

## VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

### VILLAGE COUNCIL

MELANIE ROSE WHITE, *Mayor*  
ROBERT M. SCHWARZBART, *Chairman*  
LEONARD J. GRANT, *Vice Chairman*  
ELIZABETH DEMETRA HARRIS, *Secretary*  
ALVAN M. MORRIS, D.D.S., *Treasurer*  
JOHN MERTENS, *Parliamentarian*  
CLARA M. LOVETT, *Historian*  
JULIAN P. MANSFIELD, *Village Manager*  
LESLIE STRATHMANN, *Village Manager 1987-1996*

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## APPROVED MINUTES

### PUBLIC SESSION FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING January 12, 2015

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Melanie Rose White, Mayor; Robert Schwarzbart, Chairman; Leonard J. Grant, Vice Chairman; Elizabeth Demetra Harris, Secretary; John Mertens, Parliamentarian; Clara Lovett, Historian; Julian Mansfield, Village Manager; Robert Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager; and 14 residents.

#### **ABSENT:**

Alvan M. Morris, Treasurer.

#### **CALL TO ORDER:**

At 7:30 p.m. Judge Schwarzbart called the Village Council Meeting to order. He presented a statement regarding the progress and status of the renovation of Page Park. Judge Schwarzbart submitted his written presentation which is hereby made a part of these minutes.

#### **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM COUNCIL:**

The audience reiterated its concerns opposing a playground in Page Park. There were also a few parents of young children from the Village speaking in favor of the playground. These parents applauded the Council for their decision to renovate the Park and their consideration for the younger children and the changing demographics of the Village.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ms. White made the following announcements:

The Council's 2014 Annual Report will be distributed to residents at the end of January. It will include the Proposed Budget for FY 2016.

The February 9 and March 9 Council meetings will include public hearings on the Proposed Village Budget for FY 2016.

The Community Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, January 14, at 5:30 p.m. at the Village Center.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Ms. Harris presented the minutes for the Council public session and the executive session held on December 8, 2014 and recommended approval.

- (R) Ms. Harris moved; Mr. Grant seconded, that the Council public session and the executive session minutes for the meetings held on December 8, 2014 be approved. The motion carried. (6-0-0)**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Ms. White presented the financial summary for the period ending December 31, 2014.

She also introduced the Proposed Budget for FY2016. The Budget is based on a proposed tax rate of 4 cents per \$100 assessed property value, which would maintain the current rate for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Page Park Playground – presentation and possible vote on site and layout plans from A. Morton Thomas:** Mr. Mansfield introduced Andy Streagle and Steven Jerrick of A. Morton Thomas. He also noted that the drawings to be presented were posted on the Village website and displayed in the Village Center lobby.

Mr. Streagle presented an overview of the schematic plans to indicate the location and number of playground equipment and fixtures.

The Council and audience expressed concerns that the drawings did not accurately show the anticipated layout of the playground equipment as the Council voted at its December meeting:

- The playground equipment should be placed in the upper right hand corner or northeast quarter of the Park; as opposed to the east side as indicated.
- The play area is too small to accommodate eight children, 2-5 years old, and must be expanded.
- The one piece of play equipment indicated is not enough for eight children.
- The playground equipment colors should blend well with the environment (greens and browns); not the bright color shown in the drawings.
- The location of the path presents a safety issue – pedestrians would be too close to the play area.

Mr. Streagle and Mr. Jerrick addressed the concerns:

- The playground equipment was placed on the east side to reduce the amount of grading needed to the soil because that sight is flatter than the upper right hand corner. Also, if the equipment is placed in the upper right hand corner, one tree in that area may have to be cut down.
- The playground equipment can be moved a few feet closer toward the upper right hand corner if the tree must be spared.
- The play area can be expanded.
- The one piece of playground equipment and the color (only color available for the drawing) are used as A. Morton Thomas references only. The amount of equipment and color will be as specified by the Council.
- The path can be changed.

The Council asked A. Morton Thomas to make the changes to the plans as indicated. No action was taken on the site and location plans presented by A. Morton Thomas.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion/vote on exterior landscape maintenance contract:** Mr. Mansfield stated that only one bid was received in a timely manner for exterior landscape maintenance and flower baskets. The bid was from ValleyCrest, our current exterior maintenance contractor. Mr. Mansfield reported that in preparation for soliciting bids, Dr. Morris developed the flower list with ValleyCrest, as he typically does every year. However, this time the list contained increased flower quantities. The bid submitted by ValleyCrest was about \$14,000 higher than last year, even though its maintenance cost remained the same. A second option, a repeat of last year's flower list, was presented to ValleyCrest. ValleyCrest verified that its costs from last year were unchanged, therefore, Option two was the most viable. ValleyCrest will also provide a \$3,250 credit to be used for other landscape work.

