

# 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*

4433 SOUTH PARK AVENUE  
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815

Phone: 301-656-2797  
Fax: 301-907-3922  
Email: [info@friendshipheightsmd.gov](mailto:info@friendshipheightsmd.gov)  
Website: [www.friendshipheightsmd.gov](http://www.friendshipheightsmd.gov)



## APPROVED MINUTES

### PUBLIC SESSION

### FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL

Conducted in the Village Center

November 8, 2021

#### **ATTENDEES:**

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

#### **CALL TO ORDER:**

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

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

The Council received comments from the following persons:

- Roger Cochetti suggested that the Village publicize the success of the new businesses that are entering the community (e.g., several restaurants and a daycare center) to counter the perception that the community is economically declining. Ms. Zumaran-Jones commented on the need for lighting and more activity on Willard Avenue during the evenings.
- Ms. Zumaran-Jones followed up on Mr. Dozier's request for Wi-Fi in the park. **The Village Manager will review prior notes of discussions concerning the matter and report during the next Council meeting.**
- A resident asked if the Village could address the empty tree boxes after tree removals on Willard Avenue. He was informed that these tree boxes are the responsibility of Montgomery County. **Ms. Zumaran-Jones requested that the Village website be updated to show a clarifying asterisk beside areas that are not the responsibility of the Village.**

- Mr. Dorsey, in response to an incident after the prior Council Meeting, asked that in the future anyone having comments regarding his position on any topic should raise them during the Comment Period that occurs during each Council Meeting rather than make critical comments that are not face to face.

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:**

Mayor White announced the Village had held a special public meeting on October 26, 2021 to hear information concerning the proposed 5500 Wisconsin Avenue development project; and to receive input from Village residents regarding the project. The Council then voted to oppose the project at this time because of concerns about the proposed building height, design, and use of the shared street which are not consistent with the current Sector Plan. The Council has submitted a letter to the Planning Board outlining its position and the letter has been posted to the Village website. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, November 18, 2021 for further public comments.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

**Dr. Muller moved, Ms. White seconded approval of the minutes from the Council's Public Session held on Monday, October 12, 2021 as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded approval of the minutes from the Council's Closed Session held on Monday, October 12, 2021, as presented. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council's financial standing as of October 31, 2021. Total cash on hand in the General Fund was \$5,915,702.89. Total cash on hand in the Capital Improvements Fund was \$11,299.37. Total cash in hand in the OPEB Trust Fund Reserve was \$1,335.12. **Mr. Dorsey will inquire about the amount of legal fees charged for a "Freedom of Information" request during the next Council Meeting.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Report from the Program Advisory Committee:** Mayor White reported the following highlights from the meeting that occurred on October 13, 2021:

- (1) Toby Esler is back working in the reading room, cleaning and preparing for book donations. Donations of large print books less than 10 years old and magazines are requested. Eight bags of books were given to the Friends of the Montgomery County Library of Rockville.
- (2) The Craft Fair will not be held this year due to Covid. A decorative tile workshop will be held with artist Natalia Kay on Saturday, November 13, 2021.
- (3) Other program ideas include spring yoga, an Ethnic cooking class via Zoom, and Hispanic Gala theater.
- (4) The Program Advisory Committee discussed publicizing information about new restaurants in the area.

**Report from the Citizens Coordinating Committee (CCC):** Mayor White reported the following highlights from the meeting that occurred on Wednesday, October 20, 2021:

- (1) The committee wrote a statement to the Planning Board regarding the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project. Copies of the letter will be given to all Council members.
- (2) The next CCC meeting will be held on the third Wednesday in November.
- (3) The Council made a unanimous decision to oppose a proposed Village school designation. Ms. White received emails from residents about proposed changes to send all Village children from Somerset Elementary to Westbrook. A letter was drafted to support the Somerset Elementary Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in opposing the change.

**Report from the Community Advisory Committee (CAC):** Dr. Muller reported the CAC met on November 3, 2021. The following topics were discussed:

- (1) The Willard Tower dumpsters remain a hazard.
- (2) The property at 4615 N. Park Avenue has been sold. Questions were raised about the yellow marking on the curb. Mr. Mansfield will investigate.
- (3) The CAC will monitor snow removal to ensure compliance with Montgomery County rules. Property owners are required to clear a sidewalk pathway within 24 hours of snowfall. The Village is responsible for sidewalk clearance adjacent to its three parks and its property at 4602 North Park Avenue.
- (4) A dead crepe myrtle was noted in Page Park.
- (5) The Manager was asked to reach out to the County and/or the owners of Chipotle regarding pooling water at the steps leading up to its store.
- (6) The new grass and plantings along the Village curbs need to be monitored, as some sod has died.
- (7) The Willoughby and The Carleton are working on an issue concerning their common retaining wall.
- (8) A presentation was received regarding traffic safety enforcement which will be presented tonight.
- (9) The next meeting of the CAC will take place on December 8, 2021 at 5:30 p.m., and will be open to the public.

