

VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

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Approved Minutes Friendship Heights Village Council Public Safety Committee Wednesday, November 6, 2024

Council Public Safety Committee members present: Cheryl Tyler; Bobby Pestronk; Melanie White.

Others present: Julian Mansfield; Lt. Ari Elkin, Montgomery County Police Department.

At 6 p.m., Ms. Tyler called the meeting of the Friendship Heights Village Council Public Safety Committee to order. She referred to the meeting agenda.

Approval of Minutes: June 17 and September 4

Mr. Pestronk moved, Ms. White seconded, to approve both sets of minutes. The motion was passed unanimously.

Montgomery County Department of Transportation Work on Willard Ave

Mr. Mansfield reported that recent construction work on Willard Avenue was conducted by a County contractor to perform maintenance of the traffic signal. It was not related to the traffic improvements planned by the County Department of Transportation for the coming year.

Pedestrian Stop Signs

Mr. Mansfield raised concerns about the pedestrian stop signs in the middle of Village intersections. The signs are hit repeatedly and must be continuously repaired or replaced at an ongoing cost to the Village. The Village's maintenance supervisor spends considerable time working on the signs, and there are safety concerns when he has to be in the middle of the intersection to repair or replace them. Some of the signs are placed at intersections with very little room for larger vehicles and trucks to avoid hitting them due to the sharp turns and the parked cars on the side of the street.

The Committee discussed removing the signs or finding an alternative warning method. Lt. Elkin said he will consider possible alternatives to recommend.

Registering Village security cameras with County Police Department

Mr. Mansfield reported that the Village will register its security cameras with the County Police Department and is exploring how to integrate the cameras to provide the Police with direct access to the cameras. There are seven cameras at the Village Center and Humphrey Park, and five cameras at the Red House on North Park Avenue. Integrating the cameras requires installing a device at each location. Each device covers four cameras. The Committee authorized Mr. Mansfield to buy three devices for a total cost of \$1,050 plus a \$450 yearly subscription. Mr. Mansfield is conferring with the camera technicians to determine how the boxes will be installed and activated.

Update on County Insurance Policy for Off-Duty Police

Mr. Mansfield reported on a meeting he had with Ms. Tyler and the County Insurance representatives at which the Village was advised that additional liability insurance coverage is recommended. The County has not followed up with any specifics about the coverage they are recommending. Mr. Mansfield continues to reach out to the insurance representatives for further clarification.

Public Safety Report from Police

Lt. Ari Elkin provided crime analysis data from September 1 through November 5. He reviewed the high-profile incident involving a stabbing at the Friendship Heights Metro station. The Police security camera trailer has been put back at the intersection of Wisconsin and Western Avenues. There has been a reduction in business theft in the immediate area since the camera has been activated. The County has authorized funding for the Police to install a camera on Wisconsin Avenue near South Park or in the median.

Mr. Mansfield reported that Lt. Elkin inquired about a possible pay increase for the off-duty police officers in the Village. The Committee discussed potentially including a pay increase in next year's budget. Ms. Tyler pointed out that there was an increase built into the current year's budget, and that perhaps a bonus could be given in lieu of an increase.

Committee goals and recommendations for Village

Ms. Tyler referred to the last page of the Committee's off-duty police report with the list of recommended actions. The Committee reviewed the 22 listed recommendations and discussed the status of each.

No other actions were taken by the Public Safety Committee. The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted:



Cheryl Tyler, Public Safety Committee Chair