

## **Climate Action Coffee Sept. 22, 2021 Message to Takoma Park City Council**

Greetings Council Members. My name is Randy Gibson from Ward 3. Tonight, I am representing *Climate Action Coffee*, a group formed in October 2019, an outgrowth of Takoma Park Mobilization and TALLE, Takoma Alliance for Local Living Economy.

The City declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019 and we agree. Furthermore, we believe that this emergency demands urgent and sustained attention. The reason I am speaking tonight is to begin a regular sharing of the Good, the Bad and the Actionable in our community regarding our Climate Emergency.

Let me first re-introduce you to Climate Action Coffee (CAC) which focuses on local and regional climate action and education.

For nearly two years CAC has met every Wednesday morning, first at Takoma's Busboys and Poets and then on Zoom. Our mailing list includes nearly 70 Takoma Park residents and allies. In addition to weekly meetings, three subgroups (Pollinators, Climate Scouts, and Takoma Stormwater Solutions) have formed. CAC has engaged in discussions and initiatives with Council Members and across multiple departments.

CAC has hosted over a dozen major presentations and forums ranging from the very local (how to provide pollinator habitat) to County-wide (how the City can collaborate with Montgomery County and its Climate Action Plan). Please see notes below for a list of CAC events.

We have also undertaken environmental assessments of our City's parks, planted native plants and removed invasives. In June 2021, we organized Takoma Park's first National Pollinator Week, which included support from the Mayor, the City, environmental allies and many residents.

Now for tonight's climate testimonial: The Good, the Bad and the Actionable.

First, the Good. We welcome two new staff to the City: City Manager Jamal Fox, and Vegetation Maintenance Supervisor Anna Mische John. Both positions are vital to help address the many issues facing the City, including the Climate Emergency. We have contacted both new staff and hope to develop strong working relationships with them, as we have with the Office of Sustainability and Public Works.

Next, the Bad: Briefly, I want to highlight the loss of trees and the increasing threats to our public and private lands. Following our recent brush with the

remnants of Hurricane Ida, a walk around town tells the story. One of my neighbors lost two massive oaks that fell across Elm Avenue due in part to saturated ground. A walk up Sligo Creek reveals many more trees down. Another neighbor received a permit to cut down a huge dying white oak. In my neighborhood and yours, in our parks and on private property we see more trees dead or dying. Climate change is an emergency affecting us and biodiversity now. We believe that both City staff and residents must work together to find ways to protect and restore our trees and natural environment.

Lastly, the Actionable: We have a chance to protect and restore one the largest undeveloped pieces of land in Takoma Park, Dorothy's Woods, to become the native habitat gem it was meant to be. Among its many native plants, we find more than two dozen different native tree species.

Dorothy's Woods was purchased by the City with donations from residents, with the aim of conserving the land for the benefit of the public. In pursuit of this goal, CAC has removed invasive plant species, planted natives and communicated with neighbors, donors and the City on ways to restore and protect the property. After meeting with two Council Members in Feb. 2020, we presented a proposal to the Council in July to restore a portion of Dorothy's Woods (see PDF link below). Our goal was and is to restore habitat and provide a model to residents of a more sustainable and resilient environment.

More than a year after our ask, we are asking again: 1) Work with us and the community to protect and restore Dorothy's Woods and in a related action, 2) Open for public comment the long-delayed Open Space Management Plan.

We invite all city residents and all of our allies in climate action to join us Wednesday mornings on Zoom at: <http://tpmobilization.org/talle>

Thank you for your time and willingness to address the Climate Emergency in an urgent and sustained way. Climate Action Coffee will be back next week to share more.

Randy Gibson on Behalf of Climate Action Coffee

Notes:

[TALLE and its projects > CAC > Pollinators | Climate Scouts | Stormwater Timeline of Climate Action Coffee Forums and Related Events - Oct. 2019 - July 2021](#)  
(<http://tpmobilization.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Proposal-DorothysWoodsSustainableHabitatJuly15-2020.pdf>)