Dollars and Sense: Approaching Fiscal Year 2020

By Jason Damweber, Deputy City Manager

Developing an annual recommended budget is the single greatest responsibility of a City administrator. It is a complex and ongoing task involving many stakeholders that culminates in the Council’s adoption of a document that reflects their priorities and the difficult decisions and compromises negotiated throughout the process. The annual budget is a tool used to plan for and reflect the balancing of resources with many competing needs.

As we gear up for the thick of budget season, we wanted to share information about the process, highlight challenges we expect to see, and begin engaging residents. After all, in the end, it is YOUR budget!

The Process in a Nutshell

While staff refers to late winter and early spring as “budget season,” the budget process is really ongoing throughout the year. We wrapped up and submitted the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year 2018 in October, the same time as we entered the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2019 and began planning for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20).

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Tree Ordinance, tree canopy, and outreach improvements

By Takoma Park City Councilmembers Cindy Dyballa, Kacy Kostiuk, and Peter Kovar

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The City Council is seeking applicants for a number of boards, commissions and committees. Takoma Park residency is required unless noted below. If you are interested in appointment, please submit the online application: http://bit.ly/committee-application. Feel free to drop by to observe a meeting. Meetings are listed on the City Calendar on the website. Additional information is available at takomaparkmd.gov/boards-commissions.

**COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT (5 vacancies)**

The Committee on the Environment provides guidance and assistance to the City in: (1) improving the environment; (2) protecting the City’s natural resources; (3) increasing the City’s environmental awareness; and (4) developing a comprehensive environmental policy. The Committee meets the first Monday of the month at 7:15 p.m. (1 vacancy)

**ETHICS COMMISSION (2 vacancies)**

The Ethics Commission provides an advisory opinion, investigates, hears, and decides complaints that arise under the Ethics Ordinance, promulgates regulations to accompany the Ethics Ordinance, and administers the Ethics Ordinance. The Commission meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. (2 vacancies)

**RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD (1 vacancy)**

The Recreation Advisory Board advises the City Council on such matters as: (1) programs and services; (2) recreational needs of Takoma Park residents; (3) facilities and equipment; and (4) future plans and programs. The Board meets the first Friday of the month at 6:30 p.m. (1 vacancy)

**ARTS AND HUMANITIES COMMISSION (5 vacancies)**

The Arts and Humanities Commission advises the City Council on the arts and humanities in the community, including the arts in commerce, the arts and humanities in education, the arts in recreation, and the arts in tourism. The Arts and Humanities Commission's activities include: (1) planning for arts; (2) presenting an annual arts budget; (3) awarding grants to individuals and institutions concerned with the arts in the City; (4) making recommendations to the City Council on the arts and humanities in the community; (5) coordinating and promoting the arts; and (6) encouraging cooperation and coordination among all Takoma Park residents. The Arts and Humanities Commission meets on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. (5 vacancies)

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS COMMITTEE (1 vacancy)**

The Emergency Preparedness Committee aids the City in preparing for emergencies and in emergency-related events. The Committee is charged with coordinating and providing for emergency-related activities when called upon; providing for and coordinating emergency activities when called upon; providing an Operations Plan and other supporting documents, maintains, and preserves them. The Committee meets the third Monday of the month at 7 p.m. (1 vacancy)

**BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (1 vacancy)**

The Business and Economic Development Committee assists and advises the City in fostering, encouraging, and developing a sound business and economic environment within the City. The Committee meets the first Tuesday of the month. (1 vacancy)

**PUBLIC SAFETY (2 vacancies)**

The Public Safety Committee of the Takoma Park Police Department assists the City Council in its consideration of matters concerning the police department and public safety. The Committee meets the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. (2 vacancies)

**RECREATION COMMISSION (1 vacancy)**

The Recreation Commission serves the youth of Takoma Park. The Recreation Commission advises the City Council on: (1) planning for recreation; (2) providing for recreation; (3) promoting and fostering recreation; (4) making recommendations to the City Council on recreation; and (5) executing the policies of the City Council relating to recreation. The Recreation Commission meets the last Monday of the month at 7 p.m. (1 vacancy)
Dollars and Sense

With Councilmembers to gather feedback and ideas in preparation for both the upcoming Council Retreat meetings (where the City establishes their priorities, including what they’d like to see in the upcoming budget) and the budget development process.

Looking forward, we’ll have the Council Retreat Meetings, staff working on developing preliminary departmental budgets, revenue projections, and development of a Capital Improvement Plan budget. Using this information coupled with the Constant Yield Tax Rate (more on this later), which we usually learn from the State in mid-February, we develop the City Manager’s Recommended Budget. The Recommended Budget reflects the costs of providing services and programs aligned with the Council’s priorities and the tax rate necessary to fund the work. In other words, where the money comes from and how it will be spent.

From there, Council will have a series of budget work sessions, a budget open house, a public hearing on the Recommended Budget and tax rate, and ultimately will adopt the FY20 budget and tax rate.

What We Know and Expect

Even if we “held the line” on the services and programs the City provides and did absolutely nothing new, the process to develop the budget would still be a challenge. In addition to expected increases in personnel and operating costs we have to project and account for, we also have to respond to changing assessments of home values and what those changes mean for the tax revenue that the City uses to provide services and programs. Additionally, we have to account for potential changes in revenues from sources other than property taxes, like funds received through the County or State. On the expenditure side, there are always changes that must be accounted for and budgeted for.

More on all of this below!

Revenues and the Budget

Revenues to the City come from a variety of sources, including but not limited to:

• Real property taxes: the taxes paid by property owners on the assessed value of their property
• Utility fees: taxes paid by public utilities on their property within the City
• Intergovernmental payments: payments to the City from different levels of government or government agencies, such as grants or reimbursement payments for services provided by the City that would otherwise be provided by the County
• Income taxes: the City’s portion of State-collected taxes applied to taxable income

Figure 2: Fiscal Year 2019 Budgeted Revenues

![Figure 2: Fiscal Year 2019 Budgeted Revenues](image)

Figure 3: Fiscal Year 2019 Budgeted Expenditures

![Figure 3: Fiscal Year 2019 Budgeted Expenditures](image)

Figure 4: FY 2019 General Fund Expenditures by Activity

![Figure 4: FY 2019 General Fund Expenditures by Activity](image)

In the current fiscal year’s budget are derived from real property taxes.

So what do we expect regarding revenues as we head into FY20? At this point it is difficult to say, but we should have a much better idea in late February. While intergovernmental revenues have been flat for some time (we believe we should be receiving much more from the County, but that’s the subject of a different article!) and are relatively easy to project, the City does not receive information on the total impact of changes in assessed property values until February. Around that time, we receive notice of the Constant Yield Tax Rate from the State. The Constant Yield Tax Rate is the tax rate the City would charge in order to receive the same (constant) dollar amount in property tax revenue. In other words, if assessments increase then the Constant Yield Tax Rate would decrease to net the same amount of revenue.

