



BUILDING COMMUNITY

HOUSING MAILBOX



By Moses A. Wilds Jr.
Landlord-Tenant Mediation Specialist

Question: I just moved into an apartment and want to install a new lock on the door. Can I do that? Also what is the process for scheduled maintenance and exterminations?

Answer: As a new tenant, you should be made aware that City law requires that landlords rekey locks on all doors between tenancies. The cost of rekeying is the sole responsibility of the landlord (Section 6.16.050-Obligations of landlords).

Before changing a lock, you must obtain written permission from your land-

lord prior to the installation of any new or replacement lock. You must also provide your landlord with keys to the new or replacement lock within seven calendar days of installation (Section 6.16.040-Obligations of tenants). Failure to comply with these requirements may be viewed as a breach of lease with resulting negative consequences.

Regarding your maintenance question, landlords must provide tenants with 48 hours written notice of entry into a rental unit (Section 6.16.110-Entry), and that includes all scheduled maintenance as well as exterminations. In addition, tenants must prepare their rental units in accordance with written instructions provided by their landlords and/or agents for scheduled maintenance including extermination services, painting or other requested repairs (Section 6.16.040-Obligations of tenants).

Tenants or landlords with questions regarding the city's Landlord-Tenant and COLTA Laws can contact me at 301-891-7215 or mosesw@takomaparkmd.gov.

COE calls for more members

The Takoma Park Committee on the Environment (COE) has room for new members. Several positions are open, primarily due to term limits.

The COE focuses on environmental, sustainability and energy issues in the City, both policies and practical programs. Since its creation by the City Council six years ago, the COE has contributed in such varied areas as the citywide home energy challenge, polystyrene and plastic bag ordinances, a proposed tree canopy goal, and establishment of a sustainability program.

The COE wants to broaden membership by adding members from wards 3, 4 and 5 as well as small business and non-profit members and residents from underserved groups.

To learn more, attend an upcoming meeting on Monday, Aug. 7 or Mon, Sept. 11. Both meetings will be held at 7:15 p.m. in the Takoma Park Community Center. You can also contact COE co-chair Cindy Dybala at c_dybala@yahoo.com. The City Council appoints all COE members. The application is available on the City's website.



Photo: Helen Lyons

Xavier Carrillo currently sells his frozen treats at the Crossroads Farmers Market in Takoma Park, but hopes that the Community Kitchen will help him reach his goal of opening his own store.

Community Kitchen opens its doors to aspiring local food entrepreneurs

By Helen Lyons

A year after ground was broken at Takoma Park Presbyterian Church, Crossroads Community Food Network's (CCFN) Community Kitchen is finally open for business - small businesses, specifically.

The commercial grade kitchen is a place for local budding entrepreneurs to cook up food for their start-ups, some of which they'll sell at the Crossroads Farmers Market.

"It's a learning kitchen; it's a supportive kitchen," explained Lorig Charkoudian, the chair of CCFN. "All users go through our microenterprise development classes."

Those classes teach up-and-coming culinary talents the ins and outs of running a food-based business. Graduates sell their products to grocery stores, open restaurants or set up stands at farmers markets near and far.

Xavier Carrillo vends lemonades and artisan frozen treats made mostly from tropical and exotic fruits inspired by his travels to Mexico and Central America. What isn't exotic is purchased right here, often at the Crossroads Farmers Market. He currently has a stand there, but hopes to someday open his own store.

"There are so many plans I have. I want to buy a machine to make paletas. I want to open my own store," Carrillo said. "The kitchen is such an asset. It's ten minutes away from my house. It's top notch, top of the line. It has everything that you need."

Carrillo was born in El Salvador and just celebrated his 25th anniversary in the country with his mother and sister. "Traditional Mexican and Latin American ice creams are made from fruit, not artificial flavors or artificial

ingredients," he said. "There's a big Latin American community here [to be served]."

Shared-use commercial kitchens do exist in the DMV area, but there are roadblocks to those looking to utilize them. "You need quite a bit of capital just to get in and get started," Charkoudian explained. "We started looking at creating a kitchen that was specifically designed for people with limited capital, providing them with training and mentoring. As they grow their business, they would have a chance to then graduate into their own space or one of these larger shared-use commercial kitchens in the area."

Many aspiring entrepreneurs are held back by the red tape of an industry that's difficult to break into. "They have incredible skills and passion and determination to start their own food businesses," Charkoudian said. "But they don't have a lot of assets, and it's tough to get your foot in the door."

The kitchen won't only open to those seeking to commercialize their culinary talents, however. Takoma Park Presbyterian Church will use the space for food recovery, and the city has plans to host cooking classes for adults and youth.

"When we strengthen and build the local food system, environmentally, it's a stronger approach," Charkoudian said. "You're no longer carting food all over the country."

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the kitchen's opening will be held on September 16 at 4 p.m. Sen. Jamie Raskin (D-MD) will be in attendance, along with Maryland State Delegate Sheila Hixson, both of whom were strong supporters of the project. The event is open to the public.

HAVE RENTAL HOUSING QUESTIONS?
TUNE IN FOR OUR MONTHLY BROADCAST OF

Ask Moses

IF YOU ARE A TENANT OR LANDLORD IN TAKOMA PARK, JOIN US
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2ND AT 11:00 AM ON THE CITY'S FACEBOOK PAGE.

SUBMIT QUESTIONS TO HOUSING@TAKOMAPARKMD.GOV

