

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

Minutes of the Committee Meeting on September 2, 2025

Persons in attendance:

Committee Members: Patricia Canessa (Chair), Alison Alt (Council Liaison), Sonya Starnes, Christine Knauer, Thomas Brody, Andra Miller

Observer: Lois Forester

Members absent: Emmanuel D'Silva, Evan Brown

The committee meeting was called to order by Chairperson Patricia Canessa at 7:10 PM

1. Christine Knauer volunteered to be temporary recording secretary to record minutes of this meeting.

2. Minutes of the prior meeting of August 5, 2025 were tabled for future review since several committee members had been unable to see them online prior to this meeting.

3. Counsel Liaison Alt was then asked to report to the Committee on actions taken by the Village Council regarding various issues presented to it in the past by our committee.

These issues included:

An update of the EV proposal

Council climate priorities

Friendship Heights development and climate related activities

Our committee role in neighborhood development issues

Follow up on meeting with Carleton residents

Follow up on date to meet with building representatives

Montgomery County response to Council letter on herbicide spraying in Willard Park.

Council Liaison Alt stated that she was unable to update our committee on any of the above issues because she had no information on Council actions. After some discussion expressing disappointment with this missing feedback from the Council, the Committee asked Liaison Alt to make sure that any Council Liaisons who attend our meetings in the future come prepared with a report on Council actions related to our advice. Liaison Alt agreed to do so.

4. Chairperson Canessa then reported to the Committee on the continuing need for our group to inform village residents about emergency preparedness and weather alerts. Our presentation in 2024 at the Carleton on this topic was described as a limited success, but much more needs to be done to inform other village building residents.

Patricia Canessa also reminded the Committee that all meetings of our group are open to residents who have not officially been appointed by the Village Council. Such residents will

have observer status and are welcome to present new topics of concern to the Committee and participate in discussions, although they cannot vote on any committee actions.

5. Christine Knauer then reported on the ongoing need to address the topic of excess winter salting of village sidewalks by building maintenance crews. Several months ago the Washington Post published an article describing the damage caused by this salt runoff into the Potomac River which is the source of our drinking water. In spite of our committee's presentation on state and county safe salting guidelines to the Village Council in the fall of 2024, village building maintenance crews continued to spread excessively large amounts of salt last winter.

Committee members then discussed ways to prevent this damaging practice for the upcoming winter season. One of the main problems is that building owners and managers are concerned about their liability if any residents fall on slippery sidewalks. Another is that residents, managers and maintenance crews still believe that more salt is better even though the Maryland and Montgomery County safe salt guidelines show that much less salt is more effective in melting ice than large clumps of salt. The Committee discussed several actions we could take now to reinforce this message about safe salting:

- a. Write an article on safe salting to be published in one of this fall's monthly Village newsletters to alert residents to the issue and inform them about state and local guidelines. Christine Knauer volunteered to write the article on behalf of the Committee.
- b. Research the possibility of getting Montgomery County officials to have a fall training session for local managers and maintenance crews on safe salting.
- c. Ask Village Manager Julian Mansfield to alert local building owners and managers to safe salt guidelines at a one of his monthly managers' meetings. The next meeting is scheduled for September 22.

6. Sonya Starnes then reported on her request to the Village to consider the green plate initiative for future village events.

7. Lois Forester who was present as an observer then brought up the issue of the environmental impact of the many dogs in our village. She described the issue of dog feces that wash down into Little Falls Creek and also damage plantings along village streets. As a result, some village buildings have now removed live plants along our sidewalks and replaced them with rocks which diminish the natural plantings that enhance our village.

8. Patricia Canessa then discussed the future benefits of collaborating with other groups and possibly inviting guests to speak to our committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Submitted by Christine Knauer
Willard Towers
September 16, 2025

