

VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

VILLAGE COUNCIL

MELANIE ROSE WHITE, *Mayor*
MICHAEL MEZEY, *Chairman*
BRUCE R. PIRNIE, *Vice Chairman*
ALFRED MULLER, M.D., *Secretary*
PAULA DURBIN, *Treasurer*
MICHAEL J. DORSEY, *Parliamentarian*
CAROLINA ZUMARAN-JONES, *Historian*
JULIAN P. MANSFIELD, *Village Manager*

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APPROVED MINUTES

PUBLIC SESSION

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL

July 12, 2021

ATTENDEES:

Melanie Rose White, Mayor
Michael Mezey, Chairman
Bruce Pirnie, Vice Chairman
Paula Durbin, Treasurer
Alfred Muller, M.D., Secretary
Michael Dorsey, Parliamentarian
Julian Mansfield, Village Manager
Attorney Norman Knopf, Council Attorney
Beverly John, Recording Secretary from The Professional Documents Service
19 Additional Participants at Highest Count

ABSENT:

Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Historian

CALL TO ORDER:

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

PRESENTATION - D.C. OFFICE OF PLANNING:

Mr. Mezey presented Erkin Ozberk from the District of Columbia Office of Planning, who presented information about planning efforts on the D.C. side of Friendship Heights. The D.C. Comprehensive Plan (which is amended on a regular basis) is used to guide the city's planning efforts. D.C. has continued to grow during the recent 20 years, and is projected to see continued growth. DC affordable housing goals that align with the regional goals of the Metropolitan Council of Governments were set in 2019, and have generated new and creative discussions regarding housing. A Housing Equity Report was generated to identify areas where affordable housing may be needed. Progress has been made in several wards. However, Ward 3 (west of Rock Creek Park) has not delivered any affordable housing since that area was not in the pipeline for development. Mixed-use developments are being considered in the D.C. area of Chevy Chase, as well as Friendship Heights, Tenleytown, Cleveland Park, and Woodley Park near Metro stations to support community growth and neighborhood businesses. There is a possibility that the Western Metro Garage may consider a move to the vacant Lord & Taylor location. A panel gave a presentation on Friday, April 23, 2021 regarding how the area may transform more into a neighborhood versus a high-end shopping destination (i.e., a more pedestrian-focused area). The District is currently in their budget-approval process, and is considering housing options.

Following his presentation, Mr. Ozberk responded to questions and comments posed by Council members and area residents.

- Dr. Muller asked what is going to replace Mazza Gallerie? Although the property has been sold, its future is not yet clear. However, the new owner has expressed a desire to keep the retail space but potentially add housing.
- Ms. Durbin inquired about the future of the Lord & Taylor site. Mr. Ozberk again stated WMATA may relocate to that space, but definitive answers had not yet been established.
- Mayor White asked Mr. Ozberk to define “affordable housing”. Per the federal government, affordable housing targets families with incomes that total 80% or less of the area’s average income. The Median Family Income (MFI) for a family of four in the Friendship Heights area is approximately \$126,000.
- Mr. Mezey inquired whether Montgomery County uses the same 80% definition for affordable housing. Mr. Ozberk stated they may, depending on the funding and goals.
- An unidentified resident commented that D.C. subsidizes its housing projects while Montgomery County does not.
- An unidentified resident sought more information about the city’s growth. Mr. Ozberk confirmed the growth was noted over the past 20 years. However, the numbers are lower over the past year due to the pandemic. New families with children are a factor. The resident inquired how D.C. collaborates with other jurisdictions. Mr. Ozberk stated there is a good working relationship amongst the local jurisdictions, and monthly calls are held. More formal partnerships may develop across jurisdictions.
- An unidentified resident noted there was no focus on education in the discussions, and inquired about educational needs. Mr. Ozberk shared a recent study done with Alice Deal Middle School, Woodrow Wilson High School, and Janney Elementary School, and how the school system is looking to alleviate excess capacity. Partner agencies are also looking into this issue.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM COUNCIL:

Other than the questions and comments raised in response to the D.C. Office of Planning presentation, no additional feedback was offered.

MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor White announced the Village Council met in Closed Session on Monday, June 21 2021 - pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(7) of the Maryland General Provisions - to consult with the Council’s attorney to obtain legal advice regarding the possible provision of contractual concierge services.

The Village Council’s Personnel Committee met in Closed Session on Wednesday, July 7, 2021 - pursuant to Section 3-305(b)(1) of the Maryland General Provisions - to discuss staff evaluations and proposed salaries for FY 2022.

There is no Council meeting scheduled for the month of August 2021. Therefore, the next scheduled Council meeting will be held on Monday, September 13, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded, to approve the minutes from the Council’s Public Session held dated Monday, June 14, 2021 as presented. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded, to approve the minutes of the Council's Closed Session held on Monday, June 21, 2021, as presented. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Dr. Muller reported from the minutes of the July 1, 2021 meeting of the Council's Communications Committee that a consensus was reached that no overhaul of the Council's website was needed. The Village Manager will consult with the Web Administrator to create a site map, and an effort will be launched to increase the number of residents on the email list. Profiles of Village residents may be included in future newsletters.

