

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*

VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

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APPROVED MINUTES

PUBLIC SESSION

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL

Conducted at Village Center and via Zoom

September 12, 2022

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
Jason Goldstein, Assistant Village Manager

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 the following public comments:

- Clara Lovett recognized the work of Bob Shapiro who worked very diligently for the Council until his death in 2021, and requested that the Council consider formally recognizing his efforts.
- Bobby Pestronk listed desired improvements to the community including: 1) Preserving the park at 5320 Willard Avenue; 2) Maintaining a solid wall and shrubbery at the property between Willard Avenue and River Road; 3) Creating an accessible minipark between the Reynolds house and Willard Avenue; 4) Establishing a community garden; 5) Installing walkways, benches, tables, and a bike rack between the house and Willard Avenue; and 5) Permanently prohibiting the installation of a dog park or skatepark somewhere in the community. His comments are attached.

- Requesting that the Council protect the Reynolds House (site of the proposed dog park) and resist advocating for its removal due to its historic importance.
- Requesting that the Council withdraw its support of the proposed dog park, as it does not meet the Parks Department criteria for distance from residential dwellings.
- Opposing the currently proposed location of the dog park, as it is too close to where children play; is too small to prevent conflicts due to space constraints; and also due to pollution concerns.
- Expressing the opinion it is unfair to those who have spoken at previous meetings that the Council is not presently upholding the three-minute time limit for comments.
- Reporting that the entrances to the proposed dog park are too steep, which prevents people with ambulatory disabilities from entering; and suggesting that the proposed dog park location be converted into an accessible minipark to allow disabled persons to enjoy the space.
- Reporting that residents whose homes are nearest the dog park will be directly and negatively impacted by its installation.

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor White announced that the settlement agreement with the 5500 Wisconsin Avenue developer includes the following post-settlement obligations for the Village: 1) The Village must provide the developer with an executed contract of the Village purchasing the red house; 2) Closing on the Red House must occur by the end of September 2022; and that the Village must provide a copy of the deed to the developer by that date; 3) The Village agrees to publish in the *Village News* a summary of the Village's support for the Wisconsin project following the signature of an agreement.

Dr. Muller reported on a recent theft in which two masked individuals stole a safe, but were unable to steal the ATM. The internal cameras at the location were not able to identify those involved. However, the exterior cameras were able to identify part of the vehicle used to commit the crime.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council's Public Session held on Monday, July 11, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Mezey seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council's Closed Session held on Monday, July 11, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Mezey seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council's Public Session held on Thursday, July 21, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council Committee Meeting on Concierge Services held on Thursday, July 28, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Closed Session held on Monday, August 8, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Closed Session held on Tuesday, August 16, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Closed Session held on Thursday, August 25, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Public Session held on Thursday, August 25, 2022. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council’s financial standing as of July 31, 2022. Cash on hand in the General Fund totaled \$6,105,012.09. The capital improvements fund totaled \$11,320.96. The OPED reserves totaled \$1,337.65.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from the Council Committee on Proposed Concierge Services: On May 9, 2022 after communication with non-profit organizations to gauge interest in providing concierge services, the Council received two applicants for concierge services. The Committee selected FHNN as the preferred vendor with which to initiate a contract. A negotiating team was appointed by Mayor White during the June 21, 2022 Council Meeting, and later met in Executive Session on July 28, 2022. The Council’s negotiating team reiterated the two main goals: 1) To reduce the current multi-hundred-dollar membership fees to \$50; and 2) To advertise and make available to all Friendship Heights residents the excellent programs presently offered. An active solicitation would be offered via the Village newsletter for new volunteers to provide services to be vetted by FHNN. The Council proposed a three-year renewable contract with a six-month cancellation period by either party. However, the Council also explained they could not make commitments that would be binding on future Councils. Without such a commitment, FHNN was unable to agree to such a contract. Therefore, an agreed contract was not possible at the present time.

Report from the Community Advisory Committee Meeting: On August 10, 2022, the committee voted to approve release of the document entitled, “Release of the Report on Enhancing the Identity of the Village of Friendship Heights”. The committee also discussed purchasing the property at 4608, and received resident concerns about the potential purchase. Residents also expressed concerns that Council decisions are made in Executive Session rather than during Public Sessions, and also requested that the committee provide more information about when meetings will be held.

