

## 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*

4433 SOUTH PARK AVENUE  
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815

Phone: 301-656-2797  
Fax: 301-907-3922  
Email: [info@friendshipheightsmd.gov](mailto:info@friendshipheightsmd.gov)  
Website: [www.friendshipheightsmd.gov](http://www.friendshipheightsmd.gov)



## APPROVED MINUTES

### PUBLIC SESSION FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING February 9, 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 16 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 Council's decision to renovate Page Park and the next phase of the renovation. Judge Schwarzbart submitted his written presentation which is hereby made a part of these minutes.

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

Ms. Paula Durbin (4620 N. Park) requested that all motions approved by the Council at the monthly meetings be printed verbatim in the Village newsletter or posted on the Village website. Mr. Mansfield stated that the minutes would be posted on the website, but because of space limitations, would not be printed in the newsletter.

Dr. Alfred Muller (The Elizabeth) stated that discussion of capital improvements have been omitted from the Council meeting agenda for several months. He noted that the Capital Improvements Committee should be ready to present to the Council proposals for the Village Center floors, room divider, and security cameras. He requested that the March agenda include at least one of these items.

Mr. Mertens, Chairman of the Capital Improvements Committee, reported that the Committee has not secured bids for the floors or additional lighting to highlight the art displays. Security cameras have not been discussed. He stated that the Committee will address these items and the room divider at its next meeting and hopefully will have proposals for the April Council meeting.

Mike Dorsey (4620 N. Park) requested an explanation of Proposed FY 2016 Budget item: Total Public Safety Expenditure \$104,400.

Judge Schwarzbart stated that the total Public Safety expenditures of \$104,400 includes the security patrol contract for providing parking enforcement/security personnel to the village, and the cost of security vehicles provided by the security contractor. He also stated that the revenue item Parking Violation income of \$300,000 more than pays for security expenditures.

The police field office at 4620 North Park Avenue also provides a Montgomery County police presence in the Village.

Residents also expressed concern about vehicles speeding on Willard Avenue and North Park Avenue. Discussion ensued. The Council encouraged the audience to call, write, and put pressure on the Montgomery County police to do something to control speed in these locations.

There were a few comments from the audience opposing the playground in Page Park.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ms. White made the following announcements:

Tonight we will have the first public hearing on the Proposed Village Operating Budget for FY2016. A second public hearing on the Proposed Budget will be held on March 9.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Ms. Harris presented the minutes for the Council public session held on January 12, 2015 and recommended approval.

- (R) Ms. Harris moved; Ms. White seconded, that the Council public session minutes for the meeting held on January 12, 2015 be approved. The motion carried. (6-0-0)**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Ms. White presented the financial summary for the period ending January 30, 2015.

Ms. White noted that the final Public Hearing on the Proposed FY 2016 Budget is scheduled for March 9, 2015.

**Public Hearing on Proposed Budget and tax rate for FY 2016:**

(Summary of highlights of oral testimony)

Judge Schwarzbart opened the floor for comments from the public on the Proposed Budget for FY 2016. The budget is based on a proposed tax rate of 4 cents per \$100 assessed property value, which maintains the current rate. The public is invited to submit written or verbal comments as recognized by the chair.

Persons representing organizations will have five minutes to speak; individuals will have three minutes to speak. No one may cede time to another speaker.

Dr. Alfred Muller (The Elizabeth) noted that for clarification, the title Proposed Budget should be amended to Proposed Operating Budget because the proposed budget does not include the Capital Budget. He stated that the Capital Budget is a separate budget and it is correct not to include it in the operating budget.

Dr. Muller stated that the Proposed FY 2016 Budget has a deficit balance. It is his opinion that every budget should balance unless there are extraordinary reasons why it cannot balance. He stated that many of the revenue and expense figures are only estimates and could be adjusted up or down a few thousand dollars to equal the small deficit of \$11,000 in order to balance the budget.

Judge Schwarzbart asked Dr. Muller to submit his suggestions and comments to Mr. Mansfield. The Council and staff will discuss the budget suggestions and comments and get back to Dr. Muller.

Mr. Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager, stated that the proposed budget is a realistic guide as to where the Council and staff expect the Village to be in a given period. It is based on what we know about the future and the past. There are some things that we do not know (snow removal expense depends on the amount of snow). We give Village residents our best estimate of where we expect to spend their finances for the fiscal year. In his opinion, there is no reason to plug a number just to attempt to have the budget balance.

Other questions/comments regarding the proposed budget included:

Ms. Paula Durbin (4620 N. Park):

- How much of the 2014 Actual (21A Village Parks Electricity and 21B: Village Parks Water, total \$5,087) was spent on maintenance of Page Park?

Staff answer: There is no electricity or water in Page Park. Therefore, zero dollars in this category was spent on Page Park. Interior maintenance of Page Park is included in the landscaping contract #23 and arborist contract #24. Of these amounts, it is not possible to segregate the costs for Page Park.

- How much to date has been spent or committed to the design of Page Park?

Staff answer: In the Capital Budget, \$51,000 has been committed, but not paid for the design of Page Park.

- Who is covered by the health insurance at the Village expense?

Staff answer: Seven employees are covered by the Village health insurance plan. It is the County's self-insured, not-for-profit health plan which is the most affordable for this small group.

Mr. Henry Heilbrunn (4550 N. Park) expressed his appreciation to the Council and staff for the low property tax rate, the fine services provided to the Community and the availability of the FY2016 Proposed Budget. He stated that the budget shows consistency and good control over Village finances. He suggested that the Council look ahead to the next few years by seeking input from residents and translate their needs and desires into an operating and capital budget for the next couple of years.

Judge Schwarzbart and Ms. Lovett concurred with Mr. Heilbrunn's suggestion.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion/vote on nomination of Elizabeth Harris to serve as Council representative on the Transportation Management District (TMD) Advisory Committee:** Ms. White stated that the Council is allowed to appoint two representatives from the Village to serve as Council representatives on the Transportation Management District Advisory Committee. The Committee meets once per month.

- (R) Ms. White moved; Mr. Grant seconded to nominate Ms. Elizabeth Harris for the Village of Friendship Heights representative on the Transportation Management District Advisory Committee. The motion carried. (6-0-0)**

Ms. Elizabeth Harris's name will be forwarded to the County Executive for confirmation. If confirmed, Ms. Harris will serve as Council representative on the TMD Advisory Committee, replacing Ms. Rachael Schacherer.

**Discussion/vote on proposal from League of Women Voters to run Council election:** Mr. Mansfield reported receipt of a proposal from the League of Women Voters to administer the Village Council election this year as they have done many times before. The election will be Monday, May 11, 2015. The League's proposal is for \$2,640 plus expenses, which is unchanged from the last election, two years ago. If the election is uncontested, the fees will be reduced by \$340.

- (R) Ms. White moved; Mr. Grant seconded to approve the League of Women Voters proposal in the amount of \$2,640 plus expenses to run the Village of Friendship Heights Council election on May 11, 2015. The motion carried. (6-0-0)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business before the Council, Ms. White moved, Mr. Mertens seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. The motion carried. (6-0-0)

Respectfully submitted,

  
Elizabeth Demetra Harris  
Secretary