Mr. Dorsey moved, Mr. Mezey seconded, to approve the Closed Session minutes of the Council's Personnel Committee dated Wednesday, July 7, 2021, as amended. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council's financial standing as of June 30, 2021. Total cash on hand in the General Fund was \$5,882,680.07. Total cash on hand in the Capital Improvements Fund was \$11,298.10. The balance in the OPEB Trust Fund Reserve was \$1,334.86. Dr. Muller noted the Council ended the fiscal year with a \$481,000 budget surplus.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from Parks & Grounds Committee: Mr. Pirnie reported on the committee's first meeting held on Tuesday, July 6, 2021. Attendees included: Committee members Pirnie, Durbin, and Dorsey, Village Manager Julian Mansfield and one resident. Discussions were held concerning the following matters:

- (1) Two roadside benches—one on South Park Avenue that can be removed at no expense to the Council, and another at 4620 North Park Avenue near the shuttle bus station—are weathered and will be removed. The bench at 4620 will be replaced with a teak bench.
- (2) The intersection of South Park Avenue and Hills Plaza is an area of concern for pedestrians. The option of installing a surveillance camera in that location and others was discussed. Answers to various questions regarding cameras can be found in the Committee's report. (attached)

The Parks & Grounds Committee recommended: (1) install camera(s) on a pole near the Village bulletin board at the corner of The Hills Plaza and South Park Avenue to capture the four pedestrian crosswalks; and to draw electricity from the existing circuit that serves the bulletin board. The camera footage will allow the Village to collect data to share with Montgomery County if next steps are needed; (2) research the cost of installing cameras to cover Humphrey Park that would draw electricity from existing circuits that serve the Village Center and pole-mounted lights in Humphrey Park. PEPCO may need to be involved; and (3) gather comments and suggestions from the Council's members and area residents. Mr. Mezey noted the cameras will be supplementary to any existing cameras.

Mr. Pirnie moved, Dr. Muller seconded, that the Village install at least one surveillance camera on a pole near the Village bulletin board at the corner of The Hills Plaza and South Park Avenue. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Report from Community Advisory Committee (CAC): Dr. Muller reported the CAC met on Wednesday, July 7, 2021 and elected Joe Bucherer as their new Chair. Dr. Muller will serve as the Council's liaison. The Committee discussed:

- (1) New Retail Establishments in the Village, including a new beauty salon in The Elizabeth; a new bakery and restaurant that will be replacing Ralph Lauren in the Collection; and a new Westwood cleaners at the Chevy Chase Center.
- (2) Concerns that the 10-minute waiting time rule is not being observed. Parking tickets are being issued before the 10 minutes have elapsed. It was suggested that the security team keep a log of times concerning violation in "No Parking" areas.
- (3) Uncertainty about ticketing appeals and review processes. The CAC recommended further Council discussion about the current ticketing guidelines, and about publication of the present appeals process in the Village newsletter.
- (4) Expanding retail development on the Maryland side of Western Avenue.
- (5) "Welcome" signage to identify the community as the Village rather than Chevy Chase.
- (6) The next meeting of the Community Advisory Committee is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 11, 2021 at 5:15 p.m. The committee's minutes were amended to show David Churchill as an attendee. (attached)

Report from Finance Committee: Ms. Durbin reported the Finance Committee met on Thursday, July 8, 2021 to consider the Village reserves that exceed \$5 million. Ms. Durbin reviewed Sections 6-209 and 202 of the Maryland Code regarding public funds being secured by deposit insurance or collateral. The Village is restricted by law as to how its funds can be invested. Ms. Durbin reported The Village reserves are spread across insured accounts in eight banks paying the best available interest rate; or are invested in the Maryland local investment pool. The institutions and amounts are detailed in the monthly Treasurer's Report, and are posted on the Village website. The Finance Committee recognized that interest rates on the accounts are low, and a specialist confirmed the rates were the best available at the time. The \$5.8 million balance was accumulated over 20 years.

Ms. Durbin responded to the previously posed questions by Prem Garg concerning the size of the general fund to prepare for unbudgeted expenses; apportionment of any surplus funds; and the method for investing general funds.

Dr. Muller moved, and Mr. Dorsey seconded, that the Village Manager seek one or more advisors from the auditor or other sources to present to the full Council to perform an independent assessment of the Council's financial investments. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Report from Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH): Mayor White reported:

- (1) The CCCFH met on Wednesday, June 16, 2021 with Jason Sartori of the Montgomery County Planning & Policy Division to discuss the pros and cons of the County's Thrive 2050 plan.
- (2) Norman Knopf, Village Attorney, discussed the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue development.
- (3) The next meeting of the Citizens Coordinating Committee of Friendship Heights will be held via Zoom on Wednesday, July 21, 2021 at 7:30 p.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

Update on Historic Preservation Status - 4608 N. Park Avenue

Village Attorney Norman Knopf referred Ms. Eileen McGuckian as a reference to provide guidance concerning the historical preservation application process. A specific form must be completed, and an architectural description of the property must be provided along with a statement of significance and written consent from the property owner. The previous owner of the house applied for historic status, but was denied. A copy of the previous application was requested for reference.

