

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

January 11, 2021

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; and 69 residents.

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Discussion of Retail/Development Issues in Friendship Heights with Montgomery County Council member Andrew Friedson: Mr. Friedson shared his prospective on the retail/development in Friendship Heights. Following the presentation, he addressed questions and concerns from the Council and residents.

Mr. Mezey stated that the Council is committed to following up on the retail/development issues with a series of meetings over the next few months. These will include discussions with the Planning Board, planners from the District of Columbia area, and possibly other County Council members from adjoining districts. The purpose would be to gather as much information as possible to apply to the development of an action plan to invigorate retail in Friendship Heights, within our limited authority. The Council will also continue to hold open meetings with community participation.

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 Council's 2020 Annual Report, including the Proposed Budget for Fiscal 2022, would be distributed to residents at the end of January.

The Proposed Budget for Fiscal 2022 would be introduced at the January 11 meeting. The Council meetings scheduled for February 8 and March 8 will include public hearings on the 2022 Budget.

On behalf of the Council, Ms. White also thanked Elaine Murchison, recording secretary in charge of the minutes of the Council's meetings through January 11, 2021.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve the minutes of the Council's public session of December 14. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Ms. Cooper presented the financial summary for period ending December 31, 2020, and introduced the Proposed Budget for Fiscal 2022, which is based on the current tax rate of 4 cents per \$100 assessed property value.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from the Community Advisory Committee: Ms. White reported that the Community Advisory Committee met via conference call on January 6 and discussed the following:

- (1) An update on the dumpster issue affecting Willard Avenue: Mr. Mansfield was credited for the County's involvement in resolving this issue. The County has informed the managers of Willard Towers within two weeks they had to institute a procedure for parking the dumpster on Willard Avenue for no more than one hour during daylight hours in order for the trash to be collected.
- (2) The sale of the Brooks Brothers' property and its impact on the Community;
- (3) The suggestion to brighten colors and signage on the shuttle bus; and
- (4) Ken Niles' suggestion that the right lane of Willard Avenue toward River Road be limited to vehicles making a right turn. Mr. Niles was asked to put

his suggestion in writing for Mr. Mansfield to submit to the Transportation Management Committee.

The next meeting will be February 3 at 5:15.

Report from the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights: Ms. White reported that the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights met via Zoom on December 16 and discussed the following:

- (1) The Kensington of Bethesda;
 - (2) The Capital Crescent Trail crossing;
 - (3) The County's proposed meeting December 8 to discuss THRIVE 2050; and
 - (4) The fact that 4800 Chevy Chase Drive Condominium joined the CCCFH.
- The next meeting will be January 20 at 7:30, via Zoom.

OLD BUSINESS:

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

Anne O'Neil of the Village staff reported notification from Giant Food's pharmacists that Covid-19 vaccine can be administered at the Center if sufficient supplies are available. The pharmacists will keep the staff informed.

The County has developed a portal where residents can sign up to receive vaccine information via email and text updates. A link to this page has been posted to the Village website.

The Center's online programming included virtual tours, talks and classes, among them the following: a tutorial on navigating the website; a tour of the Tenement Museum in New York City; an interview with playwright Kenneth Jones, who wrote "Alabama Story"; a two-part writing seminar; and the Friendship Heights Neighbors Network's talk on the prevention of falls. Craft baskets are available for distribution. The two-day food drive in December collected more than 600 pounds of food for the Manna Food Center.

Discussion/vote on proposal from League of Women Voters to run the Village Council election: Mr. Mezey provided a brief overview of the League's proposal for an election by mail. A brief discussion followed:

Mr. Dorsey moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve the proposal from the League of Women Voters (1) to run the Village Council election at a cost of \$3,500 and (2) to process ballot applications and returned ballots at a cost of \$2 each. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

Discussion of guidelines for staff supervision: Mr. Mezey explained the guidelines were created to resolve concerns about addressing staff

performance. The guidelines were introduced at last month's meeting and the Council agreed that Ms. White and Ms. Durbin would revise them to incorporate appropriate suggestions from other Council members. A brief discussion followed:

Ms. White moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve the guidelines for staff supervision and to include the guidelines in the Employee Handbook. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of brightening the appearance of buses and signage: Mr. Dorsey stated that the Council should discuss the issue of painting Village shuttle buses and signage in brighter colors.

Mr. Dorsey moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded, that the Village Manager solicit bids for designs to brighten the Village buses. The motion failed. (3-3)

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, Ms. White moved, Ms. Ms. Durbin seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:45 p.m. for the purpose of entering into a closed session pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provision Article, Section 3-305 (b)(1): To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.

Respectfully submitted,


Paula Durbin