

**Village of Friendship Heights**  
**September 8, 2025 Meeting Transcript**

**[00:00:37.24] - Speaker 4**

Residents of Friendship Heights. The meeting will come to order. It is 6: 30. This is the meeting of the Village of Friendship Heights Council, September eighth, 2025. We had a one-month break, so welcome back. Two months, that's right. Two-month break. If you look at the agenda, there has been one item that's moved, and that's the discussion vote to engage an attorney to represent the village on development issues, and that's been moved to the closed meeting with another personnel matter. It's been replaced with discussion vote concerning the Geico site plan. Can I ask Julian, do you have Jim Wilson on yet?

**[00:01:36.17] - Speaker 5**

Not right this minute. I'm trying to reach him, so we could do the police officer discussion first.

**[00:01:42.23] - Speaker 4**

Okay, sure. Compared to a typical meeting, a few items have moved to the top to allow presenters to go off and live their lives after they do the presentation. Is Lieutenant Elken available to get started First. Thank you.

**[00:02:03.10] - Speaker 3**

I like the comment, Go live our life. I appreciate the opportunity to go first. Good evening. I'm Ari Elken. Just in general, I wasn't quite sure exactly what to present today, but I'll just give a quick snapshot of what we did in the month of August and observations that we had as the off-duty as the off-duty officer is working here in the village. In August, we conducted 132 hours of off-duty work. Statistically speaking, because I know that our main focus is observing traffic intersections and conducting education enforcement, we conducted 46 stops during the month of August. About 30% of the stops of the folks stopped resulted in enforcement. The other 70% received warnings or some form of education. Then there were also 12 calls for service that the officer's law that were actually dispatched in the village during their tour of duty. Those ranged from medical-related calls to shoplifters. There was another on duty officer who made a traffic stop that resulted in an arrest. As I've explained before, the officers, although here in a traffic capacity, are going to be assisting for calls or service that come from the village or nearby. I myself worked a couple of the shifts, and I was saying to...

**[00:03:42.06] - Speaker 3**

I've had conversations with Julian and with some other members of the community that one of the big things that we're seeing as far as how to approach this from an educational piece. Well, actually, let me take a step back. I did ask the officers, and I continue to ask them that when they make these stops to note in their log where the folks that are being stopped live, because I would like to capture to see if these are folks that live in the community or not. I could tell you, of the stops conducted in August, only one was a resident of the community. Others were folks that were here visiting people, many that were coming for medical appointments, and/or people passing through delivery folks. As a matter of fact, I had a couple contacts that were totally necessary, but I felt bad in some respects because they were folks that had just come from doctor's appointments where they were very stressed out about their appointments, but they recognize the fact that even though they're under stress in a bad way that they should not be driving through intersections. We have been primarily stopping folks who have literally blown through the intersections, not California rolling, but just driven through like the sign doesn't exist.

**[00:05:00.00] - Speaker 3**

One of the biggest issues I've seen, and the officers have also said, is that there's a perception that many people aren't stopping for stop signs. A lot are stopping, but what they're doing is they're stopping past the stop line and partly into the intersection. What that causes is it causes the pedestrian to have to decide whether or not they're going to walk in front of the car and outside the crosswalk walk and/or wait, and then wait for that car to turn. Then the appearance further, the driver is not obeying the law. Technically, they are supposed to stop at the stop line. That's one observation, and I got to chew on how we can better address that. Number two, and this is from the pedestrian side, and this does apply directly to the residents who live in the area or who walk the community, is that we have observed a lot of folks that are crossing diagonal across intersections simply because they don't see other cars coming. Yet a car can come very quickly, and then you're stuck in the middle of the intersection as opposed to going through a crosswalk. There's an education piece that we need to do on that part to the community about, even though it may look clear and there's no one around, and it might be easier to get from here to there by going a straight line, you need to cross in the crosswalks.

**[00:06:30.00] - Speaker 3**

Those have been the two primary observations that we've had. We have not conducted any speed enforcement. However, I'm looking at that for Willard Avenue moving forward and how we can address that, because I know that has been an issue in the past, and we do want to conduct some of that activity. There have also been... I fail to note. We have issued several parking tickets as well in areas, particularly when we're asked to enforce parking. Then most of

that is occurring out on Wisconsin Avenue, so by the medical buildings. But that is a snapshot. I'd say overall, the feedback from the officers has been very positive from the community. I hope the community feels the same way. I think the hours are working the way they had been before. Now, as it's getting darker earlier, we are doing, again, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, we are going to be having officers out here till eight o'clock at night from noon to I think that's going to be good as far as the getting darker earlier. But we can always pivot if we have to, if we feel there's a need somewhere else, or if the board or Julian communicates that they would prefer to see officers here at a different time.

**[00:07:44.29] - Speaker 3**

But outside of that, if you all have any questions, I'm happy to answer any questions.

**[00:07:49.22] - Speaker 4**

Before I ask my other council members, would you care to share what we were talking about when we came in? I asked you, are there more unhoused individuals given this push from DC?

**[00:08:04.06] - Speaker 3**

Yeah. We have seen one individual who is fairly regular on the property, and most of us have had contact with that individual, not because someone has asked us or that there's been a call for service. We have a couple of officers that get out on foot and just walk around. We've had no issues. Totally pleasant. It's not bothering anybody. We have had, and one of the calls for service that we documented or was documented in our report was an individual who was clearly unhoused at the Whole Foods, who ended up having to be trespassed from there. We have encountered other folks closer to the Metro. But I will tell you on a whole, we have not seen, and this is just outside the purview of just friendship heights, but just as a general statement, we have not seen a huge impact or influx of unhoused individuals. Now, it is going to get colder, and the chances are that those numbers may go up. But Bethesda Cares does an outstanding job of making sure that when we identify folks, that they come and assist. But we haven't had too many issues from our side. If we do, it's usually mental health-related, not anyone who's really trying to bother anyone.