Update on Ad Hoc Council Committee regarding Village Concierge Service

Mr. Mezey reported the Village Attorney has indicated, rather than a grant or subsidy, a contract with a third party would be needed in order to provide for concierge services such as rides for senior citizens and other types of assistance that would allow residents to age in place. The Friendship Heights Neighbors Network was cited as an example for this type of service. Comments were received from residents asking the Council and the Ad Hoc Committee to consider the needs of isolated members of the community; to consider any potential liability for the Council in relation to concierge services; suggested the need for market research; emphasized support for maintaining the current level of service; and sought a clear definition of “concierge service”. The committee will further discuss a proposal for moving forward.

NEW BUSINESS:

Reinstating Membership in the Tree City USA Program

This is a national program started in 1976, whose members include many towns and cities in Montgomery County, which were enumerated. Their mission is to provide the framework for communities to manage and expand their public trees. The four core standards for membership are: 1) someone legally responsible for trees on public property, 2) a tree care ordinance 3) a community budget of at least \$2 per capita (about \$10,000 in the Village budget) and 4) an arbor day observation and proclamation. Friendship Heights Village qualifies for all these requirements.

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded, reinstating the membership of Friendship Heights Village in the Tree City USA Program. The motion carried by a vote of five in favor, one opposed (Ms. Durbin), and zero abstained (5-1-0).

Discussion of Fish Tank for the Village Center Lobby:

Dr Muller presented a history of the previous fish tanks in the library (attached) and how it was a unique Village amenity, enjoyed by many, including especially children. Some Council members indicated the tanks had a disturbing odor.

Dr. Muller moved, Mayor White seconded, to seek bids for the construction and installation of a six-foot freshwater aquascaped fish tank with automatic feeding and water control, on a custom made wooden stand, as well as maintenance of such a tank. The motion carried by a vote of four in favor, two opposed (Ms. Durbin and Mr. Mezey), and zero abstained (4-2-0).

Discussion/vote on Renewal of Membership to Maryland Municipal League: Ms. Durbin moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded, approving payment for renewal of the annual membership to the Maryland Municipal League at a cost of \$9,328.44. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

Introduction of Amendment to Village By-Laws: Mr. Mezey proposed a change to the Village by-laws as follows:

- (1) Section V.4 as currently written would be deleted.
- (2) Section V.3 would be amended to state that the Mayor, with the advice and consent of the Council, shall appoint Council members to committees. Typically, committees should consist of three members.
- (3) Section V.4 (formerly Section V.3, slightly reworded) The Mayor, with the advice and consent of the Council, shall select the chair of each committee.

After discussion of the advantage of having only three committee members, and acknowledgement of the complexities involved with the issue, the Council decided to take the issue up at its September Council Meeting.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION:

Dr. Muller stated an August 2021 Council meeting may be needed, as there is a great deal of business left to be discussed. The Council members were surveyed, and it was decided that a Special Meeting could be called for August 2021 if urgent business arose or if so advised by the Village attorney.

DISCUSSION/VOTE ON MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION:

Mayor White moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded, to move into 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 the Council has jurisdiction; as well as any additional personnel matters that may arise. The motion carried unanimously (6-0-0).

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, the July 13, 2021 meeting was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:



Alfred Muller, MD, Secretary

PARKS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT ON SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

In its meeting on March 8, 2021, the Council referred a proposal from Securitas Security Services USA (*A Security Proposal for Village of Friendship Heights*, dated February 17, 2021) to the Infrastructure Committee (now Parks and Grounds Committee) for review. This proposal envisioned six AXIS Q6010- E Network Cameras placed throughout the Village. Two would be located on lower North Park Avenue, one off South Park Avenue opposite the Carleton, one at the intersection of Friendship Boulevard and North Park Avenue, one in Willoughby Park, and one at the intersection of The Hills Plaza and South Park Avenue. With this proposal as a starting point, the Committee examined the issue of surveillance cameras, starting with threat that might impel the Council to authorize their purchase.

THREAT TO FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

How endangered is Friendship Heights?

Summary

Friendship Heights is a prosperous, tranquil, safe community, but she is at risk to perpetrators from outside. Montgomery County is one of the safest in Maryland, but crimes against property, especially theft from motor vehicles are a concern. The District of Columbia suffers the familiar problems of large cities and has crime at levels twice the national average. However, gentrification has pushed crime away from the Maryland border near Friendship Heights. Two recent incidents illustrate the Village's vulnerability: the burglary of Friendship Gourmet Market and the vandalization of our beloved crossing guard. (See "Recent Incidents" below.)

Overview

Crime in Friendship Heights is about three quarters of the national average, making the Village an exceptionally safe place to reside. (statistics derived from *Federal Bureau of Investigation Report*, September 2020) However, Friendship Heights is at risk to perpetrators from Montgomery County and the District of Columbia.