Given the regional trends we have been seeing, it’s probably pretty safe to assume that property values have increased. In fact, in the City of Takoma Park they have increased over 17 percent since FY14. If the trend holds true, then the Constant Yield Tax Rate will be lower than the current tax rate. However, pegging the City’s tax rate to the Constant Yield also means that we wouldn’t bring in enough property tax revenue to cover increased costs to provide services and programs.

Expenditures and the Budget

So now we have a sense of where City funds come from, but how are they spent? A good place to see the types of services and programs the City provides is the page on the City’s website called “City Services: Your Dollars at Work” (takomaparkmd.gov/about-takoma-park/city-services/your-dollars-at-work). If we look at the total budget as we did with revenues above, expenditures break down into the following key areas:

• Personnel: wages and benefits
• Capital outlay: costs for capital items like infrastructure and facility improvements, vehicle replacement, equipment replacement, technology improvements, park development, and stormwater management
• Services and charges: most operating costs other than those for personnel and capital outlay such as contracted services, licensing fees, non-capital small equipment, internal services (telephones, copying, postage), etc.
• Debt service: payments for the principal and interest on loans to the City
• Supplies: costs for office supplies, uniforms, vehicle fuel, construction and road repair materials, ice-melt, etc.
• Other: a catch-all for items that don’t fit neatly into the other categories, such as costs to conduct elections, conferences and training for staff, professional association membership dues, employee recruitment, special events and programs, etc.

If we look at expenditures from just the General Fund (that is, removing special revenues/expenditures provided for a particular purpose, the speed camera fund, and the stormwater management fund), total expenditures drop down to $31,522,928, and break down as indicated in Figure 4.

Something worth noting about these FY19 budgeted expenditures is that Capital Outlay does not typically make up such a large percentage of the budget. It can jump around a lot from year to year depending on what major projects are occurring or major equipment purchases are expected.

Personnel Costs

As noted above, even if we don’t add any staff, service, or programs, we can generally expect our costs to go up some each year. At the time this article was being drafted, it was not clear whether there would be a proposal to add or eliminate any positions. We also were not yet aware of the changes to costs for benefits like employee healthcare, which can fluctuate drastically from year-to-year. What do we know is that our staff members are our greatest assets and personnel costs make up about 49 percent of the City’s total budget, or 58 percent of the General Fund budget.

So...if we assume that we will continue to have 168.86 Full Time Equivalents – the term used to represent the equivalent of the number of employees working full time – and hold the cost of benefits constant, we can expect to see a decrease in personnel costs (wages) of somewhere in the ballpark of about three percent. This is a blend of a base increase and some merit pay. A three percent increase, which is in line with increases for local government workers nationally, equals some where in the highball of $548,000. On top of that increase, it is reasonable to expect that employer costs for benefits will also increase slightly, though it is difficult to guess.
Public Works winter weather response plan

Public Works staff are preparing to respond to whatever winter sends to Takoma Park’s 34 miles of city-maintained roads, as well as walkways and sidewalks around city parks and public buildings. City staff track potential storms, and prepare to respond as soon as the snow starts to fall. Crews start plowing operations whenever one inch of snow is on the ground and are prepared to work 12-hour shifts. The city uses Public Works Right of Way staff as primary plow drivers, and sanitation drivers fill in the second shift, if needed. When significant snowfall occurs, city trash and recycling collection may be canceled to allow sanitation drivers to pitch in with road clearing. The city’s Garden Division staff clears public sidewalks at city parks and public buildings during daylight hours, with assistance as needed from temporary laborers. Public Works encourages businesses and residents to do their part to clear snow and ice from the sidewalks adjoining their property.

Takoma Park’s winter weather response plan divides the city into five snow removal zones, each with an assigned response vehicle. Within each zone, “primary streets” are those with the most traffic, and those that connect neighborhoods. “Secondary streets” are shorter, with fewer homes, and include courts, alleys and dead ends. The map below identifies the Snow Zones and the secondary streets. City crews first clear primary streets then proceed to secondary streets. The city’s goal is to create two travelable lanes on each primary street within a 12-hour shift, if the snow fall is six inches or less. If the snow fall is more than six inches, the expectation is to make one travelable lane over a 12-hour period. Snow removal equipment remains in service around the clock until all the roads are cleared. To see a map of snow removal routes, go to www.takomaparkmd.gov/snow.

Often, when severe weather is on the way, the city begins anti-icing procedures by applying a sand salt mixture or liquid de-icing chemicals to the street surface. Flowing begins once snowfall has accumulated to one inch on the street. If the storm produces only sleet and ice, the city treats roadways with sand and salt. Snow and ice response service on some streets within the City is performed by outside agencies. The State Highway Administration is responsible for clearing Carroll Avenue, Ethan Allen Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, Philadelphia Avenue and Piney Branch Road. Sligo Creek Parkway is a Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission roadway and snow ice response is performed by Montgomery County. However, city plows will assist with snow removal on these streets in the course of their work to clear city streets.

The Public Works Department has developed a few helpful tips for residents to follow during a snow event:

- Staying connected: Conditions leading to a declared snow emergency include the expectation of a significant quantity of snow or an ice event. The city manager may declare a snow emergency and will announce the status through Takoma Park Alert, local media, and on the city’s website, Facebook and Twitter. The following restrictions go into effect during declared snow emergencies:
  - Residents are strongly encouraged to park vehicles in their driveways whenever possible. Fewer cars on the street allow city plows to more quickly and safely clear the roads.
  - If you must park on the street, make sure to park your car as close to the curb as possible, and maintain a distance of at least 25 feet from an intersection.

Clearing sidewalks. Residents are responsible for clearing the public sidewalks adjacent to their property. Keep sidewalks clear of snow and ice by regularly shoveling accumulated snow during and after a snow event. Please DO NOT shovel large amounts of snow into the street when clearing your driveway, lead walk or sidewalk. The best place to pile snow is on the lawn or grassy areas. Piles of snow shoved out into the street can cause problems for passing vehicles.

Being a good neighbor and helping others in need: Reach out and ask neighbors if they need assistance with keeping their sidewalk clear. Many residents are physically unable to shovel snow and ice and are hesitant to request help from neighbors or friends. Your thoughtfulness can make a big difference to someone who might otherwise be unable to cope. If you have any questions before or during a winter event, please contact the Public Works Department at 301-891-7633.
Rough-Cut Documentaries Screening
Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
7500 Maple Avenue
Free event

Be part of the creative process as local nonprofit Docs In Progress shares two new rough-cut documentaries where the audience will provide feedback to the film directors. Tom Reitter’s North Star Calling follows a small band of hearty seniors, who set out to bicycle more than 2,700 miles from Montana to Alaska. Angela Pinaglia’s Life in Synchro explores the little-known sport of synchronized ice skating and efforts to include it in the Winter Olympics. There is a small but dedicated following of determined girls and women (and a few men) who carry the banner for the sport, including a teenager on the hunt for the elusive national championship and a 65-year-old woman who isn’t quite ready to retire her skates.