**[00:09:30.19] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. Do council members have questions? Let AI go.

**[00:09:42.16] - Speaker 8**

Thank you, Lieutenant Elken. Were the offices able to get any idea of the general time, morning, afternoon, that these occurred or equally?

**[00:09:56.01] - Speaker 3**

Yeah, it's equal because when they're here, The ones that are here, like Monday, Wednesday, Friday, starting at 08: 00 AM, there's obviously a lot of folks between that 8: 00 to 9: 00 in the morning going to work, getting to appointments. There is a big influx then. It definitely, the middle of the day is not as busy as it is then the morning and then starting at 2: 00 when kids are getting home from school or the afternoons. But I've been here in the middle of the day, and you still have people that are coming from appointments or making deliveries. But the evening has also been fairly busy with a lot of DoorDash. A few people I've stopped have been delivery folks that are trying to get their foods in. That's another point. We've actually stopped quite a few of the food delivery folks because the ones on scooters, they sometimes forget that they need to obey the law, too, the stop signs. Just because they're on a scooter doesn't mean they get to just drive through. We've done some education. Those folks we've stopped and done an education piece with them, but we've also had to remind them that they need to have properly registered scooters if they're over 49 cc's.

**[00:11:12.16] - Speaker 3**

But so it's been a little bit of both. It's definitely a little bit quieter as far as traffic between 10: 00 AM and 2: 00 PM.

**[00:11:19.13] - Speaker 8**

Are there people, though, that are going through essentially as a shortcut to get to Willard Avenue on their way to River Road? Or it sounded as though A lot of people that weren't stopping were- No, these are mostly folks that have business in the village and/or in the medical buildings.

**[00:11:37.04] - Speaker 3**

I have not personally experienced. I'll reach out to the officers and ask them. So the next time I present, we can maybe look into that a little bit further.

**[00:11:43.28] - Speaker 8**

Because my impression is the people that come in, many of them from Somerset Boulevard, they come down Hills Plaza and make a right, they make another left, and go out. So they're clearly taking a shortcut.

**[00:11:56.28] - Speaker 3**

We did get a request from a citizen in the village that the stop sign at Somerset Terrace and the Hills Plaza was a problem. She had sent video to us. We did officer Abdelhamid, who's one of the off-duty officers here, paid attention to that stop sign. Since then, other officers have. Again, your difference between the California role versus just ignoring it altogether. But we We have spent some time on that, and that is a problem, a stop sign in the morning for sure. Sometimes in the afternoon, it's just people coming and going to work. But I haven't asked folks where they're going, if it's a cut through or not. We have a little bit of a... I don't want to say an issue, but I think we have to be a little bit cautious about what we ask folks when we're conducting these stops, not getting invasive about where are you coming from? We don't want to be interrogating. I think it's a balance between the educational part and then an enforcement part. I have a feeling as time goes on, we're We're going to get repeat offenders, probably people that we will ourselves recognize more than once.

**[00:13:20.19] - Speaker 3**

Also with our computer system, we have a system called eTix. Everything's electronic. When someone has stopped, we are required to enter all of their information into our ETIX system. For example, if I were to stop someone, I can see if it's in the DMV, I could see when they were stopped, who stopped them, and what time, what car they were in. If someone is a repeat offender through here, presumably, an officer is going to put them through their ETIX system, because whether you write them a warning or a citation, their information still has to be collected there for our reporting purposes. We will know if they were were stopped here before or even no matter wherever they were stopped and for what reason. If on one day I stopped a person and gave them a warning, if two days later they came through the same intersection and another officer stopped them, they might say, Oh, well, Lieutenant Elkin already stopped. You give you a warning. Now it's time for some enforcement. We have that. It's not saying it would happen, but it could. Thank you. Yeah. Let's go down the line here.

**[00:14:26.28] - Speaker 7**

Yeah. I have a question. When I've seen the police, it's almost always in parked cars. So I'm wondering, what's the breakout between foot patrol or driving around or parked?

**[00:14:38.24] - Speaker 3**

I don't have that exact breakdown for you. I could tell you I have two officers There are users that prefer to be upright and walk around because their backs are a little bit older and they just need to stretch and exercise. But it is obviously hard to do in traffic enforcement if you're not in your car so that you can immediately take action. But I certainly could try to break that down for you next time I report out.

**[00:15:05.13] - Speaker 7**

So it's left to the discretion?

**[00:15:06.29] - Speaker 3**

Yes. I would say that probably more of the walking is to make contact with folks in the community center, probably more in the middle of the day when it's I'm not expecting officers to be out in foot during the busy part of the morning rush or the afternoon. That's more traffic-related. So I prefer the officers to be moving from location to location. But some will get out and walk around just to stretch their legs and interact with the community.

**[00:15:38.01] - Speaker 1**

Well, thank you for being here. Thanks for your report. I don't know if I feel better or worse to know that it's mainly folks from outside the community who are causing issues with failure to stop. But it is something for us to think about, especially if it's centered on the medical I think it's good for us because it does help us on how we can reach out and educate and interact with the medical building, which is something we'll do from a second district perspective.

