

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*

VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

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**APPROVED MINUTES**

**PUBLIC SESSION**

**FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL**

**Conducted in the Village Center**

**October 12, 2021**

**ATTENDEES:**

Melanie Rose White, Mayor  
Michael Mezey, Chairman  
Bruce Pirnie, Vice Chairman  
Paula Durbin, Treasurer  
Alfred Muller MD Secretary  
Michael Dorsey, Parliamentarian  
Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Historian  
Julian Mansfield, Village Manager  
Attorney Norman Knopf, Council Attorney  
Beverly John, Recording Secretary from The Professional Documents Service

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

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

The Council received comments from the following persons:

- Afsaneh Mirfendereski expressed concern about the Council's pending bylaw change that would restrict the number of people permitted to sit on a committee. Citing recent historic high voter turnout in the Village, Ms. Mirfendereski questioned the need to restrict committee engagement; and asked the Council to reconsider.
- Dan Dozier requested Wi-Fi service for the Village Square and Park; and recommended that dates for Council and committee meetings be added to the Council calendar and the Council page.
- Roger Cochetti, a resident of the Willoughby, shared that the Urban Land Institute/D.C. Planning Office is accepting comments concerning the Master Plan for Friendship Heights DC. He has filed comments, and encouraged everyone to review the plan and offer their own feedback. He shared feedback concerning the TAP panel activity, and noted a lack of input from residents of Friendship Heights.

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Mayor White announced that the Village Council had voted unanimously via email to join a coalition of Chevy Chase communities in signing a letter to the Montgomery County Commission on Redistricting that urged the Commission to keep Friendship Heights and neighboring communities in the same County Council district that presently includes Bethesda. The Redistricting Commission is currently considering boundaries for the two new County Council Districts that were approved by the voters in 2020.

The annual Fall Festival celebration will be held on Saturday, October 23, 2021 in Hubert Humphrey Friendship Park. Details can be found in the October 2021 Village newsletter.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

**Dr. Muller moved, Ms. White seconded approval of the minutes from the Council's Public Session held on Monday, September 13, 2021 as amended. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**Dr. Muller moved, Ms. White seconded approval of the minutes from the Council's Closed Executive Session held on Monday, September 13, 2021 as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

Dr. Muller reminded Council members that after reviewing draft minutes by the Manager and Secretary, further edits should be sent directly to him for review.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

After confirming that a second corrected financial report was sent to the Council, Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council's financial standing as of September 30, 2021. Total cash on hand in the General Fund was \$5,517,213.60. Total cash on hand in the Capital Improvements Fund was \$11,298.70. The total cash in hand in the OPEB Trust Fund Reserve was \$1,334.93. Ms. Zumaran-Jones asked that the financial reports include page numbers; and requested clarification about the corrections that were made from the original report.

Dr. Muller asked for an update on the status of receiving proposals to review the Village finances; and to assist in drafting an investment plan. Mr. Dorsey has received a proposal for a free forensic review of Village investment reports from Merrill Lynch. After discussion, **Mr. Dorsey moved to accept the Merrill Lynch offer to perform a forensic audit with recommendations to accomplish a professional approach at no cost to the Village; and to direct the Village Manager to start that process. Dr. Muller seconded. However, the motion failed by a vote of two in favor (Mr. Dorsey and Dr. Muller) and five opposed (Mayor White, Mr. Mezey, Mr. Pirnie, Ms. Durbin, and Ms. Zumaran-Jones) and zero abstained (2-5-0).**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Report from the Community Advisory Committee (CAC):** Dr. Muller reported the CAC met on October 6, 2021. Discussion topics included:

- (1) Various events regarding the surrounding community.
- (2) Several instances of vehicles parked along the curb line at Somerset Terrace that blocked access to Wisconsin Avenue.
- (3) No notice of the art show held on the weekend of October 2, 2021 at Wisconsin Place; and a suggestion to publicize such events in the future.
- (4) The rental building at 4615 North Park Avenue has been sold.
- (5) The parking access elevator by Clyde's is now closed.
- (6) The CAC would like to present a traffic speed enforcement report to the Council during the November 2021 Council meeting.