Three Artists Explore the Beauty Buried in Decay
Opening Reception
Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
Free event

In our consumer-oriented society that disposes of everything that isn’t new, decay is a scary word, conjuring images of obsolescence, advancing age and death. But decay can be beautiful as shiny metal rusts and abandoned buildings crumble, leaving relics transformed by time and neglect. Three local artists will explore these themes in The Beauty of Decay, a new group exhibition in the galleries at the Takoma Park Community Center.

Kristina King creates handmade paper, large-scale drawings, installations and animation to explore themes of decay, fragility, turbulence and the ephemeral. Her ragged handmade paper pieces are riddled with holes and frayed edges, resembling a topographical map of mountain ranges or pock-marked craters on the moon.

King earned a BFA in studio art from Denison University and has shown her work at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center, the Alleghany Arts Council, Willow Street Gallery and other venues. She is currently the gallery director at Georgetown Frame Shoppe.

David Mosher photographs himself in deteriorating and abandoned buildings, evoking scenes of melancholy and regret. By sharing very personal and psychological scenes, he engages viewers in exploring their own emotional responses to decay. He is inspired by artists Man Ray, Robert Mapplethorpe and Francesca Woodman, who used self-portraiture to communicate emotions and project different personal identities.

Drawing from personal loss and her own struggles with depression, Chrissy Wilkin’s paintings depict her psychological journey through grief towards acceptance. Her work offers a mandala or spiritual symbol that illustrates how life comes full circle as we continue to live in spirit even after death. She uses different mediums in her work, including marker, charcoal and bleach.

Wilkin has been teaching art since she was 16 years old when she took a mission trip to Haiti to make art with local children. She continues to teach art internationally at summer camps and locally as a teacher at Eleanor Roosevelt High School in Greenbelt, Md. She is a member of the Hyattsville Arts Alliance and the arts coordinator for the New Deal Café, and she displays her work at various venues in Prince George’s County.

Untitled (#77) by Kristina King

Above, Poppy by Chrissy Wilkin
At right, Yellow Room by David Mosher

Third Thursday Poetry Reading
Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center Auditorium
7500 Maple Avenue
Free event

Local poets Anne Becker, Katherine Lorri, Cliff Lynn and Elizabeth Rhode will read their original work with introductions by Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O’Toole. The audience can meet the poets at a reception following the reading.

3rd Thursday Poetry
RECREATION

YOUTH

ART

Clay for Kids
In this class, children will receive instruction on how to utilize a variety of techniques ( coil, pinch and slab work) to create one-of-a-kind sculptures and vessels out of clay. Caregiver participation required for children ages 4-6. There is a $15 materials fee (per child) due to the instructor on the first day of class. Instructor: Caroline Mackinnon
Takoma Park Community Center Art Studio
7500 Maple Avenue 4–13 years
6 Week Sessions
Mondays: January 21, February 18
Wednesdays: January 24–February 13
Time: 4–5 p.m.
Resident: $130 / Non-resident: $150

CAMPs

Dribble, Pass & Shoot Basketball Spring Camp
Emphasizing individual improvement is one of the guiding philosophies of camp. Campers will be provided with excellent coaching, which allows each participant to develop a sense of pride and individual accomplishment. The level of instruction will be adjusted to fit the individual needs of each participant. Pack a non-perishable lunch each day. Before and After Care are available for the week at an additional cost. Instructor: Joe Dobkins
Takoma Park Recreation Center Gymnasium
7315 New Hampshire Avenue 5–12 years
3 Day Session
Wednesday–Friday
April 17–April 19
9 a.m.–4 p.m.
$120

DANCE

Pre Ballet
Pre Ballet for ages 3–6 emphasizes learning basic ballet vocabulary, movement patterns and musicality in a creative movement. By introducing students to the basic shapes, positions, postures and traditions of classical ballet, the Pre-Ballet curriculum will enhance both cognitive and physical development at this important time. Instructor: Edurama
Takoma Park Community Center Dance Studio
7500 Maple Avenue 3–6 years
8 Week Session
Sundays, 3–3:45 p.m.
January 6–March 10
(No class 2/10 & 2/17)
Resident: $85 / Non-resident: $95

TEENS

ART

Nail Flare
Have you ever wanted to be able to do your nails and have them look like they were professionally done? If so, this is the class for you. There are a number of different nail art techniques you can use to create unique designs on your natural nail. This class will teach you proper nail maintenance as well as design techniques such as: stamping, sponging, dotted, decals and drawing. Registration is required.
Takoma Park Community Center
Art Studio
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 6–12
Fridays, January 17–March 7
3:30–5 p.m.
Free

DANCE

Just Dance
A series of music and creative movement classes for teens. These classes will celebrate your natural ability to move in an expressive way. Learn fundamental hip-hop moves, including basic body isolations, precision, performance quality and choreography. Build teamwork and bonding skills through dance. Instructor: Ife Taylor
Takoma Park Community Center Dance Studio
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 6–12
Saturdays, January 19–March 9
4–6 p.m.
Resident: $5 / Non-resident: $10

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

College Preparation Workshops
These workshops are designed to facilitate an understanding of the college planning process and high school preparation needed for the college application season. Topics will include related testing, selection and data for consideration, paying for college overview, how to conduct an organized scholarship search, maximizing out-of-school time activity and a successful transition.
Takoma Park Community Center Hydrangea Room
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 6–12
Tuesdays, January 22–March 19
4–5 p.m.
Resident: $10 / Non-resident: $15

MULTI MEDIA

Photography 101
We are constantly taking photos, but they don’t come out the way we imagined. In this class, learn the intro to photography as an art form and step up your photography game. The class will cover the following topics: shooting manual on your DSLR, rules of composition, portrait photography, object photography, landscape photography, posing 101, editing your photos, natural light vs. non natural light, composition and turning your phone into a camera. Instructor: Vinny Mwano
Takoma Park Community Center Multi Media Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 6–12
8 Week Session
Tuesdays, January 22–March 19
4–5 p.m.
Resident: $75 / Non-resident: $85

TRIPS

Black College Expo
Decisions, decisions, and more decisions! Who has the best academics? Who has the best athletics? Should I stay on campus? How far is comfortable enough for me to travel? Jump on board as we visit the Black College Expo at Bowie State University. Register in advance space is limited. Transportation is provided. The bus will depart the TP Community Center at 8:30 a.m. sharp.
Takoma Park Community Center Teen Lounge (meeting location)
7500 Maple Avenue
Grades 9–12
Saturday, March 16
8:30 a.m.–5 p.m.
Free

Dave N Busters and Movie Trip
Join the Teen Program as we head to the movies, and afterwards we’ll go over to Dave RECREATION Page 7

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Takoma Park News January 2019
Helping Hands Helping Others

By Michael Kurland, Recreation Supervisor

The City of Takoma Park Recreation Department is sponsoring the Empty Bowls Project for the second year in a row. Recreation staff implemented this program after seeing the positive impact from the same program in New Orleans. The Empty Bowls Project is an international, grassroots, crafts-based effort to end hunger. It started as a one-time luncheon to raise money for a school district food drive in the fall of 1990. Today, events are held around the world and have raised tens of millions of dollars for organizations fighting hunger. The events have also raised public awareness about hunger and provided students of all ages the chance to work for positive change in their own communities and beyond.

