

**CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND  
PRESENTATION, REGULAR MEETING AND WORK SESSION  
OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**Monday, February 9, 2015**

**MINUTES**

*Adopted April 6, 2015*

**CALL TO ORDER**

**Present:**

Mayor Williams  
Councilmember Grimes  
Councilmember Male  
Councilmember Stewart  
Councilmember Seamens  
Councilmember Smith  
Councilmember Schultz

**Staff/Others Present:**

Acting City Manager Ludlow  
Assistant City Clerk Nalvarte  
Library Director Arnold-Robbins  
HCD Director Daines  
Community Development Coord. Grigsby

The City Council convened at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Takoma Park Community Center, 7500 Maple Avenue, Takoma Park, Maryland.

**PRESENTATION**

**(1) Presentation of Options for Library Redesign by The Lukmire Partnership**

Mr. Fred Lukmire from the Lukmire Partnership made the presentation of three recommended options for renovation/expansion of the Library. (Power Point attached.)

Option 1 would not change the shape of the library but would only rearrange the floor plan. Option 2 would expand the side where the mosaic wall is located. The mosaic can and would be moved and then put back. Option 3 would expand the side where the mosaic is located as well as the Philadelphia Avenue side of the library.

Mr. Seamens noted that Option 3 called for taking down walls. He asked if replacing the whole library would be better than Option 3.

Mr. Lukmire responded that a new library would be expensive. Building up on the existing building could be an option if the library was rebuilt. He said that the library would then require an elevator, stairs, an HVAC system, larger electrical capacity and additional staff.

Mr. Smith asked if the project could be done in stages and if the library could be kept open.

Mr. Lukmire responded that contractors would charge more to work around people. He recommended closing the library during construction.

Mr. Smith asked about the time frame for Options 2 and 3.

Mr. Lukmire said that it would take approximately 14 to 15 months.

Mr. Male asked if it was necessary for the building to meet ADA requirements.

Mr. Lukmire responded that in order to obtain permits, ADA requirements must be met. He said the Department of Justice has a robust system and performs audits.

Mr. Male asked if the current ADA issues in the library involved the shelving and bathrooms.

Mr. Lukmire responded confirmed that the ADA issues involved the shelves and bathroom as well as signage.

Mr. Male said that he expects that the residents may change in how they use the library with the opening of the new Silver Spring Library.

Mr. Lukmire stated that many residents indicated that they had no intentions of going to the Silver Spring Library because it was too big and impersonal.

Ms. Stewart stated that she supports Option 2 because it does not disturb the green space on the Philadelphia Avenue side of the library. She said that although Option 3 creates more space, a lot would be lost by giving up the green space.

Mr. Schultz: asked about the existing flood walls.

Mr. Lukmire said that he did not see a reason why the flood walls could not be incorporated in the design.

## **PRELIMINARY MATTERS**

### **(i) Additional Agenda Items/Agenda Scheduling Update**

Mr. Williams noted that the resolution regarding the City Attorney's contract was pulled from the consent agenda. He shared information regarding upcoming agenda items.

Mr. Williams mentioned that there will be a closed session scheduled on February 17 on Takoma Junction. He explained that the meeting would be closed due to the financials to be discussed and other topics that the potential developers wish not share publicly at this time.

Mr. Grimes suggested asking the developers if it mattered to them to share the financial information.

Ms. Ludlow said that she would check with the developers.

## **(ii) Public Comments on Voting Items**

Joe Edgell, Elm Avenue, said he had donated \$1,000 to the effort to preserve the Washington-McLaughlin property. He commented on his efforts to participate in the bidding process with a group of community members. He said this group, if it had won the bid, would have developed five or six lots on Parcel 3, using less than 7% of the total property. They would have granted a conservation easement for the rest of the parcel to the City or County. He encouraged the Council to support and encourage this type of investment in the community.

Ian Barclay, Cedar Avenue, asked for information pertaining to the legal costs the City incurred on the bidding for Parcel 3. He noted his belief that the donations made toward the purchase would be burned up by legal costs of dealing with the property.

Arthur David Olson, Hancock Avenue, commented on the City Attorney's contract. He asked for information on what was the previous flat fee and noted the large inflation increase included in the contract terms.