Committee Chair Joe Bucherer then summarized notes found in the September 2021 CAC minutes regarding parking ticket enforcement. The CAC is focusing on three areas for improvement:

- (1) Parking management: Understanding the rules and issues around enforcement and ticketing. Violations mostly stem from visitors and residents parking in “No Parking” areas. Temporary parking to drop off or pick up regulations are confusing to all. The security team has discretion about whether to ticket. It was noted that disputes and conflicts with the security teams have been frequent.
- (2) The committee recommends the following to help mitigate the problem:
  - a. Periodic reminders in the newsletter or other appropriate communication methods. The website may not be the best method to use. Notify each building to post reminders and updates via their bulletin boards and respective newsletters.
  - b. Identify instances where “No Parking” signs are obstructed from view by planters.
  - c. Zone 1 parking signs are needed.

Dr. Muller asked the Council to review the security guard hours since evening hours had been cancelled due to the Center being closed because of Covid restrictions.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Update from Attorney Knopf on 5500 Wisconsin Avenue Development Plans**  
Village Attorney Norman Knopf provided the following updates:

- (1) Attorney Knopf presented an overview of the developer's proposal to build a 213-foot-high rental property (approximately 21 stories high including roof elements). The proposal does not comply with the existing sector plan height limitations.
- (2) The developer's proposal does not comply with the current sector plan criteria for compatibility with other nearby developments.
- (3) The developer's plan would cause “canyonization” that is cautioned against in the sector plan.
- (4) The new street in the proposed plan is narrow and may not meet the requirement for multiusage by pedestrians, cars and service vehicles. The current Code also requires the inclusion of satisfactory vehicle, pedestrian, parking, and bicycle access in the proposed development.
- (5) The Village will have an opportunity to provide public comment at a later date.

**Discussion/Vote on Proposals for Street Trees**

**Mr. Pirnie moved to contract with Stadler Nurseries to plant 18 street trees at a cost of \$8,545, with Stadler Nurseries to be asked if they can provide a larger maple tree replacement in Humphrey Friendship Parl. Ms. Durbin seconded. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0). Management will follow up on the request, but the Council agreed to approve the Stadler Nurseries proposal regardless of the outcome.**

**Proposal for Architectural Historian/4608 North Park**

**Dr. Muller moved to accept the proposal from the Ottery Group totaling \$5,487 to assist the Village with preparing, researching and submitting an application for historic preservation for 4608 North Park Avenue; and for the present owners of the property to be notified of the decision. Mayor White seconded. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**Discussion of Traffic Study for Hills Plaza/South Park**

**Mr. Pirnie moved that the Village solicit bids for time-activated pedestrian warnings signs using light-emitting diodes to be placed on approaches to the intersection of Hills Plaza and South Park Avenue. The expense will be paid using capital reserve funds. Dr. Muller seconded. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0). The Community Advisory Committee is expected to make a presentation on this matter at the November council meeting.**

**Discussion/Vote on Amendment to Village By-Laws**

**Mr. Mezey presented the proposed amendments to Sections 5:3 and 5:4 of the by-laws that were attached to the Council meeting materials. Ms. Durbin moved to approve the bylaw change as stated. Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded. The motion carried by a vote of five in favor, two opposed (Dr. Muller and Mr. Dorsey) and zero abstained (5-2-0).**

**Update on Village Council Committees**

**Ms. White presented proposed Council committee membership as follows:**

- **Communications Committee: Dr. Alfred Muller (Chair), Melanie White, and Carolina Zumaran-Jones**
- **Finance Committee: Paula Durbin (Chair), Michael Dorsey, and Michael Mezey**
- **Parks & Grounds Committee: Bruce Pirnie (Chair), Paula Durbin, and Dr. Alfred Muller**
- **Personnel Committee: Melanie White (Chair), Michael Mezey, and Carolina Zumaran-Jones**
- **Ad Hoc Committee on Concierge Services: Dr. Alfred Muller (Chair), Paula Durbin, and Michael Mezey**

**It was noted that the Personnel Committee will most likely include all Council members when discussing salaries. But personnel complaints would be handled by the committee of three.**

**Dr. Muller moved to approve the committee membership as presented. Mr. Pirnie seconded. Mr. Dorsey declined to serve on the Finance Committee. The motion to approve the committee membership with the removal of Mr. Dorsey from the Finance Committee; and an acknowledgment of the need to elect a third member to**

the Finance Committee. The motion carried by vote of six in favor, one opposed (Mr. Dorsey), and zero abstained (6-1-0).

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Nominations for Community Advisory Committee**

Ms. White nominated the following residents to serve on the Community Advisory Committee: Evan Smith (Willard Towers), Bill Lewis (4620 North Park), and Cameron Moody (The Elizabeth).