Report from the Community Advisory Committee Meeting: On September 7, 2022, the committee heard and responded to concerns regarding the proposed dog park; reduced bus schedules; The Willoughby’s upcoming smoke free resolution; maintenance of the Metro entrance; and electric vehicle charging stations. Due to requests that minutes from

committee meetings be made available to the public, the CAC minutes have been posted on the Village website. The committee voted unanimously to help prepare a questionnaire for distribution to the residents regarding use of the Red House after closing of the sale. Management has already reached out to the group in charge of maintaining the Metro entrance by Whole Foods to address previous complaints about cleanliness and vandalism.

Update from Joe Bucherer on CAC Report on Village Identity: Mr. Bucherer presented a report regarding his work to establish improved marketing and communication in order to increase awareness of the Village's involvement in the community of Friendship Heights. The effort includes developing logos and marketing materials; installing additional signage; increasing walkability with speed bumps and pedestrian signs; emphasizing the Village Center in Humphrey Park as the center of town by replacing the bulletin board with a digital sign to provide more timely updates to the community. Mr. Bucherer also suggested continuing conversations on ways to allow senior residents to remain part of the community and age in their homes; as well as hosting weekend events for children and families and expanding shuttle bus drop-offs to Willard Park on weekends. The report is attached.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion of the Status of the Village Shuttle Buses with Representative from RMA Shuttle Bus Company:

Art Miesemer, Vice President of RMA shuttle bus company, responded to questions and comments posed by members of the community regarding current bus outages. They also explained, due to the shortages in labor and supplies because of the COVID pandemic, that the company has had difficulty locating parts to repair and maintain Champion buses after Champion went out of business in 2021. Once the current vehicles can no longer be used, the next step is to switch to electric buses which will likely occur within the next few years.

Report on Settlement Agreement With 5500 Wisconsin Avenue Developer:

See *Mayor's Announcements* within these minutes.

Update on Purchase of 4608 North Park Avenue Property:

Councilman Dorsey suggested the option of installing an electric vehicle charging station on the property rather than renting out the eight parking spaces to individual residents. This and other options will be discussed fully at a later date.

Discussion/Vote on Proposed Village Charter Amendment to Expand Procurement Authority:

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. White seconded approving the proposal requesting the Maryland legislature amend the Village Charter to allow funds be expended up to \$20,000 without advertising for bids and to provide emergency procurement authority with majority consent of the Council. The motion carried unanimously.

Update on Proposed Dog Park in Willard Avenue Park:

Mr. Mezey moved, Dr. Muller seconded that the Council draft a letter renewing its support of the dog park at Willard Avenue Park. The motion carried unanimously.

Review of Updated Text for Cleo Tavani Commemorative Plaque in Page Park:

Ms. Zumaran-Jones moved, Dr. Muller seconded approving the commemorative plaque for Cleo Tavani, with the exact wording to be determined. The motion carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion of Converting Village Streetlights to LED Bulbs:

Mr. Pirnie moved, Dr. Muller seconded to solicit bids to replace 110 street lamps with light emitting diodes having output including color similar to existing lamps. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion/Vote on Bids for Kitchen Exterior Wall Repair:

Mr. Mansfield reported there is a leak in the Village Center kitchen and staff has advertised for bids to waterproof the exterior wall. He recommended approval of the proposal from Multiservices General Contractor. Mr. Dorsey moved, Ms. White seconded, to approve the proposal from Multiservices General Contractor for \$7,425. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion for The Village to Join the National League of Cities:

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded having the Village Council join the League of Cities at a cost of \$871. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

Pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305(b)(1). Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded entering the September 12, 2022 Council Meeting into a Closed Session at 10:22 p.m. to discuss confidential matters. The motion carried unanimously (7-0-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Alfred Muller, MD
Secretary

Public comment to Friendship Heights Village Council, 9/12/22

Robert Pestronk

I am following your instructions to the public as I've heard them repeatedly:

- 1) I've attended many Council meetings for the past six months.
- 2) I've read past minutes to inform myself of Village affairs and Council action
- 3) I've spoken to several Council members, current and former, and Village staff
- 4) I've examined the backgrounds, statements and priorities of current Council members
- 5) I've listened to the responses of Council members to public comment at Village meetings

I've learned through these actions that members of Council to varying degrees:

- 1) Want members of the public to express their opinions publicly and to the Council
- 2) Have an abiding, active, and continuing interest in the history and preservation of the area now known as Friendship Heights
- 3) Feel that democracy and compromise are important elements of interaction among public and Council to forestall in our lovely community the polarization and intolerance so destructive elsewhere
- 4) Believe quality of life for residents, particularly seniors and those with special needs, is a high priority

With these instructions and learnings in mind, I'm asking the Council to do several things:

- a. Send a letter to the County Parks and Planning which expresses Council's support for improvements to Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park.
- b. List as desired improvements for the parcel at 5320 Willard Avenue, in the text for your letter, designs to preserve and add only to the quiet, green, lush, meditative nature of the current parcel and Park thereby protecting immediate neighbors in homes and facing apartments from noise and clutter from other than that of human interaction. To wit, and specifically:
 - i. preserve and avoid the destruction of the blue home at 5320 the oldest in the area now known as Friendship Heights area with its extraordinary cultural significance and continuing potential to generate revenue
 - ii. maintain some form of solid wall and shrubbery now provided by two homes on newly purchased Parks property at the intersection of Willard Avenue and River Road
 - iii. between the blue home, now a rental property, and Willard Avenue:
 1. create a mini park-within-a-park accessible to humans with physical challenges and other disabilities and other humans
 2. establish a large community garden

3. install walkways, benches, tables and gaming tables for picnicking, and quiet gaming, perhaps even bike locking structures for those passing through the area
4. permanently enjoin the installation of a dog park there or elsewhere in Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park since available funds need not be reserved only for this purpose or a skate park
5. continue to allow, as is now the case, throughout the Park, access to dogs on a leash.

I look forward to your support for this proposal through conversation with Parks and Planning officials, County elected officials, and your forthcoming formal letters to them. I think they will be pleased with the leadership and flexibility demonstrated by Village Council on this issue. Creative reuse of County property for humans through collaborative design and construction will serve a broad constituency of current and future community residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you this evening.

The Village of Friendship Heights is a culturally diverse, quiet, high-rise community of approximately 5,000 residents.

As part of its 2021 / 2022 activity, the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) considered the issue of "Identity" as it related to the Village of Friendship Heights. There are several reasons to undertake this initiative. First, to establish a sense of place, and second, for marketing and communication purposes. The full report that Council Members received represents about a year of work, research, discussion, and compromise among the Committee members.

I would like to acknowledge the members of the Committee publically: Sandra Schwarzbart, Sheila Footer, Ethel Pacheco, David Churchill, Ken Niles, Cameron Moody, Evan Smith, Bill Lewis, Bill Corey, and Joe Bucherer, along with the Council liaison, Al Muller.

The Committee has focused on suggestions to increase awareness of being in the Village of Friendship Heights. The Village community is different from Bethesda, Somerset, and the DC Friendship Heights. In fact, during recent Business Alliance focus groups and surveys, as well as a meeting with the CAC, when the "Heights" was discussed, we questioned what that meant, outlining the differences between the Village and surrounding areas. This caused us to limit our scope to things that were easily achievable and that leveraged advantages already existing in the community. We believe that it is in the Village's interest to define itself given the development activity surrounding it.

"Identity" is connected to having a "sense of place." "Place" is not only physical but extends to attributes that help describe it. For example, a place is known as a food destination, shopping district, arts center, etc. These all help to describe the "place".

In addition to its proximity to Metro service and the myriad of health care services and emerging food amenities nearby, the Village of Friendship Heights has a recognizable Village Center and Humphrey Park, which serve as the center of the community. These are augmented by Willoughby Park and Page Park. These help as "place" identifiers, but is it recognizable as being a village unto itself?