In overall crime, Maryland reflects the national average, but Montgomery County is one of the safest in the state. In Montgomery, violent crime against persons (murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault) has declined greatly from its height in 1990-1995 and is now at approximately the level of the late 1970's. Mara Salvatrucha (MS-13) continues to be the largest gang operating within Montgomery County, and is responsible for nearly half the gang-related assaults in the county. (*Montgomery County Department of Police, 2019 Annual Report on Crime and Safety*, p. 1) Crime against property (breaking and entering, larceny, auto theft) has declined even more and now stands at less than half the level of the later 1970's. (*Bethesda Magazine*, "How Safe is MoCo?",

October 22, 2019) Comparing 2018 with 2019, crime against persons declined 3% and crimes against property increased 2.3%. (*Montgomery County Department of Police 2019 Annual Report on Crime & Safety*, National Incident-Based Reporting System data from MCPD dashboard 2/12/2020) Against this favorable trend, theft from motor vehicles is disturbingly high. The 2nd District Bethesda, Montgomery County Police, advises that thefts from unlocked vehicles are a high-volume crime in Montgomery County and urges residents to take precautions. (*Crime Summary*, 2nd District, January 2020)

Although violent crime in the District of Columbia has declined greatly since the crack epidemic in the 1990's, it still remains twice the national average (FBI Uniform Crime Statistics). Moreover, the District and Prince George's County, in common with numerous cities across the nation, are currently experiencing an upwards spike in violent crime. (See the September 2020 incident noted below.) There were 198 homicides in 2020, the highest since 2004. As of May 5, 2021, there were 66 homicides for the year. (*Metropolitan Police Department, Crime Data at a Glance*) Since the 1990's, crimes against property in the District have declined by about half. As gentrification progressed, crime moved towards the eastern parts of the District. The northwestern neighborhoods nearest Friendship Heights are among the most prosperous with the lowest crime rates. In contrast, Ward 8 (Anacostia) in the farthest corner is the least prosperous and most crime ridden.

Recent Incidents

This list captures serious incidents that occurred in and near Friendship Heights during the past eighteen months.

February 2020

A motor vehicle struck and seriously injured a pedestrian while she was attempting to cross Willard Avenue near the corner with Shoemaker Lane. Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) subsequently decided to install pedestrian hybrid beacons (PHB) at this location and also near the corner of Willard Avenue and North Park Avenue.

7:30 PM September 24, 2020 (near the Village)

There was a fatal shooting in the 5200 block of Western Avenue near 45th Street. A twenty year-old man residing in North Baltimore was found dead at the location of the incident. A second man was found wounded about two blocks away on Harrison Street. Police thought the shootings might be related to sale of marijuana. (*Washington Post*)

Late September 2020

Unknown perpetrators vandalized the Elizabeth arcade and the garage entrance to the Carleton.

11:00 PM October 29, 2020 (near the Village)

Police foiled an attempt to loot the Saks Fifth Avenue store. Police monitoring protests in Washington, D.C., learned that a group of protestors was planning action in Friendship Heights. In response, Montgomery County Police patrolled along Western Avenue near Wisconsin Avenue. Just before 11:00 PM twenty young people exited vehicles in front of Saks and broke a window. Police arrived quickly, causing the perpetrators to flee in a car and on foot. Police detained and subsequently arrested one of these perpetrators. An hour later, plain clothes officers arrested seven people, thought to be among the people seen at Saks, who were trying door handles and entering cars. Five were adults and two were juveniles, all from D.C. (Chevy Chase, *Weekly Police Beat*)

First week January, 2021

Thieves smashed windows on several cars parked in the commercial area of Friendship Heights on streets and in parking garages. They stole laptops, iPads, and other personal possessions. (Chevy Chase, *Weekly Police Beat*)

First week, January, 2020

Thieves stole items from a car in the area of South Park Avenue and The Hills Plaza. (Montgomery County Police, *Recent Crime Summary*, January 4, 2020)

January 11, 2021

Masked perpetrators broke the glass front door of the Friendship Gourmet Market, 5550 Friendship Boulevard. The store front is located across North Park Avenue from the Carleton. The perpetrators stole money from the state lottery, a laptop computer and cigarettes among other items. They were imaged by a security camera mounted on the wall behind the counter, but wore masks. Since this burglary, the store has added a system of smaller security cameras scattered throughout the store. In addition, the camera located above the main entrance of the Carleton now covers the front of the store.

January 21, 2021

Unknown perpetrators vandalized the statue of a crossing guard entitled "Oh, It's You, Welcome!" by Seward Johnson on the corner of South Park Avenue and Hills Plaza. The vandals beat the statue's face with some hard object. They spray painted the statue and the surrounding sidewalk. The statue had to be sent to the sculptor's atelier for repair at a cost of approximately \$24,000.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS

How much do surveillance cameras contribute to public security?

Summary

Humans cannot be expected to monitor the output from security cameras continuously and even if they chance to see an offense in progress, law enforcement may not arrive in time. But surveillance cameras have deterrent effect, especially in crimes against property, and they are commonly used after the incident to assist investigation and to provide evidence for trial. Automated programs, especially license plate recognition and facial recognition, enormously increase the usefulness of imagery and are in wide use throughout the U.S.

General Use

Surveillance cameras are ubiquitous in the industrialized world. The U.S. alone has some seventy million cameras currently in operation. (*Moneywatch*, December 10, 2019; statistics from IHS Markit) Cameras appear to have some deterrent effect, especially as concerns premeditated crimes against property. Imagery from surveillance cameras is often used after incidents to assist investigation and to provide evidence. Constant monitoring by humans is not feasible, except in very specific, closely limited applications. Constant monitoring by software includes license plate recognition and facial recognition, described below.