## **(iii) Other Public Comments**

Richard Levine, Cedar Avenue, directly across from the library, said there is an esthetic value of maintaining the green space near Philadelphia Avenue. The option that preserves that nice frontage would be the best option. He is also concerned about any project that would close the library for a period of time.

Ferrell Hamer, Holly Avenue, commented on the library development. She complimented the Council on conducting the study. She said that anything would be an improvement, but she particularly likes the second option because it would improve the front access. It would make the sidewalk more active and provide a better entrance for the library. The option also provides a stronger architectural form as well.

Marilyn Berger, TPSS Co-op, stated that the Co-op can lead the Takoma Junction development project. They have two established developers on their team and a plan for phasing and staging. She noted that the Co-op is the only entity whose business continuity is threatened.

Roger Schlegel, Allegheny Avenue, commented on the criteria to be considered by the Council for Takoma Junction. One function that all members of the Task Force agreed to is to have a gathering place that represents the diversity of Takoma Park. He said that a community can become more polarized if there is not a way for different groups to meet face to face and not be considered as "others." The need for open public space, the Co-op, and parking, suggests that private development is not the best option. A public private partnership is needed.

Fred Feinstein, Sycamore Avenue, endorsed the previous comments. He thanked the Council for holding the listening sessions, but said there has not yet been a systematic process to assess the views of the community and see if a consensus can be developed. He said that is what the

Takoma Junction Task Force did. He would be delighted to see the Task Force criteria used by the Council. If not, he would like to see a new collaborative process to develop criteria.

Welmoed Laanstra said that she has submitted many comments. She feels that the City Council has handed the RFP process badly. She agrees with Roger Schlegel and Fred Feinstein. She would like to emphasize that all the concerns have not been heard. The Council has not established a set of priorities that meets the needs of the entire community. She suggested ten criteria that the Council should consider. If the Council continues, she will consider the process not in the interest of the community.

Robert Anderson, Woodland Avenue, Vice President of the Co-op Board, noted that the Co-op employs 47 full time employees, 9161 members (2500 households). Members spend \$100 or more per month. The Co-op has been there for 17 years, a new 20 year lease, and is continuing to serve the community. He hopes the Council will ensure that the Co-op can continue to thrive.

Elizabeth Wallace, Ward 1, suggested that the City lot be used for temporary library space during library construction to get people used to congregating in that area.

Ian Barclay, Cedar Avenue, commented on the Lukmire presentation. He said there is heat in the reference area and the roof does leak into the computer area. He disagreed that the bathrooms in the library would need to be renovated since there are restrooms available in the Community Center. He said he grew up in the library (his mother was the library director). He noted that expansion of the library toward Philadelphia Avenue would lead to the destruction of the large willow oak tree that is dedicated to Martin Luther King, Jr.

Lorraine Pearsall, Historic Takoma, commented on the Takoma Junction development project. The concept and compatibility to the immediate neighborhood is very important. Not all developers can do every concept. She said she community wants to know what is being discussed with the developers. As much as possible should be done publicly. Having closed sessions is premature.

Mary Jane Muchui, Boyd Avenue, said she has lived in her house for 32 years. She has been a member of the Co-op since the beginning but does not really like the co-op because it is gentrifying. She feels her neighborhood is gentrifying. She also expressed concern about the road narrowing for traffic calming that was done on her street and the process that was used to allow sidewalks to be placed along her property.

Byrne Kelly, Circle Avenue, thanked the Council for continuing the process on the Takoma Junction development project. He said the property belongs to all of us, the taxpayers. He said he hopes the conversation can continue. He said the City should take into account all its assets. He noted the need for senior housing in the community. Mr. Kelly suggested that the City should have its own master plan, rather than being combined with Silver Spring, so that it can better plan for its future.

David Corn, Hickory Avenue, commented that if the Council is going to negotiate with a developer, it needs to know what it wants. The criteria should be developed with the community

and shared with the community. There are a variety of different goals that the Council could consider. It is important to have backing from the community for moving forward.

**(iv) Council Comments**

Mr. Grimes stated that Metro staff released its draft public hearing report. He said he would like to draft a comment on behalf of the City. He said a vote would need to occur on February 23.