**[00:16:13.02] - Speaker 3**

That would be great. I've already started thinking about ways to do that. There are a lot of creative ways we can do that. But it was interesting, though, and I've gotten this from a few of the officers, not everyone's getting great news when they're leaving these places and they're not in a... So the question is, they probably should even be driving.

**[00:16:37.07] - Speaker 1**

I did see a car today that was on duty and stopped, and it was when really many children were getting off of school busses on North Park, and I thought that was a great time for the officer to be there. There were, I think, three school busses that I saw in a very short period of time. The

officer was clearly positioned in such a location that they could see what was going on with the kids walking home. Yeah. Thank you.

**[00:17:09.18] - Speaker 4**

Thank you very much. I hope you have an exciting evening outside of this room.

**[00:17:17.27] - Speaker 3**

Go pick up my son from a crew practice. Oh, there we go. Thank you. All right. Have a good night. Thank you.

**[00:17:32.07] - Speaker 4**

We're trying to connect with our project manager by phone. If everyone would just be a little patient. Let me just get the microphone going. All right.

**[00:17:49.22] - Speaker 3**

Jim, you there? Yeah. Go ahead.

**[00:17:56.02] - Speaker 4**

Yeah. Next up, virtually and by phone, He is our project manager. We hired to help us with finishing Page Park and some items related to the Red House. He's unavailable to be here in person this time, although he has been here before, and he's been participating at our Parks and Grounds committees. We're doing the best we can here to get a report from him on the status of Page Park. Jim, can you take it from here?

**[00:18:33.18] - Speaker 5**

Sure, I can. Is there any particular... Would you want to do Page Park first and then the Red House or any preference?

**[00:18:40.00] - Speaker 4**

Page Park first, including the Meyer engineering proposal and then the Red House. Okay. Right.

**[00:18:50.06] - Speaker 5**

With Page Park, we are working on finalizing all of the permits associated with the Stormwater Management Sediment Erosion Control. Included in that is an application to receive a waiver for forest conservation, which we should get, but we have not heard back from them. From all the site work, sediment Erosion Control, the Stormwater Management, all of those things are all intertwined. We cannot resubmit for the Sediment Erosion Control and the Stormwater Management until we receive our waiver on the forest conservation. All that being said is we were looking for an early spring, late winter, early spring ability to start and the overall total duration in the last schedule that I gave you. I apologize. I don't have it right now. We're pretty much on track, but that's the piece that is most vital to Page Park. I'm sorry. Go ahead.

**[00:20:08.03] - Speaker 4**

Could you repeat what that piece that was major for Page Park? Was that the Forest Conservation Waiver?

**[00:20:17.05] - Speaker 5**

Yes. The Forest Conservation Easement is... The engineers are saying that we should not have any issue with getting the waiver for that. But that just needs to go through their agency to sign off and provide that release. But they have done a good bit of reorganizing in the last, say, eight months or so. We have run into this on a few other projects where it's taking a really long, unordinarily long time. But I still think we're going to get it without impacting our overall schedule. But that's probably the biggest unknown right now in the timing. We cannot resubmit. We got comments, and the comments that we got were very minor in nature, but the only one that you we have to address all the comments in order to resubmit. One of the comments is that we need to have our forest conservation exemption in place in order to make our resubmission. That's probably the one piece that we're being very careful about how much we nudge them because it sometimes helps and sometimes it doesn't.

**[00:21:48.06] - Speaker 4**

Right. Could you explain the third-party inspection process and why we need another vendor engineer engineer for the structural engineering piece?

**[00:22:04.20] - Speaker 5**

Right. Because the pergola is actually considered a structure, it needed to have engineered drawings. The third-party inspection that had been started previously, they were not going to do the engineer drawings. The The company that had done some initial investigative work was not interested in doing any more engineering and design work. We needed to be able to get, in

order to get the county to approve the inspections and to be able to finalize the building permit, which is in this process, you need both the settlement erosion control, and I'm using settlement erosion control in its stormwater management, approvals and permits. You need that approval, and then you also need the building permit approvals. We talked about the settlement erosion control piece. Now, the building permit. They are saying, We do not have engineered drawings and stamped drawings for the foundation or the footings for the pergola. I think people got for a while were snagged on the terminology because they were It took a number of times for me to realize that the conversations that I was having with the builders in the testing, they were talking about the pergola design, and there were some drawings that showed a some support for the pergola, but they were not engineered foundation drawings and footing drawings.

**[00:24:10.15] - Speaker 5**

I had gone with both of the builder, the third-party inspector, and then I needed to find another engineer who was going to engineer it. In the meantime, in that time being, I was able to contact a number of them. But one of them, Myers Engineering and Myers Consulting Engineers, that I've known for probably 35, 40 years, was interested and was willing to help and do both the engineering and the third party so that they knew exactly, will know exactly how to satisfy the county to do whatever plans they need as well as inspect it and sign off on the work in place. The proposal that was brought forth previously to the committee was it's a \$5,000 proposal for all the engineering work. The inspecting, the actual time of inspection will be done on an hourly basis. The reason they do it that way is because they can't know right away exactly how the county is going to and exactly what the county is going to require them to do. They're going to hope that they can get them to do as little as possible, but they do not expect it to be a great deal, but they would have to do it hourly, which is, to me, was reasonable.

