

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 in person at the Village Center

Monday, January 9, 2023

ATTENDEES:

Michael Mezey, Chairman
Melanie Rose White, Mayor
Bruce Pirnie, Vice Chairman
Alfred Muller, MD, Secretary
Paula Durbin, Treasurer
Michael Dorsey
Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Historian
Julian Mansfield, Village Manager
Jason Goldstein, Assistant Village Manager
Robert Bryant, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER:

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

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM THE COUNCIL:

- Roger Cochetti complimented the updated Friendship Heights Village website; and noted the closing of CVS and T.J. Maxx in neighboring DC.
- Michael Mezey offered thanks to Mr. Goldstein for his excellent upgrading of the Village web site.
- Charlie Schwartz asked what the Village Council is doing to address safety concerns in the community. Council members weighed in on the efforts being expended in the area of security, including the additional surveillance cameras and discussion with County police concerning patrols in the Village. **“Safety and Security” will be included on the next Council Meeting agenda.**
- Steven Tokarick acknowledged the regular shuttle driver is very good, but there is a notable drop-off in service when he is not present (e.g., missing pickups, failing to know the proper route, etc.). Mr. Mansfield indicated the provider has been informed of the issue.

MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor White announced the Council held a Closed Session at 7:00 p.m prior to this public meeting, in order to consult with Attorney Norman Knopf concerning the proposed 5500 Wisconsin Avenue development.

The Village managers are currently addressing the recent connectivity issues with Zoom by working with technical consultants. The goal is to resume hybrid live/Zoom Council meetings by the next meeting on Monday, February 13, 2023.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded approval of the minutes as presented from the Council’s Public Session held on Monday, December 12, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Closed Session held on Monday, December 12, 2022. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Muller introduced the minutes of the Council Finance Committee meeting of January 3, 2023. He had a correction to the minutes, to add his name to the sentence that mentioned Carolina Zumaran-Jones recommending an increase in the security patrol budget. Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approval of the minutes as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council’s financial standing as of Wednesday, December 31, 2022. Cash on hand in the General Fund totaled \$3,431,281.70. The Capital Improvements Fund totaled \$11,441.48. The OPEB reserves totaled \$1,351.89.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance Committee Report:

Ms. Durbin reported the following information from the Tuesday, January 3, 2023 Finance Committee meeting:

- The committee reviewed the initial draft of the FY 24 Village budget. Suggestions were raised regarding proposed revisions to the draft budget. Mr. Mansfield noted the General Fund balance projections did not include the committed expenses for the Page Park renovation. The General Fund balances will be updated to reflect the additional expenses. The Village management team will explore the feasibility and costs of hiring off-duty Montgomery County police officers. The Finance Committee agreed to hold off on increasing the budget until the costs are known. The committee will forward the draft budget to the full Council to review during their January 2023 Meeting.

Report from the Community Advisory Committee (CAC):

Dr. Muller reported the following information from the Wednesday, January 4, 2023 CAC meeting:

- The committee requested that the owners of Willard Towers or the county be informed that the trash dumpsters be removed from the street as soon as possible after pickup.

- The CAC discussed the status of the red house and the upcoming survey after the Village Council Communications Committee review.
- The Community Advisory Committee will outline their rankings of the submissions for the new Village sign at the January 9th Council Meeting.
- An Informational Session was provided for the proposed Metro garage conversion.
- The Willoughby passed a bylaw revision to designate their building as non-smoking.
- Comments were received from several members of the community regarding trash in the Village - particularly at 5550 Friendship Boulevard.
- A discussion was held regarding the level of lighting within the Village. (An upgrade of all street lights to LED has been finalized.)
- The committee discussed the draft FY 24 budget.
- Security was a major topic of discussion. A security survey is being performed at The Elizabeth by the police department.
- The next meeting of the Community Advisory Committee will take place on Wednesday, February 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Village Center.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion /Vote - 4608 N. Park Avenue Usage Survey: The latest draft of the survey has been finalized after input was received from the CAC, Mayor White, and the Village managers. The survey will be transferred to an online survey by Qualtrics, the company recently approved by the Council to implement the survey and present the collected data that residents can access via a link on the Village website. **Ms. Durbin moved, Mr. Mezey seconded approval of the 4608 N. Park Avenue usage survey. The motion carried unanimously. The Village management team will distribute a link to the online survey using all available avenues, including the Village newsletter. Residents will have until February 3, 2023 to submit their responses.**

Discussion/Vote - Sketch Design for Village Welcome Sign: In December 2022, the Village invited residents to submit sketch designs for a new welcome sign to be placed at the intersection of South Park and The Hills Plaza. Four sketches were received from residents. The managers forwarded the submissions as anonymous entries to the CAC who then gave each one a ranking. CAC Chair Joe Bucherer reported on the committee's discussion and rankings. Council members reviewed the two submissions that received the highest rankings from the CAC and offered their comments. **The Council voted 4-3 to support the sketch identified as #1. As a result, the Council management team will use sketch #1 as a guideline along with the specifications from Parks & Grounds to obtain bids. The winner will assist with the design process.**

ADJOURNMENT:

At 8:42 p.m., Mr. Dorsey moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Pirnie seconded. The motion was carried unanimously (7-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Alfred Muller, MD
Secretary