Mr. Pirnie moved to accept the nominations for the Community Advisory Committee as presented. Ms. Durbin seconded. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

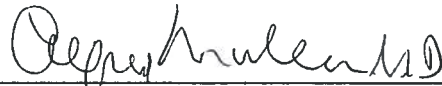
**DISCUSSION/VOTE ON MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION:**

At 9:11 p.m., Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded moving into Closed Session, pursuant to Maryland Code General Provision Article Section 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business before the Council, the October 12, 2021 meeting was adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alfred Muller, MD, Secretary

Community Advisory Committee Minutes  
October 6, 2021

**Attendees:** Al Muller, Bill Corey, Sheila Footer, David Churchill, Sandy Schwarzbart, Ken Niles, Joe Bucherer

Meeting was held at the Village Center and called to order at 5:30 pm.

The proposed members of the Committee also were present and made contributions to the meeting: Evan Smith, Bill Lewis, and Cameron Moody.

**Topics:**

- 1) Roundtable discussion of events / news in the surrounding community.
  - a. Several instances of vehicles parked along the curb line on Somerset Terrace blocking access to Wisconsin Ave.
  - b. Unfortunate that there was no notice of the Art Show held at Wisconsin Place on the weekend of October 2 – 3. It would be good to have some information on events occurring in the local community.
  - c. 4615 N Park has been sold.
  - d. Elevator to access parking at The Collection by Clyde's has been closed off. This is important for access for those who need it.
  
- 2) The Committee discussed documents pertaining to two issues
  - a. **Parking Ticket Process / Procedure / Dispute Resolution**
    - i. Reviewed status and discussion of presentation to Village Council at the meeting on 10/12.
  - b. **Traffic Speed Enforcement**
    - i. Discussed coordination discussions with Village Parks & Grounds Committee and Council Member Bruce Pirnie.
    - ii. Modifications to the draft proposal (approved by the Committee and attached)
      - To a test at either the intersections of Hills Plaza and S. Park or N Park Ave. and Willard Ave. for removable speed bumps and lighted pedestrian signs. These are suggested as they are entry points to the Village from major thoroughfares.
      - Include the intersection of N. Park and Willard Ave. as a location for crossing signs and speed bumps.
      - Suggestion that the number of cross walk signs in the Village could be invasive and not in keeping with the image we want to project. As a result. Pedestrian signs at the intersections of S. Park and Hills Plaza and N. Park and Willard Ave. are to be suggested with removable speed bumps placed throughout the Village before crosswalks to moderate traffic speed and act as a warning to drivers.
    - iii. The Committee requests that the suggestions be placed on the next available Village Council Agenda for discussion.

The next meeting of the Committee will be on Wednesday November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 PM.

Adjournment was at 6:30 pm.

From: Community Advisory Committee

Subject: Village Traffic Safety Review and Recommendations

The Community Advisory has been considering traffic issues within the Village for several years – principally speeding but also the ignoring of stop signs. It is believed that many nonresidents use the Village as a short cut from Wisconsin Avenue to Willard Avenue or vice versa, but the issues are not confined to nonresidents. Set forth below are suggestions for possible improvement to ameliorate the situation.

1. **Movable speed bumps.** Complement the current speed bump on Somerset Terrace with speed bumps within the Village which are movable in the event of winter storms requiring snowplows. An on-line search indicates that the cost of several speed bumps would be in the thousands of dollars, to be best determined by the Village Manager. The bumps would need to be durable enough to handle truck traffic and heavy enough, so they are not moved easily. Additionally, signs notifying drivers of the presence of the speed bumps would be required. Locations for placement include The Hills Plaza before Somerset Terrace, South Park Avenue between The Hills Plaza and Friendship Boulevard, North Park Avenue on both sides of Shoemaker Farm Lane, Shoemaker Farm Lane prior to Willard Avenue, Friendship Blvd approaching N Park, and N. Park approaching Willard Ave. Unlike the bumps on Somerset Terrace, it would be best to not have the speed bump placed at the crosswalk, set back by about 8 – 10 feet so that cars slow on the approach to the crosswalk.
2. **Solar Powered Flashing Yellow Pedestrian Lights** at key crosswalks within the Village like those recently installed on Somerset Terrace. The committee suggests that these be placed at the entry intersections to the Village ( Hills Plaza and S. Park Ave, N. Park Ave. and Willard Ave., Friendship Blvd. and Willard Ave., Shoemaker Farm Rd. and Willard Ave., Friendship Blvd and Willard Ave.) to alert drivers that they are approaching a crosswalk. An on-line search indicates that the cost ranges from approximately \$1,000 to \$1,500 each. Final selection would require investigation by the Village Manager for durability and any relevant traffic requirements.