There is a physical aspect to identity – it's about letting people know where they are. Signs and markers are important, but so too is branding and marketing. If you were a first-time visitor, would you know you were in the Village of Friendship Heights? There are no visible markers, signs, or other materials to let you know. In contrast, nearby communities such as Drummond, Somerset, and Chevy Chase West have signage to let

people know where they are. This is especially important in 2022 as Montgomery County and DC begin to plan a revitalization of “The Heights”, “at the crossroads of Bethesda and DC.” Signage welcoming people to the Village, in addition to modestly bolder signage on the Village sponsored shuttle bus, are important to letting people know where they are, and to begin to provide a sense of physical place.

There also needs to be an emotional connection. “Place” identity is often tied to a common purpose such as sense of well-being, safety, and other attributes.

The village already has infrastructure in place to help begin its marketing. We recommend taking advantage of our assets.

- **Take advantage and enhance walkability** by completing the test of lighted pedestrian safety signs and speed humps and incorporate them in a few locations previously outlined by the Committee to reinforce this important and frequently cited aspect of Village life.
- **Emphasize the Village Center and Humphrey Park as the “center of town”.**
 - **Enhance signage** to welcome as well as inform individuals that they are in the Village of Friendship Heights. While there are space limitations, there is room for improvement in the area assigned to the Village bulletin board at the corner of Humphrey Park. Rather than have a bulletin board that is difficult to read, have a **landmark sign** welcoming people to the Village. In the full report, note that the committee did a review of such signs in the area and on-line. We are cognizant that there is a risk of too much signage in a small area that would lead to the Village having a cluttered look.
 - Additionally, we recommend replacing the bulletin board with a **digital sign** that could be placed in the left (as facing) window of the Village Center. This would serve several purposes. First, it would facilitate updates. Second, it would potentially draw more residents to the Village Center and encourage them to enter.
- **Improve signage for the parks in the Village.**
 - Incorporate signage like those at county parks stating maintained by the Village of Friendship Heights. Signage does not need to be big and intrusive, but should be of a consistent style and theme.
- **Enhance signage of the Village Shuttle** via more vibrant and bolder colors – currently the white on white is lost when in motion and hard to read.
- **Seniors are the largest – and most stable – cohort** in Friendship Heights. The Village should continue the conversation to provide services so that, if they choose,

they can age in their own apartment homes and continue to be a vibrant part of the community.

- **Children are important** to a community, and when children get together their parents tend to meet other parents and get involved in activities.
 - Many children's events occur at daytime hours when parents are working. While evenings are difficult due to dinner and homework, having kids' events on weekends could be beneficial to incorporate families more fully in the life of the Village, interest parents in possibly becoming more active, and providing an avenue for demographic diversity.
 - On weekends, consider expanding the shuttle bus to drop off at Willard Park. As the closest play area, parents of small children are required to walk up and down the hill to Willard with strollers and other necessities.
- **Use the weekly Farmer's Market** to continue to promote Village sponsored events beyond the website and newsletter. This can be done by having community group tables, marketing materials available, and representatives of the Village available to answer questions of residents. Possibly select one Saturday a month for this presence.
- The **Business Alliance** has started to sponsor events and is beginning to proactively advertise them well in advance of event dates. Coordinate to grow the voice and identity of the Village in the area as well as to influence activities of interest to Village residents.

None of the recommendations we have made come at excessive cost. They represent easily achievable items, all geared to establishing identity and place for the Village. In fact, one of the reasons the Council voted to approve the Village's purchase of property, with a compromise on 5500 Wisconsin, was to invest in the Village and its continuing "identity". Our recommendations dovetail with this intent. Nonetheless, we do not expect that all suggestions will be implemented, nor are all likely to be immediately successful. The effort to enhance "Identity" is not a short-term effort. It will require time to develop, but with some steps we feel will be of benefit in expanding the identity of the Village as a place to live for all ages and to be known for its inclusiveness and lead to greater activity among residents.