Committee Member Bill Corey discussed the following suggestions related to traffic safety enforcement:

- (1) Test removable speed bumps to complement the existing speed bumps on Somerset Terrace. The estimated cost is several thousand dollars.
- (2) Install signs notifying drivers of the speed bumps located prior to crosswalks on Hills Plaza, South Park Avenue, North Park Avenue, and Shoemaker Farm Lane.
- (3) Install solar-powered flashing yellow pedestrian lights at crosswalks at an estimated cost of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per crosswalk.
- (4) Add more speed limit signs and possibly reduce the speed limit from 25 miles per hour to 20 miles per hour.
- (5) Add signage and include language regarding the need to obey the speed limit at Wisconsin Avenue and Willard Avenue
- (6) Inquire if there could be possible County enforcement of traffic laws within the Village, since there is no authority for ticketing by the current private contractor.

**Report of Ad Hoc Council Committee on Concierge Services:** Dr. Muller reported that Anne O'Neil, the Village Program Director, had met with the Executive Director of

FHNN on November 2, 2021 to discuss collaboration between the two groups. A future meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee has not been determined.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Additional Council Member to Serve on Council Finance Committee:**  
**Mayor White moved, Ms. Durbin seconded to appoint Mayor White to fill the third spot of the Finance Committee. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**Village Financial Investment Review:**

Mr. Mansfield summarized a staff report on Village financial investments over the past five years in an effort to understand the decrease in returns on investments. Mr. Mansfield and Ms. Durbin worked to pull and analyze the data for the report. Interest income fluctuated over the past five years, and declined significantly in 2021. Ms. Durbin reported it was decided not to currently invest in Treasury notes because of the low interest rates. Mr. Mezey presented an overview of the mandates the Village, like other non-profits, must adhere to when investing funds.

Mr. Dorsey previously noted his concern 11 months ago about the drop in returns on investments, and questioned the source of the investment advice. Dr. Muller noted a lack of communication on financial decisions, noting The Village has not laddered its investments; and recommended that an expert review the data and give options concerning how to invest the funds moving forward. Ms. Zumaran-Jones suggested contacting a financial expert who understands the nature of the investment needs of municipalities.

**Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded to accept free investment advice from Merrill-Lynch. After discussion concerning to whom the Merrill-Lynch expert should report and the scope of work, the motion failed by a vote of three in favor (Mr. Pirnie, Dr. Muller, and Mr. Dorsey) to four opposed (Ms. White, Mr. Mezey, Ms. Durbin, and Ms. Zumaran-Jones) (3-4-0).**

**Update on the Historical Designation of 4608:**

Mr. Mansfield reported the vendor has begun preliminary work on the historical designation application. A report is expected in early December, possibly in time for the next Council meeting. To date, the property owner has not responded to The Village's communications regarding the matter.

**Proposals for Replacing Holly Shrubs:**

Per the Parks & Grounds recommendation, and as approved by the Council to replace the holly shrubs in Humphrey Park, the Village Manager recommends selecting E&F Landscaping to do the work - one of five vendors to bid on the work for performance in spring 2022. **Mr. Pirnie moved, Ms. Durbin seconded contracting with E&F Landscaping to replace the holly shrubs in Humphrey Park at a cost of \$25,020. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**Signage in Front of the Office Building at 5550 Friendship Boulevard:**

Mr. Dorsey asked if the Village had any control over the signage that has been in front of the office building for approximately nine months. Dr. Muller reported

speaking with someone from the building a year ago who stated that the sign is in compliance with the County's sign ordinance. This may need confirmation.

**Use of Lime Scooters in The Village:**

The Village voted in opposition to a request to allow Lime scooters within the community. However, the scooters have recently been noticed on the property. **The Council asked Mr. Mansfield to contact Lime to have them prohibit the operation of scooter activity within The Village.**

**Willard Avenue Sidewalk:**

The bushes on Willard Avenue owned by Chevy Chase Land (next to the pink house) have overgrown and the owner needs to be contacted and reminded to obey the Village ordinance which prohibits such over growth.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Page Park Project:**

**Mr. Pirnie moved, Dr. Muller seconded to approve the Page Park project as a whole; and to task the Parks & Grounds Committee to conduct the design competition process. After discussion on the process of vetting the landscapers, the need to select three competitors by the December 2021 Council meeting, and a review of the vision statement, the motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**Volunteer/Staff Appreciation:**

Ms. White agreed with the Village Manager's recommendation to not host a holiday appreciation event in 2021 due to COVID-19. Dr. Muller recommended that the Village issue gift cookie baskets to staff and volunteers as was done in 2020 and that a gift card be added (not for Council members), the amount to cover a dinner for two which previously was given at the Center. **Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded, that the Village provide gift cards and cookie baskets to staff and volunteers. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**A Parcel of Land for Sale or Rental:**