This year a professional potter from the Czech Republic, Martin Koller, handcrafted the bowls. Various youth in the Recreation Department’s Afternoon Addition and teen after school programs studied the 40 bowls that Martin made. Martin lives in Takoma Park with his wife, Linka, who is on a sabbatical studying peer isolation in school. Martin loves the community and being here with his wife, but he felt there was a void in his life; he was bored. Many in the community told him that he needed to talk to Alice Sims so that he could do his potter’s work while his wife is studying or in class.

Alice told Martin about the bowls project. He was very interested and wanted to know how he could be a part of this project. “Anything to give back to the community and get involved,” Koller said. Alice suggested that she needed someone with potter’s skills to make the bowls. Martin said that is right up his alley, and he could make all 40 needed. Alice was astounded and said that is great but wanted to know how long it would take him. Martin said he could do all 40 in 2 hours. After Alice picked her jaw up from the floor, she said absolutely he could do it.

Alice told Martin the project. He’s interested and wanted to know how he could be a part of this project. “Anything to give back to the community and get involved,” Koller said. Alice suggested that she needed someone with potter’s skills to make the bowls. Martin said that is right up his alley, and he could make all 40 needed. Alice was astounded and said that is great but wanted to know how long it would take him. Martin said he could do all 40 in 2 hours. After Alice picked her jaw up from the floor, she said absolutely he could do it.

Qi Gong – Minding Our Business
Minding Our Business is a strategy for managing work related stress. Using various mindfulness and Qi Gong practices will increase performance, creativity and health. Mindful practices are offered as “Take Fives” - brief breaks that can be incorporated throughout the day by anyone, anywhere at any time. Minding Our Business requires no special equipment and no dedicated space. Simple, effective and energizing practices lessen the impact of stress and enhance well-being. These sessions are spread over 10 weeks to allow for deep learning and experience. Supporting material will be sent electronically to awaken and guide the students. All that is required is an open mind and a willingness to experiment. Instructor: Patrick Smith

A challenging workout within a quick hour, this total body program includes a circuit of drills, such as jumping jacks, running, push-ups, squats, crunches and weight training. Students are required to bring their own mats. Instructor: KJ Total Fitness

A powerful cardio workout. Incorporates interval training (HIIT), a form of high intensity interval training that focuses on a short period of intense effort followed by a recovery period. The class is designed to produce an effective cardiovascular and body conditioning workout. This class can be modified to accommodate all levels of fitness. Instructor: Laura Stewart

A challenging workout within a quick hour, this total body program includes a circuit of drills, such as jumping jacks, running, push-ups, squats, crunches and weight training. Students are required to bring their own mats. Instructor: KJ Total Fitness

A powerful cardio workout. Incorporates interval training (HIIT), a form of high intensity interval training that focuses on a short period of intense effort followed by a recovery period. The class is designed to produce an effective cardiovascular and body conditioning workout. This class can be modified to accommodate all levels of fitness. Instructor: Laura Stewart

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The Recreation Department is looking for businesses to partner with for its Summer Youth Employment Program. Be the memorable business that gives a teen a first job and teaches important life lessons that will last forever. Limited spaces are available for this informational interest meeting. RSVP by email to leiciam@takomaparkmd.gov or call 301-911-2783.

2019 Business Interest Meeting (SYEP)

The Recreation Department is looking for businesses to partner with for its Summer Youth Employment Program. Be the memorable business that gives a teen a first job and teaches important life lessons that will last forever. Limited spaces are available for this informational interest meeting. RSVP by email to leiciam@takomaparkmd.gov or call 301-911-2783.

Takoma Park Community Center
Hydrangea Room
7500 Maple Avenue
16 years and older
8 Week Session
Tuesdays, January 8-February 26
No class on February 19
7:30–8 p.m.
$85
Drop-in: $15

Total Body Tabata
A form of high intensity interval training (HIIT), Tabata consists of eight rounds of ultra-high-intensity exercises in a specific 20 seconds on, 10 seconds off interval. This class enhances upper body, lower body, balance, core and flexibility. Just a short workout will leave you sweaty, full of energy and ready to take on your packed schedule. Instructor: Kimberly James

Takoma Park Community Center
Dance Studio
7500 Maple Avenue
16 years and older
5 Week Session
Tuesdays, January 15-February 5
7-8 p.m.
$85

Zumba
Come out and enjoy an hour of Zumba. Zumba is a total workout, combining all elements of fitness with cardio, muscle conditioning, balance and flexibility. Zumba takes the work out of workout by mixing low and high intensity moves. The class will incorporate Latin music that will easily move you through your workout. Instructor: Laura Stewart

Takoma Park Community Center
Gymnasium
7315 New Hampshire Avenue
16 years and older
5 Week Session
Tuesdays, January 15-February 5
7-8 p.m.
$85

Photography 101
We are constantly taking photos, but they don’t come out the way we imagined. In this class, learn the intro to photography as an art form and step up your photography game. The class will cover the following topics: how to shoot manual on your DSLR, rules of composition, portrait photography, object photography, landscape photography, posing, 101, how to edit your photos, natural light vs. non natural light, composition and turning your phone into a camera. Instructor: Vinny Mwano

Takoma Park Community Center
Multi Media Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
19 years and older
5 Week Session
Tuesdays, January 8-February 26
7:30–10 p.m.
$85

Mindful Movement
What happens when you combine meditation, dance and yoga together? Mindful Movement! This class is for dancers and non-dancers alike. Using creative movement exercises from different dance styles, we will explore and observe, through sensing and moving, our mind-body connection. Creative Movement is about freedom to the wonderful world of your body. Expect free dancing, some technical elements of dance, (e.g. African, jazz, contemporary), and some improvisation, meditative stretching, and lots of insight and fun Instructor: Beth Mwano

Takoma Park Community Center
7500 Maple Avenue
16 years and older
6 Week Session
Saturdays, January 12–March 2

IQ: 12:45-2 p.m.
Resident: $15 / Non-resident: $15

FITNESS

Ladies Boot Camp
A challenging workout within a quick hour, this total body program includes a circuit of drills, such as jumping jacks, running, push-ups, squats, crunches and weight training. Students are required to bring their own mats. Instructor: KJ Total Fitness

Takoma Park Recreation Center
Gymnasium
7315 New Hampshire Avenue
16 and older
8 Week Session
Tuesdays and Thursdays
January 8-February 8
6:30–7:30 p.m.
$85
Drop-in: $15