3. The Committee suggests that the Village test the concept of the speed bumps and pedestrian lights at the intersection of Hills Plaza and S. Park Ave. or N. Park and Willard Ave. to assess impact and resident receptivity. These two intersections are also primary entry points to the Village and areas of high pedestrian and auto traffic.
4. Add more signage within the Village showing the speed limit and reduce speed limit from 25 mph to 20 or 15 mph.
5. Inquire as to possible enforcement of traffic laws within the Village by the County. Under no circumstances should this authority be given to the private contractor enforcing parking restrictions.



# Village of Friendship Heights

## Parking Management

9-2-2021

For a number of years continuing to the present, vehicle parking has been managed through a contract issued by the Village of Friendship Heights. Currently the contract is with Securitas Security Services, who provide the personnel and, they in turn, are authorized to issue official tickets for parking violations on behalf of the Village, that are subsequently processed through Montgomery County Government.

The Village provides on-street, **Free Two-hour Parking** offered 9 AM – 6 PM, Mon – Fri, on the streets falling within the Village, and all of these parking areas are designated **Zone 1**; please note (parking signs also display, “Moving a Vehicle Within Zone 1 Does Not Extend the 2 Hour Time Limit”. Other signs throughout the Village clearly designate **No Parking areas**, such as in front of an intersection, etc. Additionally, all the Montgomery County Code as it applies to parking regulations is enforced in the Village by ticketing and fines, shown below in the most common examples of infractions:

- 31-13 Parking of vehicle – snow accumulation \$60.00
- 31-14 Parking of heavy commercial vehicles, recreational vehicles, or buses \$75.00
- 31-16 Over 24 hours \$60.00
- 31-17 Within 35 feet of intersection \$60.00
- 31-18 Posted time limit \$60.00
- 31-19 Obstructing driveways (within 5 feet). \$60.00

These and all other applicable parking regulations are enforced by the Security officer(s) provided by Securitas Security Services and where there are violations official tickets are issued by the officer.

The problems and complaints that arise regarding parking regulations and the Village enforcement system are mostly from visitors and residents parking in **“No Parking areas”**, and not from overtime in the designated parking areas! Cars in **No Parking areas** whether occupied or attended, *are considered parked*, except when temporarily stopped for the purpose of and while actually engaged in loading and unloading

merchandise or passengers. Current to the practice in the Village enforcement system, *the Security officer is instructed to give about 10 minutes waiver to cars in a no parking zone with flashers on, with a fair amount of discretion involved.* While violations are often disputed and arguments often ensue when the Security officer attempts to ticket violators, the Village parking system leaves the Security officer(s) with no vested interest to issue tickets other than to do their job enforcing the official parking regulations as they apply in the Village. There are many anecdotal assertions that the Security officer(s) apply the parking regulations unfairly and unlawfully, but to date there has been no concrete or objective proof that this is the case, according to Village Management! While there have been cases where tickets have been disputed, and where there was found to be credible reason to dismiss some tickets, overall the current parking system is working, considered to be fair, and is a satisfactory solution for management of parking regulations by the Village Management.

Short of adding to the contract, with Securitas Security Services, costly and significant additions of elapsed time-stamps and photo evidence to the ticketing process, on its face the current parking system is working and operating successfully, according to Village Management. Adjustments to change the processes for ticketing would most likely increase staffing requirements and increase the cost of parking enforcement, but it does not appear that these actions alone would necessarily change the adversarial nature of issuing parking tickets.

Generally, it is worth considering why we have parking enforcement in the first place. Basically, the parking regulations are enforced to provide for safety (particularly in no-parking areas) and equity in access to on-street parking. Without enforcement parking would become a nightmare, totally unsafe and unfair! It should also not go without mentioning, that the process of enforcement itself is an unpleasant task, at best! On many occasions, confrontations arise, no matter how accommodating the Security officer may act in the ticketing process. Residents who question the fairness and functionality of the current system might want to

consider turning the management of The Village parking system over to Montgomery County, but it also should be readily recognized this would result in the likely addition of Parking Meters in the Village and parking in **No Parking areas** would then be enforced with little or no discretionary time waivers as is currently being done!

There are two minor concerns that will require action to the current Village parking system, 1. Hanging plants from lampposts that obscure parking signs, see pictures below (hopefully this will be addressed by the Council Parks and Grounds Committee) and 2. Provide a “Zone 1” sign wherever the standard on-street **Free Two-hour parking** signs are displayed. This item will be addressed by Village Management in the near future, adding the Zone 1 signs where needed.

