



## WHAT'S NEW?

**Rec Dept. Coordinates Phone a Neighbor Program**  
Details, page 4

**City Seeks Donations for Small Business Mini-Grant Program**  
Details, page 4

**TP Poet Laureate Offers Inspiration**  
See page 5

**More FY21 Budget Info**  
See pages 3, 9 and 11

**Preparedness for Corona Viruses**  
See page 10

**Crossroads Market Opens April 15**  
See page 4

**Trash/recycling collection**  
Regular collection service for trash, recycling, food waste, and yard waste will continue as normal until further notice.

**Look for this icon throughout this issue**  
See page 10

## Budgeting in Uncertain Times

### City Manager to Present Proposed FY21 Budget on April 6

We are in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic and the City of Takoma Park still needs to adopt a City budget for Fiscal Year 2021, which runs from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. The proposed FY21 budget will be presented by the City Manager in a virtual meeting on Monday, April 6 at 7:30 p.m. Following the presentation, the City Manager will answer questions from the public.

The City Council will hold virtual public hearings and budget work sessions as they consider the draft budget through mid-May. This will be the first time in Takoma Park's history that consideration of the City's budget will be done remotely. Please see the schedule and public hearing process outlined on page 3.

### Proposed FY21 Budget Context and Overview

By Suzanne Ludlow, City Manager

I never imagined I would be preparing a City budget in the time of a pandemic. And, City Councilmembers and the public have never had to consider a proposed budget in the time of a pandemic. For that reason, I would like to share background

information and my thought processes on the budget.

First, the City of Takoma Park is on solid financial footing right now and revenues are likely to remain thin but stable for the next year or so. The immediate

FY21 BUDGET  Page 3



Mayor Stewart

### Message From Mayor Stewart: "We Will Get Through This Together!"

As the country faces the current health crisis, we are all learning to do things differently. Over the past few weeks, your City government has been shifting how we work.

We are here for all of you and will continue to be here.

I appreciate all the support, patience, and compassion as we face this crisis together. Our City staff has been working around the clock to make sure we can put in place processes and new ways of conducting the work of the City and delivering essential services.

All essential services are continuing. Police officers continue to work, and public works employees continue to collect trash, compost, and recycle. Other City employees have transitioned to teleworking. Our staff continues to assist residents and businesses in need as we face this crisis.

We successfully held our first two virtual City Council meetings. We will continue to meet virtually over the next few weeks and broadcast our meetings on all the usual channels — on City TV (RCN – Ch. 13, HD Channel 1060; Comcast/Xfinity – Channel 13; Verizon Fios – Channel 28), on the City Council Video Page of the City Website; on YouTube, or on Facebook. These meetings are recorded for residents to watch.

We will continue to build on the success of these first meetings and look for ways to incorporate more

MAYOR STEWART  Page 3

**CHALK YOUR WALK**

Looking for something to do?

Draw some inspiring art or write encouraging messages on your driveway or sidewalk with chalk.

Your neighbors will love looking at the masterpieces as they go for a walk.

#SocialDistancing

Information and Resources: Covid19  
[takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov)

Questions, Comments and Suggestions  
[askus@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:askus@takomaparkmd.gov)

#TogetherTKPK

Mayor & Council  
7500 Maple Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

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**Dig into Digital Resources**  
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**Hold Out Hope: TP's Dog Walkers**  
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# DOCKET

## City Council & Committee Calendar

### OFFICIAL CITY GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

#### CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Monday, April 6, 7 p.m.  
City Manager's Budget Presentation and Online Q & A

Monday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.  
Budget Work Session

Wednesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m.  
Regular Meeting and Budget Public Hearing

Monday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.  
Budget Work Session

Wednesday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.  
Regular Meeting

Monday, April 27, 7:30 p.m.  
Budget Work Session

Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 p.m.  
Regular Meeting and Public Hearings on the Tax Rate and Budget

Monday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.  
Budget Work Session (Reconciliation)

#### CITY BOARD, COMMISSION, AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As of the date of publication, plans have not been finalized for resuming regular meetings of City boards, commissions, and committees. Once resumed, meetings will be held remotely for the duration of the public health crisis.

For current information, visit [www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov) and click on "Events and Meetings." Information on any meetings taking place will be published there along with information on how the public can observe.

Individuals interested in receiving a weekly Council agenda and calendar update by e-mail can sign up by sending an email to [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov).

#### ADA NOTICE

The City of Takoma Park is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to fully participate in public meetings. Anyone with a disability who wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations at a City of Takoma Park public meeting or public hearing is invited to contact Jessie Carpenter, City Clerk, at [jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:jessiec@takomaparkmd.gov) or 301-891-7267 at least 48 hours in advance.

### FY 2021 Living Wage Rate Established

Every City contract for the provision of services awarded after a competitive bid or proposal process requires the contractor and any subcontractor to pay each employee assigned to perform services under the City contract a living wage. The current living wage rate is \$15.05 per hour. Effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, the Takoma Park living wage rate will be \$15.25. Certain contracts are exempted from this requirement. Additional information can be found at [takomaparkmd.gov/services/bids-contracts](http://takomaparkmd.gov/services/bids-contracts).

## City Council Action

Only negative votes or abstentions are reported here. Resolutions and ordinances are published online after adoption.

On **February 12, 2020**, the Council adopted **Resolution 2020-5**, authorizing the closure of Laurel Avenue for Art Hop on Saturday April 25 and for a Takoma Pride Street Party on Friday, June 12. (Note that these events may not take place due to the public health crisis. Contact the Old Takoma Business Association for information.)

The City Council took the following actions on **March 4, 2020**. **Resolution 2020-6** was adopted. The resolution, "2020 Climate Emergency Response Framework: From Nuclear Free to Fossil Fuel-Free to Build a Healthy and Livable Community for All," commits the City of Takoma Park to continue to move

aggressively toward net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, as resources and authorities allow, by adopting a climate action framework of priority strategies and potential policy changes for consideration in the areas of buildings, transportation, renewables, fossil-fuel free energy and other appropriate action. Councilmembers Smith and Searcy voted against the resolution. Also adopted was **Resolution 2020-7**, authorizing the closure of Anne Street for the Crossroads SpringFest on Saturday, May 2, 2020. (This event is being rescheduled due to the public health crisis.)

On **March 11, 2020**, the City Council adopted **Ordinance 2020-4** to confirm the City

Manager's authority to take all appropriate and reasonable actions necessary to prevent and/or reduce the impact of the outbreak of disease caused by the coronavirus (Covid-19) on the efficient operation of the City's government in order to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. **Ordinance 2020-5** was adopted, awarding a contract for Recreation Center community engagement to Brick and Story. The awarded contract is for an amount is up to \$69,980. **Resolution 2020-8** was adopted, appointing Matthew Ling (Ward 2) to the Board of Elections. Paul Huebner (Ward 3) was appointed to the Parking Management Task Force by **Resolution 2020-9**.

## VIRTUAL CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

Due to the public health crisis, the City Council will be meeting remotely by video conference throughout April. The meetings are available to watch live (or view afterwards) in all the usual ways:

- on the City Council Video Page of the City Website (<https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/city-council-video/>)
- on City TV (RCN - Channel 13, HD Channel 997, HD Channel 1060 | Comcast/xfinity - Channel 13 | Verizon Fios - Channel 28)
- on Facebook (@TakomaParkMD/)
- on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/TakomaParkTV>)

The public will be able to comment during the public comment portions of the meetings by registering and logging into the video conference. The link will be provided by weekly email from the City Clerk and on the City website. For those not able to do so, comments may be sent by email to [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov).

### CITY OF TAKOMA PARK NOTICE OF A PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The City Council of the City of Takoma Park proposes to increase real property taxes.

1. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2020, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 2.0%, from \$2,461,251,909 to \$2,510,388,105.
2. If the City of Takoma Park maintains the current tax rate of \$0.5397 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 2.0% resulting in \$265,188 of new real property tax revenues.
3. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$0.5291, the constant yield tax rate.
4. The City is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The City proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$0.555 per \$100 of assessment. This tax rate is 4.9% higher than the constant yield tax rate and will generate \$650,191 in additional property tax revenues.

A public hearing on the proposed real property tax rate increase will be held at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, April 29, 2020. Due to the public health crisis, the meeting will take place remotely.

The hearing is open to the public, and public testimony is encouraged.

View [www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov) for information on viewing and commenting during the hearing. Comments may also be sent to [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov).

Persons with questions regarding this hearing may call 301-891-7267 for further information.

### BUDGET PUBLIC HEARINGS

The City Manager will present her proposed budget to the City Council on Monday, April 6.

The following public hearings are scheduled in April:

Wednesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m.

- Public Hearing on the City Manager's Proposed FY 2021 Budget

Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 p.m.

- Public Hearing on the FY 2021 Tax Rate (Constant Yield Tax Rate)
- Public Hearing on the FY 2021 Budget

Information on signing in to the virtual meeting to comment will be provided at [www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov). Questions may be directed to [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov) or call the City Clerk at 301-891-7267 (please leave a message and your call will be returned). The hearings will be held in the order listed.

## FY21 BUDGET

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economic hits of the pandemic will affect Takoma Park less than they will affect other governments because of our relatively stable revenue sources. For example, we do not receive much income from hotel/motel or amusement taxes, as a number of nearby Maryland municipalities do. Nor do we receive much revenue from investment interest. While the City provides assistance to many residents through our Housing, Recreation, and Police Departments, we are not responsible for providing the level of health and social services provided by Montgomery County. And, unlike the County, our income tax revenue is not heavily reliant on capital gains income.

