

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

Conducted via Zoom

February 8, 2021

ATTENDEES:

Melanie Rose White, Mayor
Michael Mezey, Chairman
Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Vice Chairman
Paula Durbin, Secretary
Bruce Pirnie, Parliamentarian
Michael Dorsey, Council Member
Julian Mansfield, Village Manager
Robert Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager
Anne O'Neil, Program Director
Sabrina Hamm, Recording Secretary from The Professional Documents Service
20 Residents

CALL TO ORDER:

Mr. Mezey called the meeting to order at 7:31 p.m.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM COUNCIL:

The Council heard a comment from one member of the audience.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor White made the following announcements:

Kathy Cooper resigned as a member of the Village Council on January 17, 2021. On behalf of the Council, Mayor White extended sincere appreciation for Ms. Cooper's service to the community and the Council since 2015.

Mayor White offered special thanks to Village shuttle bus driver Patrick Voltaire for responding on short notice to a call for assistance driving members of the National Guard

to Washington, D.C., in January to protect the Capitol and its surroundings. RMA is the contractor providing shuttle bus services in the Village.

Mayor White welcomed Sabrina Hamm, the new recording secretary from The Professional Documents Service, who took these minutes.

INTRODUCTION OF MARRIOTT COURTYARD GENERAL MANAGER:

Justin White, general manager of the Marriott Courtyard, introduced himself, and offered brief remarks. He indicated that the property had been sold but that the hotel would remain open.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve the minutes from the Council's Public Session held on January 11, 2021. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve the minutes from the Closed Session held on January 11, 2021. The motion carried by a vote of 5-1-0.

Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve the minutes from the Special Council Meeting held on January 28, 2021. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Mayor White presented the financial summary for period ending December 31, 2020.

A public hearing was then held on the proposed budget and tax rate for Fiscal 2022, which is based on a proposed tax rate of \$0.04 per \$100 of assessed property value, maintaining the current rate. The Chair invited comments limited to three minutes per person. Mr. Mezey announced that a second public hearing would be held on March 8, 2021.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from the Community Advisory Committee: Mayor White reported that the Community Advisory Committee met on February 3, 2021, and discussed the following:

- (1) The installation of LED bulbs in the recently painted streetlights.
- (2) The possibility of voting in person at the Center during the Village Council election in May.
- (3) The brightness of the inner ring of lights at 4620 N. Park.
- (4) A request to include a notice of future CAC meetings in the Village newsletter.
- (5) Requests that the Donohoe/Carr Companies improve snow removal around retail stores.

The next meeting of the Community Advisory Committee will be held on Wednesday, March 3, 2021, at 5:15 p.m.

Report from the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights:

Mayor White reported that the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH) met on January 20, 2021, and discussed the following:

- (1) The request per the Public Information Act regarding the Capital Crescent Trail. The information was produced on Monday, February 8.
- (2) The latest developments concerning the building at Kensington in Bethesda.
- (3) Development taking place on the 5500 block of Wisconsin Avenue and the amendment to the Wisconsin Place site plan.
- (4) Zoning Tax Amendment (ZTA) 20-07 intended to provide more missing middle-income housing in more areas of the County.
- (5) Preserving the agricultural reserve.
- (6) A meeting between CCCFH representatives and County Councilmembers Will Jawando and Paul Mortensen on February 1, 2021, to further discuss ZTA 20-07.

The next meeting of the CCCFH will be held on Wednesday, February 17, 2021, at 7:30 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on the Village Response to the Corona Virus:

Ms. O'Neil announced that Giant Pharmacy plans to schedule a clinic offering vaccinations against COVID-19 by appointment only at the Center beginning in early March 2021, pending availability of the Moderna vaccine. Details will be announced as they become known. The Council will use an internal sign-up process for those interested rather than requiring access through the State or County. Mr. Mansfield reported that, given the community's substantial senior population, Maryland Delegate Ariana Kelly offered to advocate before the County and the State on behalf of the Village Council and Friendship Heights. The governor recently allocated vaccine sufficient for 2,000 injections at Leisure World.