Report on Enhancing Identity of the Village of Friendship Heights

Village of Friendship Heights Community Advisory Committee

August 10, 2022



Our Village

The Village of Friendship Heights is a culturally diverse, quiet, high-rise community situated off Wisconsin Avenue between the DC border and Bethesda. Established in 1914, the Village has a Village Center, which was dedicated in 1986 and overlooks Hubert Humphrey Park. This neighborhood park and gathering place hosts many social events and is in regular use by residents. Additionally, the Village has two other parks,

eight high-rise apartment buildings, an assisted living residence and five office buildings that contain an array of professional healthcare services and medical specialties.

Best known as a desirable and diverse community of approximately 5,000 residents, the Village is next to a Metro station and a short ride to our Nation's Capital. That makes all the cultural, governmental and scientific institutions in the area easily accessible. Other area resources include several high-quality public and private schools and two major hospitals. In or nearby the Village are delis, restaurants, grocery stores, pharmacies and a post office.

Though statistically a Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC), the Village is a welcoming home for all age groups. For those choosing an active lifestyle, every residential building has a gym and a pool. Cyclists and walkers will find several trails nearby.

The Village Center offers a range of activities including classes, social events and shows. All happenings and events are published in the monthly Village Newsletter. A Village shuttle bus connects the apartment buildings, the Village Center, the grocery stores, and the Metro stop.

Background

As part of its 2021 / 2022 activity, the Community Advisory Committee considered the issue of "Identity" as it related to the Village of Friendship Heights. There are several reasons to undertake this initiative.

1. Establish a "Sense of Place"

- Recently there have been focus groups and surveys intended to illicit information about what residents are looking for in the Village and the surrounding community. The goal of these initiatives is to develop "place."
- The Village should be proactive in developing its identity so that it is not adversely imposed by surrounding development.

2. Marketing and Communication

- For Village promotion, helping to drive real estate values, and consequently tax ratables, and to pull the community together as a place to live, raise a family, and age in place.
- Associated with this is acceptance of rules outlining building requirements based on height, setback from curb lines, architectural guidelines such as

window and door styling, and the like. While this may work in communities that are tourist destinations, for a community like the Village of Friendship Heights this is difficult due to the prominence of its high-rise buildings. That said, the Village does have a Sector Plan that has guided its development and has resulted in the physical community that it is.

- It needs to be recognized that the Village is not starting from scratch in its “Identity” search. It already has the reputation of being a well-educated, quiet community with access to the amenities of Wisconsin Ave. and easy METRO access. It serves as a medical center, with three medical buildings. Relatively close are a variety of restaurants and retail stores.

The Committee is not recommending that the Village attempt to become another Bethesda or Pike and Rose. Similar locations too close to one another would cannibalize each other increasing the likelihood of business churn. Unlike Bethesda, for example, the Village must prosper in its relationship to its proximity to NW DC and the broader “Heights” as it is becoming known.

The Village Council has discussed the retail situation at various times but is not able to influence such development. It has been suggested that losing locations such as the Panera Bread were unfortunate because it was a place where one could go, have a coffee and snack and meet with friends. While true, the reality is that the businesses must generate profit and foot traffic to remain in place – this was not happening. The determination of appropriate retail is a business proposition that requires investment, marketing and long-term demographic trend research – along with a fair amount of risk. As a result, the Committee is not making recommendations on retail, and suggests that this is not the province of government either. These decisions should be left to businesses which will have financial skin in the game.

What the Committee has focused on are things that can be done to increase awareness of being in the Village of Friendship Heights. The Village community is different from Bethesda, Somerset, and the DC Friendship Heights. In fact, during recent Business Alliance focus groups and surveys, as well as a meeting with the CAC, when the “Heights” was discussed, we questioned what that meant, outlining the differences between the Village and surrounding areas. This caused us to limit our scope to things that were easily achievable and that leveraged advantages already existing in the community.

The Community Advisory Committee looks forward to discussing this initiative further and working with the Village Council to emphasize the special nature and needs of the Village of Friendship Heights.

What is Identity?

The “identity” of a city, town, or village is connected to having a “sense of place.” “Place” is not only physical but extends to attributes that help describe it. For example, a place is known as a food destination, shopping district, arts center, etc. These all help to describe the “place”.

The Village of Friendship Heights has a recognizable Village Center and Humphrey Park which serves as the center of the community. These are augmented by Willoughby Park and Page Park. These help as “place” identifiers, but is it recognizable as being a village unto itself?