Mr. Male said that he was in support of the Council making a comment on the Metro Board staff report.

Mr. Male stated that maybe the city should hold off on the library development given that there were other projects on the table such as the New Hampshire Avenue gym renovation and the swimming pool.

Mr. Male concurred with Mr. Grimes in regards to closed session. He said that the Council should draw up a draft of a set of parameters and share them with community.

Ms. Stewart said that she agreed with Mr. Male. She said the Council should identify criteria

Mr. Schultz commented on the public auction for the Washington-McLaughlin property. He also commented on the closed session regarding the Takoma Junction development. He asked if the Co-Op representatives could sit in on the closed session.

Ms. Ludlow responded that the City Attorney advised that the Co-Op could not participate in the closed session

Mr. Smith announced that there was a capital improvement project that would take place in 2016 to replace the Park Valley Road Bridge.

Mr. Williams reminded all that the Young Activist club will be holding an event in the Community Center.

Mr. Williams announced the meetings he attended over the past week.

**(v) City Manager's Comments**

Ms. Ludlow informed the council that the Arts and Humanities Commission annual report on the Arts and Humanities was distributed

She also reported that a car count was being conducted to continue the study of the parking in areas adjacent to businesses, particularly in advance of the Busboys and Poets opening.

**(vi) Legislative Update**

Ms. Ludlow reported on tax duplication and on the alcoholic beverage bill.

## **REGULAR MEETING**

### **(2) Resolution Approving the City of Takoma Park's Purchase of 2.68 ± Acres of Land, Known as Parcel 3, of the Washington-McLaughlin School Property at the Internal Revenue Service Public Auction Sale on January 22, 2015.**

Mr. Male moved adoption of the resolution. Ms. Stewart seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Williams, Grimes, Male, Seamens, Stewart, Smith, Schultz).

#### **Resolution 2015-6 (attached)**

### **(3) Resolution Expressing Deep Appreciation to Those Who Contributed Towards the Purchase of the Washington-McLaughlin School Parcel 3 Property**

Ms. Ludlow said that the community efforts were impressive. Of the money donated by community members, \$53,000 was used toward the purchase.

Mr. Shultz moved adoption of the resolution. Mr. Grimes seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Williams, Grimes, Male, Seamens, Stewart, Smith, Schultz).

#### **Resolution 2015-7 (attached)**

### **(4) Single Reading Ordinance Awarding a Contract for an Integrated Library System**

Ms. Ludlow said that the cost was less than what was budgeted for the project.

Mr. Seamens moved adoption of the ordinance. Mr. Shultz seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Williams, Grimes, Male, Stewart, Seamens, Smith, Schultz).

#### **Single Reading Ordinance 2015-8 (attached)**

### **(5) CONSENT AGENDA**

Ms. Grimes moved adoption of the consent agenda (items B, C, E, G, and H). Ms. Stewart seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Williams, Grimes, Male, Stewart, Seamens, Smith, Schultz).

#### **B. Resolution 2015-8 Providing for an Appointment to the Nuclear-Free Takoma Park Committee (attached)**

#### **C. Resolution 2015-9 Providing for an Appointment to the Facade Advisory Board (attached)**

#### **D. Resolution 2015-10 Providing for an Appointment to the Safe Roadways Committee (attached)**

**Items Removed from the Consent Agenda:**

**A. Single Reading Ordinance Authorizing the Mayor to Execute a Contract for Municipal Legal Services (City Attorney)**

Mr. Grimes asked about the attorney's flat fee that was mention during public comment.

Ms. Ludlow responded that there was no flat fee in the past.

Mr. Male moved adoption of the resolution. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion carried (VOTING FOR: Williams, Grimes, Male, Seamens, Stewart, Smith, Schultz).

**Ordinance 2015- 9 (attached)**

**WORK SESSION**

**(6) Review of Listening Sessions and Discussion of Next Steps for the Takoma Junction Site – Criteria for Developers**

The Council developed and refined its criteria for developers of the Takoma Junction site.

The resulting site criteria ranking matrix is attached.

**ADJOURN**

The Council adjourned for the evening at 11:42 p.m.