

**Village of Friendship Heights
Ad Hoc Community Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Environment**

Minutes of the Committee Meeting on March 5, 2024

Persons in attendance:

Village of Friendship Heights Liaison: Martha Solt

Committee Members: Patricia Canessa (Chair), Emmanuel D'Silva, Joyce Mushaben, Sonya Starnes, Christine Knauer

Observer: Al Muller

Committee Members unable to attend:

Aleisha Bynum, Philip Yin Lu,

The committee meeting via Zoom was called to order by Chairwoman Patricia Canessa at 7:09 PM

1. The first order of business was to appoint Christine Knauer as temporary recording secretary to record minutes of this meeting. It was agreed that this recording task would be rotated among committee members in the future.

2. The next order of business was to discuss and approve minutes of the prior meeting on February 22, 2024. There was a discussion during that meeting of the county requirement of building preliminary audits on energy use intensity performance standards. Two village buildings, the Carleton and the Willoughby were described in the minutes as the only village buildings which have submitted preliminary audits and received a rating score. Sonya Starnes corrected this description to state that the 4620 building was also mentioned at that meeting as having submitted a preliminary audit with a score of 50.

After this correction the minutes of the prior meeting were approved.

3. The next topic discussed was how to present the committee's findings to the Village Council. Village Liaison Martha Solt clarified that minutes of all committee meetings must be submitted to the village timely and will be posted on the village's website. Formal actions taken by the committee must be reported directly by a committee member to the Friendship Heights Village Council as an agenda item at its next meeting.

4. The next topic was a Chair Report by Patricia Canessa. Chairwoman Canessa discussed her recent appointment to the University of Maryland Environmental Center and reviewed some of the issues of interest to them and to our own committee: transportation and the use of electric vehicles, education of residents using various media, the differences in perception between community residents and environmental groups, the possibility of funding various projects, and coordination with other government agencies and nonprofits.

5. Chairwoman Canessa then discussed her formal Plan of Action and Committee Work Plan, which she had created in a document and sent to committee members for review before this meeting. The Plan of Action emphasized our committee's vision, goals and objectives. The Committee Work Plan further defined three goals including education of the public, identifying proven science-based environmental strategies, and improving the community's quality of life with their cooperation. Some committee members stated that since we are a small volunteer group, we should focus our efforts now on simple local projects that will have an impact on village residents and will raise our visibility in the community.

6. The Committee then moved on to new business. The first topic concerning the nationwide problem of food waste management was introduced by Emmanuel D’Silva, who talked about the importance of composting to recycle discarded food waste. Just 6% of food waste is composted in the country, he said, which if doubled could save \$444 billion and lower carbon emissions. Other committee members mentioned limited private food composting programs within their buildings and one member mentioned the possible public health issues with these programs. Mr. D’Silva then talked about his recent meeting with Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich where he asked if the current pilot program to pick up food waste from single family homes could be extended to high-rise buildings. Mr. Elrich told him the county had a bigger plan: it was negotiating with Anne Arundel County to put up a biogas digester. If this comes through, the county would collect food waste from everybody, possibly by the fall of next year.

7. The next topic of new business was a discussion of other local environmental problems that the committee could address. These issues included reducing water use, planting native species in the village, protecting migrating birds from colliding with our apartment windows and reducing excess winter salt use on village sidewalks and walkways.

8. The next topic was a discussion among members and observers about how to educate village residents and gain their cooperation with environmental projects. Suggestions on this matter included:

- Identify key people in each building to coordinate efforts
- Set up informational meetings with building managers
- Use different media to connect and educate, including flyers and emails
- Create environmental programs at the Village Community Center
- Publish articles in Village newsletter
- Set up an informational table at the April 13 Village Community Day
- Engage village children with games, projects, movies and story time
- Work with local schools to educate children about taking care of our environment
- Research the DC environmental film festival
- Participate locally in Earth Day projects.

9. Chairwoman Patricia Canessa then asked Christine Knauer to present a report on behalf of the committee to the Village Council on the issue of winter salt pollution. Village Liaison Martha Solt said that she would put this report on the Council’s agenda for its March 11, 2024 meeting.

10. Martha Solt then said that she will set up the committee’s next meeting at the Village Center for April 2, 2024 at 7:00 PM. This will be an in-person meeting.

11. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Submitted by Christine Knauer
Willard Towers
March 20, 2024