There are characteristics that are distinctive to the Village, but less apparent such as walkability, being a quiet restful community amidst the hustle and bustle of Metro DC, easy access to Bethesda and DC, and the changing and expanding amenities along Wisconsin Ave. Many residents have a more nuanced association to the Village having lived in it for decades where they developed deep ties and friendships. Others have moved to the Village when downsizing from a private home. This begins to indicate that there are identifying characteristics making the Village an attractive location. The challenge is to exploit that and have it become more prevalent to create a broader sense of community, place, and identity.

How to create Identity

Physical: This is as simple as letting people know where they are. Signs and markers are important, but so too is branding and marketing. With a diverse and well-educated population, cultural activities sponsored by the Village Center, and organizations such as FHNN to connect and serve seniors, and new ones on the way such as the City Line Arts Center on N Park Ave, along with several parks, creating an identity should be easy, but needs to be communicated.

First, if one were a first-time visitor and did not talk to anyone, would you know you were in the Village of Friendship Heights? The obvious answer is no.

There are no visible markers, signs, or other materials to let one know that they are in a special community. Nearby communities such as Drummond, Somerset, and Chevy Chase West let people know where they are.



This is especially important in 2022 as Montgomery County and DC begin to plan a revitalization of “The Heights”, which is said to be “at the crossroads of Bethesda and DC.” Signage welcoming people to the Village, in addition to modestly bolder signage on the Village sponsored shuttle bus, are important to letting people know where they are and to begin to provide a sense of physical place.

Emotional: Emotional connection extends beyond political considerations which can often be divisive and work against creating a community and bringing people together. Place identity is often tied to a common purpose such as sense of well-being, safety, and other attributes.

The village already has infrastructure in place to help begin its marketing. It has a logo and a website for communication of information. It has three large medical buildings that residents value for the convenience they offer. Its apartment buildings have pools, lounge areas and community rooms. It has a shuttle bus to move residents up and down the hill and elsewhere. It has a newsletter highlighting key events and happenings, and has a communication board on the corner of Hills Plaza and S Park Ave. It does not have a motto or statement of what it wants to be – or one that is easily found.

In attending numerous Village Council meetings and other forums, several key phrases keep coming up that begin to help define the village. Residents remark on its prime

location, easy access to amenities (noted earlier), walkability, quiet nature, parks, and relative safety. The Village is in an enviable position as it does not need to sell or create these attributes – they are recognized and exist...these need to be taken advantage of to enhance community awareness. As an example:

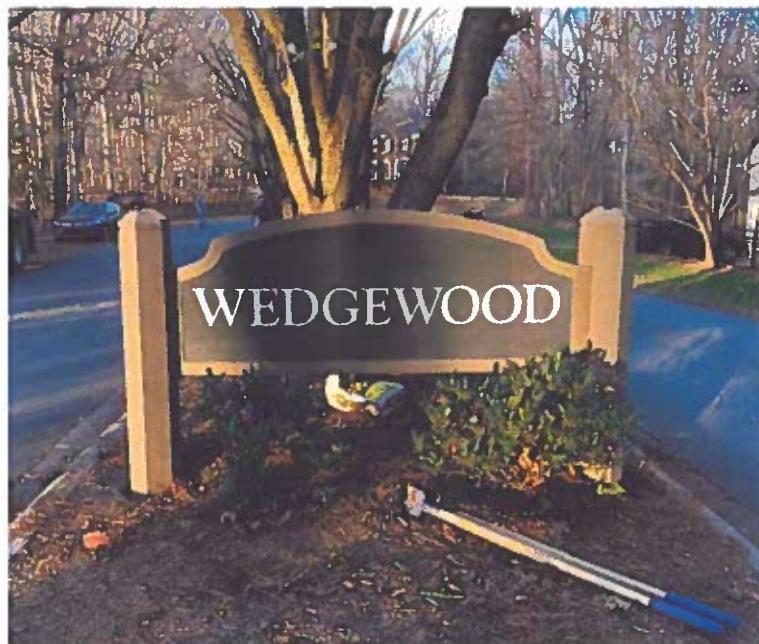
- *The Village of Friendship Heights is an easily accessible and quiet community where young and old can live, rest, play, and engage in peace and safety.*

