

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

Conducted in the Village Center

December 13, 2021

ATTENDEES:

Melanie Rose White, Mayor
Michael Mezey, Chairman
Bruce Pirnie, Vice Chairman
Paula Durbin, Treasurer
Alfred Muller, M.D., 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 7:32 p.m.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mayor White announced that Bob Shapiro, the Assistant Village Manager and Finance Director for more than 25 years, passed away on Saturday, November 13, 2021. Mr. Shapiro had an outstanding career at The Village and will be greatly missed. The December 2021 Village newsletter includes an appreciation for Mr. Shapiro.

A moment of silence was observed in his memory.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM THE COUNCIL:

The Council received comments from the following persons:

- Prem Garg expressed concern about the high cash-on-hand balance and the Council's return on reserve investments. He requested clarification as to the appropriate reserves the Village should carry and suggested the presentation of a plan to use the money. Council members responded that the tax rate is presently the minimal amount allowed by the Village charter and that a tax holiday is not a practical option nor are refunds. It was explained that a large amount of the current reserve may be needed

for the potential acquisition of property for public use within the village. How best to invest the reserve in the future will be reviewed by the Finance Committee and the Council.

- Roger Cochetti commented on the recent Montgomery County Planning Board meeting to discuss the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project. The Village and other neighboring community groups testified. The Planning Board was not receptive of the position of the Village Council and the legal points they raised. Mr. Mezey reported attending the Planning Board Meeting, and reported that numerous residents had called in and testified in favor of the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project. Mr. Cochetti believes the Planning Board will likely approve the project after further review and public input. The Council and others will have 30 days to submit an appeal after the Planning Board releases their official report. (2) Mr. Cochetti announced the publication of the Friendship Heights Census. Ms. Zumaran-Jones noted the recent Census data debunks the notion that Friendship Heights is a senior community. Dr. Muller noted The Village has the highest population of seniors in the County outside of Leisure World. (3) Mr. Cochetti recommended subsidizing buildings that opt to have “green” roofs, i.e. that have plantings on the roofing material.
- Joe Bucherer, as Chair of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), urged the Council to vote in favor of the pedestrian signs, speed bumps, and exterior security cameras proposed by the CAC.
- Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler inquired about the projected plans for Page Park, which abuts their family’s patio and will impact their view and others in Willard Towers. The Council assured her that there will be public review of any proposed designs.

MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mayor White announced Goodwill will hold a donation drive in the Village on Friday, December 17, 2021, from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. A Goodwill truck will park on Friendship Boulevard outside the Village Center to accept donations of clothing, books, appliances, and electronics.

CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mr. Mezey reported receiving a call from Jed Donohoe of the Donohoe Construction Company about the Friendship Heights Alliance. The alliance will include major property owners on the Maryland and District of Columbia sides of Friendship Heights, and is a 501(c)(6) organization with the goal of creating a sense of community for the general Friendship Heights area, including the 32-acre Village. An advisory committee will be formed in the spring of 2022 to include representatives from the Village. Mr. Donohoe will be invited to a spring 2022 Village Council meeting to share details about the Alliance.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded approval of the minutes from the Council’s Public Session held on Monday, November 8, 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, November 8, 2021 as presented. The minutes include the approval of two motions related to personnel matters made during the Closed Session. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council’s financial standing as of November 30, 2021. Total cash-on-hand in the General Fund was \$6,570,801.10. Total cash-on-hand in the Capital Improvements Fund was \$11,299.71. Total cash-on-hand in the OPEB Trust Fund Reserve Fund was \$1,335.16.

The financial report distributed to Council members indicated that for the fiscal year to date (July 2021 through November 2021), revenue from income taxes was \$183,000 above budget. The salary figures included final compensation for Assistant Manager Robert Shapiro, payable to his wife.

Mr. Dorsey asked for clarification about the decisions to reinvest reserve notes (e.g., “who made them and when were they made”). The role and responsibilities of the Treasurer were discussed as noted in the bylaws as well as adherence to the Open Meetings Act. After further discussion by Council members concerning how investment decisions were made, recommendations were made to notify the Council of possible investment transactions; and for Mr. Dorsey to join the Finance Committee. Mr. Dorsey declined but reported that he will move forward with a personal review of the past financial reports and investments.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from the Community Advisory Committee (CAC): Dr. Muller reported the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met on Wednesday, December 8, 2021.

Discussion topics included:

- (1) A roundtable discussion on news and events in the community.
- (2) The presentation of traffic safety concerns to the Council.
- (3) Support for speed bumps and lighted pedestrian sign tests with possible observers to survey the impact of the new measures.
- (4) Branding for the Village. Ms. Zumarán-Jones asked the Chair of the Communications Committee (Dr. Muller) for a meeting to coordinate marketing efforts. It was agreed this would be set at a convenient time in the near future.
- (5) Review of materials from a recent Urban Land Institute TAP presentation and the Friendship Heights Alliance.
- (6) Positioning Friendship Heights as a walkable community.
- (7) Access to Village programs and marketing signage on the Village bus.
- (8) Release of the U.S. Census data.
- (9) Process on committee-level items reaching the Village Manager.
- (10) The next meeting of the CAC was scheduled for Wednesday, January 5, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

Report from the Citizens Coordinating Committee: Mayor White reported the following information from the committee’s meeting held on Wednesday, November 17, 2021:

- (1) The Thrive Montgomery 2050 reports.
- (2) Recap of the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project and upcoming hearings.
- (3) The committee’s next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 19, 2022.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion/Vote - Traffic Safety at South Park Avenue/Hills Plaza Intersection:

Mr. Pirnie led the discussion on traffic safety, noting that failure of drivers to observe STOP signs is the major safety issue rather than speeding.

