

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, February 13, 2023

ATTENDEES:

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

ABSENT:

Michael Dorsey

CALL TO ORDER:

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

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Mayor White recognized the contributions of long-time Village resident and former Village Council member Len Grant who passed away on January 16, 2023. Paula Durbin recognized Friendship Heights Activist Cleo Tavani and her many contributions to the Village community, as Ms. Tavani passed away on February 9, 2023. Mr. Mezey recalled that the Council previously voted to approve a plaque in honor of Ms. Tavani.

Obituaries in honor of Mr. Grant and Ms. Tavani will be posted at the Village Center front desk.

Residents were reminded not to enter Page Park, as it remains an active construction site. The pathway to Somerset will remain closed for a few additional weeks. **The community will be notified once the path can be reopened.**

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM THE COUNCIL:

- Clara Lovett thanked Council members for their efforts on behalf of Len Grant and Cleo Tavani, and specifically recognized Carolina Zumaran-Jones and Paula Durbin for their work in recognition of Ms. Tavani.
- Dan Dozier urged the Council not to cease offering a video component for their public meetings. (2) Mr. Dozier clarified that The Carleton prohibits smoking in the common areas of their building. Dr. Muller noted all other residential buildings within the Village prohibit smoking within their units in addition to their common areas.
- John Golden inquired whether the Council has a plan to address the significant amount of dog waste on the sidewalks and grassy areas of the Village; reminded everyone that failure to remove pet waste can incur a \$100 fine; encouraged the Village to take additional measures to enforce the law with regard to pet waste; and suggested the placement of additional pet waste stations within the Village - particularly on N. Park Avenue.
- Stephanie from Highland House West sought clarification about the instructions given to the patrols for ticketing delivery drivers; and addressing double parking in the area between Brooks Brothers and Highland House. She suggested using the newsletter to provide instructions regarding those matters.
- Cameron Moody reported a trash issue in the neighborhood, particularly in front of Banana Republic and Gap. The owner reported he is a participant in the Friendship Heights Alliance—the Business Improvement District for the area. It was reported there had been no interest in new leasing of any of the retail spaces until the fourth quarter of 2022, and that some of the existing tenants such as DSW and Marshalls have provided notice that they will be vacating their spaces. Statistics were presented that indicate the storefronts in Friendship Heights (Maryland and D.C. combined) are 60% to 65% empty. Those changes will present an opportunity for redevelopment to achieve a more vibrant community.
- Paula Durbin reported that the Village’s Winter Festival that replaced the New Year’s Day reception occurred on Saturday, January 28, 2023, in the Village Center. Approximately 150 persons were in attendance who enjoyed breakfast and a ballet performance. The festival will continue in the future as one of the four main seasonal community events.

SECRETARY’S REPORT:

Dr. Muller moved, Mayor White seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Public Session held on Monday, January 9, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Council’s Closed Session held on Monday, January 9, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded approval of the minutes as distributed from the Public Safety Committee Meeting held on Tuesday, January 17, 2023. The motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Treasurer Durbin presented a summary of the Council’s financial standing as of Tuesday, January 31, 2023. Cash on hand in the General Fund totaled \$3,369,862.25 The Capital Improvements Fund totaled \$11,480.07. The OPEB reserves totaled \$1,356.45.

FIRST PUBLIC HEARING—FY 2024 DRAFT BUDGET

There was no resident testimony for the public hearing. Council members offered comments regarding the draft FY 2024 budget.

Dr. Muller proposed adding a new Line Item 9D (Police Patrol) in the amount of \$175,000; recommended increasing Line Item 18C (Recreation and Parks) from \$10,000 to \$20,000; increasing Line Item 18K (Lunches, Brunches, Teas, and Dinners) from \$12,000 to \$15,000; and increasing Line Item 18M (Center Special Events) from \$30,000 to \$35,000.

Ms. Zumaran-Jones requested an explanation regarding Line Item 9A. Mr. Mansfield explained the cost covers the security contractor that provides parking enforcement within the Village.

Ms. Durbin noted the Village is receiving higher interest income on its investment accounts in comparison to the previous year.

Mr. Mezey reported the final vote concerning the FY 2024 budget will take place during the March 2023 Village Council meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Council Ad Hoc Public Safety Committee

Mayor White reported the Ad Hoc Public Safety Committee met on Tuesday, January 17, 2023. The committee discussed three topics:

- The possible hiring of off-duty Montgomery County police officers to serve from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Village Manager and Assistant Village Manager reported what other community associations are paying for the service (\$71 to \$73 per hour). At that rate, an eight-hour shift five days per week would cost the Village between \$147,680 and \$151,840 annually.
- The installation of more security cameras throughout the Village, in particular at the Red House.
- Whether to approach the individual condominiums and apartment buildings to discuss the installation of cameras on the sides of commercial buildings.