Resident: $75 / Non-resident: $85

DANCE

Mindful Movement
What happens when you combine meditation, dance and yoga together? Mindful Movement! This class is for dancers and non-dancers alike. Using creative movement exercises from different dance styles, we will explore and observe, through sensing and moving, our mind-body connection. Creative Movement is about freedom to the wonderful world of your body. Expect free dancing, some technical elements of dance, (e.g. African, jazz, contemporary), and some improvisation, meditative stretching, and lots of insight and fun Instructor: Beth Mwano

Takoma Park Community Center
Dance Studio
16 years and older
6 Week Session
Saturdays, January 12–March 2

Multi Media Lab
2019 Business Interest Meeting (SYEP)

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Meeting (SYEP)
Friends Fortnightly Book Club to read *Heroes of the Frontier*

*Heroes of the Frontier* by Dave Eggers will be the featured novel of the Friends Fortnightly Book Club, which will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 9 at 7:30 p.m. in the Azalea Room of the Takoma Park Community Center. The discussion will be facilitated by Tim Rahn.

The novel tells of the adventures—and misadventures—of a mother and her two young children as they travel through Alaska in the midst of a cataclysm of wildfires. Eggers is often spot on in his observations of parenting, consumerism, climate disaster and a host of other contemporary topics. In the book in *The Guardian*, Alex Preston wrote: “I can’t remember the last time I read a novel that was so relentlessly uncynical, where the note was one of such radical good faith… I think Eggers is trying to tell us something about contemporary American life, about the meaning of courage in a world where danger appears only on television. Josie (the book’s heroine) says near the end of the novel that all she wants for her children is that they learn to be brave. America has lost its bravery, Eggers tells us, and it can be found in nature, in open spaces, in shaking off the trappings of mall life and the media and consumerism. It’s hardly a novel message, but Eggers renders it with such passion and good humor, and describes the ‘land of mountains and light’ in such stirring, luscious prose, that we can’t help but feel its truth anew.”

All are invited to attend the Fortnightly book club discussions. Copies of *Heroes of the Frontier* are available for checkout in the Library.

**Caldecott Club culminates with choices and celebration**

All last year, our Caldecott Club read and discussed possible Caldecott contenders, and on Jan. 7, we’ll make our final choices for our mock 2019 Caldecott Medal. The award is given annually by the American Library Association to the creator of the best-illustrated book for children. It’s a prize the librarians at TPPL love to give, and it’s always interesting to see how close our Caldecott Club comes to the actual winner, which will be announced on Jan. 28. After that, it’s time to celebrate! So, on Monday, Feb. 11, our Caldecott Club program will focus on reading the actual winner of the 2019 Caldecott Medal and any Caldecott Honor books that are chosen. At our program, we’ll have cake and lemonade, gluten-free and nut-free cookies also will be available. Please join us for this gala evening! (And for adult fans of children’s books, you’re invited to our fifth annual Mock Caldecott for Adults on Saturday, Jan. 12 from 1–4 p.m.)

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**First author event of 2019 with Lynne Kelly**

Our first author event of 2019 takes place on Tuesday, Feb. 5 at 7:30 p.m. when kids’ novelist Lynne Kelly presents her new book, *Song for a Whale*. In this novel, Kelly tells the story of Iris, a deaf girl who develops a special connection with a whale. Publishers Weekly noted that “this finely crafted novel affectinglly illuminates issues of loneliness, belonging, and the power of communication,” while Booklist said: “The strength of the book is its strong portrayal of Iris as a Deaf girl in a hearing world and an intelligent 12-year-old in healthily single-minded pursuit of her goal.” Politics & Prose will be selling copies of Kelly’s book at our event, but the program is free and no purchase is required.

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**CALENDAR**

**WinterQuest Wrap-Up Party is this month.**

All WinterQuest participants are invited to our wrap-up party on Monday, Jan. 14 at 7:30 p.m. We’ll talk about the WinterQuest story, discuss favorite books, and end with cupcakes and lemonade. In addition, participants will be able to choose a new book or two to take home and keep. Registration encouraged so we can be sure to have enough cupcakes; to register, please go to www.tinyurl.com/tppl-winterquest-wrapp-up-party.

**Books to Action Book Club meets next month.**

Our Books to Action: Social Justice Book Club for kids and families will meet on Saturday, Feb. 9 at 3 p.m. to read and discuss books about kindness and about people who have made the world a better place.

**Winter Quest Wrap-Up Party**

Join us as we read and celebrate the actual winners of the 2019 Caldecott Medal! Cake and lemonade will be served.

**Fairy Tale Party, Saturday, Feb. 16, 2-4 p.m.**

Come in your fairy tale finery and enjoy some tales, crafts and snacks.
Seizing the opportunity for community through the arts

By Rick Henry

A $5,000 Community Grant award from the City of Takoma Park will help a local arts organization further advance its vision for creating ‘healthy families.’

The grant, awarded to Carpe Diem Arts Inc., based in Silver Spring and the Eastern Shore of Maryland, will fund the ‘Healthy Families Parent Support Project’ and will support programs for residents of the Essex House apartment complex on Maple Avenue in Takoma Park and neighbors in nearby multi-family and single-family residences.

“This project will be a bridge to connect members of this very diverse community with each other within the community, to promote civic engagement through guided discussions, memorable shared experiences and mutual support,” said Denise Jones, project manager for the program.

Carpe Diem’s mission is to create opportunities for people of all ages and walks of life to participate in visual, literary and performing arts activities by developing multigenerational and multicultural community events with the goal of building community, strengthening education, celebrating diversity and encouraging creative expression.

To that end, the organization first began implementing arts programs three years ago at Essex House Apartments and Park Montgomery Apartments in Silver Spring in partnership with owners Community Preservation and Development Corp and Montgomery County Collaboration Council through a 21st Century Learning Grant funded afterschool program, the African Cultural Arts and Education (“ACE”) Academy. According to Jones, the reactions to ACE were overwhelmingly positive, and she and other program facilitators made an effort to capture them.

“WE liked learning about our families and seeing and hearing the support offered from you and each other,” said Patience Aloth. Such enthusiasm sparked Williams and Aloth and other adults who participated in ACE to approach Jones and others involved in the program and ask for additional programs.

“They were ‘thirsty’ for this engagement,” Jones said. “The parents specifically asked for assistance with developing a sustainable Parent Support Group.”

So busy Graham, founder of Carpe Diem Arts, and Denise Jones applied for the community grant, and with it secured, the Healthy Families project will go forward and build upon that previous programming. There are several components offered to achieve the project goals, Jones said, including:

- Parent Engagement Workshops to help parents learn, share and practice tools to strengthen families, improve school and community engagement;
- Parent Support Group: Quilting Conversations to create a sustainable parent support group by offering a time and place to share stories and experiences and provide mutual support and resources;
- House Concerts and a Community Sing to provide opportunities for residents to host a series of musical performances and special events and invite neighbors from the community to promote connection and networking opportunities through memorable shared experiences; and
- Workshops on Healthy Eating on a sustainable budget to strengthen family engagement around meal times.