In past recessions, it took several years before the City of Takoma Park was significantly negatively affected. I have worked for the City of Takoma Park since 1993 and was Deputy City Manager during the last recession. The impacts of the 2008 recession hit Takoma Park in 2012, when Montgomery County and the State of Maryland cut money that would have



Susan Ludlow, City Manager

come to Takoma Park because their income tax revenue had greatly decreased from the recession and subsequent federal sequestration.

### Immediate Actions Being Taken

Right now, my staff and I are looking at immediate costs of the pandemic and identifying assistance to the City that may be available from Federal, State and

County actions. In my role as the Chair of the Chief Administrative Officers Committee at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, I am fortunate to be connected to information about pandemic issues and resources. The Council and my staff are also connected to resources at other levels of governments and through the National League of Cities.

We are assessing all City activities and determining which do not need to be done, which can be done differently or postponed, and which might be eligible for reimbursement funding. A number of steps we are taking are:

- **Union Negotiations on Temporary Hold.** Similar to a number of other

## FY 2021 Budget and Public Hearing Schedule\*

### MONDAY, APRIL 6, 7 P.M.

- City Manager's Presentation
- Virtual Budget Q & A

### MONDAY, APRIL 13, 7:30 P.M.

- Budget Work Session

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 7:30 P.M.

- Budget Public Hearing

### MONDAY, APRIL 20, 7:30 P.M.

- Budget Work Session

### MONDAY, APRIL 27, 7:30 P.M.

- Budget Work Session

\*Remote/Virtual Meetings

While the Covid-19 public health crisis continues, meetings will be held remotely. The public may view meetings as always: on City TV (RCN- 13, HD 1060; Comcast/xfinity-13, HD 997; Verizon Fios-28), on the City Council Video Page of the City Website; on YouTube, or on Facebook. Information on commenting during City Council meetings is available on the City website at [takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/current-and-past-agendas](http://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/current-and-past-agendas) or by contacting the City Clerk at [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov).

### WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 7:30 P.M.

- Public Hearing on the Tax Rate (Constant Yield Tax Rate)
- Budget Public Hearing

### MONDAY, MAY 4, 7:30 P.M.

- Budget Work Session (Reconciliation)

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 7:30 P.M.

- First Reading Ordinances Adopting the FY21 Tax Rates and Budget

### WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 7:30 P.M.

- Second Reading Ordinances Adopting the FY21 Tax Rates and Budget

entities, we have put union contract negotiations on hold. We were in the process of negotiating new collective bargaining agreements with the two unions that represent City non-management employees, Local 400 for police officers and AFSCME for other staff. The contracts were to

expire June 30. Because of the difficulty in negotiating virtually and because of the uncertainty related to the pandemic, all parties agreed that negotiations should be put on pause through August. Employees will

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## MAYOR STEWART

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public comments. Please check out the City website for more information and instructions on how to give public comments.

Next, our City staff has created and keeps updating a resource page where you can get information about:

- City Facilities and Services
- Resources and Programs
- Business Information
- Things to Do

Please refer to this for information about COVID-19 and resources you or your neighbor may need at this time. There are also recommendations on how you can volunteer and support local organizations and businesses during this time. Check back frequently because we are adding more each day.

### To stay connected with the City

Be sure you are signed-up for Takoma ParkAlerts to receive emergency alerts: [takomaparkmd.gov/services/takoma-park-alert](http://takomaparkmd.gov/services/takoma-park-alert). This is very important.

Email us at [askus@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:askus@takomaparkmd.gov).

gov to ask questions or make suggestions. We are gathering these for a Frequently Asked Questions page on our website.

We are a tight-knit community that likes to be around each other and gather. Social distancing – staying 6 feet apart and no more than 10 people gathering at a time – will be challenging for us all. I cannot stress enough the importance of social distancing, with our families, especially our children. So, I am glad neighbors are looking for ways to be together virtually, on the phone, or at a distance.

The Recreation Department has also rolled out some programs and ideas. Here are some I hope people will take advantage of:

**Phone a Neighbor:** Feeling like you want to do more to help your neighbors during this public health crisis? Sign up for the Rec Dept's "Phone a Neighbor Program". We are looking for seniors who want to receive occasional phone calls and the residents who can volunteer to make them. To sign up, email [javontem@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:javontem@takomaparkmd.gov) or call Ms. Paula at 240-687-4132. (See page 4 of this issue.)

**Chalk Your Walk:** As we all practice social distancing and still get out for

fresh air, take the time to do some fun artwork and share words of kindness and compassion on the sidewalk.

**Takoma Park Arts Online:** Watch some of our concerts, theater performances, poetry readings, lectures, film screenings, art exhibitions, and more online. You can take the arts home with you and share the link with your family and friends. (See page 5 of this issue.)

The health and safety of our residents, businesses, and staff is our top priority.

Please check our website frequent-

ly. Consult the CDC: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html). Montgomery County also has resources and updates on its website ([montgomery-countymd.gov/home.aspx](http://montgomery-countymd.gov/home.aspx)), and I want to thank our County Executive on his leadership at this time.

We know the next few weeks and months will not be easy ones. Our lives are being disrupted. And, I know by supporting and treating each other with kindness, we will get through this together.

## ELECTION 2020 INFORMATION

### Important Takoma Park Election Dates

The next City of Takoma Park election for Mayor and City Council will take place on Tuesday, November 3. This is the same date at the Presidential Election. Voters will cast ballots at their usual assigned voting location but will check in and vote first in the Presidential Election, and then check in and vote in the Takoma Park Municipal Election.

- Tuesday, September 15 - Nominating Caucus
- Thursday, October 22 through Thursday, October 29 - Early Voting
- Tuesday, November 3 - Election Day

### Be a 2020 Takoma Park Election Worker

**Support the democratic process and be paid for your work!**

As an election worker for the Takoma Park election, you provide an essential service to the functioning of democracy. You contribute to the community's governance and the free and fair election of its leaders. You will also meet neighbors and friends. You are a point of contact between the Board of Elections and the general public. You work with a team to administer the voting procedures and give voters a positive experience. And with five City Election polling places for the first time in 2020, plus eight days of early voting, there are more opportunities than ever before to serve.

### Requirements

- Be a registered voter in Maryland or Takoma Park.
- Cannot be a candidate in the city election nor working on a city election campaign.
- Complete a three-hour training session.
- Deal courteously and patiently with the public and coworkers.
- Be available for election day or early voting.
- No prior experience needed.

### Additional considerations

- Bilingual workers are especially needed.
  - Youth ages 14 and up may serve as election volunteers and earn SSL hours.
- Apply Now! <https://takomapark.seamlessdocs.com/f/ElectionWorkerApp>. For more information, contact: Irma Nalvarte, Assistant City Clerk, 301-891-7214, [irman@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:irman@takomaparkmd.gov)



### THE TAKOMA PARK NEWSLETTER

Editor: Apryl Motley  
Assistant: Sean Gossard  
[www.takomaparkmd.gov](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov)  
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Letters to the editor, reports by community groups, calendar items and other submissions will be considered for publication; send to [tpnewseditor@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:tpnewseditor@takomaparkmd.gov)

[takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov) or Newsletter, City of Takoma Park, 7500 Maple Ave., Takoma Park, Md. 20912.

Name, address and telephone number must accompany all submitted material. Editor reserves the right to edit for length, clarity, style, spelling and grammar.

Published material containing opinions does not necessarily reflect the views of the Newsletter or the City of Takoma Park.

The Newsletter does not accept commercial, classified or political advertisements.

The Newsletter is printed on recycled— content paper.



# BUILDING COMMUNITY

## Library Magazine Collection Is Online

By Jill Raymond

For those seeking up to date information, the library offers free access to Masterfile Premier, which has full text for nearly 1,700 periodicals and is updated daily.

- On any library page, look at the button on the top.
- Go to ONLINE; then go to MAGAZINE COLLECTION.
- At this point you will be asked for your Patron ID, which is the bar code on the back of your library card. You will then be offered several choices of databases.
- Pick MasterFILE Premier, and then scroll to the Continue button, and when you click on that you will be on the main page.

There are many options for searching, and you can go back at any time to the page where you select MasterFILE Premier to get details about searching and fields. But you don't need most of this information to complete a basic search. You can sort the results so that the most recent

result shows first. You can search a specific publication by clicking on the Publications button at the top left corner of the main search page and entering the title.

Here are some things to think about as you search. In *The New York Times*, a search for covid-19 yielded 26 hits. But if you search coronavirus (one word) the search yields 638 hits. Why the difference? Because covid-19 has only been used by the Times for a short period of time! So think about your terms and your publication. A search for coronavirus in *Science News* yielded 3218 hits; of course, many of those predate the current pandemic. *Science News* is current to the 3/28/20 issue.

You also might want to just look in a particular publication to see what's new. The May *Consumer Reports* issue is already loaded. The first article that appears when that issue is opened is titled "Taking Care in a Time of Crisis." You can open html or pdf versions of full text articles, and print or download the file. Information is power!

## City Seeks Donations for Small Business Mini-Grant Program

The City of Takoma Park has established a Citywide Small Business Mini-Grant Program in response to the immediate needs of small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The City will issue grants of up to \$3,000 per business for immediate needs. The first group of mini-grants will be announced by April 10, 2020.