**[00:25:32.18] - Speaker 5**

It's a very, very well-established structural engineering firm in Montgomery County, and they're very familiar with all the inspectors and the agency reviewers. That was why I was recommending that we would use them, and that's going to be the quickest and most expedient way to get the pergola and building permits behind us.

**[00:25:55.06] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. That's later on our agenda, that item. You can do that while you're waiting for the Forest Preservation Exemption, is that right?

**[00:26:10.21] - Speaker 5**

Yes, they actually run completely independent of each other. But we'll only intersect when it's time to actually start all the work that's out there. Okay.

**[00:26:25.05] - Speaker 4**

I'm going to allow my fellow council members to ask about Page Park before you We'll move on to a brief report on the Red House. Just hold on one moment.

**[00:26:41.03] - Speaker 8**

Madam Chair, at some point, while we still have Mr. Wilson. I wonder if council members that have specific questions about the Myers project can ask them.

**[00:26:53.00] - Speaker 4**

Now is the time.

**[00:26:54.17] - Speaker 8**

Okay, go ahead. I have no questions.

**[00:26:57.22] - Speaker 4**

I just wondered if we as a council could- Yes, Because he's probably going to be released before the Myers Consulting item comes up. Now is the time if you have questions about that proposal or anything on the Page Park right now. I'm not seeing questions. If you could share a little bit about the Red House, please.

**[00:27:25.01] - Speaker 5**

Sure. I didn't hear some of that conversation. If there was a question that was directed or anything for me that I needed to respond to, I couldn't totally hear that. Jim, there were no follow-up questions on Page Park, so you can do the Red House. Okay, thank you. The Red House, we have received drawings today, the preliminary from the engineers to submit for building permit for doing all the life safety improvements and code modifications to the Red House by the design builder and their architect, the architect that they're using as an architect in the region here. It's a GTM, is the name of the firm. They have drawings and everything that are ready to go in for permit. It's my recommendation that we do get those submitted. One thing that is important to understand is, and I had this with the builder because he was saying that there's a lot more requirements in these drawings than he had anticipated to begin with. Without telling

him, pushing back too hard or pushing back hard immediately, I just said, We just need to all understand how the original contract was priced and based on what. But I do understand that these drawings have a lot of information that the builder could not have anticipated.

**[00:29:11.10] - Speaker 5**

It's just some of the details. It may not be a big deal. It may not That's not really significant, but when you do start looking at the size of the footings and the size of everything that's there that is now on these drawings, it is what's going to be required. It's going to take me a little bit to figure out exactly how the contractor came up with the number in the first place. To be able to evaluate, are they due any more money or not? But all that to be said, I do think we need to submit these plans to the county to get them in the review process.

**[00:29:52.16] - Speaker 4**

You feel you have the authority with a contractor to do that, right?

**[00:29:59.16] - Speaker 5**

I I shot a note over to Julian today, and I said, Julian, I think we should do this, and he just suggested that we just bring it up. There shouldn't be any reason that we... I don't know of any reason to not move forward. Obviously, there's no authorisation for anybody to spend any more money or for anybody to be charged anymore or anything at this point. This just gets it into the county and the permitting process clock starting. Okay.

**[00:30:29.16] - Speaker 4**

I trust you'll work with Julian to move that along expeditiously because I don't think you need the council for that.

**[00:30:36.26] - Speaker 5**

Okay, great.

**[00:30:38.20] - Speaker 4**

Do council members have questions on the Red House? No. I think we have time for maybe three questions from our audience to our project manager. If anyone has a question about, probably, Page Park, less likely the Red House. If you Mr. Wilson is on the phone. If you could

go over to where our village manager is over there. She can talk. I'm sorry. This is even better. Sorry about that, Lois. We have a question coming up.

**[00:31:13.07] - Speaker 2**

I'll repeat it if you can.

**[00:31:15.05] - Speaker 4**

Sure. Julian will repeat the question. Right.

**[00:31:18.24] - Speaker 1**

But just since he's here, it would be nice to bring this issue up. On July 14th, we had a really heavy rainfall, and I just happened to be looking out the It was getting somewhat dark, but I could definitely tell the chocolate milk, meaning the water coming off of Page Park was very, very dirty on the front side, running along the street down on North Park Avenue. It was very dark. I mean, the water was just super dark. Then I walked the next day On the backside, of course, I've been noticing erosion on the backside. Given that Page Park is going to be taking it'll take several more months, and we're getting, hopefully, well, not hopefully, but we're in a little bit of a drought, a more rainy season again. I was wondering if we couldn't afford, the village couldn't afford, some of these erosion logs that could be put along there. It's on the right side adjacent to the rental building as you're going into the park. That's all bare because of the dogs cleaning out a lot of the lower vegetation, as well on the backside where the bench sits. I would like to ask if that is possible in the interim before the construction begins, because there's a lot of runoff.

**[00:32:55.00] - Speaker 1**

Like I said, it was literally chocolate milk coming down that slope.

**[00:32:59.16] - Speaker 4**

Julie, Julian, would you mind repeating the essence of that question?

**[00:33:02.22] - Speaker 5**

Jim, the question was about the feasibility of placing erosion logs temporarily while we're waiting for the stormwater permit to mitigate the runoff that's happening right now at the beginning, at the entrance to the park.

**[00:33:17.06] - Speaker 8**

And is that something that's feasible for us to do?