In addition, Jones said Carpe Diem is seeking additional funding, so the organization can still deliver “Dance for Fun and Fitness” classes, which are led by professional dancers/teaching artists and promote cross-cultural engagement through learning together dance from other cultures.

“We are also endeavoring to fund a life skills program for middle school girls, as this is a particularly challenging time in their development,” she said.

Jones said that the success of, and interest in, the type of cultural and community program offered through the Healthy Families’ project, showcases not only the benefits of bringing programs to where people live, but to connecting them to the wider community in general.

“We are very excited with the initial reception and know that we are helping people access the community connections they hoped for in choosing Takoma Park to be their home,” she said.

RECREATION

Photography – Intermediate

It’s time to pick up the camera you gave up on. Learn how to improve your DSLR Skills and better utilize your camera. In this class learn how to master your DSLR. The instructor will give you a set of formulas that will allow you to use photography as an art form and help you step up your photography game. Instructor: Vinny Mwano

Takoma Park Community Center
Multi Media Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
19 and older
8 Week Session
Mondays, January 7-February 11
(No class 1/21 & 2/18)
6:30–7:30 p.m.

Resident: $85 / Non-resident: $105

Video Production and Editing

From production techniques to how to properly videotape with any device and techniques of editing, learn the art of video production. Instructor: Issac Aarem

Takoma Park Community Center
Multi Media Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
16 years and older
5 Week Session
Thursdays, January 10-February 7
6–8 p.m.

Resident: $150 / Non-resident: $180

SPORTS

Adult Coed Volleyball League

The Takoma Park Coed Volleyball League is a new, fun and exciting recreational program for competitive adults of all skill levels. Teams will play games weekly. Games will be played with

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Students participate in the African Arts, Culture and Education (ACE) Academy.

EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

Computer Basics

This three-week course will introduce people with little to no experience to basic skills, such as sending and receiving email, internet searching and using a word processor to compose letters, etc. You need a Takoma Park Library card to access the computers. Registration with the Takoma Park Recreation Department is required. Instructor: Anne Leveque

Takoma Park Community Center
Computer Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
55 years and older
3 Week Sessions
Wednesdays, January 30-February 13
10 a.m.–12 pm

$10 (Plus a Takoma Park Library Card)

Computer Extras

Take your computer skills to the next level. In these three classes, experiment with social media and master the calendar and other computer/smart device apps. You need a Takoma Park Library card to access the computers. Registration with the Recreation Department is required. Instructor: Anne Leveque

Takoma Park Community Center
Computer Lab
7500 Maple Avenue
55 years and older
3 Week Sessions
Wednesdays, March 6-20
10 a.m.–12 pm

$10 (Plus a Takoma Park Library Card)

FITNESS

Cardio Groove Classes

This class offers high-energy, fast paced, low-impact Aerobics to get the heart pumping and feet moving quickly. Followed by a cool down and stretch. Instructor: Nancy Nickell

Takoma Park Community Center
Dance Studio
7500 Maple Avenue
55 years and older
12 Week Session
Mondays, January 7-March 25
(No class 1/21 & 2/18)
11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m.

Free

Heart and Core

Move to the high heat energy to pump up the heart rate followed by 20 minutes of a Pilates core workout to strengthen the area from shoulders through hips. Class members should bring their own mats. This is a free class; however, registration is required. Instructor: Nancy Nickell

Takoma Park Recreation Center
Gymnasium
7505 North Hampshire Avenue
55 years and older
12 Week Session
Saturday, January 5-March 23
9:15–10:15 a.m.

Free

SPORTS

Tennis Fun & Fitness

This class blends exercise with learning or reviewing tennis skills utilizing special equipment or indoor play. All equipment provided, but you can bring your own racket. Instructor: Coach Sj

Takoma Park Recreation Center
Gymnasium
7505 North Hampshire Avenue
55 and older
12 Week Session
Thursdays, January 3-March 21
12–1 p.m.

Free
Winter Preparedness Check-up

By Claudine Schweber, Co-Chair, Emergency Preparedness Committee

Have you done this before? Did you receive a healthy report? Just like the annual medical check-up, it’s time for the annual Winter Preparedness Check-Up (WPC). How well prepared are you to manage the snow, icy roads, freezing temperatures and rain, power outages, or school/business closings? Can you contact kids in school or have them reach you? Can you help elderly relatives, neighbors or someone who doesn’t speak English? Just like checking your blood pressure, heart rate, weight and medications with the doctor or getting the car tuned up, here’s a winter safety check-up list.

Indoors at home
If you must shelter in place, you should have:

• 3 days’ worth of supplies (Go Bag)
  • Water for 3-6 days (about a gallon per person per day)
  • Non-perishable food that doesn’t require refrigeration or cooking
  • Can opener that’s hand operated
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

• Lighting and news source
  • Flashlights with working batteries and/or a lantern
  • Portable radio battery-operated, solar-powered, or hand-crank radio
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

• Health support
  • Prescription medication, sufficient for at least a week;
  • Medical professionals’ contact list
  • Copies of health insurance information, medical records, health documents
  • Phone/contact information for nearest hospital & emergency personnel
  • First aid kit
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

Outside your home
If you have to leave your house or apartment for several days, you will need:

• Go Bag with supplies
  • A few games, books, puzzles to keep busy if internet is down
  • Warm clothing and complete change of clothes/underwear; sturdy shoes
  • External contacts list; list of medications, cell phone and charger
  • To sign up for the TPPD House Check Program if you are going away 4-30 days, call the Takoma Park Police Department at 301-270-1100. You must do this several days in advance.
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

Communication and contact information
To establish or maintain communication during an emergency, you will need:

• Emergency contact list with identifier (such as cousin, neighbor) and easily accessible with phone/email info*
  • Out of area emergency contacts (name, relationship, contact info)*
  • Cell phone charged before the storm and/or a portable charger (ready for use)
  • Paper and pen/pencil
  • Out of area emergency contacts (name, relationship, contact info)*
  • Mobile phone or other contact list
*Be sure to tell these people they are on your list!
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

Assistance for the elderly, disabled and non-English speakers
You should have:

• Support for caregivers as well as the elderly
• Mobility help for those needing wheel chairs and/or special medical equipment
• Contact information for sign language interpreters or translators
*Reminder: Through the CARE Program, The Takoma Park Police Department will call registered residents who are alone or have special needs. To sign up, call 301-270-1100.
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

School information
Make sure that you have:

• The school’s emergency number
• Information about when the school becomes an overnight shelter
• School’s emergency number
• A way to contact your child and for him/her to contact you
• Information and authorization for the school if someone else needs to pick up the student
*Despite our preference for technology, keep a paper copy of this information, so it’s visible and accessible.
Status: Yes ____ No_____ Notes__________________________________

Did you pass your check-up? Don’t wait! Remember being prepared prevents being scared.
It’s easy to contact us at tpcs@takomaparkmd.gov or 301-891-7126. And join us at “Talk of Takoma” WOW/DL P 94.3 FM at 1 p.m. on the first Sunday of the month for “Dear Beatrice Prepared.”
Operating Costs

Similar to personnel costs, it’s reasonable to assume that even if we continue to provide the same level of service and programs, the costs for doing so will increase. This is largely due to increasing prices for things like supplies, small equipment, contracted services, etc. That said, we are always looking for efficiencies, and occasionally are able to spend less than previous years on operating costs in certain areas. We also always have the option of discontinuing certain services or eliminating programs, but that could mean taking away something that residents have come to greatly appreciate or even rely on. This is all part of the annual balancing act. When we know more about Council’s expectations and any new priorities, departmental budget requests, and the Constant Yield, we’ll have a better sense of the extent to which we’ll need to hold the line, or change, eliminate, or add services and programs.

