

Village of Friendship Heights
Ad Hoc Committee on Environment and Climate Change
Corrected Minutes of the Committee Meeting on April 2, 2024

In Attendance: Martha Solt (Village Liaison), Patricia Canessa (Chair), Christine Knauer, Joyce Mushaben, Sonya Starnes, Emmanuel D'Silva

Observers: Lois Forster, Roy Schaeffer

Absent: Aleisha Bynum, Philip Lu

1. The committee meeting in person was called to order by the chair, Patricia Canessa, at 7:02 pm. Emmanuel D'Silva volunteered to be the note taker.
2. Minutes of the prior meeting on March 5 were approved with a minor correction: substitution of the word "reports" in the second paragraph by "preliminary audits" with regard to building energy efficiency standards.
3. Village Liaison Martha Solt reported on committee member Christine Knauer's presentation to the Council on excessive use of salt on sidewalks on snowy days. Ms. Solt said the presentation had an immediate impact with the Village Secretary modifying contracts to require less salt use in the future. Copies of the Montgomery County winter salt guidelines were also sent to each building owner. She would follow up next snow season to remind them of these guidelines. Ms. Knauer explained that the County's guidelines recommending less salt (12 oz per 10 normal sidewalk squares) was not being followed by Village contractors.
4. Chairwoman Patricia Canessa reported that she had started a conversation with eight building managers on a "climate change survey." The purpose of the survey was to identify climate change mitigation activities being carried out in each building in the Friendship Heights building community. The questionnaire listed a number of activities. She said issues relating to solar panels, composting of food waste, EV charging, and energy efficiency generated considerable interest in her initial conversation. Discussion on this initiative followed. One member felt that the committee should have been consulted before taking the initiative. Another said the committee should trust the individual taking the initiative and not be involved in the details. Ms. Canessa informed that she would like to discuss strategy with the building managers the next time.
5. There was considerable discussion on preparations for the Community Fair on April 13. Council Liaison Solt was requested to secure a larger table to display the committee's activities. There were suggestions to place on the table flyers on birds and their migration, composting, mini forests and other issues. A small group comprising Patricia Canessa, Christine Knauer and Sonya Starnes will meet to organize materials and designs for the table focused on the environment and climate change.
6. Joyce Mushaben moved a motion to request Ms. Solt to secure a truck from the County, or some other source, for the purpose of picking up and recycling electronic waste. She said many seniors were not able to take their computers, TV sets, and other large electronic items to the County's recycling station at Shady Grove. This truck could make the rounds once or twice a year. Ms. Solt promised to look into this request.
7. Next, Emmanuel D'Silva made a brief statement on the importance of mini forests. He said the Miyawaki method of planting native trees densely in small spaces is getting attention around the world as urban areas deal with record temperatures. He cited Manhattan as being the latest area to take up the Miyawaki method to address the heat island effect. Under the Miyawaki system, trees are planted up to 30 times densely and grow ten times faster. The area required could be as small as a tennis court (200 square feet). Mr. D'Silva reported that his conversation with the Montgomery County Public Schools staff responsible for tree planting was not fruitful; they were limited by space and county restrictions relating to safety and esthetics. Ms. Solt suggested that committee members could walk in the neighborhood to identify potential sites for a mini forest.
8. Other issues raised: Joyce Mushaben wondered whether the Village Council had given any thought to an EV charging station. Some buildings were discussing this issue but were running into a number of problems (eg,

buildings are old, voltage, etc). Patricia Canessa enquired whether the Village Center could install solar panels on its roof? Lois Forster talked about some dog owners not acting responsibly to rein in their pets when they trample on plants and flower beds.

9. The meeting was adjourned at 8:22 pm

Prepared by Emmanuel D'Silva
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