

**City of Takoma Park
Takoma Junction Task Force
Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, March 8, 2011**

The City of Takoma Park Takoma Junction Task Force met on Tuesday, March 8, 2011, in the Takoma Park Community Center, Takoma Park.

Members Present:

Kay Daniels-Cohen, James DiLuigi, Steve Dubb, Seth Grimes, Andy Kelemen, Howard Kohn, , Barbara Muhlbacher, Susan Robb, Billy Coulter, Megan Gallagher, and Lorig Charkoudian, Ellen Zavian, Katrina Oprisko.

Members Absent:

Jeffrey Trunzo, Jennifer Sisane, Lorraine Pearsall, Linette Lander, Roger Schlegel, Hailu Aichehi.

Staff Present: None

Others Present:

J.J. Smith (reporter for *Takoma Patch*), Catherine Tunis, Joe Edgell, Sat Jiwan Ikle-Khalsa, and Terrill North (Takoma Park Task Force on Environmental Action)

1. Welcome (including introductions if any outsiders are present) and agenda review.

A quorum present, the meeting was called to order at approximately 7:40 p.m.

2. Resolution for City Council on near-term improvements.

A draft resolution written by Seth Grimes on near-term improvements for Takoma Junction was shared with the group. Seth Grimes suggested that the resolution be submitted to the city council for consideration in late March or April when the task force reports to the city council. The resolution was considered as a motion. A discussion ensued about the elements of the resolution.

Discussion: Susan Robb indicated that she has had discussions with the State Highway Administration and she wants those efforts to be reflected in the document. Lorig Charkoudian thinks that the signage should differentiate between the 16 TPSS Coop parking spots and spots available for public parking. Howard Kohn suggested that the details of the signage be dealt with later. Lorig Charkoudian thinks that the task force's efforts to make near-term improvements could affect the task force's effectiveness in longer-term efforts. James DiLuigi expressed concern about items #2 (additional pedestrian crosswalk) and #3 (retime and synchronize the traffic and pedestrian signals) being contradictory, and suggested dropping item #2 in the document.

Steve Dubb inquired about whether the city council would be receptive to a time limit for acting on the near-term proposals. Seth Grimes indicated that the city staff will have to carry through the improvements and they will be asked to cooperate. Kay Daniels-Cohen emphasized the importance of an end date to motivate action. Kay Daniels-Cohen also expressed her support for item #2 and requests that it not be eliminated from the document. Seth Grimes reminded the group that signals are expensive. Kay Daniels-Cohen said that the current signals do not work correctly and that Montgomery County has asked for them to be fixed by SHA before Montgomery County will address any issues.

Howard Kohn said that the city can make item #1 (signs calling attention to the parking lot) happen but can only set the remaining items in motion. Billy Coulter requested that item #2 not be dropped from the document. Lorig Charkoudian asked the group who would make the decision about signaling since Suzanne Ludlow had indicated that she didn't know. Seth Grimes indicated that the document refers to SHA as well as other authorities. Susan Robb also expressed concern about item #2 but indicated that it's fine with her to leave it.

Action: Seth will redraft the resolution and send it around for additional comments.

3. Takoma Park Task Force on Environmental Action Presentation.

Joe Edgell presented material from the Takoma Park Task Force on Environmental Action Final Report.

Discussion: Howard Kohn raised a question about improvements and new construction at Takoma Junction, inquiring about whether it has to be certified. Catherine Tunis indicated that the county requires new [city] construction larger than 10,000 sq. ft. to be LEED certified. She also said that Takoma Park has its own requirements but it doesn't currently enforce them. Catherine Tunis added to Joe Edgell's presentation by outline several strategies for improving the environmental conditions at Takoma Junction.

Joe Edgell referred to a charette that was done for New Hampshire Avenue which involved a roundabout at Takoma Junction. Sat Jiwan Ikle-Khalsa suggested that the TJTF try to quantify the various options in order to decide on specific improvements. He also mentioned a circulator bus, which was raised in an earlier TJTF meeting by Roger Schlegel. James DiLuigi talked about the traffic back-up on Philadelphia Avenue, from Maple Avenue to Carroll Avenue in the mornings. He said that changes at Takoma Junction would affect this back-up, possibly making it worse. Joe Edgell emphasized the importance of looking at the whole corridor comprehensively. Howard Kohn mentioned that there are several crossing guards working on Philadelphia Avenue that affect the traffic. Joe Edgell confirmed that the TFEA recommended a roundabout for Takoma Junction in its report.

Ellen Zavian inquired about other issues, like making a right on red, buses, and bikes. Joe Edgell said that they recommended improvements to human powered transportation but did not give much attention to public transportation. Terrill North also expressed support for a circulator bus. Susan Robb asked for the name of the traffic engineer that consulted for the TFEA report. Joe Edgell told her where to find the name on the city website. Andy Kelemen mentioned that the crossing guard is the solution to the traffic.

Ellen Zavian asked the TFEA members what they would have done differently in their task force. Terrill North indicated that they did not engage the public as much as they should have. Sat Jiwan Ikle-Khalsa indicated that their report should have been shorter, that they should have had fewer recommendations, and agreed with Terrill North that they should have engaged the public earlier. Joe Edgell indicated that he thought the long document and number of recommendations was fine, but that the more public pressure would have helped the city to make difficult decisions. Terrill North added that they didn't do any public relations and should have. Joe Edgell said that they requested public hearings but that the city hasn't done it. Seth Grimes suggested that Subcommittee B identify some strategies for getting the Takoma Junction Task Force's recommendations acted on by the City. James DiLuigi shared his perception that the city council and the city staff are not on the same page because city staff do not live in the city. Joe Edgell offered to look at the environmental aspects of the Takoma Junction Task

Force's recommendations, and is willing to seek advice on strategy from others on the TFEA. Kay Daniels-Cohen expressed interest in joining forces with TFEA.

Action: Subcommittee B will identify some strategies for getting the Takoma Junction Task Force's recommendations acted on by the City.

4. Review of efforts by Billy Coulter to bring a craft market at Takoma Junction

Billy Coulter reported that the Fenton Street market organizers have submitted two different proposals, both of which are too costly. In addition to financial concerns, Billy Coulter also mentioned that organizers raised concerns about parking. Task Force members discussed whether the second proposal from the Fenton Street organizers should be submitted to the city staff even though it is not feasible, and decided not to. Ellen Zavian suggested several ideas, including a pilot market with 12-15 vendors, a TJTF table at the Earth Day festivities at TPSS Co-op, and a possibility of using vacant storefronts at Takoma Junction for promotions. Seth Grimes suggested that the issue be addressed by Subcommittee A, who can share it with the OTBA promotions committee. Billy Coulter mentioned having identified a local resource for organizing a craft market.

5. Update on outreach efforts.

Kay Daniels-Cohen provided a brief update on outreach efforts, including upcoming meetings with neighborhood associations. Seth Grimes suggested that the city council be updated on outreach efforts next time TJTF reports to city council.

6. Scheduling TJTF meetings through June 2011.

Seth Grimes suggested that the group continue to meet twice a month and inquired about days that work for future TJTF meetings. The group indicated that Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays are fine for meetings. He said that he would contact Roger Schlegel to ask Roget to work on setting meeting dates.

7. Ethics.

Seth Grimes raised the issues of ethics, indicating that Roger Schlegel has concerns. The group decided that there was not enough time to discuss the issue and that it would be included on the agenda of the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 pm.