Debt Service

Debt service is one of the few areas where we have a good sense of what costs will be in the future. When we lock in a particular interest rate and can plan for spreading costs out over the term of the loan. For that reason, we don’t expect any surprises regarding our debt service payments on outstanding loans. Those loans include bonds used to pay for major Community Center renovations, construction of the Public Works facility, major transportation projects (Ethan Allen Gateway Streetscape and Flower Avenue Green Street), and planned Library Renovations.

Capital Outlay

As noted above, “capital outlay” refers to costs for capital items like infrastructure and facility improvements, vehicle replacement, equipment replacement, technology improvements, park development, and stormwater management. Most of the items in the “Capital Improvement Program” are things that we have known for at least a few years we would need to purchase.

For some items like vehicles and equipment replacement we may be able to realize some savings in the short term by pushing expenditures out if, say, a vehicle is in better shape than expected at the time we planned to replace it. On the “flip-side,” sometimes vehicles and equipment may not last as long as we’d hoped. And for capital items involving construction, cost estimates developed one year could change significantly by the time a project goes out to bid. We have seen this recently as fiscal conditions have caused delayed construction, and increased construction costs, which have affected the City’sFi

The good news here is that we ended FY18 with a larger unassigned fund balance than we expected. This was due to unexpected savings due to staff vacancies and postponement of certain major projects (for example, the Library Renovations which were put on hold temporarily when we learned that a new floodplain study would have required). The flip-side is that much of what was not spent last year will be carried over into the current year to be spent, so it’s not all actually “savings.”

The Bottom Line

Very few people like it when they have to pay more in taxes. Government officials (who are also human and also pay taxes) are acutely aware of this fact. We do our very best to understand the needs, interests and priorities of the community and develop a budget that balances all these things. While it’s a task with many factors and considerations, there are really two primary, related levers when it comes to the General Fund: taxes and services. In a budget year where we can expect increases in the cost of providing services, tax revenue will need to increase in order to maintain service levels and programs. If we do not increase taxes, service levels will need to be reduced and/or programs eliminated. If the expectation is that the City continues to provide the same level of services and programs, there is little wiggle room in the budget to make changes or cuts. Our staff and budget are very lean. We do not have “fluff.” This means we cannot add services or programs without adding staff unless we discontinue other services or programs. A reduction in tax revenues will require cuts to service or programs. Cuts to programs usually mean cuts to staff. Most of our staff members wear a variety of hats, so if a position is cut, there could be ripple impacts to other services or programs. Additionally, we have debt obligations that must be met if we are to remain in good financial standing, capital purchases that must be made if we continue to collect solid waste and clearing snow, staff members who must be paid...you get the idea.

Hopefully, we will have a better sense of the budget process and the many considerations that need to be weighed and balanced as it is developed. As we enter budget season, we welcome your feedback, input and ideas.

Additional Resources

The annual budget is a forward-looking planning document developed by staff that includes proposed expenditures and the revenue sources that will be used to cover those expenditures for a given fiscal year. The Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR), on the other hand, is backward-looking, prepared by independent auditors, and includes actual rather than estimated/projected dollar figures from the previous year(s). In order to get a full picture of the City’s financial standing and plans, one should refer to both the adopted budget document and the CAFR. These documents are available on the City’s budget and financial documents page of the City’s website: https://takomaparkmd.gov/finance/budgets-and-financial-documents

TREE CANOPY

From page 1

the Native American word “Takoma”).

It’s no accident we still have such lush greenery in our city. For many years, we’ve had strong advocates for tree protection and equally strong laws. And today, we have an even greater awareness of how trees help slow climate change by removing carbon dioxide, storing carbon, and reducing energy use in nearby buildings, as well as providing other critical ecological and social benefits. Not to mention they provide shade and look amazing! When the City Council conducted its annual priority-setting process earlier this year, we pledged to take the following inter-related actions:

• Formulate tree canopy goals to strengthen and expand Takoma Park’s commitment to growing its canopy and helping address climate change
• Review our Tree Ordinance policies and processes to address resident concerns and ensure alignment with canopy goals
• Explore improved approaches for education and outreach to the community with a focus on tree retention, maintenance, and growth

At the Oct. 24 Council meeting, we discussed a schedule for moving forward on these points, with a goal of completing the work by the end of the year. A crucial part of the process is ensuring many opportunities for engagement by residents and input from staff members and Council-appointed committees.

Tree Ordinance

The Council has asked the Tree Commission and the Committee on the Environment to review the ordinance and recommend areas for updates and improvement. The following are some areas the Council has initially identified for review based on resident feedback:

What decisions can, and cannot, be appealed?
• Definition of “hazardous” and “hardship” and waiver policies
• Timeframes for various actions
• Fees and tree replacement requirements, including for multifamily buildings
• Procedures for emergencies, including emergency tree fund

Tree Canopy

The Council asked the Commission and the Committee on the Environment to review tree canopy and identify recommended goals. Both panels have previously urged the Council to establish a formal tree canopy goal. Older, mature trees are dying, and a 2014 review showed that tree canopy coverage in Wards 4 and 6 lags behind other areas. The disparity between Wards 1 and 4, which focus on home maintenance, but many property owners aren’t aware of how best to promote tree health and extend life through regular pruning and watering, and adding soil amendments. We hope to develop ways of disseminating information of this type to residents, and also improving the accessibility of information about the Tree Ordinance. Throughout this process, resident feedback will be very important. These are ways to engage and share your views, including:
• Online Tree Ordinance Comment Form
• Fill out this form to share your experiences with the tree ordinance, recommendations, and perceptions.
• Open House/Public Forum – Details will be provided as we make plans this winter.
• Contact your Councilmember – Residents are encouraged to contact their Councilmembers to share their thoughts and experiences.
• Public Comments at Work Sessions – The Council will hold multiple work sessions this winter, at which residents can share their opinions during the public comment period.