Dr. Muller shared an initial discussion with Mr. Boone regarding the possibility of him selling or renting a parcel of his land to implementing a dog park. The owner would consider renting space. **The Council will further discuss the matter during their December 2021 meeting.**

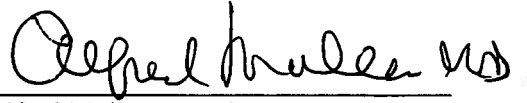
**DISCUSSION/VOTE ON MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION:**

**At 9:26 p.m., Mr. Dorsey moved, Dr. Muller seconded moving 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 evaluations of appointees, employees, and officials over whom the Council has jurisdiction; as well as any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business before the Council, the November 8, 2021 meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alfred Muller MD". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Alfred Muller, MD, Secretary

Community Advisory Committee Minutes  
November 3, 2021

**Attendees:** Al Muller, Bill Corey, Sheila Footer, David Churchill, Sandy Schwarzbart, Evan Smith, Bill Lewis, Cameron Moody, Joe Bucherer

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

**Topics:**

- 1) Roundtable discussion of events / news in the surrounding community.
  - a. Discussion of trash dumpsters at the Willard Towers as a hazard to traffic. While the dumpsters may be smaller, they continue to block one lane of traffic and obstruct vision for a motorist exiting the Willard Towers garage.
  - b. New ownership of 4615 N Park has been making cosmetic changes and has changed over all unit locks to keypad entry. Question about authorization for the yellow curb strip in front – was that approved by the Village?
  - c. Committee members will monitor snow clean up over the Winter to ensure clear paths are available. This is necessary due to the number of different groups (residences, county, Village) responsible.
  - d. There continues to be confusion and variation across the different residences regarding Covid actions. Committee urges consistency within the Village which extends to the Village Center.
  - e. Crape Myrtle in Page Park is dead. Committee would like to see replacement as part of the planning for the park.
  - f. When it rains, there is a large amount of pooling at the steps leading up to the Chipotle on Willard Ave which makes it difficult for pedestrians to transit without walking through a large puddle. Can the Village work with the building owner to evaluate a remedy?
  - g. Committee asked about plans to finalize the grass / plantings along the curbs in the Village.
  - h. Meeting was held to discuss and plan remediation of the retaining wall between the Willoughby and the Carleton. Work will be beginning soon.
  
- 2) The Committee discussed documents pertaining to two issues
  - a. Reviewed presentation on **Parking Violations** to Village Council at the meeting on 10/12. The committee was pleased with the reception to the ideas, action taken, and the positive newsletter article.
  - b. **Traffic Safety Enforcement** – Committee discussed the presentation before Council scheduled for 11/8/2021.
  - c. With Parking and Traffic Safety completed, the Committee will begin to turn its attention to the topic of Village Identity

The Committee will meet on December 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in the Village Center.

Adjournment was at 6:30 pm.



Village of Friendship Heights  
Traffic Safety Community Advisory Committee Presentation  
11-08-2021

The Community Advisory Committee appreciates the opportunity to present our review of traffic safety issues in the Village. We also appreciate the collaboration with Council Member Bruce Pirnie and the Parks & Grounds Committee as we work on common suggestions. Since <sup>the</sup> Council has the full report issued as part of our October 1<sup>st</sup> minutes, I will provide a summary on behalf of the Committee.

The Community Advisory <sup>Committee</sup> 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. As a result of Village walk arounds and Committee discussions over the past 3 months, we have some suggestions, several which are already being considered by <sup>the</sup> Council from its October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

1. We suggest serious consideration and a test of movable speed bumps. These would 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. 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. The speed bumps would need to be placed <sup>up</sup> ~~will~~ in advance of the cross walks, unlike those on Somerset Terrace which are at the cross walk.
2. Solar Powered Flashing Yellow Pedestrian Lights at the crosswalks within the Village like those recently installed on Somerset Terrace. This was endorsed as a test in the last Council meeting. In addition, consider additional mid-block crosswalks. An on-line search indicates that the cost ranges from approximately \$1,000 to \$1,500 ~~each~~ each. Placing a pair at each crosswalk in the Village would require about 12 lights. We have aligned as suggested prior to a <sup>signage</sup> ~~test~~ at the intersection of Hills Plaza and S Park Ave.





3. Add more signage within the Village showing the speed limit and reduce <sup>the</sup> speed limit from 25 mph to 20 or 15 mph.
4. In conjunction with the Community Advisory Committee's project on improving the Village's identity to the public by adding signage on Wisconsin Avenue and Willard Avenue, include language about respecting speed limits and the safety of pedestrians within the Village.
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.

The Committee thanks the Village Council and Management for its consideration. We also appreciate the information shared on Parking in the November Newsletter. We suggest that the Traffic <sup>Safety</sup> Report be shared in the December Newsletter

Submitted by Bill Corey  
Member  
Community Advisory Committee

That the Village approves the Page Park Project presented in the report from Parks and Grounds Committee on November 8, 2021 and tasks this Committee to conduct the design competition.