

# VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

## VILLAGE COUNCIL

MELANIE ROSE WHITE, *Mayor*  
MICHAEL MEZEY, *Chairman*  
CAROLINA ZUMARAN-JONES, *Vice Chairman*  
PAULA DURBIN, *Secretary*  
KATHLEEN G. COOPER, *Treasurer*  
BRUCE R. PIRNIE, *Parliamentarian*  
MICHAEL J. DORSEY  
JULIAN P. MANSFIELD, *Village Manager*

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## APPROVED MINUTES

### PUBLIC SESSION

### FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

Conducted via Zoom

October 13, 2020

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Melanie Rose White, Mayor; Michael Mezey, Chairman; Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Vice Chairman; Paula Durbin, Secretary; Kathleen Cooper, Treasurer; Bruce Pirnie, Parliamentarian; Michael Dorsey, Council Member; Julian Mansfield, Village Manager; Robert Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager; Anne O'Neil, Program Director; and 15 residents.

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Mr. Mezey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

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

The Council heard questions and concerns from members of the audience.

#### **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ms. White made the following announcements:

The Village Council met in closed session on September 14, pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(1) of the Maryland General Provisions, to discuss hiring maintenance staff.

A ballot drop box was scheduled to be delivered to the Village on Wednesday, October 14, and installed outside the main entrance to the Village Center. It was

to be under 24/7 camera surveillance and would be emptied daily by the County Board of Elections through November 3.

A shredding truck scheduled to return to the Village on Thursday, October 22, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., would park on Friendship Boulevard by the Village Center to collect discarded materials.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

**Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. White seconded, to approve the minutes of the Council's public session of September 14 and the closed session minutes of September 14, as amended. The motion carried. (6-0-1)**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Ms. Cooper presented the financial summary for period ending September 30, 2020.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Report from the Community Advisory Committee:** Ms. White reported that the Community Advisory Committee met via conference call on October 8 and discussed the following:

- (1) Enhancing the colors of and signage on the new Village bus to identify the Village;
- (2) The new manager for the Elizabeth;
- (3) The ongoing hazard posed by dumpsters on Willard Avenue, in front of Willard Towers, and a recommendation to contact the new management to resolve this issue;
- (4) The Amazon Fresh opening in the Chevy Chase Collection Shopping Center;
- (5) A suggestion that notices of the meetings of Village Council and the Community Advisory Committee be displayed in the shuttle bus and included in the newsletter; and,
- (6) A suggestion that the schedule of the bus to the polls on Election Day be included in the newsletter and circulated to all buildings.

The next meeting date will be announced.

**Report from the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights:** Ms. White reported that the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights met via Zoom on September 26 and discussed the following:

- (1) Little Falls Parkway, including the closure of the Parkway on weekends and the CCCFH's communication to the County to discontinue those closings;

- (2) The Gateway to the Willard Branch Greenway per the CCCHF website; and,
  - (3) The development of the Bethesda Senior Living in Kensington.
- The next meeting will be held October 21 at 7:30, via Zoom.

Ms. White noted that the Council recently sent a letter to the County requesting a delay in its consideration of the revision of “Thrive 2050” in the County General Plan. The Planning Board had just approved a draft scheduled for a public hearing on November 19. Recent comments from a County official suggest that the County would not be likely to delay consideration of the draft.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Update to the Community on Village Response to the Corona Virus:**

Ms. O’Neil of the Village staff reported that on October 7 and 8 more than 30 residents were vaccinated against the flu and pneumonia each day in clinics administered by Giant at the Village Center. On October 26, Giant held a two-hour mini-clinic at the Center to accommodate residents wait-listed for the shots.

The Center’s online programming for the remainder of October via Zoom included a talk organized by the League of Women Voters on October 14 to explain the questions on the 2020 ballot; a virtual tour on the topic of women’s loss of the right to vote in the early 1800s; children’s Halloween bingo; a program on the prevention of blindness; and a call-in concert celebrating Hispanic heritage.

Mr. Mansfield reconfirmed the October 14 delivery of the drop box for ballots for the 2020 election.

The shuttle bus will take voters from the Village Center to the polls at the Jane Lawton Recreation Center in Chevy Chase from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Election Day, November 3, during the entire time that the polls remained open. The schedule had been distributed to the residential buildings.

**Discussion/possible vote on proposal to repaint streetlights:** Mr. Pirnie stated that 11 bids had been received and analyzed. Bay Town Painting, which displayed significant experience working for the D.C. Department of Transportation and repainting thousands of street lights in D.C., was highly recommended. Its estimated cost was slightly more than half that submitted by OGP, which had painted the two sample poles on North Park to enable Village staff to determine a color matching the newer aluminum poles. A brief discussion followed.

**Mr. Pirnie moved, Ms. Cooper seconded, to approve the proposal from Bay Town Painting, Inc., to repaint 87 street lights at a total cost of \$35,000. Staff was authorized to request the contractor amend the proposal to include workmanship and product warranties. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

**Discussion of Infrastructure Committee recommendation re grass strips:** Mr. Pirnie presented an overview from the Council Infrastructure Committee regarding the rehabilitation of the grass strips between the sidewalks and curb (referred to as “road verge” in the report).

**Mr. Pirnie moved, Ms. Durbin seconded, to approve the Council Infrastructure Committee’s proposal to renovate approximately eight hundred feet of road verge with sod and lirioppe according to the plan submitted on October 13, 2020. Consistent with Council policy, staff was authorized to advertise for bids that include warranties for workmanship and product(s). The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion of decline of retail business in Friendship Heights:**

Mr. Mezey stated that this discussion regarded a recent Washington Post article on the decline of retail along Wisconsin Avenue. Mr. Mansfield reviewed a failed attempt to create a Business Improvement District in Friendship Heights approximately 15 years ago.

Following the discussion, the Council decided to form a working group to explore some of the ideas presented.

**Discussion of food-truck events hosted by the Village:** Ms. Zumaran-Jones reported that, in response to the food-truck event sponsored by The Elizabeth, several residents had suggested the possibility of a food-truck event hosted by the Village Center. A brief discussion followed.

**Ms. Zumaran-Jones moved, Ms. Cooper seconded, to approve a trial food-truck event scheduled on a Saturday or Sunday evening in November. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

The staff was asked to develop a detailed plan of the food-truck event for the Council’s review.

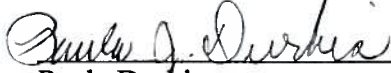
**Discussion of graffiti and security in the Village:** Ms. Zumaran-Jones reported incidents of graffiti at The Carleton and The Elizabeth and her concern regarding evening security. A brief discussion followed.

Mr. Mansfield noted that the security patrol had been suspended on evenings and weekends since the COVID shut-down and expressed the concern that the police should be alerted of all suspicious or criminal activity. The Council consented to hiring additional security as necessary.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business before the Council, Mr. Dorsey moved, Ms. Durbin seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Paula Durbin