

**Village of Friendship Heights
Ad Hoc Committee on Climate Change
Minutes of September 3, 2024**

In attendance:

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

There were no community members present.

The meeting commenced at 7:05 pm.

1. Committee members approved the minutes from the August 6th meeting.
2. Council Representative Martha Solt indicated that Tom Brody, a biologist, had expressed interest in joining the committee. The Council would address his membership at its meeting the following Monday.
3. With regard to the "Sustainable Maryland" (SM) initiative, Solt reported that although the Village as such is not eligible to participate, the SM Board is willing to consider making an exception for Friendship Heights. Should that not be possible, she noted that there are other potential funding sources that might be available. She will schedule a meeting with Pepco in relation to the Sustainable Committee grants. She reiterated that the Village would be able to manage alternative funding by arranging a separate grant fund. Sonya Starnes pointed out that further information was available on the Pepco website.
4. Joyce Mushaben once again raised the issue of an annual "electronics recycling" event for the Village, given the inability of elderly or car-less residents to drive out to the major recycling center in Shady Grove. Martha noted that Goodwill would be staging a local pick-up on September 14th, which would include appliances and small electronics. It was incorrectly assumed that Goodwill would even recycle items that are no longer functional.
(Note: According to Goodwill, "Kitchen gadgets should work properly. Broken toasters, blenders, or microwaves are not accepted, non-working refrigerators, stoves, washing machines, and dryers cannot be accepted by Goodwill. Broken cell phones, tablets, and other personal electronics should be recycled correctly.")
5. Patricia Canessa (chair) reported on a County meeting regarding natural disaster preparedness and alarm systems, noting a need to better utilize the services of the police, firefighters, FEMA and other first-responders. Having visited the Bradley Firehouse, she determined that there were no protocols for tornados or other potential catastrophes occurring *outside* neighborhood buildings. She distributed revised power-point materials for possible local use. Christine Knauer advised the committee that September is National Emergency preparedness Month. Mushaben indicated that FEMA can only be called upon once an event has been declared a "national disaster."

6. Committee members then discussed the need for building-by-building education and planning for Village residents in large complexes. Mindful that the Council's Safety Committee sets policies in this domain, our liaisons will notify the Village that we see also this as an area for committee engagement, given its obvious links to climate change. This will include sensitizing and training building managers to assist in compiling preparedness protocols.

6. Solt held that the Carlton (140 units) would be a good place to introduce a campaign along these lines as a kind of pilot project. Emmanuel D'Silva asked whether the condo- and apartment complexes had designated fire-marshal volunteers for each floor. Members were unaware of the existence of such positions in their respective buildings. At a minimum, it would be necessary to post what-to-do-in-case-of-disaster maps close to elevators and other exit points, indicating escape routes and "safe spaces" in each building.

7. One general problem centered on the high turn-over rates among renters. Knauer noted that the Willard Towers (525 apartments) had a Tenants' Association, which could be used as a channel for communications, equivalent to the elected Boards in condo complexes. Solt further recommended posting once-a-month update messages regarding alert and preparedness developments on various building list-serves (e.g., "My Neighbor"). Members agreed that the Montgomery County Alert system was often perceived as irritation, due to its lack of specificity (e.g., zip-code based notices) and often not accessible.

8. Returning to the revised disaster preparedness power-point circulated by the chair, Martha suggested a "practice presentation" session prior to addressing the Carlton residents. Recognizing the importance of the "12 ways to prepare" summary, members felt it was best not to overload the slides with more than three easily "digestible" points, so as not to overwhelm residents attending such sessions.

9. There was a brief reference from the insurance industry to potential problems installing e-charging stations in the garages of residential buildings, due to possible electrical fires. This topic merits further discussion.

10. Knauer stressed that the region is entering into the fall migration season for birds, and distributed an advisory hand-out for posting in our respective buildings.

The meeting concluded at approximately 8 pm.