

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*
CAROLINA J. ZUMARAN-JONES, *Historian*
MICHAEL J. DORSEY
JULIAN P. MANSFIELD, *Village Manager*

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APPROVED MINUTES

PUBLIC SESSION

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL

July 11, 2022

ATTENDEES:

Melanie Rose White, Mayor
Michael Mezey, Chairman
Bruce Pirnie, Vice Chairman
Paula Durbin, Treasurer
Alfred Muller, M.D., Secretary (via Zoom)
Michael Dorsey, Parliamentarian
Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Historian
Julian Mansfield, Village Manager
Attorney Norman Knopf (via Zoom)

CALL TO ORDER:

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

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM THE COUNCIL:

The Council received comments from the following persons:

- Dan Dozier spoke in favor of employing a hybrid system (in person and Zoom) for future Council meetings.
- Michael Mezey reported the Village Council, the Citizens Coordinating Committee of Friendship Heights, and other local communities have endorsed the creation of a dog park adjacent to Willard Avenue Park. There is a home sitting on that property, and the long-standing goal has been to convert the property for park usage. The proposal is progressing, and the next step is for the County Parks Department to hold a webinar public meeting on Wednesday, July 20th via Zoom.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT:

Mayor White announced that Primary Election Day will be held on Tuesday, July 19th. The Village Center is the polling place for all registered voters who live in the Village.

The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. Voters can request a mail-in ballot and place their completed ballot in the drop box by the Center's main entrance.

There was no Council meeting scheduled for August 2022. Therefore, the next scheduled Council meeting would take place on Monday, September 12th. However, a few Council members expressed opposition to foregoing an August meeting because of the important business already before the Council. Following a discussion, the Council agreed to hold a meeting in August if necessary.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council's Public Session held on Monday, June 21, 2022. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council's Communications Committee Meeting held on June 27. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mayor White seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council's Closed Session held on July 7. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0-0).

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council's financial standing as of Thursday, June 30, 2022. Total cash on hand in the General Fund was \$6,276,687.98. Total cash on hand in the Capital Improvements Fund was \$11,320.96. Total cash on hand in the OPEB Trust Fund Reserve was \$1,336.56.

Ms. Durbin noted in the final profit and loss budget analysis statement for the fiscal year that there was a notable surplus of \$355,446.18 in the Income Tax line item. A total of approximately \$1,406,000 was expected, but the Council received \$1,761,466.18.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from the Council Committee on Concierge Service: Dr. Muller reported the latest on pursuing concierge services for the Village. The aim is to enter into a contract with two goals:

(1) Charging minimal fees to those receiving the services; and (2) Making the programs available on a first come, first served basis for everyone within the Village. The name of the service has been changed to Neighbors' Care. Legal counsel has determined that either a grant or a contract would be permissible, but there are many precedents for contractual services in the Village. Insurance has been raised as a major concern and a comprehensive list of requirements has been received from our County insurance agent. Questions have been raised about methods of advertisement for the programs. The question of volunteer recruitment is still under consideration, and it is hoped that the new Assistant Program Manager will take up the matter as an area of focus. Additionally, the length of the contract is under consideration.

A meeting was held in early July 2022 with the President and Vice President of the Friendship Heights Neighbors Network (FHNN). Dr. Muller will speak with the Council's attorney to seek guidance regarding acceptable language for the contract.

FHNN will meet with their Board of Directors on Tuesday, July 12th. Dr. Muller thanked the members of the Village Council Board of Directors, the Council staff, and the FHNN Board for their diligent work in relation to establishing concierge services. The Council discussed term length for the contract, and considered potential liability for the Council. Dr. Muller stated the details of the concierge services contract are still being developed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Negotiation - 5500 Wisconsin Avenue Settlement Agreement:

Mr. Mezey summarized the Council's June 2022 approval to pursue a settlement agreement for the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project. He then explained, following the June 2022 Council Meeting, discussions between Attorney Norman Knopf and the developer's attorney revealed that Donohoe was not in the position to complete a purchase of the pink house due to pending litigation. Therefore, Donohoe is unable to guarantee the development restrictions on the property that had been negotiated. As a result, the settlement agreement approved by the Council is no longer viable. The deadline for filing court papers for an appeal of the Planning Board's decision is Thursday, July 15, 2022. Therefore, papers need to be filed to protect the Council's legal position. The Council has two options: (1) Continuing with an appeal of the Planning Board's decision to accept the developer's sketch plan, with the hope that negotiations can continue. This option would not require a vote of approval from the Council since the Council has already adopted this approach. (2) Seeking an agreement with the developer on alterations to the sketch plan without the added square footage that would have come from the pink house property. Once an agreement is finalized, the suit could be dropped.

Ms. Zumaran-Jones moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded having Attorney Norman Knopf pursue negotiations with the developer of 5500 Wisconsin Avenue based on the proposed design changes and exclusion of the pink house property. However, the motion failed by a vote of two in favor (Ms. Zumaran-Jones and Mr. Dorsey), five opposed, and zero abstained. As a result, the Council will continue its court appeal while remaining in contact with Donohoe and their representatives concerning the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue project. The brief to continue the Village's appeal will be filed in court by the deadline of Thursday, July 15, 2022.

Negotiation - Purchase of 4608 N. Park Avenue Property:

Dr. Muller reported speaking with the Council's settlement attorney who spoke with the attorneys for the seller. The attorneys for the seller agreed to send over the signed disclosure papers. Dr. Muller also recalled that the Council authorized the Village Manager to select a building inspector at a cost not to exceed \$5,000. The Council agreed by unanimous consent to further discuss this topic during the Executive Session.

Bids for Financial Consultant to Review Village Investments: The Council advertised for the selection of an independent financial consultant to review the Village investments. Two proposals were received - one from Quantum Financial Advisors, and one from Clavis. The Council members expressed support for the proposal from Clavis but agreed that their scope of work was too broad and needed to be reduced.

The Council agreed by unanimous consent to have the Village Manager negotiate with Clavis to submit a revised proposal with a reduced scope of work.

NEW BUSINESS:

Village Center Exterior Wall Repair:

One section of the Village Center's exterior wall has been repaired. Additional areas of the wall have been identified for repair. Management advertised for bids, and received proposals from four companies.

Mr. Pirnie moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded approving a contract with Bradleigh Applications to perform additional repairs to the exterior wall at a cost of \$40,500. The motion was carried unanimously.

Membership with Maryland Municipal League

Mr. Dorsey moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approving membership with the Maryland Municipal League. The motion was carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:43 p.m., Ms. Durbin moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded, entering the July 11, 2022 Council Meeting into a Closed Session pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305(b)(1), to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals; and pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305(b)(3), to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related to the acquisition. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Alfred Muller, MD
Secretary