Mr. Pirnie moved, and Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded approving the placement of one removable speed bump on the approach to the intersection of Hills Plaza and South Park Avenue. The placement will be done on a test basis, and at a cost below the bid threshold of \$5,000. Following a discussion, the Council agreed to table the matter until its January 2022 Council Meeting. This would allow time for the Village Manager to secure more information regarding the cost and types of speed bumps/humps.

Discussion/Vote - Selection of Designers for the Page Park Project:

Four proposals were received, but only three will be selected, as previously decided at the previous public Council meeting. Mr. Pirnie gave an overview of each respondent's submission including the credentials of their attached landscape architects or landscape designers. **Mr. Pirnie moved, and Dr. Muller seconded to choose three landscapers from the list submitted by the Parks & Grounds Committee to participate in a competition to design Page Park. The Council selected GreenSweep, Pineapple Landscaping, and Tenleytown Lawn & Landscape.**

Mr. Pirnie then moved, and Dr. Muller seconded, to approve a retainer for each designer of \$10,000. However, the motion failed by a vote of two in favor (Mr. Pirnie and Dr. Muller), five opposed, with no abstentions. The retainer fees will remain \$8,000 as originally approved. The Village Manager's follow up will include legal review of a contract by the Village attorney, including inclusion of adequate insurance. Mr. Mezey provided an overview of the proposal review process for the three landscapers.

Discussion/Vote - Proposals for Exterior Security Cameras

Mr. Pirnie stated nine proposals were received. Remote guarding is not recommended, as it would not be cost-effective. Mr. Mansfield clarified the proposed locations for the cameras. The costs discussed include Phase 2 pricing.

Mr. Pirnie moved, and Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded that the Council accept the bid from LSVI to perform Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Security Camera Plan, which without remote guarding would cost \$5,270.08 for acquisition plus \$1,200 per year for maintenance. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Discussion - Potential Use of Vacant Lot Behind Boone & Sons Jewelry Store

Dr. Muller reported that Mr. Daryl Boone, owner of the jewelry store on Hills Plaza, would be open to renting the vacant lot behind his store for possible use as a dog park. Because of the cost and possible temporary nature of the project at that site (Mr. Boone wishes to develop the property at some point), Mayor White suggested exploration of the site as a Tot Lot, similar to one which existed on the present location of the Village Center. **After discussion regarding the pros and cons of the options, Dr. Muller recommended holding a meeting with the**

owner, Mayor White and Manager Mansfield to further discuss the matter and then report back to the Council. Ms. Zumaran-Jones suggested that the Council consider a full dog park elsewhere within the boundaries of Friendship Heights Village.

NEW BUSINESS:

Request for Vacation and Sick Leave Data: Mr. Dorsey suggested holding an Executive Session in early 2022 to discuss the leave of Village staff members.

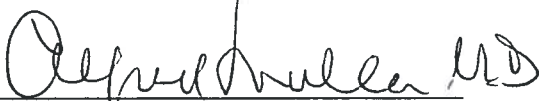
DISCUSSION/VOTE ON MOTION TO ENTER CLOSED SESSION:

At 9:40 p.m., Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin 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 December 13, 2021 meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:


Alfred Muller, MD, Secretary

Community Advisory Committee Minutes
December 8, 2021

Attendees: Al Muller, Bill Corey, David Churchill, Sandy Schwarzbart, Evan Smith, Bill Lewis, Cameron Moody, Ken Niles, Ethel Pacheco, 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, including follow up of topics from last meeting by Julian Mansfield, Village Manager.
- 2) Discussion of presentation to Village Council on Traffic Safety concerns on November 12.
 - a. Outline of plan to test speed bumps and lighted pedestrian crossing sign at intersection of S Park and Hills Plaza.
 - b. The Committee is interested in expanding bumps and signs to a few other locations in the village.
 - c. Discussed potential to observe driver reaction to speed bump and pedestrian sign test at S Park & Hills Plaza.
- 3) Discussion of Village Identity.
 - a. Reviewed materials and discussion points from recent Washington DC TAP presentation and Friendship Heights Alliance. Committee is interested in potential for reinforcement of positioning Friendship Village as a walkable and quiet community near activity on Wisconsin Ave.
 - b. Discussed other areas of potential action such as access to Village programs and improving marketing signage on the shuttle bus to be more prominent.
 - c. Discussed recently released US Census data and the fact that 70% of the population is under 65 and what this means for the Committee to be representative of the Village residents overall.
- 4) Issue process discussion. To manage flow of observations to the Village Office, we will put in place a triage process to funnel requests. In some instances, the Village is already acting or there is a history that the Committee is unaware of. This will allow for full Committee knowledge and stem one-off issues.

The next meeting will be on January 5, 2022, at 5:30 PM in the Village Center.

Adjournment was at 6:45 pm.