Small businesses are the backbone of our community, as they employ many of our residents and provide us with the services and entertainment that make Takoma Park a wonderful place to live, work, and play. As mandated by Governor Hogan on March 23, 2020, many Takoma Park businesses have been deemed "non-essential" and have closed their doors during the pandemic to adhere to social distancing rules. Others are working hard to pivot their business models and adapt to contactless service and increased delivery demand. We want to support all of our small businesses and help them stay strong throughout this unprecedented crisis.

The City has a fund of approximately \$20,000 and would appreciate any additional donations to support this program and the hundreds of small businesses in our community. All businesses in Takoma Park will be eligible for this

grant, although preference will be given to those located outside of the Old Town Business District (Laurel/Carroll Avenue area), which has a separate established grant fund managed by the Old Town Business Association (OTBA).

Donations will be accepted on an ongoing basis and can be made online at [takomaparkmd.gov/news/help-support-takoma-park-businesses](http://takomaparkmd.gov/news/help-support-takoma-park-businesses) or mailing a check made out to City of Takoma Park to City of Takoma Park, Finance Department, Attn: Small Business Mini-Grant Donation, 7500 Maple Avenue, 3rd Floor, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

We would like to thank Old Takoma Business Association (OTBA) for assistance with technical infrastructure to receive online donations with such short notice. You will see OTBA information on the donation page; however, funds are directed to a separate City of Takoma Park donation account for the Takoma Park Citywide Small Business Mini-Grant program.

Questions may be submitted to Grace Yixian Zhou in the Economic Development Division: [yixianz@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:yixianz@takomaparkmd.gov). Thank you for your generous support of our small businesses during this challenging time.

## Crossroads Farmers Market to Open on Schedule

*Editor's Note: While the market plans to open as scheduled, and stay open for as long as possible, they are also committed to helping to keep our community safe, so if instructed to close due to concerns about public health, the market will comply. The market's Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/CrossroadsFarmersMarket](http://www.facebook.com/CrossroadsFarmersMarket)) is regularly updated with any changes to market schedules, including closures. If you are unsure if the market is open, check there.*

The 14th season of Crossroads Farmers Market begins Wednesday, April 15, as scheduled. Like other food retailers, farmers markets are considered essential businesses during a state of emergency. The market will look and work a little differently for now.

Crossroads Farmers Market has been a vital food resource for community members since 2007. The market is working with vendors, staff, and volunteers to keep the market safe and healthy. Here are some steps they're taking and important ways you can help:

**Hand-washing.** We have partnered

with the City of Takoma Park to increase the number of hand washing stations at market. Use these stations often, before and after shopping.

**Social distancing.** We are increasing space between vendor booths, and ask that you maintain at least six feet of distance between you and those around you. Please don't linger longer than you need to.

**Temporary ban on food samples and demos.** There will be no food samples or healthy food demos at this time, but we encourage you to check our healthy eating recipes on our website.

**Prepared food to-go only.** All prepared food will be packaged to go. Enjoy your delicious items at home! We will not be providing additional tables and seating.

**Once you're home:** We encourage you to wash all produce thoroughly before using it, and to wash your reusable produce bags between market visits.

**MOST IMPORTANT:** If you are sick, stay home and take care of yourself; ask a friend or family member to pick things up for you at the market instead.



Takoma Park Recreation Department's

# Phone a Neighbor Program

*Supporting each other during this time of social distancing.*

**We are looking for Takoma Park Seniors who would like an occasional phone call during this time of uncertainty.**

**We have a list of neighbors willing to reach out.**

**To sign up call Ms. Paula at 240-687-4132.**

*There is nothing in the world like hearing a concerned voice on the other end of the phone sometimes. Neighbors can quickly become family.*



# TAKOMA PARK ARTS

All upcoming Takoma Park Arts events at the Takoma Park Community Center have been postponed to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, but you can watch many of our past events online now at [artsevents.takomaparkmd.gov](https://artsevents.takomaparkmd.gov), including concerts, theater performances, poetry readings, film screenings, art exhibitions, and more. Please sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at [takomaparkmd.gov/arts](https://takomaparkmd.gov/arts) for updates about when events will be rescheduled.

Check out the links below to see an engaging lecture, an unusual guitar concert, or a fun children's concert that will get your kids' feet moving! We're all in this together. Stay safe and healthy.

## Mr. Jon Children's Music Concert

Mr. Jon performs energetic music for the entire family that is all about fun, dancing, and laughter! He has attracted loyal audiences across the D.C. area, including the kids who laughed and danced their way through this concert. See if your kids want to join in the fun at home! <https://bit.ly/2U0xul4>



## A Night of Guitar Music with Yasmin Williams

Have you ever heard a guitar played with a bow, lap tapping, or alternate tunings? Acoustic finger-style guitarist Yasmin Williams captivated a large audience with an engaging concert that expanded the possibilities for guitar music. Takoma Park's own guitar legend John Fahey would be proud. <https://bit.ly/391IBP4>

### A LONG OVERDUE STORY



## From Slavery to Freedom: A Black Union Soldier's Life Story

In an engaging lecture, Dianne Cross shared the remarkable story of her great-great-grandfather Sgt. Isaac Hall who earned his freedom from slavery fighting in the Union Army during the Civil War. <https://bit.ly/2xaX25V>

## Here's Poetry When You Need It!

*Editor's Note: While it may be a while before residents can be together in one location to enjoy the arts, rest assured that creativity is alive and well in Takoma Park. In that spirit, I asked Takoma Park Poet Laureate Kathleen O'Toole to offer some words of inspiration as we all enjoy our poetry in place during this National Poetry Month.*



Kathleen O'Toole

By Kathleen O'Toole, Takoma Park Poet Laureate

A year ago, my first article as Takoma Park Poet Laureate celebrated the plentitude of poetry in our community, never imagining that a year later my audience would be "self-isolating" in a pandemic. First, we still have a lot to celebrate. Since September 2019, our Third Thursday Poetry audiences have appreciated "Poems of Exile" and the work of current and formerly incarcerated poets of the *Free Minds Book Club*, among our usual crop of talented poets. Stay tuned for the line up of new voices and seasoned poets whose readings we're re-scheduling for this fall.

Now, for this moment ... let me suggest a few ways we can all discover poetry's power to calm and comfort, uplift

and challenge in the poems of others, or by trying our hands at making our own poems.

### Online poetry sources

As I scroll through emails and Facebook posts, I've witnessed how many people are already turning to poetry and sharing poems. Here are a few sources, should you want to search for poems, or receive a daily dose of poetry in your Inbox:

- *Poetry Daily* [poetrydaily@poems.com](mailto:poetrydaily@poems.com)
- *Poem-a-Day* [Poets.org](https://Poets.org) collection from the American Academy of Poets, now hosting "Shelter In Poems" on a daily basis (#ShelterInPoems)

You may also enjoy downloading poetry podcasts like "The Slowdown" ([www.slowdownshow.org](http://www.slowdownshow.org)) hosted by Tracy K. Smith, which lets you hear the daily poem, with a short reflection on the verse. I also love the *On Being Poetry Project*, now featuring "Poetry for Tumultuous Times" at [onbeing.org/starting-points/poetry-for-tumultuous-times](https://onbeing.org/starting-points/poetry-for-tumultuous-times).

### Try your hand: Dip into Haiku

What a gift it has been for those of us able to step out (carefully spaced) into

spring! For me, writing haiku as I walk captures fleeting moments of wonder that can be a source of joy and balm. A quick definition: A haiku is a short poem that uses images to convey the essence of an experience of nature or the season intuitively linked to the human condition. Don't worry about the old "three lines, 5-7-5 syllables" you learned in grade school! Be brief. Capture the image(s) to express what you feel. A few of my own from this last week:

last night's rain  
a robin with a wren splashing  
pothole birdbath

lock down day 5  
on the star magnolia  
first blossoms

cherry blossoms  
on the sidewalk...too soon

And you don't need to be outdoors. Use your windows, or notice what's in front of you:

March rain  
hyacinth in a vase  
scent of spring

Don't want to fuss with specific forms? Accept the invitation of Reginald

Dwayne Betts on *Weekend All Things Considered*. Try twitter-verse in fewer than 140 characters, emphasis (same as with haiku) on noticing! His offering: "I heard the sound of a squirrel's claws as it climbed a tree. And I realized that I had just never heard that before because I'd never been outside in nature without the hum of a car."

Finally, two poems that have come my way in the early days of cloistering:

### From "The Peace of Wild Things"

By Wendell Berry  
"I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."

### From "Pandemic"

By Rev. Dr. Lynn Ungar  
"Promise this world your love—for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, so long as we all shall live."

You can look up the poems in their entirety at [billmoyers.com/story/peace-wild-things](https://billmoyers.com/story/peace-wild-things) and [www.uuworld.org/articles/poem-pandemic](https://www.uuworld.org/articles/poem-pandemic), respectively.

# RECREATION

## UPDATED PROGRAMMING INFORMATION

- The Fitness Expo is canceled.
- The Annual Egg Hunt is canceled.
- Spring Break Camp is canceled.
- Spring classes and all rentals are canceled through the end of the health emergency.
- Updated information on future registration dates (2020-2021 Child Care, Spring/Summer Classes, etc.) will be posted on social media.
- Recreation Center memberships have been temporarily suspended during this closure.