**[00:33:20.22] - Speaker 5**

Yeah, it would be great if we could identify where that is or if anybody has any photographs, that would be helpful because my inclination would be, as I would try to get the contractor to just come in and do it on their own without having to incur any additional cost. But if you have some photographs or some images of where that is, we can First, I would try to, one, is it our stuff? Is it making sure that if it is coming off from us, then secondly, can we get them to fix it for nothing? But then thirdly, is our permanent fix going to in the same situation? Those would be the three ways that it would be helpful to see those images, and those would be the three approaches, one, to make it go away now, trying to make it go away without it being any cost to the village. And then thirdly, does our final solution make sure that we've addressed it?

**[00:34:24.19] - Speaker 4**

We'll try to get you those pictures or drawings. I'd like to allow I'll ask about other people if there's two more people that have questions about Page Park. Sure.

**[00:34:43.26] - Speaker 1**

I don't think We were able to hear everything that was said, but there is erosion occurring, and it was witnessed by someone who's an expert in this area. That That was Lois who was talking. I think we can be sure that it's happening from Page Park, based on what I heard. It's a question then of seeing what we can do to have it stopped. Are you able to get us pictures, Lois? Not that easy. I'm not for it, but I'm. I could go out here and have another picture of our building. I thought it was the Well, if you just take pictures. Well, that's what I would take a picture of. Yes, I would take a picture of where you saw it occurring, even if it's not occurring when you take the picture. Thank you. That's just what I wanted to say.

**[00:35:48.02] - Speaker 5**

Julian, I can come by there on Wednesday and take a look at it if you like. Just walk over there and make sure I'm clear on.

**[00:35:58.27] - Speaker 3**

That would help.

**[00:36:00.00] - Speaker 8**

The person who spoke said she's going to send me pictures as well.

**[00:36:03.13] - Speaker 5**

Great. Thank you.

**[00:36:05.11] - Speaker 4**

Does anyone else have a question about Page Park before we let Ms. Foster have a second shot? I think not. Okay.

**[00:36:20.02] - Speaker 1**

Since, Jim, you were on the phone, I'm glad you're here tonight because I brought this up about a month ago when there was a focused or more of a focused meeting, I guess, specific on Page Park. I spoke about this, and I'm really very concerned, and I would like you to figure out how we can make this work. You said in response to my point, and my point was that with dogs in Page Park going to go wild now that once it's opened, they will go into the rain gardens and proceed to destroy all the plant material. You can bet your BIPI I'll be on that. My concern is then you don't have functioning rain gardens, and rain gardens are designed from the biomasks and everything else to function. I requested some fencing that would look nice but still keep people away from going into those rain gardens. If you do, it's going to be very expensive to repair those over and over again, and they'll no longer function.

**[00:37:33.28] - Speaker 5**

I remember the conversation, and I think I understood the full question. Maybe the better is just to have the... Let's come up with a fence design that is going to keep as much as we can just keep people and dogs. When I say people, people from walking their dogs and taking their dogs in there to those areas and protect them from the pets destroying them. That's your concern? Did I get that right?

**[00:38:10.05] - Speaker 4**

That's right. I think so.

**[00:38:11.14] - Speaker 5**

Yeah. Julian, we'll look and have the engineers and landscape architects come up with something that looks appropriate and attractive and that we're not surrounding because I think we have three of them that are out there, the three or four little bioretention areas We did. It's just not a... It was five. Okay, I remember it was five. I couldn't remember it was three. We don't end up with just a park with more fences than we would like to have out there. We can talk about it. We'll talk to them and see if we can come back with an idea of how to do this.

**[00:38:50.04] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. Anything else for Jim from the council? I don't think so. Thank you so much. You've been so helpful and knowledgeable, and look forward to seeing you when you get back.

**[00:39:03.11] - Speaker 5**

Yeah, I'm so sorry, everybody. I do apologize for the set of world when family things happened right when this was supposed to start and I lost track. I really apologize, everybody.

**[00:39:14.25] - Speaker 4**

No, things happened. It's okay. We're just glad to hear your voice.

**[00:39:18.01] - Speaker 5**

All right. Thank you so much, everybody. All right.

**[00:39:20.07] - Speaker 3**

Thank you. We'll be in touch.

**[00:39:21.04] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. On our agenda, the next is Chair's announcement. I have Almost nothing. But the one thing does relate to pedestrian safety. You may have noticed, if you're a driver, there are more no turn right on red signs at lights in Bethesda, Friendship Heights on the Maryland side and Friendship Heights on the DC side, and cameras for enforcement. If you choose to go through one of those, you will get a ticket for Sometimes it takes 20 days for the ticket to get to your home. If you happen to have that habit, you could owe a lot of money. It's really good to follow the rules to avoid an unexpected expense.

**[00:40:17.22] - Speaker 7**

I think there is a map of red light cameras in the county.

**[00:40:22.22] - Speaker 4**

It's not just a red light camera. It's a no turn right on red date. New signs, new cameras. Okay. Next, we have comments from the public. First, I have Bob Harris from Geico. Thank you for coming.

**[00:40:45.04] - Speaker 2**

Good evening. Thank you for having me. For those who don't know me, I'm Bob Harris, an attorney with Lourdes early Brewer. I'm here tonight to speak with you on behalf of Geico, as some of you are already aware. I've been working with the Village of Prentia Pites land use matters for nearly 40 years now. Over those years, I've had the occasion to work with the village to create agreeable resolutions to issues ranging from Somerset Terrace Alignment to the Red House, which my client sold to you and many other things, but most significantly working with you on the Geico property and the redevelopment of it. I'm here tonight to speak with you directly about Geico's plans and to ensure that we have an open line of communication with you folks because each of us has an interest in the future here. By way of background, as most of you are aware, Montgomery County's land use and development approval process is built around a series of long-range master plans or sector plans that guide development for a growing county with evolving needs. When the French Pite sector plan was last updated, thank you, was last updated. Geiko and I worked closely with the village and other interested parties to determine where future growth in French Pites would occur and what the form would be.