Response Time

Even when a human happens to see imagery at the time a crime is being committed, perpetrators might still flee before police arrived on the scene. The average response time for an emergency call for services in Montgomery County is about 8.5 minutes. (Montgomery County Department of Police, *2019 Annual Report on Crime and Safety*, p. 4) Individual response times vary widely depending on where police happen to be at the time of the incident. The Second District of the Montgomery County Department of Police has responsibility for Friendship Heights. Second District Station is located in Bethesda, approximately 2.3 road miles distant from the Village Center. The Montgomery County Police Field Office at 4602 North Park Avenue is manned sporadically. If police happened to be in the Field Office at the time of an incident, the response time would be very short. Securitas Security Systems is under contract to enforce parking regulations within the Village. Securitas patrols the Village in marked vehicles, which may have some deterrent effect, but their personnel are not armed and have no police powers.

License Plate Recognition

Security personnel and law enforcement officials can identify individual license plates just by observing imagery, but in many cases automation is necessary. Almost three quarters of all police departments in the U.S. employ automated license plate recognition software, typically to control traffic, collect revenue from delinquent tax payers, recover stolen vehicles, and apprehend known felons.

Sophisticated software finds license plates, compensates for skew, averages values over multiple images, identifies characters, and checks them against the format of

state license plates. License plate recognition is usually done with specialized high speed cameras. For example, shutter speeds of 1/500 of a second are required to capture plates on vehicles moving at 40 miles per hour.

Facial Recognition

Security personnel and law enforcement officials can identify a known individual just by observing imagery, but automation is often necessary. Over one hundred countries in the world, including the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and most European countries use some form of automated facial recognition. The Federal Bureau of Investigation has access to over six hundred million photos, including access to over twenty state databases, for example those generated by licensing drivers. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Government approved the National Capital Region Facial Recognition Investigative Leads System (NCRFRILS) in 2017. Over a dozen law enforcement agencies have had access to this database which now contains about 1.4 million photos. However, in May 2021, the District decided to shut down NCRFRILS after a review prompted by a new Virginia law tightening restrictions on use of facial recognition technology. (WP, *"Facial recognition system used to identify Lafayette Square Protester to be halted,"* May 18, 2021) The Department of Homeland Security uses facial recognition to monitor traffic at airports. Facebook uses facial recognition to tag people in photos and link these photos to their profiles. Apple uses facial recognition to unlock its latest phones. Despite such widespread use, Congress still has not passed legislation clarifying how this new technology may be legally applied.

Facial recognition technology uses biometrics to create numerical codes that identify individual faces. Current systems employ deep learning, a form of artificial intelligence that passes inputs through multiple stacked layers to identify patterns. Facial recognition software identifies a face, which may be singly or in a crowd, frontal or in profile. It creates a geographic map by measuring the distances between various features or nodal points, e.g., the distance between eyes or from forehead to chin. It combines these measurements through a mathematical formula that yields a numerical code, which may be compared with other codes to discover matches. Verification of cooperative subjects, e.g., unlocking a smart phone, is much easier than identifying uncooperative subjects, e.g., identifying people in a crowd of rioters. Under ideal conditions, facial recognition has near perfect accuracy, but under more difficult conditions there may be large numbers of false positives. These may be screened out by setting confidence thresholds. The obvious drawback is that correct matches may be among those that are discarded.

CAMERAS ON BUILDINGS

What exterior areas are covered by building cameras?

Summary

All of the buildings except one have exterior security cameras in operation. These cameras are located at pedestrian entrances, vehicular entrances, loading docks, parking lots, and grounds. Most of these cameras are intended to surveil traffic entering and exiting the buildings, but some happen to include narrow swaths of sidewalks and streets. A few cameras capture more extensive views. For example, the 4620 Condominium has a camera next to the pedestrian entrance on Willard Avenue that looks up the street towards Friendship Boulevard. These cameras are monitored as needed and are not directly connected to police or security services. Imagery is usually kept for fifteen to thirty days.

Carleton

The Carleton has four cameras mounted outside the building: one over the main entrance on North Park Avenue looking towards the street, one on Willard Avenue looking towards the pedestrian door, one on Willard Avenue looking towards the gate, and one by the loading dock on Shoemaker Farm Lane.

Two of these cameras - those over the main entrance and next to the loading dock - look outward from the building. The camera over the main entrance shows the driveway under the portico and part of North Park Avenue including the Friendship Gourmet Market. The Carleton added this camera in 2021 in response to interest from the Village. It has sufficient resolution to recognize a person's features as far away as the sidewalk on the near side of North Park Avenue. The camera by the loading dock shows the dock and part of Shoemaker Farm Lane down to the intersection with Willard Avenue.

The person on duty at the main desk in the lobby on floor and the dock master in his office on floor T2 have access to imagery from all cameras. They observe the screens as needed for particular purposes. The imagery is retained for two weeks. There is no direct connection to agencies outside the building, but images can easily be sent by flash drive or email.