## CITY-OWNED PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT RESTRICTED DUE TO THE COVID-19 HEALTH EMERGENCY

All City-owned playground equipment is restricted from use due to the Covid-19 health emergency. Unfortunately, the City of Takoma Park is not able to ensure that the surfaces can be kept sanitized nor keep children from playing closely together on the equipment. Public Works staff have fenced off play equipment and placed closed signs on the fencing. City parks will remain open for walking, running, biking and relaxing. In our parks, as in every other place, good social distancing and other health practices should be followed.

**BE SURE TO CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE CITY'S WEBSITE FOR VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES TO DO WHILE YOU ARE HOME.**

## ATTENTION PARENTS UPDATE:

Registration for 2020-2021 Before & After Care programs has been postponed.



## THE RECREATION DEPARTMENT IS WORKING ON CREATIVE PROGRAMMING FOR YOU DURING THIS TIME OF SOCIAL DISTANCING:

- "Chalk Your Walk" is spreading encouraging messages and artwork as your neighbors go for a stroll. (see page 1)
- We have a list of families who are interested in reaching out to our seniors to keep them engaged. If you know of a senior who could benefit from a daily call, contact us at 240-687-4132. (see page 4)
- We suggest sharing your appreciation with the Police and Public Works Departments who are working the front lines for your continued safety. (see page 12)
- Daily R.A.R.'s (Rec Approved Resource) are sharing virtual tours, cool craft ideas, popular fitness exercises you can do at home and more.
- We are working with our instructors to offer virtual classes during the month of April - this information will be posted on our social media sites as well as the Recreation Department's website.

## A Toast to the Tequila Shots

Typically the Takoma Park Recreation Department Adult Softball League would be starting this month, so it's the perfect time to honor our unique back-to-back champions, the Tequila Shots. For 11 years the team fought hard for a win but continuously came up short, coming extremely close to a championship game a couple of times. Finally, in 2018, Tequila Shots won in dramatic fashion, by a score of 8-6. They were able to win it all again in 2019, with a dominant, undefeated season!

Tequila Shots credit their success to their team practices and players that provide a pleasant blend of athletic and strategic strengths. The team prides themselves in being flexible, willing to improve and help one another in a variety of ways including; encouragement, good sportsmanship and embracing each other's unique qualities.

One of the managers, Gabe Pinkney, and his father, Fred, joined the league as free agents in 2006. After two years, that team disbanded with a few players sticking around. Together they recruited more players, and the Tequila Shots were born in 2008. For many years, Fred Pinkney and Joe Felperin served as the managers until they passed the torch to their sons, Gabe Pinkney and Matt Felperin.



The team celebrates its championship victory.

Tequila Shots are incredibly diverse and inclusive. Many have played softball for years, while others are quite new to the game. The team is comprised of players who were born and raised in Takoma Park and the Greater Washington Metro Area. Throughout their time as a team, they have had players as young as 16 and as old as 76. They have also had

four father/son combinations play. This season will be the Tequila Shots' 13th year together in the league!

Many of the players began playing in the Takoma Park Babe Ruth League, which was created in 1994 by Gary Weinstein, aka "Coach G." The Tequila Shots are proud to call Coach G a teammate and mentor. He's paved the way for

kids and families of Takoma Park to get involved with baseball and softball. Players have continued their involvement in softball by moving on to participate in the Takoma Park Adult Softball League.

Over the years, quite a few players on the team have had meaningful sports involvement at various levels. Gabe is a sports public address announcer, Coach G is a longtime volunteer with Nationals Youth Baseball Academy, Joe Noyes is a sports photographer, and Joe Felperin has served as a coach and referee. Matt Felperin has been scorekeeper at countless recreational basketball games, Jamie Abell served as a Baltimore Orioles ball girl, Mary Ann Moore teaches softball lessons, and Alex Edsall is a physical education teacher. The Tequila Shots strongly believe that sports bring people together and provides opportunities for unity and excitement.

Being able to participate in the Adult Takoma Park Softball League provides opportunities for exercise, growth, friendly competition and lifelong friendships.

**The softball league has been postponed due to the health crisis. We will reevaluate the program when we reopen and reach out to the teams with more information at that time.**

# Walking the Dog

By Taylor Dibbert

The world of professional dog walking is thriving here. But who are these patient pros? What's their story? What is dog walking in Takoma Park really about?

Jennifer Betts, 52, has lived in Takoma Park for most of her adult life. She's the founder and owner of Run and Play, a dog walking and pet sitting company. Interestingly, Betts came to the world of dog walking after a career in social work.

Betts started dog walking in 2014, and her path has taken unexpected and welcome turns since then. Nowadays, she oversees a team of people and spends most of her time managing the company. "I started as a one-woman operation in 2014, had one additional walker until 2016, and now have six walkers," she said. "All of my walkers are big animal fans, and they're good people."

According to Betts, less than ten years ago, the professional dog walking scene in Takoma Park was quite undeveloped. The situation has changed considerably since then.

Lindsey Paige started walking dogs in graduate school and eventually got a job at a dog daycare where she worked as a dog walker. In 2003, Paige created her own company, Paw Prints Around Town. She started out small and steadily built up a client base. She has a team of seven people that help her with dog walking. Based in Silver Spring, the company has been operating in Takoma Park since its inception and at least half of their current clients are in Takoma Park.

The main services that Paw Prints Around Town offers are dog walking, pet sitting and training. Paige previously worked for a variety of nonprofits, but dog walking is her true calling. She loves having the ability to plan her own schedule and the overall flexibility of it. "And animals depend on me," she said. "That feels really good." Paige enjoys being able to spend time outside too.

There is no typical day for her. But in addition to regular dog walking, she – like Betts – handles all of her company's administrative work.

According to Paige, dog walkers need to care about animals, be reliable and have people skills. "Flexibility is key," she said.

Paige mentioned that she has so many clients who are like family. Anicca Jansen, a Takoma Park resident since 1991, has known Paige since 2004. "My experience with Lindsey and Paw Prints has been so personal," Jansen said. "I was so impressed from the beginning by Lindsey's energy and enthusiasm."

"I wake up every day grateful for this job," Paige said. "I don't even feel like it's a job most of the time."

Originally from Israel, Drorit Dror is a dog walker, a pet sitter and – from time to time – a dog trainer. She started this work in 2005 and has been walking dogs in Takoma Park since then.

Drorit loves dog walking. Being outside, meeting ani-



Jennifer Betts



Drorit Dror



Lindsey Paige

mals, communicating with animals and people – all of this appeals to her. She also enjoys being her own boss, and there is no typical day for her.

Drorit loves the streets of Takoma Park. "I don't know the names [of the streets], but I know exactly how to get everywhere."

Jennifer Shields, a Takoma Park resident since 1997, said Drorit has been walking her family's German Shepherd, Luna, for all seven years she's been alive. "I really don't think my family could manage our jobs and the dog without her help," Shields said.

Shields said that Drorit is whip smart, funny, and generous: "We are grateful for her contribution to our family and for her friendship."

Betts, Paige and Drorit are all dog lovers and dog owners. However, the business of dog walking is about so much more than just having an appreciation for canines.

Ultimately, dog walking boils down to trust, relationship-building, and skill and commitment from people who care about animals. Thankfully (and unsurprisingly), there's no shortage of these things in Takoma Park.

## COVID-19 Update

*Editor's Note: We checked with the dog walkers interviewed for this article to see how life has changed since we last talked with them.*

### From Lindsey Paige:

I have an amazing team of dog walkers and pet sitters and the best clients I could possibly imagine. Our clients have showered us with support in the form of kindness, tips for our dog walkers, and buying dog walking and pet sitting packages in advance to use once we all get back to work and travel. Our business has definitely slowed down and will possibly be at a total stand still by the time this goes to print. However, I know that we will be back up and running as soon as this is all over. We continue to offer services as needed and as allowed by the county and state. We are offering virtual training and consulting. I took a certification course last year in Emergency Disaster Planning for Pets. I have found the information incredibly useful at this time.

### From Jennifer Betts:

We, like many small-scale businesses, are in a financial free fall due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Our walkers are contractors, and are all wonderful and committed to their pups. A few had employee positions they recently lost. I had no problem as a leader supporting them by stepping up and being honest with clients as to where we were, and not fearing showing our vulnerability at this time while constantly updating procedures. So many of our clients are just as wonderful and agreed to pay for unneeded walks. With that help, despite a 60 percent drop in visits, we are keeping some semblance of hope and will be assessing things week by week.

### From Drorit Dror:

It was pretty much expected that my job would be on hold. It's a reasonable outcome of a lockdown. When people stay at home, dog walkers (and pet sitters) are out of business. After doing daily walks for almost 14 years, it's weird to only walk my dog now. Though personally I'm fine financially, the fact that my income went to zero makes me wonder about all the dog walkers who have lost their main income. This also includes house cleaning people, many of which lost their main (and sometimes only) income. Will people be willing to contribute 50 percent of what they paid regularly to help those workers? I am starting with my cleaning crew. Would more people join in, please? I am using your platform to spread this request.

*The City of Takoma Park has established a Small Business Mini-Grant Program to assist local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To donate, go to [takomaparkmd.gov/news/help-support-takoma-park-businesses](http://takomaparkmd.gov/news/help-support-takoma-park-businesses).*

# Breakin the Mold

By Rick Henry

Since he opened TheLabDC, a break dancing studio on Willow Street in Takoma Park in 2012, almost everything has broken perfectly for Antonio Castillo.

If the trend continues - and, given his history so far there is little reason to think that it won't - his next big break will be the biggest one of all.