Resources

The City’s website includes information and resources on the value of our trees, how to care for them and the tree permit program.
• Tree ordinance and canopy review project page (including online survey): takomaparkmd.gov/initiatives/project-directory/tree-ordinance-review-tree-canopy-goal
• Tree Permits Takoma Park MD Government/ Service/ permits/tree-permits/
• Tree Commission takomaparkmd.gov/government/boards-commissions-and-committees/tree-commission
• Councilmember contact information: takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/contact-us
Do you have an item for the city calendar? Let us know if you have a nonprofit event that would be of interest to City of Takoma Park residents, and we’ll consider it for inclusion in the calendar.

Deadline for the February issue is Jan. 11, and the newsletter will be distributed beginning Jan. 28. To submit calendar items, email tpnewseditor@takomaparkmd.gov. "TP Community Center" is the Takoma Park Community Center, 7900 Maple Ave., Takoma Park. All addresses are in Takoma Park or Takoma, D.C., unless otherwise noted.

PUBLIC MEETINGS OF NOTE

City Council
City Council Meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 9, 7:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 23, 7:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, Wednesday, Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.
City Council Meeting, Wednesday, Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m.
TPCC Auditorium
Detailed agendas are always available for review online at www.takomaparkmd.gov/citycouncil/ agendas.

New Years - City Offices Closed
Tuesday, Jan. 1
All city offices and facilities will be closed Tuesday, Jan. 1, for the New Year’s Day. The Takoma Park Police Department is open 24/7 for emergency services.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day - City Offices Closed
Monday, Jan. 21
All city offices and facilities will be closed Monday, Jan. 21, for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday. The Takoma Park Police Department is open 24/7 for emergency services.

Takoma Park Emergency Food Pantry
First Saturdays, noon – 3 p.m.
Grace United Methodist Church, 7001 New Hampshire Ave. Bi-weekly and monthly food supplements for needy families 240-450-2092 or educare_ssi@yahoo.com www.educaresupportservices.org

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Circle Time
Tuesdays, 10 a.m. and 11 a.m.
A beloved local tradition, the 30-minute program of songs, fingerplays, rhymes, movement exercises and stories teach early literacy concepts in a fun way. The program is geared for infants through preschoolers and their grown-ups.
Takoma Park Maryland Library
Spanish Circle Time
Thursdays, 10:15 a.m. and 11 a.m.
Join Senora Guiza for a 30-minute program highlighting basic Spanish vocabulary through songs and rhymes.
Takoma Park Maryland Library
The Spirit Club
Wednesdays, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Community Center
Therapeutic recreation class for Takoma Park residents 17 and older. This class is designed for adults with developmental/neurologic challenges. For more information, contact jclay@ tpcc.org

Top Notch Toastmasters
Second and fourth Mondays, 7:15 – 8:30 p.m.
TP Community Center
Improve your communication and leadership skills. Top Notch Toastmasters meetings provide opportunities for positive, supportive development of personal and interpersonal skills that make you a better communicator, a better leader. Come to our meetings to sharpen your abilities, meet new friends, and make a difference in your life.

Community Self Defense
Wednesdays, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m.
6308 New Hampshire Ave., Takoma Park Certified Grace Ju Jitsu Black Belt instructor Free and open to all
Parents of Special Needs Adults (POSNA)
First Thursdays
TP Community Center
This support and advocacy group of parents and other loved ones of adults with special needs including autism, Down’s syndrome, and severe chronic psychiatric challenges usually meets the first Thursdays of every month. For more information, contact Mary Muchal at muchal@umd.edu.

Storytime for Families
Saturday, Jan. 5, 10:30 a.m.
Takoma Park Library
Storytime for families with 0-6 year olds. Enjoy yoga poses, songs, and a story with your child.

Mock Callidect for Adults
Saturday, Jan. 12, 1 – 4 p.m.
TP Library
Growing-up fans of picture books: join the Takoma Park Library for its fifth annual Mock Callidect for Adults. More details on page 8.

2019 NBGC Health & Fitness Expo
Walter E. Washington Convention Center, 800 Mount Vernon Pl. NW D.C.
Jan. 12 – 13, Saturday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
Let’s Play America is partnering with NBGC to help bring this free expo which offers information on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle with forums on healthy cooking, exercise, activities for children from games to face painting.

Silver Spring Nursery School Open House
10008 New Hampshire Ave.
Tuesdays, Jan. 15, 10 a.m. & 11 a.m., Jan. 22, 10 a.m.
Silver Spring Nursery School (SSNS) is non-profit, cooperative, play-based, part-time nursery school for ages 2-5, where teachers and parents work together to help children develop a healthy sense of identity and self-esteem. Families can attend an information session, tour the school, meet their child’s teachers. Applications and fees will be accepted during Open House through Feb. 1.

VILLAGE OF TAKOMA PARK EVENTS

Village Rides Volunteer Training
Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7 – 9 p.m.
TP Community Center, Rose Room
Orientation session for those interested in driving Takoma Park seniors once a month or more. Please register by calling The Village of Takoma Park at 301-446-2199, or email sandypermierred@gmail.com

Village of Takoma Park Rides
Village of Takoma Park Rides
Games and activities just for teens
Takoma Park Farmers Market
Sundays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
You’re invited to join us at the Takoma Park Farmers Market. Enjoy the fresh produce and other goods available every Sunday.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Takoma Park’s 9th Annual Mid-Winter Play Day
Sunday, Feb. 10, 1 – 4 p.m.
7900 Maple Avenue Takoma Park Let’s Play America and the Takoma Park Recreation Department have teamed up to present to you the ninth annual Mid-Winter Play Day. Come join Let’s Play America and the Takoma Park Recreation Department for a fun afternoon of indoor play. Free fun for all. To see a full listing of activities and performances, visit www.letspiplayamerica.org. See you there. Volunteers contact Pat, 301-928-9962, theplayaday@gmail.com

Historic Takoma Artist Talk
Sunday, Feb. 24, 2 p.m.
Historic Takoma, 7328 Carroll Ave.
Winty Mix is a site-specific installation by Takoma Park artist Marty Iffem, which features photography from the Historic Takoma archives by Morris Brien, present day images by Eric Bond and collagraph prints by Iffem. The piece presents one’s humanity and ingenuity when the landscape is suddenly coated in slippery stuff.

FSGW Midwinter Festival
Saturday, Feb. 2, 12 – 10:30 p.m.
Takoma Park Middle School
Come out and dance and sing with your shadow. It’s Groundhog Day and time for the Folklore Society of Greater Washington Mini-Fest. This annual celebration is a tribute to all things FSGW: chants and stories, dances and duets, hambos and hornpipes, banjos and bodhrans and ballads. There are two dance tracks and more than 40 workshops and concerts at seven different venues throughout the school (plus unscheduled hallway shenanigans, usually involving Morris dancers, bells, sticks and Hankies). It’s a sure-fire cure for the winter blues.

For ticket prices and additional information, visit fsgw.org/mini-fest.