**[00:42:13.20] - Speaker 2**

Working with the Planning Commission, we, the village, we at Geiko, studied all relevant issues ranging from traffic, environment, open space, to the most central of all, compatibility of new development with the existing development. As Dr. Mueller will recall, that resulted in something everyone referred to at the time as a consensus plan, an agreement between the parties as to what it would be. Property owners, including Geico, agreed with you, and with Geiko on the nature and form of the development on the Geico property. It also included Friendship Place, the Chevy Chase Land Companies, the collection project. All of those were part of the consensus plan. Consistent with that consensus plan and with the support of the village, the Geiko property then was rezone to accommodate the planned development, and Geiko obtained subdivision approval from the planning board for that development. While the other projects then proceeded, Friendship Place and the Collection, Geiko had to wait until the time was correct for it to implement its portion of the consensus plan. That time It has now arrived as

Geiko's business operations have changed, consistent with many other businesses. It has signed a lease to relocate its headquarters to downtown Bethesda next year.

**[00:43:40.21] - Speaker 2**

That frees up the Geiko property for the previously approved development, reflected in the consensus plan and in the sector plan. Geiko has filed an application with the Montgomery County Planning Board to retain the validity of that approval sufficient for a builder to be able to proceed. The one exception is that Geiko has determined that the portion of the property along Friendship Boulevard, where the approved plan allows for 810,000 square feet of office, can better serve community-Thank you.

**[00:44:08.17] - Speaker 4**

I'm sorry, we have to keep it at three. You do know we will be inviting you again.

**[00:44:13.09] - Speaker 2**

That is fine. Thank you. I ran over. I thought it was going to be... I understand. But thank you for listening, yes, and I will be around.

**[00:44:25.16] - Speaker 4**

Mr. Perry?

**[00:44:30.28] - Speaker 2**

I'm Arthur Perry. I'm a resident of 4615 North Park. I attended Harvard and MIT and earned a master's in city planning from Harvard. And I want to speak in favor of a wide sidewalk on the south side of Willard Avenue, basically from Friendship Boulevard down to the west end of the Geiko property across from Willard towers. I feel the benefits of such a sidewalk would include to preserve many of the existing trees and likely plant more, to concentrate the green space amenities along Willard Avenue between the existing existing condominiums and the new housing on the Geiko site to benefit both existing residents and new residents, to create pocket parks, possibly along the walk. And those could include an amphitheater near the Sunken Crown at Friendship and Willard. And possibly near the middle entry to the Geiko, a place where actually kids slid in the winter, but also a possible dog park. And then hopefully moving the Ballfield, which is up in that Western in friendship where there's no housing, perhaps down across from Willard Towers, where there's more housing and more available to Brookdale as well as the village, and possibly to build garden plots at the western extremis of the Dicot land.

**[00:46:45.13] - Speaker 2**

So all of these are to create an amenity that will improve the green space and recreation opportunities, enhance the property values of the existing residential buildings, and improve neighborhood livability.

**[00:46:59.21] - Speaker 4**

Thank Could I just ask two clarifying questions? What is a pocket park? I've not heard that term.

**[00:47:05.26] - Speaker 2**

Well, there are pocket parks in Manhattan. And so these are small, often One or two buildings have been taken down, and waterfalls or small places to have lunch are put into these urban areas. This is not that urban, of course, but that's the The point is that you have a specialized use in a very small area.

**[00:47:35.18] - Speaker 4**

The sidewalk you're talking about is on the Geico side of Willard. On the Geico side.

**[00:47:41.01] - Speaker 2**

It would obviously, Martha, have to be raised at the northern end because there's a big drop off and it'd be relatively flat on the same level, more or less, as Willard Avenue would get down towards Willard Tower.

**[00:47:53.16] - Speaker 4**

Okay, I understand now. Thank you.

**[00:47:55.01] - Speaker 8**

Madam Chair, in response to your question, in the There isn't a sector plan, actually, the part that Geiko has submitted, there is essentially a pocket park in front of the new high rise that's right near Whole Foods. On that side, the big area greenery across the street, across Friendship Boulevard, on the other side, across from the Willaby, is presently planned one of those small pocket-like It works. Thank you. In the present plan, but it hasn't been done yet.

**[00:48:34.26] - Speaker 4**

Thank you, Council member. Mr. Pestrunk?

**[00:48:43.21] - Speaker 2**

Thank you. First, I'd like to recognize Council member Klein for her persistence. It brought obviously and necessary, busy and useful off-duty Montgomery County police back to Village Street. Thank you very much. Next, a few questions which I hope will be answered during discussion of items on the agenda tonight. First, based on the Chair and Woman's statements of previous council meetings, does the council still plan to post on the Village website written material from residents submitted in advance of or following council meetings? Second, At its next meeting, will the Finance Committee acknowledge publicly and correct the cover-up and stonewalling about errors and forms signed by the current mayor in his last position as treasurer regarding certificates of deposit? Third, will the Finance Committee recommend steps to prevent a repeat of this error and require Mr. Cusky to correct those forms? If not, will the Finance Committee recommend another advisor? Fourth, is Mayor Schafer currently the only Council or staff member authorized to interact with Mr. Cusky? And if so, at least two officials should be required for any interaction to reduce the potential for malfeasance or misbehavior. Fifth, has the council followed the advice from the village attorney concerning correspondence to the investment advisor and bank regarding errors on the form signed by the current mayor?