Report from the Community Advisory Committee (CAC):

Dr. Muller reported the following information from the Wednesday, January 18, 2023 CAC meeting:

- A new Police Field Office sign was installed facing North Park Avenue.
- A meeting was held with the Manager of Willard Towers to discuss the trash/dumpster issue
- The CAC discussed the preliminary report provided by Dr. Muller about the Red House survey.
- Security and safety within the individual buildings were discussed in detail, with each representative reporting for their own building.
- The CAC discussed the Village “Welcome” identity sign.

- The Village’s bulletin board at the corner of South Park Avenue and The Hills Plaza will be replaced with a digital display in the Village Center main entrance.
- A committee members’ roundtable went over the mask mandates for the various buildings.
- An update was presented concerning the Friendship Heights Alliance.
- Willard Towers and 4615 are no longer providing the same shuttle bus service as they were in previous years.
- The picket fences at the entrances to Hubert Humphrey Park are no longer necessary. The CAC unanimously recommended removal of those fences.
- The next meeting of the Community Advisory Committee will take place on Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the Village Center. The meeting is open to the public.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion /Vote - Landscape Maintenance Contract: The Village’s three-year contract with GreenSweep is nearing expiration. The landscape maintenance contract was sent out to bid. Ten proposals were received in response, including one from GreenSweep. Mr. Mansfield recognized Kyle and Jed Narsavage of GreenSweep in the audience during the February 13, 2023 Council Meeting. GreenSweep was the second lowest bidder. The lowest bidder submitted an incomplete proposal, as they did not provide pricing for the hanging baskets. With that information in mind, and because GreenSweep has provided stellar work to date, **Mr. Pirnie moved, Ms. Durbin seconded approving a three-year landscape maintenance contract renewal with GreenSweep at a cost of \$89,723 per year. The motion carried unanimously.**

Discussion/Vote - Security Cameras at the Red House: After publishing a public bid notice for proposals in January 2023, five bids were received to add cameras at the Red House. **Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Durbin seconded the approval of management’s recommendation to contract with LVSI to install additional cameras at the Red House at a cost of \$4,248. The motion carried unanimously.** Mr. Mansfield reported LVSI installed the cameras in Humphrey Park and did a professional job.

Discussion/Vote - Ramp Construction at Page Park: Following an overview by Bruce Pirnie and comments by the representatives from GreenSweep, **Mr. Pirnie moved, Dr. Muller seconded contracting with Green Sweep to build an ADA-compliant ramp in Page Park extending from the back edge of the play area to the perimeter path at a cost of \$10,197; and contracting with GreenSweep for a metal working company to install handrails on both sides of the ramp at the estimated cost of \$3,000 to \$5,000. The motion carried with one abstention (Ms. Zumaran-Jones).**

Discussion/Vote - 4608 N. Park Avenue Usage Survey Results: Dr. Muller relayed the process undertaken to draft the survey before summarizing the results which will be posted to the Council’s website. Each comment received was forwarded to the Council. **Following comments from Council members, the Council agreed to have the management team research the services of a retail broker about potentially renting out a commercial retail space for a food use. All comments on the questionnaire would be posted on the Council’s web site.**

Discussion/Vote - Sketch Design for Village Welcome Sign: After publishing a public invitation, proposals were received from four companies to design a “Welcome” sign for the Village. The sign options were displayed on the big screen during the Council

Meeting. Dr. Muller moved, Mr. Pirnie seconded the approval of management's recommendation to proceed with SOL Signs & Graphics' design option for the Village "Welcome" sign at a cost of \$5,600.19. The motion carried with one abstention (Ms. Durbin).

Discussion/Vote - Proposal to Hire Off-Duty Montgomery County Police Officers: Please see the "Council Ad Hoc Public Safety Committee" section of these minutes. Additionally, Council members discussed the cost implications of hiring off-duty police officers; what other buildings in the area are doing; as well as any insurance, liability, and logistical considerations. Dr. Muller moved, Ms. Zumaran-Jones seconded approving the proposal from the Village Manager to have a pool of 12 to 15 highly qualified police officers patrol the Village 40 hours per week in four-to-five hour shifts at a rate of \$73 per hour, plus a monthly fee of \$800 for Officer Jason Cokinos to manage the program. The program was approved on a month-to-month, trial basis. The motion carried by a vote of four in favor, zero opposed, and two abstained (Ms. Durbin and Mr. Mezey).

Buses: Following a question from Ms. Zumaran-Jones, Mr. Mansfield reported there have been no recent issues with bus operations within the Village.

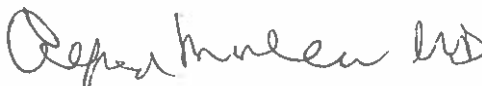
NEW BUSINESS

Discussion/Vote - Management of the 2023 Village Council Election: Dr. Muller moved, Mayor White seconded contracting with The League of Women Voters to manage the Council's 2023 election at a cost not to exceed \$10,000. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 9:32 p.m., Dr. Muller moved to adjourn the meeting, and Mr. Pirnie seconded. The motion was carried unanimously (6-0).

Respectfully submitted,



Alfred Muller, MD
Secretary