That break would be having one of his students represent the United States in the Olympic Games. "Competitive Breakin" has now been sanctioned as an Olympic sport and the first U.S. national team is scheduled to compete in Paris in 2024.

Two youths who train at the Lab, 13-year-old Isaac Witte and 14-year-old Evan Slettin, are two-time national champions and have set their sights on the Olympics.

Such representation would be fitting given Castillo's influential role in creating and developing competitive breakin.



A student at the Lab demonstrates his moves

"In the Lab, we created our own sport with breakin," he said.

He initially commandeered the space that has become the Lab because, as an active breaker himself, he was looking for a place to practice.

"It was not supposed to be a school, but people would walk by and see me practicing and then they started asking for lessons, and that's how the Lab was born," he said.

What was originally a 400-square-foot space with a few students has morphed into a 2000-square-foot studio that accommodates approximately 700 kids yearly through its camps, weekly classes, afterschool programs and special events. It has also become the de facto headquarters for the national Competitive Breakin League (CBL) and, given Castillo's position as Chairman of the USA Breakin Olympic Committee, an important hub for what promises to be an historic journey.

That journey, which has seen breakin go from hobby to exhibition to competition to Olympic sport, has been

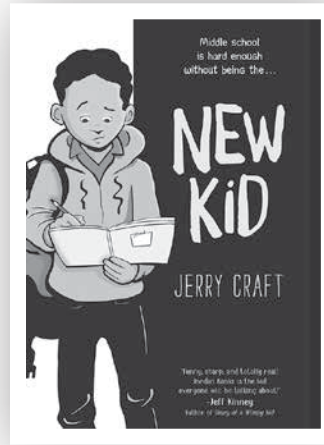


## Book Briefs

By Karen MacPherson

Here's a brief look at a couple of books. One is a comic for kids; the other is an audiobook of an adult mystery. Both of these books can be checked out and downloaded from our website, via Hoopla. To access Hoopla, go to [www.takomapark.info/library](http://www.takomapark.info/library). Click on "EBooks," and then "Hoopla."

### New Kid written and illustrated by Jerry Craft



*New Kid* is not only a well-written, compelling book; it is also a ground-breaking book. Two months ago, *New Kid* won the 2020 Newbery Medal, the first comic to win the prestigious children's book award given annually by the American Library Association to the best-written book for kids ages birth–14.

In *New Kid*, Craft tells the story of Jordan Banks, a seventh grader who has moved from public to private school. Jordan is one of the few African-American students at Riverdale, which complicates even further his efforts to make friends and fit in. Craft vividly captures the ups and downs Jordan experiences in both words and pictures, creating a story that will resonate with many young readers. As 2020 Newbery Committee Chair Krishna Grady put it: "This distinct, timely, and honest story respects children and gives its readers a glimpse into what it means to be other."

### The Last Passenger by Charles Finch (audiobook narrated by James Langton)



In 2007, author Charles Finch published *A Beautiful Blue Death*, his first Victorian-era mystery featuring a high-born sleuth named Charles Lenox. Since then, he's published nine other books in the series, which has won popular and critical acclaim for its well-researched history, tightly-told mysteries and above all, its expressive and memorable characters. Two years ago, Finch published the first in a trilogy of prequels, designed to give readers background into how Lenox got into the detective business despite the fact that it was adamantly not a gentleman's pursuit.

Just published, *The Last Passenger* is the final of the three prequels. In this book, Lenox, working uneasily as always with Scotland Yard, tries to figure out who killed a young American congressman on a train from Manchester to London's Paddington Station. The mystery deepens further when Lenox learns that the congressman was a staunch abolitionist who hoped to court support from well-placed English officials with similar leanings. James Langton, who has narrated all of the books in the Charles Lenox series, does his usual superb job at bringing Lenox and his world to life.

## April is poetry month!

Though the Library will not be holding its Favorite Poem Evening for the first time in more than 20 years, it's a good time to remember the restorative powers of poetry. The Favorite Poem event was begun by then Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky – who believed that poetry has meaning for everyone, at some point in their life.

Subsequently Merrill Leffler and Ann Slayton, with Michelle Morgan, began Spring for Poetry – featuring poetry posters around Takoma Park, with art by Montgomery College students. Some of these posters have been recycled and re-framed by Walter Mulbry of The Friends of the Library – and may be seen around town this April.

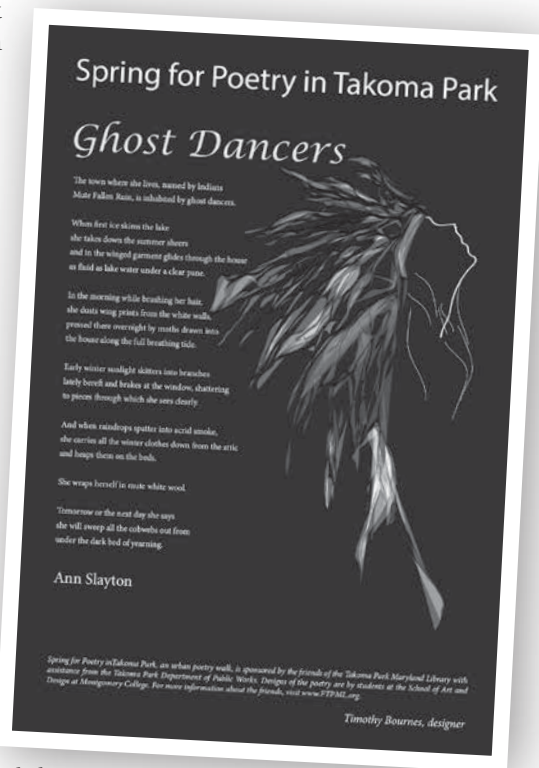
Here is a favorite poem of mine which I might have read, but didn't. It's followed by Karen MacPherson's wonderful guide to web-based avenues for discovering new poetry and recalling old favorites.

—Ellen Robbins

### To Daffadills

By Robert Herrick

Faire Daffadills, we weep to see  
You haste away so soone:  
As yet the early-rising Sun  
Has not attain'd his Noone.  
Stay, stay,  
Untill the hasting day



Has run  
But to the Even-song;  
And, having pray'd together, we  
Will goe with you along.

We have short time to stay, as you,  
We have as short a Spring;  
As quick a growth to meet Decay,  
As you, or any thing.  
We die,  
As your hours doe, and drie  
Away,  
Like to the Summers raine;  
Or as the pearles of Mornings dew  
Ne'r to be found againe.

## Poetry in Place

By Karen MacPherson

Poetry lovers can find a plethora of resources online just by going to two main websites, one maintained by the Library of Congress and the other by the Poetry Foundation.

The Library of Congress poetry resources can be found at [www.loc.gov/poetry](http://www.loc.gov/poetry). Here you'll find information about the current U.S. Poet Laureate, Joy Harjo, plus links to the Library of Congress' blog and podcasts about poetry and literature. Click on "Features" to access a number of poetry resources, including "Poetry 180," a program through which teens can read or listen to a poem for each of the 180 days of school. Under "Features," there's also a series focused on "The Life of a Poet," "Archive of Recorded Poetry and Literature," plus special spotlights on African and U.S. Hispanic poets and writers.

The Poetry Foundation website – [www.poetryfoundation.org](http://www.poetryfoundation.org) – also is a treasure trove for poetry lovers of all ages. Among other things, the Poetry Foundation pub-

lishes *Poetry* magazine, and also sponsors the Young People's Poet Laureate position as a way to spotlight poetry for kids and teens. Naomi Shihab Nye is the current Young People's Poet Laureate.

On the home page of the Poetry Foundation, you'll see a "Poem of the Day" as well as links to all kinds of resources, including poems for children, poems for teens, audio poems, and poem guides. To find information about an amazing array of poets, just click on the "Poets" button and you can explore poets by name or by school of poetry, and even find introductions to various poets in "Poets 101." Click on the "Collections" button, and you see poems gathered by themes, such as spring, motherhood, etc.

To listen to poetry, click on the "Audio" button, where you'll also access the *Poetry* magazine podcast. Finally, just click on "Learn" to explore all kinds of educational materials for children, teens, adults and teachers. There's even an online "Glossary of Poetic Terms."

## Roscoe of Takoma Park

By Merrill Leffler

Behold me here, imprisoned now in bronze  
Where once I held command of this wide street —  
Cock of the Walk who strode with Rooster gods.

O Roscoe you're the One, "just like the Fonz  
Was once," they'd cry and bow down at my feet.  
Behold me now, imprisoned here in bronze.

I strutted all about just like the Lords  
My coxcomb high — I was more than great —  
Cock of the Walk who strode with Rooster gods.

I had an eye for Chicks – and with my fowl glands  
I took the measure of their tender meat.  
And now? Look at me fettered here in bronze.

Oh! I'd rather be a lonely Hen who plods  
Each day and has to beg the smallest treat.  
Aiee! Me, Roscoe who strode with Rooster gods.

So go you Passersby and Common Clods —  
Know that you too will leave in lone defeat.  
Gaze on at me now imprisoned here in bronze  
Cock of the Walk who strode with Rooster gods.



# Digital Resources: What We Have and How to Access Them

By Karen MacPherson

With all Library programs canceled through May 10, now is a great time to spotlight our many wonderful digital resources for all ages. Some of the resources are streaming, while others can be downloaded to your phone or other devices. Also, some resources may require you to enter your library card number, so have it handy.

To get to our digital resources, go to: [www.takomapark.info/library](http://www.takomapark.info/library).