**[00:50:23.23] - Speaker 2**

Sixth, did the mayor and chairwoman engage in nepotism and act without council approval regarding Recording the appointment of a chairman for the August meeting of the Development Committee. Seventh, will the mayor or chairwoman announced tonight in which buildings live new members recommended for appointments to the development committee? Will the mayor or chairwoman tell us the number of residents from each village residential building who will be serving on the development committee if all are appointed tonight, and also why it was thought necessary to add a third council member to the committee, and will the committee be choosing its own chairperson. Finally, a few suggestions. Can the order of the Council agenda for future meetings, future meetings, list the mayor and treasurer's report before general comments from the public so that if residents wish to reflect on those comments, they will have an opportunity to do so? And second, can the space now earmarked for the mayor's comments in the monthly newsletter, which simply repeats information found elsewhere, be devoted instead to alert village residents about activities produced by, for for example, the Friendship Heights Neighborhood Network or the Friendship Heights Alliance. This information would be more helpful to village residents.

**[00:51:38.13] - Speaker 2**

Thanks very much. I'll share these comments digitally with council members and staff.

**[00:51:44.09] - Speaker 4**

I could just comment quickly on a few of them. I know you have seven comments. I think you had seven comments. The posting, the written material, and the questions, that's on the list for our policies and procedures committee to figure out how to do that. That's, shall I say, on the list. The forms you're talking about have been changed, the signature forms. They have been changed, and I think they would probably to your satisfaction.

**[00:52:15.01] - Speaker 2**

Could I receive a copy of those? I'm sorry. Could I receive a copy of those?

**[00:52:18.19] - Speaker 4**

You can put in a request for them. It's, to my knowledge, public information.

**[00:52:26.20] - Speaker 7**

I didn't catch everything, so if you want to send it to me, that's fine. I could respond to some of those things. The interactions with Mr. Cusky, certainly anyone is allowed to contact him. The treasurer is, I know the chairman, I believe, has. I'm not aware of any restriction from any council member contacting him. So that answers that.

**[00:52:49.04] - Speaker 2**

That, of course, was very different from how you handled this in the previous term. So I'm glad to hear that anybody can- I was not the mayor in the previous term.

**[00:52:57.01] - Speaker 7**

That's not correct.

**[00:52:57.24] - Speaker 2**

I'm happy to hear that anybody can contact him.

**[00:53:00.00] - Speaker 7**

There were never any... And if you could show me where there were restrictions, I'd like to see it, but there were never any restrictions on calling Mr. Cusky.

**[00:53:07.15] - Speaker 2**

You are including members of the public who may contact Mr. Cusky?

**[00:53:12.01] - Speaker 4**

I think their confidentiality concerns.

**[00:53:14.25] - Speaker 7**

He's a fiduciary of the village, but I'm saying there was never in the prior term that I'm aware of, or this term, any restrictions on any council member calling Mr. Cusky. There was a question about- If I have that documentation, shall I share it with Please.

**[00:53:30.11] - Speaker 2**

Council members.

**[00:53:30.28] - Speaker 7**

I'm not regarding members of the public, regarding council members calling. Okay. There was a, why you third council member was added. We're going to talk about that in a few moments. There was Several comments directed as me as a signer. Let me be very clear. Every signer that has been authorized by the council in the prior term and the current term has signed those documents, except Mr. Pestr, not only me. We've I've covered this many times, but our attorney reviewed those forms on two separate occasions during the last council term at Mayor White's request in this term. We've discussed this so many times. I want to be clear, these comments are directed at every signer, including Mayor White, and including the current members of the Finance Committee. The FHN information, I think that's a fair point, and it's something to think about. Yeah, I agree with that. I will try to diversify those comments.

**[00:54:33.01] - Speaker 2**

Who are the council members that have been authorized by the council to sign those forms?

**[00:54:36.23] - Speaker 4**

Can we move on? We can follow up Sure. Outside this meeting. Be happy to. Thank you. Ms. Foster, You got your questions answered? Okay. Mr. Moody?

**[00:55:06.13] - Speaker 2**

Good evening. I prepared a little statement that I'm going to preface by saying that as a member of the Community Advisory Committee, we've discussed street lighting in the past. It's my hope that we're going to discuss it more vigorously upcoming. I just made a little... Could you speak into the microphone, please? I believe I am, but I made a little note on why street lighting is important and where I will be advocating for lighting that's directed downward and reflecting downward. It would be an improvement to the community as opposed to lighting that sounds outward and upward. Actually, as we look behind me, that's a good example of light that shines out and up as opposed to down. And so light that shines down produces less light pollution than light that goes upward. It spill into the sky like what's behind me, which washes out the stars and affects your ability to enjoy the night sky. It keeps the sky darker, which is light pollution in apartments Also, it's better for wildlife who's sensitive to light, and it reduces the strain that wildlife face during migration season, for example. It improves the esthetics. It makes it a in a pleasant environment when you're out.