Programs:

Twin Springs continues its fruit farm market on Saturdays. The Center is offering a beginner Zoom tutorial on Thursday, February 11; a virtual tour of the Labor Museum on Tuesday, February 16; a community conversation on "COVID: One Year Later" by Dr. David Sacks on Wednesday, February 17; a virtual tour of the Idaho National Laboratory in Celebration of National Science Month on Thursday, February 25; a talk on the coup in Myanmar on an unspecified date in March; and virtual tours of the Baseball Hall of Fame and the Baltimore Museum of Industry, also on dates as yet unspecified. The Center has distributed all of its winter craft kits for adults and all but one child's kit. Valentine kits were to be available during the week of February 8.

Village Security Measures:

Mr. Mansfield reported holding two preliminary meetings with Securitas and Patriot Systems in preparation for a walkthrough to inspect exterior cameras. Both companies would report their findings, including recommendations regarding camera placement. The initial preference is to use the streetlights, but the Village would have to check with PEPCO about how to power the cameras. Mr. Mansfield reached out to each building manager regarding the possibility of installing cameras on the exterior of their buildings for added security; responses should be forthcoming. Councilmembers offered to speak with the managers of their respective buildings about responding to Mr. Mansfield.

Lieutenant Sheila Sugrue spoke to the Village at a special meeting on January 28. In connection with a request from the Village, she indicated that the Bethesda Police Department does not have the manpower to report statistics on crime to the Village and provide updates on a regular basis. At her suggestion Mr. Mansfield was to consult the Community Services Officer. Per the lieutenant, a crime report is published weekly on the Department's website, which the Council can post or distribute.

At Mr. Mansfield requested, Montgomery County checked the lighting situation on Willard Avenue and determined that it complied with County standards.

New lights have been installed on Wisconsin Avenue at Mazza Gallerie.

NEW BUSINESS:

Use of Village Newsletter for Council Candidate Statements:

The following suggestions were discussed:

- Dedicating a separate publication to the 2021 Council election.
- Including a photograph of each candidate using a uniform background and camera angle.
- Allowing the use of bullet points, bold type, and italicized type.
- Limiting candidates' statements to 200 or 250 words each.
- Appointing a third-party editor, possibly The League of Women Voters, to review the statements.
- Offering a sample candidate statement to illustrate layout and font choice.
- Reference to the candidates' statements as "information" rather than "advertisements."

Mr. Pirnie moved, Mayor White seconded, that the Council allow one statement per candidate to be published as a public service, subject to review during the next Council Meeting. The motion carried by a vote of four in favor, zero opposed, and two abstentions (4-0-2). Mr. Mansfield would consult with the League of Women Voters to determine the cost of its services and would check with the Council's attorney about the legality of posting the candidates' statements. As indicated above, a template for statements will be submitted for approval at the next Council Meeting.

Discussion: Posting Campaign Documents:

Per Ms. Zumaran-Jones' suggestion, the Council authorized management to include the campaign and election documents on the Website.

Discussion/Vote: Interior Plant Maintenance:

Bids were received from three vendors, including Interior Garden Designs, the incumbent, to maintain plants located at the Center.

Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded, to approve a three-year contract with Interior Garden Designs for interior plant maintenance at a cost of \$500 per month, the current cost. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Discussion: Tree Assessment/Treatment:

In connection with the Council's concern with (1) identifying trees that might be dead or stressed and (2) recommending appropriate treatment. Mr. Pirnie moved, Mr. Mezey seconded, to request from Bartlett Tree Experts the cost of such services by arborist Nick Scaletta. If its cost does not exceed \$5,000, Bartlett would be asked to perform the work. Otherwise, bids would be solicited. The motion carried (5-1-0).

At the suggestion of Mr. Shapiro, the words "Arborist Contract" will be changed to "Arborist Services" in the Council's budget. Mr. Mansfield will ensure all expenses noted under "Arborist Contract" are accurately classified.

Discussion - Village Council Vacancy:

Mr. Mezey explained the Council usually advertises a vacancy, solicits applications, and reviews any submissions before deciding upon the appointment of a person to serve until the date of the next Council election. However, the Council also has the option of leaving the position vacant until the next election. The Council agreed unanimously to leave the position vacated by Kathy Cooper open until the May 2021 Council election.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, Mr. Dorsey moved, Mayor White seconded adjournment of the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Paula Durbin