Click on the “online” button at the top of the page, and you can have fun exploring our great collection of digital resources!

## E-BOOKS

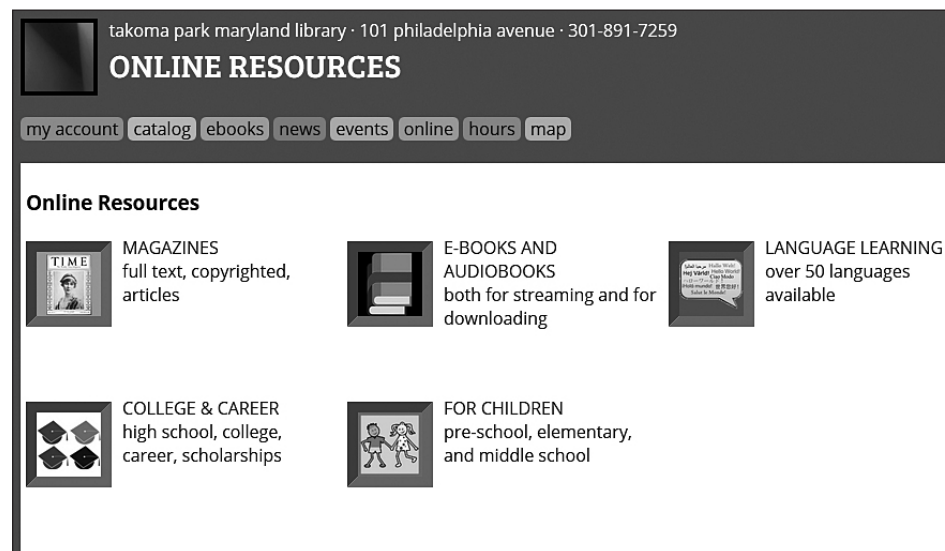
We have several streaming options for e-books. For the youngest readers, try Tumblebook Library, which has picture books, read-alongs (kids see the text while it is read to them), comics, non-fiction, French and Spanish books, “playlists” of themed books, short (1–5 minutes) National Geographic videos on animals and other subjects, and puzzles and games.

BookCloud is a great option for older kids. It offers fiction, non-fiction, books used in AP English classes, some books in French, drama, poetry and more short National Geographic videos. In addition, BookCloud has “enhanced e-books,” in which the reader follows the text while it is read aloud.

Infobase offers basic non-fiction books for readers from middle school through adult. From biographies to history books, there are almost 2,000 books from which to choose.

For downloadable e-books, we have two options: Hoopla and Freading. Both require some set-up – and your library card number — the first time you use them; go here for directions: [www.takomapark.info/library/ebooks2.html](http://www.takomapark.info/library/ebooks2.html)

Hoopla is quite easy to set up and use. It offers e-books for kids and adults, Span-



ish and French books, comics, and much more. In addition, patrons can check out audiobooks, TV shows, movies and music. Each Library patron can check out five items from Hoopla each month, and the different types of items have varying check-out periods: music checks out for one week, e-books and audiobooks for three weeks, and movies/TV shows for three days. The items will automatically disappear from your device at the end of the check-out period.

Freading requires a bit more set-up, but it offers a great number of different types of books that can be checked out for two weeks. There are non-fiction books focused on gardening, cooking, foreign study, plus fiction books in dozens of categories, including humor, mysteries, romance and more. Each book requires 2-4 tokens, and each Library patron is given 10 tokens per week. Your unused tokens accumulate for four weeks, then zero out. As with Hoopla, the e-books will disappear at the end of the check-out period.

payments for these programs. As time goes on, our summer camp programming may be affected. Although the City's programs are very affordable, they are a source of a limited amount of revenue for our General Fund.

Some projects are continuing during this time, such as work on the Flower Avenue Green Street and HVAC work on the Community Center, but most activities are on hold unless they are directly related to the pandemic response. Some key staff vacancies are being filled, for example the Deputy City Manager position and an important facility maintenance position, but hiring for summer camps and the Youth Employment program are on hold at this time.

With many employees working remotely, we will have some financial savings in terms of reduced building utility and supply use, but we are paying for some increases in technology, the production and mailing of information to the public regarding the pandemic response, and we are purchasing additional safety supplies for our Police officers and others who must report to work.

Expenditures related to supporting

## AUDIOBOOKS

- For streaming audiobooks, go to BookCloud for teens or AudioBookCloud for adults.
- We've got two options for downloadable audiobooks: Hoopla and RBDigital. As noted above, Hoopla requires some set-up, as does RBDigital. Basically, you set up an account with your library card, and then you are good to go. Both offer app versions for your phone, and both Hoopla and RBDigital have digital offerings for kids and adults.

## MOVIES, MUSIC & TV SHOWS

Hoopla is the place to go for these, and there are tons of choices for all ages.

## EDUCATIONAL

We have educational resources for all ages, and you can access all of these by first clicking the “Online” button on our main website. That will take you to a page that organizes the resources into areas: “Language Learning,” “Magazines,” “For Children,” and “College & Career.” There's also another section of links into our e-book offerings.

For young children, click on “For Children,” and then on “Digital Resources for Small Children.” Here, you'll find another way to link to the Tumblebook Library, as well as an array of puzzles and games. (For this, you'll first enter your Library card number).

School-age children have even more choices. To explore these, click “For Children,” and then “For Older Children.” Here, you'll find an array of possibilities, including Smart Math, National Geographic for Kids (both the magazine and books), World Book Online for Kids, Britannica for Kids in Spanish and English, dictionaries in French and Spanish, and more.

If you're interested in learning a language (or brushing up on one), click on “Language Learning,” which will take you to Pronunciator. You need to put in your Library card number to access Pronunciator, and if you want to keep track of your progress and use it on mobile devices, you'll be asked to register. Our Language Learning page also gathers all of our other language resources, including Universalis (Britannica in French) and direct links to our French and Spanish offerings for kids on Tumblebook Library.

Kids and adults doing research should click on our “Research” button. Here, you'll find more links on various subjects, including “History,” “Health Reference Center,” “Legal Forms,” and, of course, “Magazine, Newspaper and Journal Articles.” Many more links can be found within each of these. For example, if you click on “History,” you'll find links to information on “American History,” “African-American History,” “American Indian History,” and more.

Finally, don't forget about our “College & Career” resources, which include test preparation for a number of exams, including SAT, ACT and many more. There are also an extensive number of career resources, found by clicking “Career Guidance Center.”

## FY21 BUDGET

■ From page 3

continue to work under the existing contracts. Pay increases for most staff would normally occur on July 1, but those will be put on hold during this period.

- **Shifting of Resources to Provide Short-Term Assistance.** We are using current funds in our Economic Development and Housing divisions to provide assistance to small businesses through our new Mini Grant program and to residents through our Emergency Assistance Fund. Public donations to these funds are encouraged, and we thank those of you who have already contributed. The need is great for these programs.
- **Program and Project Adjustments and Planning.** Due to the pandemic, we are not providing afterschool programs, classes and the Spring Break camp, but we are paying staff (mostly part-time employees) as if they were working. It is likely that we will need to offer refunds and forego future

community festivals, attending conferences, and related costs will not be spent if social isolation must continue for an extended period of time. Projected revenue from rental of Community Center rooms and parks will be decreased.

We are keeping track of our various activities and expenditures in the expectation that we may receive some reimbursement under the various financial assistance measures that have been taken by the federal, State and County government. And, City Councilmembers are working to help ensure that funds that are to come to the City of Takoma Park from the County and State are not reduced.

One near-term unknown is how our essential staffing levels might be affected by Covid-19. Will we need to partner with other policing agencies, or will we need to change our plans for trash, recycling and food waste collections if a large number of staff become ill? Will there be a financial cost to the City as a result? These are questions front of mind, and we will continue to re-evaluate programs and staffing needs throughout the pandemic.

## Longer Term Outlook

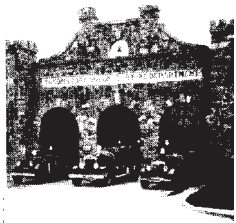
Impacts in future years may result from decreases in income tax or property tax revenue. It is too early to know how significant these impacts may be on Takoma Park's finances. We will need to see how the federal stimulus programs work to retain jobs and property values over the next year.

We will also need to ensure we have staff and services available for recovery measures when the pandemic eases. Close communication will be required with the City Council, professional staff and emergency management partners to determine what may be needed for Takoma Park.

## The FY21 Proposed Budget

The numbers for the FY 21 Proposed Budget were mostly compiled by the time the declaration of the health emergency was issued on March 13. For that reason, there will be a number of changes needed as the Council reviews the budget over the coming six weeks. We were able to do some adjustments before the document was finalized, but there will be additional

# AT YOUR SERVICE



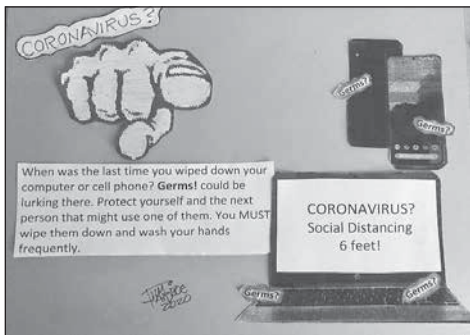
## THE FIREHOUSE REPORT

By Jim Jarboe

Two weeks ago, the Takoma Park Volunteer Fire Department suspended all meetings, training, and other activities at the station until further notice. The only members permitted in the station are the ones checked out to ride on the medic engine or ambulance. A Tip of the Helmet to our Montgomery County Fire Rescue Service personnel assigned to be there, staffing the medic engine and ambulance around the clock, 24-7. Please keep these precautions in mind and stay safe!