A second bid, from InsideOut Services, was first received using specifications for the wrong year. A later bid was received after the deadline but the price was higher for the recommended option.

- (R) Ms. White moved; Ms. Lovett seconded to approve the ValleyCrest contract in the amount of \$87,783.90 to provide exterior landscape maintenance and flower baskets for the Village of Friendship Heights. The motion carried. (6-0-0)**

**Discussion/vote on interior landscape maintenance contract:** Mr. Mansfield stated that two bids were received for interior landscape maintenance. One bid was from our current interior landscape maintenance contractor, Interior Garden Designs. He noted that Interior Garden Designs has handled interior plants for the Village for many years. It also provides the holiday decorations and has done consistently superior work. Its price has remained unchanged for a long time. A second bid was received from InsideOut at a slightly lower cost, but staff still recommends continuing with Interior Garden Designs.

- (R) Ms. White moved; Mr. Grant seconded to approve the Interior Garden Designs contract in the amount of \$5,940 to provide interior landscape maintenance for the Village Center. The motion carried. (6-0-0)**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business before the Council, Mr. Mertens moved, Mr. Grant seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 p.m. The motion carried. (6-0-0)**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Elizabeth Demetra Harris  
Secretary

## **OPENING STATEMENT-VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING-1/12/15**

**For the benefit of those who have expressed interest in the Page Park/Playground issues but who were not able to attend our Village Council's last December meeting when an important vote was taken as to the scope of what will be done in that regard and, perhaps, to explain where we are and a bit of how we got to where we are, I offer this opening statement. While realizing that there is no way to please everyone who has taken a position on this matter, particularly those who are not willing to accept having any playground equipment there regardless of scale, it may be possible to reduce discussion by providing certain information and assurances. At the outset, I would point out that while there are additional matters that still are scheduled for consideration tonight, including the precise equipment to be installed, questions related to the benches, grill and picnic tables, etc., the Village Council arrived at its December vote after careful consideration, incorporating many months of community input. In short, we directionally now know what we are doing and we are going to do it. The key votes that were taken at last month's meeting concerning Page Park will not be revisited. The matters concerning that park have moved forward to the next stage.**

**In December, the Village Council, 5 to 2, voted to install playground equipment of the highest quality limited to the 2 to 5 year age group in a single area in the upper right hand corner, or northeast quarter, of Page Park. This play area, thus recessed from the street, will be enclosed with a low decorative fence and the equipment will blend well with the environment. Responding to the salient concerns raised about preserving the tree canopy in that park, the only three trees that will be removed from that area at the time of installation will be those that our arborist has identified at an earlier open Council meeting as having to be taken down in any event because of their poor condition. No other trees will be affected and, as in the past, we will do whatever is necessary to ensure the trees' future health and maintenance. As an additional safety measure, there will be a back fence. We also voted to renovate the park, replacing old benches, repositioning and, as needed, replacing the picnic tables. The grill also serves as a retaining wall and its removal might damage certain tree roots. So, the consensus was to defer to our design and engineering firm, A. Morton Thomas, regarding the grill. The actions now intended are much scaled back from anything earlier proposed and, as noted, take into account expressed legitimate concerns from members of our community. When the work is completed, Page Park will retain its green, parklike quality, will be much improved and be more inviting to people of all ages.**

**It should be remembered that there historically had been some modest playground equipment in Page Park that had been welcomed and accepted without controversy. We now merely continue this tradition.**

**This process has been a prolonged learning experience for us. None of us started out in the playground business, bad first impressions are hard to overcome and we did make mistakes. But, working with and listening to, the members of our community, we have come up with a worthwhile solution to a divisive problem, knowing that everyone is not going to thank us. Along the way, we've come to recognize that the somewhat older children we originally had sought to accommodate have recreational options in school, in teams and elsewhere that the 2 to 5 year group, on which we now focus, do not.**

**Going forward, we are glad to have been able to surmount a major part of this controversy. As before, we will value your input on the remaining issues to be considered this evening.**