Brighton Gardens of Friendship Heights

Brighton Gardens has one of the newest and most comprehensive arrays of external cameras. The camera overlooking the back courtyard also offers a glimpse of The Hills Plaza beyond the fence. There are two cameras covering the front entrance, one over the vehicular entrance, one at the loading dock, and one overlooking the rear patio. Imagery from all these cameras is displayed at the reception desk. It is monitored as needed by the staff. There is no connectivity with law enforcement or security agencies. The staff can request recent imagery from the purveyor of the system.

Elizabeth

The Elizabeth has two cameras mounted outside the building: one over the semi-circular driveway and one at the vehicular entrance and exit. The camera over the

semi-circular driveway shows the driveway and a swath of North Park Avenue opposite the Elizabeth. The camera at the vehicular entrance and exit shows the interior of the garage at the entrance and a narrow glimpse of North Park Avenue. The resolution is good and might be enhanced. Imagery is retained for one month, after which it is erased. The Elizabeth Condominium Association is considering the addition of cameras in the building. During the same process, it will also consider upgrades to its system.

4615 North Park Avenue

4615 North Park Avenue has one camera that looks outside the building. It captures the vehicular entrance, the sidewalk immediately adjacent to this entrance, and a small swath of the street.

4620

The 4620 Condominium has one externally mounted camera. It is located next to the the pedestrian entrance to the parking garage on Willard Avenue. This camera is directed eastward towards Wisconsin Avenue. It covers the pedestrian entrance, the nearby vehicular entrance, the adjacent sidewalk, and Willard Avenue as far as the intersection with The Hills Plaza. The imagery is available to personnel working at the front desk behind the main entrance on North Park Avenue. They monitor the input as necessary to perform their tasks. The building retains imagery for one month. There is no connectivity with law enforcement or a security service, but they might receive imagery as needed in particular cases.

Highland House

The Highland House has four cameras that show views outside the building. One camera is at the main entrance on Wisconsin Avenue. One camera above the visitor garage parking entrance on South Park Avenue shows the entrance and a swath of sidewalk and street. One camera above the resident garage entrance on The Hills Plaza shows the entrance, the sidewalk, part of the Hills Plaza, and the sidewalk on the far side of the street. One camera at the loading dock on South Park Avenue shows just the entrance and sidewalk next to the entrance. Output from the Highland House and Highland House West cameras is displayed at the reception desks and in the offices. Images are monitored on an as-needed basis and retained for thirty days. There is no direct connectivity with law enforcement. Highland House staff can access imagery on smart phones using an application supplied by the firm that installed the system.

Highland House West

Highland House West has three cameras that show outside views. The camera at the main entrance on South Park Avenue shows part of the lobby and areas of the sidewalk just outside the entrance. The camera at the garage entrance on The Hills Plaza shows

the entrance and the street beyond. The camera at the loading dock on Friendship Boulevard shows the dock, the sidewalk next to the dock and a portion of the street.

Willard Towers

Willard Towers has no cameras that cover areas outside the building. It plans to add cameras, but has not yet determined their locations.

Willoughby

The Willoughby has seven cameras mounted outside the building or directed towards an entrance. Two cameras are mounted above the semicircular driveway off Willard Avenue. These capture primarily the driveway with glimpses of Willard Avenue. One camera is mounted at the entrance to the parking garage on Willard Avenue. This camera also captures a swath of the avenue and the facade of the GEICO headquarters. One camera at the entrance beneath the building on Friendship Boulevard shows a small bit of the street. One camera at the vehicular entrance on Friendship Boulevard next to the Willoughby Park captures just the entrance. One camera is mounted within the pedestrian entrance on North Park Avenue. The camera shows the interior of the entrance, part of the outside ramp, and a small bit of the street. One camera is mounted above the vehicular entrance on North Park Avenue. It shows primarily the driveway with a small segment of North Park Avenue and the office building across the street.

The person on duty at the main desk and persons within the office have access to the imagery. They view this imagery as needed. Imagery is retained 15-20 days. There is no direct connectivity with police or security services. Two years ago, images of a resident at the entrance on Willard Avenue were entered as evidence in a trial for rape that ended in conviction.

POSSIBLE COVERAGE

What areas should Village surveillance cameras cover?

Summary

The Village has a range of options for installing surveillance cameras, ranging from single installations to coverage of the entire Village. We outlined five options, identified for convenience by a key word, e.g., "Core." These options might be implemented singly or together with others, except Option 5, which encompasses the entire Village.

Option 1: Spot (e.g., corner of South Park Ave and Hills Plaza)

The Village might opt to mount surveillance cameras at certain spots of exceptional interest. An example would be the heavily traveled intersection of South Park Avenue and The Hills Plaza. Soon, construction will start next to the Holiday Inn on Wisconsin Ave, implying more cars, more foot traffic, and sporadic street closings.

Option 2: Core (Village Center and the parks)

The Village welcomes and encourages residents to use public space for meetings, entertainment, and relaxation. She thus acquires a responsibility to promote safety while people use this space, including the Village Center, Humphries Park, Willoughby Park, and Page Park.