### Safety Messages

When was the last time you wiped down your computer or cell phone? Germs could be lurking on them. Protect yourself and the next person that might use one of them. You must wipe them down and wash your hands frequently.



### From Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh, who cautions residents about con artists taking advantage of people's fears of the COVID-19 virus.



Scammers are promoting fake cures for the virus, peddling sham at-home testing kits and sending emails purportedly from the World Health Organization and federal health officials seeking personal information. Senior citizens are particularly vulnerable to the scams. However, at this time, there are no drugs to cure or prevent COVID-19.

He urged consumers to report price gouging; his office has seen instances across the state, including one in which a case of water was being sold for \$38.

Please be safe. Seek accurate information directly from the CDC at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html> or the Montgomery County Health Department at <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS/RightNav/Coronavirus.html>.

In addition, if you have any questions, please email us at [askus@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:askus@takomaparkmd.gov)



## Editor's note

### English:

Look for this icon next to newsletter articles that you can read online in other languages using the translation feature on the City of Takoma Park's website. After clicking on the link for the article, look in the upper right hand corner of the web page next to the navigation bar, and select the language you want using the drop-down box.

### French:

Recherchez cette icône à côté des articles du bulletin que

vous pouvez lire en ligne dans d'autres langues à l'aide de la fonction de traduction disponible sur le site Web de la ville de Takoma Park. Après avoir cliqué sur le lien de l'article, regardez dans le coin supérieur droit de la page Web à côté de la barre de navigation, puis sélectionnez la langue souhaitée à l'aide du menu déroulant.

### Spanish:

Busque este ícono junto a los artículos del boletín que puede leer en línea en otros idiomas usando

la función de traducción en el sitio web de la Ciudad de Takoma Park. Después de hacer clic en el enlace del artículo, busque en la esquina superior derecha de la página web junto a la barra de navegación y seleccione el idioma que desee con el cuadro desplegable.

### Amharic:

ከሆኑ ያለውን ይህን ኮድ ይፈልጉ የዚህ መጽሔብ አርከብ ራስዎ ላይ በሌሎች ቋንቋዎች በመስመር ላይ ማንበብ ይቻላል ትርጉሙን በመጠቀም በ ታክሜ ከተማ ውስጥ ያለውን ባህሪ የገገክ ድርግብያ ጠቅ ክፍረትን በሆስፐታል ክፍሉ ላይ ይመልከቱ በላይኛው ቀኝ ጥንግ ላይ ታንባለን የክሰሳ ክፍሉን ይምረጡና ይምረጡ የሚጠቀሙበት ቋንቋ ተቀልቋይ ሳሉን።

# Preparedness for Coronaviruses



By Ron Hardy, Takoma Park Emergency Preparedness Manager

Coronavirus is the generic group name that refers to many different viruses. CoVid-19 is the official name of the strain that was first recognized in Wuhan China and has spread quickly around the world. The symptoms are similar to the flu, like a sore throat, fever, and trouble breathing, possibly pneumonia.

This virus seems to affect the elderly, who have other medical conditions more seriously than other groups of people. More than 80 percent of the people who have or had CoVid-19 have experienced mild to moderate symptoms.

Most exposures have been related to foreign travel, with a growing number through community contact. If you experience severe symptoms, contact your health care provider or local emergency room for guidance before arriving. Symptoms can appear anywhere between 2 to 14 days.

### Being prepared

- Home quarantines are two weeks usually, but may last longer depending on when people inside get sick.
- Essentials are your medicines, food and water.
- You can store some items in advance, but remember you have power and water in your home.
- There is no need to panic, and additional items can be delivered to you from another family member, neighbor, or a store with delivery capabilities and left at your door step.
- Establish a contact network, so you can check on each other and assist with needs.
- Listen to the news for updates and new restrictions.

### Other items to have should you get sick

- Have an adequate supply of over the counter drugs or other health supplies on hand which could include: pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.
- Have a thermometer, tissues, and hand sanitizer in case you become ill and must stay home to recover.

### with good hygiene practices

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue; then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

### Ways to help those who are sick in the home

- Make sure that you understand and can help the patient follow health-care provider's instructions for medication(s) and care. You should help the patient with basic needs in the home and provide support for getting groceries, prescriptions, and other personal needs.
- Monitor the patient's symptoms.
  - If the patient is getting sicker, call his or her healthcare provider and say that the patient has laboratory-confirmed COVID-19. This will help the healthcare provider's office take steps to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected.
  - Ask the healthcare provider to call the local or state health department for additional guidance.
  - If the patient has a medical emergency and you need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that the patient has, or is being evaluated, for COVID-19.
- Household members should stay in another room or be separated from the patient as much as possible. Household members should use a separate bedroom and bathroom, if available.
- Prohibit visitors who do not have an essential need to be in the home.
- Make sure that shared spaces in the home have good air flow, such as by an air conditioner or an opened window, weather permitting.

For more information, visit the Montgomery County Health and Human Services website for Coronavirus or [takomaparkmd.gov](http://takomaparkmd.gov) for local city updates. Contact [tpepc@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:tpepc@takomaparkmd.gov) or 301-891-7126.

## FY21 BUDGET

■ From page 9

staff-recommended reconciliation items regarding revenues and expenditures as the emergency continues.

**Tax rate.** The Proposed Budget recommends a real property tax rate of 55.5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. This is a 1.53 cent (or 2.8%) increase over the current tax rate of 53.97 cents and would bring in about \$384,000 in additional property tax revenue over the amount expected to be received this fiscal year. (See tax rate box for more information)

The final real property tax rate will likely be adjusted after the Council goes through the budget review and reconciliation process, but would not be higher than the 55.5 cent rate included in the budget public hearing notices.

**IT security.** The budget includes funding for one new position, an IT specialist. We currently have a staff of three plus an intern in our IT division. Even before we went to having most staff work remotely, there was a critical need for the fourth full-time position, given the importance of the security of our systems and the desire to use technology to better serve the public.

**Capital projects.** The proposed budget also postpones some capital projects until FY22 so that we can better assess how the economy is doing. Critical infrastructure projects or purchases were not deferred, however. In particular, road repair costs are fully funded. Repaving roads when the work is needed saves a great deal of money in the long run. If a road deteriorates so much that the road base is impacted, the cost of road repair is much greater. We did not postpone needed road work in the last recession, and Takoma Park is so much

better off because of that decision. In contrast, Montgomery County's roads have not yet caught up to pre-recession quality because the County did delay funds for road repair.

**Library.** The major project to move forward in FY21 is the renovation of the Takoma Park Library. Continuing the design work for the renovated Library is in the economic interest of the City. The funds allocated for Library design and construction cannot easily be used for any other project nor will cutting the funds save taxpayer money. And, we need to get the design finished so that we may be able to take advantage of the reduced construction costs that often come in a recession. The Council will receive detailed information about Library cost components at regular points so that they may determine if adjustments to the design may be needed to save money. And, they will have multiple opportunities to decide not to proceed with the project if it turns out that such a decision is needed. At this point, though, proceeding with the design of the Library project is in the best interest of the City.

Overall, the Proposed FY21 Budget advances the goals of the Takoma Park City Council. As I present the Proposed Budget on April 6 and the Council considers the budget through April and into May, I will highlight how the budget addresses each of the Council's adopted goals. The Council has recently adopted major efforts, such as the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Climate Change Response. I am pleased that many of the actions outlined in the Housing and Economic Development Strategic Plan are allowing us to more effectively help small business owners and residents during this emergency.

**A key Council goal is A Fiscally Sustainable Community.** At this time of un-

certainty, I wish to reassure the residents of Takoma Park that I am committed to fiscal sustainability. This Proposed Budget takes the steps needed to remain in solid fiscal health and gives the flexibility to take steps that may be needed during and after the Covid-19 pandemic to address the current situation and position our City and its residents well in the long term.

These are challenging times. I am fortunate to have remarkably skilled professional staff working with me on behalf of the City of Takoma Park. I am particularly fortunate to have Susan Cheung as

my Finance Director. Her work has led to repeated honors by the Government Finance Officers Association for the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and Budget documents. Although she is staying at least six feet away from me, I am pleased to have her by my side.

Please take time to review the Proposed FY21 Budget online, watch my virtual presentation on April 6, and share your questions, recommendations and comments with the City Council. I look forward to hearing your thoughts.

## Tax Rate

The City's main source of revenue is property taxes, and we remain affected by the questionable 2019 State property assessment. That triennial assessment showed almost no increase in citywide property value over the previous assessment and maintained that a third of the City's properties had lost value, contrary to area home sales data. We know some residents did see an increase in their assessment, but on average we saw no increase. At the same time, the cost of providing basic services, such as trash and recycling pick up, repairing the roads, maintaining parks, and other services, did increase.

With State property assessments not keeping up with normal operating costs, the property tax rate needs to be raised to have funds to continue the same level of City services.

One way to see this is to determine what the tax rate would be if an independent index showing the rate of inflation in market wages and employer-paid benefits is applied to the amount of property tax revenue expected to be received by the City this fiscal year. The Constant Yield Tax Rate, which is the tax rate that would generate the same amount of property tax revenue as is expected through June 2020, is 52.91 cents. If that rate is increased by the Employment Cost Index for State and Local Government Employees (ECI), which is 2.9% this year, the tax rate would be 54.44 cents. The ECI is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and shows the compensation cost for state and local government workers, including health care benefits.

