday, February 14 and Monday, February 15 to honor Presidents Day. The Police Department is always open for emergency services.