Option 3: Traffic (intersections of major streets)

Traffic safety is a concern, especially where pedestrians and motor vehicles interact frequently. Perhaps the most hazardous intersection is that of South Park Avenue and The Hills Plaza, mentioned in Option 1, but other intersections also present hazards. These include the intersections of North Park Avenue and Willard Avenue, Shoemaker Farm Lane and Willard Avenue, Friendship Boulevard and Willard Avenue, The Hills Plaza and Willard Avenue, North Park Avenue and Friendship Boulevard, South Park Avenue and The Hills Plaza, South Park Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue.

Option 4: Buildings (areas around condominiums and apartments)

Village residents live almost entirely in high-rise condominium and apartment buildings that generate continuous flows of people. The buildings have cameras that cover entrances (pedestrian and vehicular entrances, loading docks, parking lots), but these cameras capture at most only swaths of sidewalks and streets beyond the entrances themselves, leaving much of the surrounding area uncovered.

Option 5: Village (Options 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Full coverage by surveillance cameras would include the Village Center, parks, buildings, intersections, and streets between intersections. Streets would include the full lengths of North Park Avenue, South Park Avenue, Friendship Boulevard, and The Hills Plaza plus segments segments of Willard Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue.

RECOMMENDATIONS

[MATERIAL TO BE ADDED]

PARKS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT ON ROADSIDE BENCHES

The Village has four roadside benches: one at the shuttle bus station next to 4620, one on the corner of North Park Avenue and Friendship Boulevard next to the Willoughby, one in the shelter on Friendship Boulevard next to Humphrey Park, and one on South Park Avenue next to the Bank of America.

CONDITION OF BENCHES

Two of these benches are in good condition, while two are usable but badly weathered. All are in frequent use except for the bench next to the Bank of America, which is in an awkward location and seldom used. A synopsis follows:

- 4620: simple metal bench with wooden seat and back; wood is weathered dark gray and strewn with cracks. A large waste container is immediately adjacent to the lefthand arm rest. This bench should be renovated or replaced. If possible, the trash container should be moved away from the bench.

- Willoughby: wooden bench with curved back rest; wood is in good condition and recently sealed; donated by the Rotary Club of Friendship Heights in February 2000; manufactured by Kingsley-Bate, 7200 Gateway Court, Manassas, Virginia. This bench requires no action.

- Humphrey Park: elaborate cast metal bench with composition seat and backrest divided by armrests into three places; donated in memory of Ilse Johanna Hess by family and friends in 2005. This bench requires no action.

- Bank of America: structure and condition identical to the bench next to 4620. This seldom-used bench will be a nuisance when construction begins on the planned apartment building. It should be removed.

REPLACING THE 4620 BENCH

A replacement for the 4620 bench should be approximately the same size (seat 69 3/4' long and 17 1/2' wide, backrest 17 1/2' high). Possible choices include:

Teak comparable to the one now located next to the Willoughby on North Park Avenue. Teak is a dense, rot-resistant wood that naturally has a golden brown color. To maintain its original color, teak furniture should be oiled or sealed. Sealing has a longer lasting effect than oiling. Left untreated, teak acquires a silver-gray patina.

Cast aluminum with slats of recycled plastic such as the ones next to the Somerset House in Chevy Chase. Aluminum is extremely resistant to corrosion and has excellent

thermal conductivity, keeping it cooler than iron in the same conditions. Recycled plastic is highly durable and does not require painting or staining.

PARKS AND GROUNDS COMMITTEE REPORT ON INTERSECTION OF SOUTH PARK AVENUE AND THE HILLS PLAZA

At peak hours, this intersection has heavy traffic that can put pedestrians at risk. The Carr and Donohoe Companies plan to build a large apartment building between the existing Marriott Hotel and South Park Avenue. After construction, residents of this new building will increase pedestrian and vehicular traffic at the intersection. This report suggests new measures to reduce risk.

THE PROBLEM

This intersection with four-way stop is challenging for drivers and pedestrians because right-of-way is not always obvious nor are intentions of participants. Drivers may be in doubt over which vehicle has right-of-way and intentions of other drivers, including whether they will proceed straight or turn in either direction. At the same time, drivers have to clear pedestrians entering from either side of the road. Pedestrians may be in doubt over drivers' intentions. Frequently, pedestrians and drivers resolve ambiguity by signaling with their hands and arms.

Montgomery County has declined to install a traffic light because it would be just a block from the existing light on Wisconsin Avenue and because traffic is usually lower than would justify a light. The County is very unlikely to deploy police around the intersection because it has higher priorities for this limited asset. Montgomery County does not currently use traffic cameras that detect violations of stop signs.

EXISTING MEASURES

County and Village have taken a range of measures to contain risk. The County placed stop signs at each corner and small, easily replaced stop signs / pedestrian crossing signs in the center of the street at each pedestrian crosswalk. The Village built bump outs into the street at pedestrian crosswalks, thus narrowing the traffic to just one lane in each direction. The Village also constructed brick walk-ways for pedestrians, thus channeling their movement.

NEW MEASURES

The Committee will assess the feasibility and desirability of new measures that will require approval from the County. These might include:

Signage: replace existing stop signs with radar-activated signs that have light emitting diodes; add bright yellow pedestrian warning signs below the stop signs.

Raised surfaces: Install removable speed bumps and warning signs; raise the four crosswalks; raise the entire intersection, including all four crosswalks and the area encompassed by them.