The tax rate included in the Proposed FY21 Budget is 55.5 cents to allow for changes the Council may wish to make in services and to have flexibility as new information on impacts of the pandemic is received. All of this information will be considered by the Council as they set the final real property tax rate in May.

## BREAKIN THE MOLD

■ From page 7

rapid and Castillo has been involved at every stage.

With interest and attendance at the Lab growing, Castillo decided he wanted to add a competitive element for the breakers. He did not let the fact that there was no governing body or rules deter him. It did not exactly go well, however.

"I set up a 'battle' (where two breakers face off against each other to try and outperform the other) between two kids, but they jumped in at the same time and no one knew what was going on," he said. "I realized there needed to be some structure."

So Castillo decided to place two strips of blue tape on the floor, with each breaker standing behind a strip. Rather than breaking simultaneously, he decided that each competitor would do an individual routine, and those routines would be scored.

But just how would they be scored? Since none existed, Castillo crafted a set of scoring criteria. From this he created paper score sheets that he distributed to judges so that they could evaluate each competitor.

"I wanted to be transparent about specifics so that everyone knew how they were being judged," he said. "That changed everything."

Castillo's competitive concept and system began to spread. He began to work with representatives in other cities and soon developed a system to define different skill levels. Soon after, he was contacted by USA Dance, the governing body for competitive dance in the U.S., and they began working together to create a path to expand breakin in the U.S., pushing for its designation as a sport.

Eventually Castillo and others established a governing

body, USA Breakin, as a nonprofit to establish the framework for Breakin as a Competitive Sport in the United States. The group currently oversees the (CBL) and will be responsible for Olympic oversight and qualifying.

The first national competitions, which will ultimately determine the Olympic participants, have begun in earnest; Round 1 of qualifying for the U.S. team took place in March at the Black Box Theater in Silver Spring. One of Castillo's students took second place for the teen category. The national finals are currently scheduled to take place in Washington, D.C. in June. (You can follow the latest developments and purchase tickets at [www.Competitive-Breakin.com](http://www.Competitive-Breakin.com))

Breakin.com)

Whether the national and Olympic teams feature breakers from the Lab or not, Castillo said Takoma Park's role cannot be understated.

"I feel like breakin fits in perfectly with the whole vibe of Takoma Park," he said. "The City, people, and businesses of Takoma Park have been very supportive. "They will all share in the success of Paris in 2024."

For the time being, the lab is holding classes online, and people can register through its website. Castillo said, "It's been a great way to stay connected with our students."

## Make a Difference - Plant a Tree

*Discount Trees Available to Beautify Yards,  
Replace the Tree Canopy*

The spring season is an excellent time to plant trees. Takoma Park residents can help replenish the aging tree canopy and take advantage of this incentive. The City will contribute \$115 towards the first tree purchased. Residents can have a 2" diameter tree installed by the City's landscape contractor for \$95 plus 6 percent sales tax, for a total of \$100.70. Additional trees will cost \$210 plus 6 percent sales tax. The trees are warranted for one year. The \$110 discount is not available for a tree required by a tree removal permit replanting agreement. Residents can select a tree(s) from the following seven tree species: black gum, river birch, Southern magnolia, swamp white oak, sycamore, white oak, and willow oak. Trees can be ordered through April 20. A limited number of grants are available for low-to moderate-income homeowners. In selecting a tree planting location, make sure to keep in mind the eventual size of the tree and pay attention to underground/overhead utilities, building foundations and walkways/sidewalks. Use the Right Tree Right Place principle for tree location selection: <https://bit.ly/2TDUpjD>. After your order has been received, the City's Urban Forest Manager will notify you of the planting date/time.

### ORDER FORM

Please include this completed form, with a check, payable to City of Takoma Park, for the number of trees selected, plus tax. Mail to Urban Forest Manager, 31 Oswego Ave., Silver Spring, MD, 20910. Deadline close of business April 20.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Please include a map of property/tree installation locations.**

\_\_\_ Black Gum (2") \$210 \_\_\_ River Birch (7' - 8') \$210

\_\_\_ Southern Magnolia (2") \$210

\_\_\_ Swamp White Oak (2") \$210

\_\_\_ Sycamore (2") \$210 \_\_\_ White Oak (2") \$210

+ 6% sales tax \_\_\_ Willow Oak (2") \$210

Total \_\_\_\_\_

# April 2020 Calendar Notice

For the foreseeable future, we'll use this space to feature city resources and provide important updates on city services. However, let us know if you have a virtual, 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 May issue is April 15, and the newsletter will be distributed beginning April 30. To submit virtual calendar items, email [tpnewseditor@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:tpnewseditor@takomaparkmd.gov).

## Event Cancellations

Due to COVID-19 concerns, please be advised that all events and meetings held in City facilities have been cancelled or postponed until further notice. The Police Department is open 24/7 for emergency services.

- All Takoma Park Arts events are canceled until further notice.
- All Takoma Park Maryland Library events are canceled through May 10.

- The Takoma Park Safe Routes to School 5K Challenge, TKPK5K, will not be held on Sunday, May 3 as planned.
- The Takoma Park Newsletter has received notice of the following event postponements or cancellations:
  - Arbor Day Celebration
  - Fitness Expo
  - Tree Forum
  - Annual Egg Hunt

- Takoma Park House & Garden Tour (Postponed)
- Historic Takoma Park White Historian Lecture Series (Postponed)
- Second Annual Takoma Park Children's Business Fair

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. If you have concerns about whether a specific event is cancelled, contact the sponsoring organization directly.

## SHARE IDEAS

### Attend virtual City Council meetings!

**Wednesday, April 1, 7:30 p.m.**  
Regular Meeting

**Monday, April 6, 7 p.m.**  
City Manager's Budget Presentation and Q&A

**Monday, April 13, 7:30 p.m.**  
Budget Work Session

**Wednesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m.**  
Regular Meeting and Budget Public Hearing

**Monday, April 20, 7:30 p.m.**  
Budget Work Session

**Wednesday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.**  
Regular Meeting

**Monday, April 27, 7:30 p.m.**  
Budget Work Session

**Wednesday, April 29, 7:30 p.m.**  
Regular Meeting and Public Hearings on the Tax Rate and Budget

**Monday, May 4, 7:30 p.m.**  
Budget Work Session

Detailed agendas are available for review online at [www.takomaparkmd.gov/citycouncil/agendas](http://www.takomaparkmd.gov/citycouncil/agendas).

Due to the public health crisis, the City Council will be meeting remotely by video conference throughout April. The meetings are available to watch live (or view afterwards) in all the usual ways:

- on the City Council Video Page of the City Website (<https://takomaparkmd.gov/government/city-council/meetings-and-documents/city-council-video/>)
- on City TV (RCN - Channel 13, HD Channel 1060 | Comcast/xfinity - Channel 13 | Verizon Fios - Channel 28)

- on Facebook (@TakomaParkMD/)
- on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/user/TakomaParkTV>)

The public will be able to comment during the public comment portions of the meetings by registering and logging into the video conference. The link will be provided by weekly email from the City Clerk and on the City website. For those not able to do so, comments may be sent by email to [clerk@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:clerk@takomaparkmd.gov).

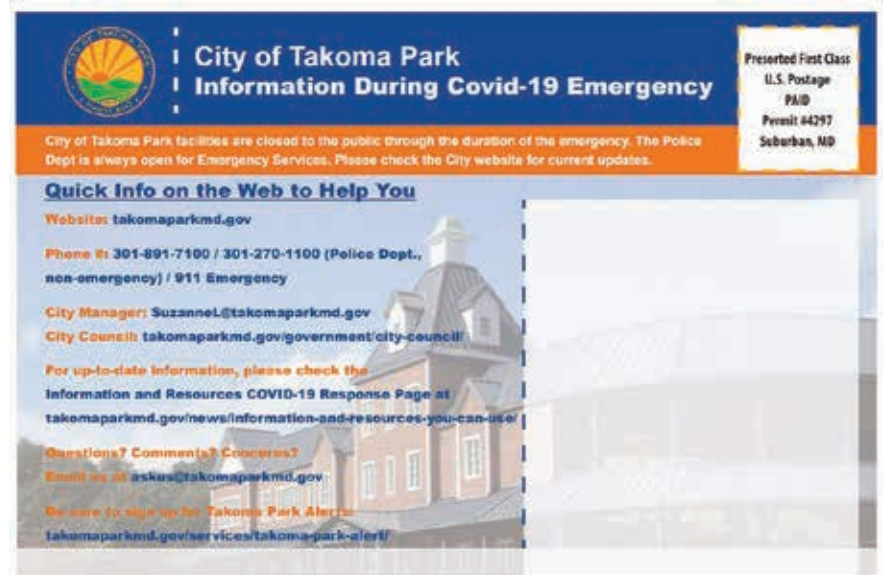
## SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

The City of Takoma Park has established a Small Business Mini-Grant Program to assist local businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To donate, go to [takomaparkmd.gov/news/help-support-takoma-park-businesses](http://takomaparkmd.gov/news/help-support-takoma-park-businesses).



## STAY INFORMED

The City has sent this postcard to every household in Takoma Park providing information during the COVID-19 Emergency. The text is provided in four languages. Please keep yours available for easy reference.



## SEND KUDOS