Taking Advantage of Our Assets

- **Take advantage and enhance walkability** by completing the test of lighted pedestrian safety signs and speed bumps to reinforce this important and frequently cited aspect of Village life.
- **Emphasize the Village Center and Humphrey Park as the “center of town”.**
- **Improve signage for the parks in the Village.**
 - Incorporate signage like those at county parks stating maintained by the Village of Friendship Heights. Signage does not need to be big and intrusive, but should be of a consistent style, theme, and communicate respect for the parks and all who use them.
 - As an example, while Page Park is an inviting space, soon to be enhanced with the approved Greensweep project, you would be hard pressed to know its name given the placement and mundane identifying marker, much less the reason for the name.



- **Enhance signage** to welcome as well as inform that individuals are in the Village of Friendship Heights. While there are space limitations, there is room for improvement in the area assigned to the Village bulletin board at the corner of Humphrey Park (S. Park & Hills Plaza).
 - Rather than have a bulletin board that is difficult to read, have a **landmark sign** welcoming people to the Village. The committee did a review of such signs in the area and on-line. We are cognizant that there is a risk of too much signage in a small area that would lead to the Village having a cluttered look. The Committee suggests something like below in either wood or stone to replace the current bulletin board.



- Additionally, the Committee recommends **replacing the bulletin board** with a digital sign that could be placed in the left (as facing) window of the Village Center. This would serve several purposes. First it would make updating easier and more current. Second, it would potentially draw more residents to the Village Center and encourage them to enter.
- **Enhance signage of the Village Shuttle** via more vibrant and bold colors – currently the white on white is lost when in motion and hard to read. Consider blue or green, both components of the Village logo, as an alternate.
 - As the broader "Heights" comes to fruition, the current TAP and Alliance plan has it extending from the SAKS to the Rodman's on Wisconsin Ave. Is it possible to expand the range of the shuttle bus to include the whole of the

Wisconsin Ave. strip, almost like a Circulator, or, at least periodically. This would also expand the available locations of our older residents to shop.

- **Seniors are the largest – and most stable – cohort** in Friendship Heights and offer a wealth of experience gained over their careers. Various services should be provided to them so that, if they choose, they can age in their own apartment homes and continue to be a vibrant part of the community.
 - While they are in generally good health, the programs and activities of the Village Center – and of FHNN – serve them well.
 - When they become less mobile and develop other limitations, the services provided by FHNN become important. Also, the shuttle bus should stop at the medical buildings to meet their needs.
 - When their health further deteriorates, they need trained home care, geriatric care managers and house call doctors. SmithLife has recently introduced a pilot program offering limited hour care (e.g., two hours per day). The Village should encourage similar services to be provided on an affordable basis, particularly in the early years of their use.
- **Children are important** to a community, and when children get together their parents tend to meet other parents.
 - Many children's events occur at daytime hours when parents are working. While evenings are difficult due to dinner and homework, having kids' events on weekends could be beneficial.
 - On weekends, consider expanding the shuttle bus to drop off at Willard Park. As the most proximate play area, parents of small children are required to walk up and down the hill to Willard with strollers and other necessities.
- **Use the weekly Farmer's Market** to continue to promote Village sponsored events beyond the website and newsletter. Consider adding an entertainment component to the Farmers Market, especially in the nice weather to invite more people in. Local Markets in Bethesda and Silver Spring have clown, street performers, and local musicians. This would potentially draw more families but also offer a means for socialization beyond buying produce and moving along.
- The developing **Business Alliance** has started to sponsor events and is beginning to proactively advertise them well in advance of event dates. Coordinate to grow the voice and identity of the Village in the area as well as to influence activities of interest to Village residents.

We do not expect that all suggestions will be implemented, nor are all likely to be immediately successful. The effort to enhance “Identity” is not a short-term effort. It will require communication, time, and consideration. To modify and gain insight into what is working, a survey and or interview after an event or periodically to gain feedback is important.