Community Advisory Committee Minutes

July 7, 2021

Attendees: Al Muller, Bill Corey, Sheila Footer, Shirley Carr, David Churchill, Sandy Schwarzbart, Ken Niles, Ethel Pacheco, Joe Bucherer (by phone).
Meeting began at 5:15 p.m.

Topics:

1) Joe Bucherer was elected to be the new Chair, succeeding Al Muller, who will become Council liaison.

2) New retail establishments in the Village and nearby were reported: a beauty salon in The Elizabeth, a bakery and restaurant replacing Ralph Lauren, Westwood cleaners at the Chevy Chase Center.

3) Concern about parking tickets. Members of the committee felt that the “rule” for 10 minutes wait time is not being executed properly. The feeling is that tickets are often given prior to 10 minutes and that allowance needs to be given for drop off of handicapped persons and those delivering prescriptions as times could need to be extended in these cases. A suggestion is to have the security team log the time that a car has been parked initially and then follow with a time the ticket is issued to validate the violation. Associated with this issue is uncertainty about the appeal process and rules governing it.

Suggestion: Council discussion of current ticketing guidelines and publication of appeal process in Village Newsletter

4) Committee began to discuss, in relation to expanding retail and development on the MD side of Western, how to develop an “identity” for the Village of Friendship Heights. There was not time to discuss this in detail, however, ideas regarding signage “welcoming” people to the Village are worth exploring, especially with regard to new development and having the Council and residents begin to address their mail as Village of Friendship Heights (or something similar) rather than Chevy Chase to begin to have identity of place.

Suggestion: Ongoing discussion of this topic by CAC and Council.

Meeting ended at 6:15 pm.

Friendship Heights Village Center Aquarium

Since there have been a few email comments concerning a proposal to replace an aquarium in the Village Center, I offer a detailed background statement that can help to focus and speed discussion on Monday.

History: After many years of planning and hurdles, the current Village Center was opened on April 13, 1986. The Village Council had unanimously approved a multipurpose building, with a kitchen, two classrooms, a large auditorium and a small reading room which contained two fresh water fish tanks, three feet each, mounted in the wall so as to appear like two living, moving paintings.

The tanks were a unique amenity of the Village, providing a backdrop of stress free tranquility for anyone in the library. They also provided a constant attraction for children, young and old, who would pull their parents into the Center (and the library) to watch the fish. Some residents had names for the longer lived fish and would visit them many times a week. There were no recorded complaints in thirty years from any resident.

In 2015, at the suggestion of members of the Council Advisory Committee, a small Council ad hoc Capital Improvements Committee was established to respond to requests to upgrade the deteriorating floor of Huntley Hall. This ad hoc group included Chair John Mertins, and staff Julian Mansfield, Bob Shapiro and Betty Ardizzone. The minutes reflect at least six open public meetings, during which the committee and the original architect of the Center determined that a larger renovation/upgrade of the entire Village Center was needed, including "lighting, auditorium flooring, carpeting of the hallway, and renovation of the restrooms and kitchen." The last public meeting was held on May 3, 2016.

At no time in any public meeting do the minutes reflect discussion of renovation of the library. But when three proposals for renovation were received for public Council discussion on June 13, 2016, the library was for the first time publicly shown to have the fish tanks removed in order to make room for more book shelving. The minutes reflect undetailed "questions and concerns from the audience." The architectural design was accepted, 6-0-0.

At the next public Council meeting, on July 11, 2016, a motion was made "not to amend the previously approved contract for the renovation of the Village Center (in order) to accommodate fish tanks and reduce the shelving planned." The motion passed 5-1-0, with Mr. Dorsey being absent, and Mayor White the sole dissenting voice favoring retention of the tanks. Of the 5 Council members voting in favor of not restoring the tanks, only one remains on the present Council.

At no time during preparation of the changes to the library or request of replacement of the tanks was there ever a Council public discussion of an alternative site in the Center for an aquarium.

That is the purpose of the proposal for discussion on July 12th, 2021: to begin planning an alternative site for the aquarium which was removed. By coincidence, this discussion will start almost exactly 5 years to the day of the final decision to remove a popular amenity without adequate public discussion... for which the Chair, Mr. Mertins, later apologized.

Options for Consideration:

Placement of a six foot (replacement for the two previous 3 foot tanks) salt water or fresh water aquarium in the main lobby, as a center piece visible to anyone entering the lobby.

Salt water tanks with coral cost estimate between \$8,000-\$15,000 to design and set up, with computerized feeding and environmental control (water temperature, ph, etc) and require weekly maintenance visits by a contractual service.

Fresh water tanks cost estimate between \$3,000-\$8,000 to design and set up, also with computerized options. Maintenance service usually requires only once or twice monthly.

Either type of tank would include a custom stand with complimentary wood finish and canopy preventing fish or odors from leaving the tank. Either tank would require movement of present furniture, with two chairs being moved to the library to match the current library chair.

Project Timeline:

A few months, consisting of:

- 1) Bidding process in case cost is greater than \$5,000
 - 2) Building of the tank, stand and canopy by the selected contractor
 - 3) Setting up of the aquascape (plants, driftwood, etc) before placing fish in tank
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