**[00:56:32.01] - Speaker 2**

It doesn't scatter light around the neighborhood. What's most important to us, which would probably be a top of mind for people, again, is the light pollution that shines upward and outward and the safety aspect. When you have light that shines outward, you're lighting the sky as opposed to the sidewalks, which most people are worried about. I'm happy that we have this behind us so you can see a very good example of what happens when it shines out and Good examples of lights that shine down towards the street are at 5550 Friendship Boulevard and at the collection at Chevy Chase, where they have hooded lights that illuminate the sidewalk. Their lights or LEDs are actually much brighter than our lights that we use in our streets, but they avoid the light pollution that people are afraid of when you speak brighter light, because most commonly you see this outward-shining light as opposed to down light. So please take this in as you leave tonight with the sky getting darker earlier, it'll be easier. You don't have to be out late. But contrast that you see at the collection at a 55 Friendship Boulevards, because those are much better lighting solutions.

**[00:57:40.06] - Speaker 2**

I think it would be great for us to explore that as a village because I hear a comment on All the time, both directed to me and when I'm walking down the street, eavesdropping about how bad our lighting is. It would be a great way for us to improve the community. Thank you.

**[00:57:59.25] - Speaker 4**

All I almost forgot you, Mr. Cucchetti. You were up a few lines here. You're next.

**[00:58:10.02] - Speaker 6**

Thanks, Roger Cucchetti, 5,500 Fringive Boulevard. I have three brief points I wanted to bring up regarding developments that are taking place around here. First, the DC planning has now announced plans to install bicycle lanes on Western Avenue from Jennifer to Westmoreland Circle. I am an enthusiastic bicyclist, have been for 60 years, and currently am, but I think this is a terrible idea. It will cause auto-congestion on Western Avenue, particularly during peak travel times. It will benefit an infinitesimally small segment of the population, about one quarter of 1% of the population bikes to work. The bike lanes will never be used from November through April, and will never be used on a rainy day. So it benefits a tiny, tiny fraction of the consultation to the detriment of people who will be sitting there stuck in traffic. Secondly, Montgomery Planning has announced its plans for September 30th consultation, followed October final input moving on towards their recommendations for Friendship Heights. I think this is a terrible mistake. The Council should strongly encourage Montgomery Planning to take more time on the Friendship Heights planning exercise and indicates how far away from the people of Friendship Heights the Montgomery Planning Department is.

**[00:59:56.13] - Speaker 6**

Finally, three recent developments have suggested the possibility of a tectonic shift in the housing environment in which we live and in which Montgomery County planning makes virtually all of its plans. This has nothing to do with the short term shortage of affordable housing. But if you think in terms of 10, 20 years, all five of the principal drivers that have created permanent growth in residential housing in the Washington DC area appear to be shifting. And one of the consequences of that is that at least three residential developments planned for our area have been put on hold or postponed, and housing starts across the country are slowing down. But The five drivers that are shifting is growth of the government and government employees and work from office as opposed to working from home. Second, birth rates, which have flattened and are declining. Third, lifespans, which have flattened and in some cases are declining. Fourth, domestic immigration, which is directly related to government employment. And lastly, international immigration, which as everybody knows, is under great

pressure. So all of the factors that have made permanent population growth in our area may be reaching a turning point, and investors will be the first to know that and slow their investments in housing.

**[01:01:32.17] - Speaker 6**

That will affect Montgomery County planning eventually. Again, this has nothing to do with the 2-3 year shortage in affordable housing. It has everything to do with the 5-15 year trends in regional housing. Those are my comments. Thanks.

**[01:01:52.20] - Speaker 4**

Thank you.

**[01:01:54.17] - Speaker 1**

Can I ask a question, please? Sure. Yes. Can you repeat where you you said the bike lanes are going to be running from?

**[01:02:03.26] - Speaker 6**

The bike lanes would run from Jennifer Street to West Morland Circle. They're trying to develop the specific details of that. But if there are anything like removing a car lane on each side and replacing it with a bike lane, which is what they appear to be suggesting, that would reduce Western Avenue to a two-lane road. One other comment I'd make is that the vast majority of bicyclists are recreational bicyclists, not me, not the one quarter of 1% who are commuting. But anybody who bicycles on these main roads knows that every intersection It's a potential death trap. It's not a safe way for bikes to be... Because every driveway and every entrance, cars are coming in and out, bikes are zipping along. That's where you have accidents. I'm a big fan of bike trails and a skeptic of bike lanes. Thank you very much.

**[01:03:02.14] - Speaker 4**

I think we move on to mayor's announcement now, please.

**[01:03:13.09] - Speaker 7**

Thank you. There's something I was asked to read. This Saturday, September 13th, we will once again host the Goodwill Donation Drive. Goodwill will have a truck parked on Friendship Boulevard by the entrance to the Village Center from 10: 00 AM to 2: 00 PM to accept your

donations of household, electronics, clothing, housewares, and other items. Residents are invited to join us for our annual fall festival celebration in Humphrey Park. Outside the Village Center on Saturday, October fourth, from 1: 00 PM to 2: 30 PM. And check the newsletter posted on the website for more details. Okay, so what I wanted to say is, well, first I want to thank everyone for joining us tonight, whether you're here, which we prefer online or watching a recording. We do appreciate your time and your participation. It's been a long time since we met in person, but Everyone involved in contributing to maintaining our services and activities has been busy. That includes staff, the council, members of citizens committees, and volunteers. You've already heard about some of those efforts you're going to continue to hear about them through the rest of the evening. I've been asked about individuals in our community who have been circulating a petition to request certain amenities at the Geico site.

**[01:04:43.12] - Speaker 7**

I just want to be clear that neither the village council nor any council committee has approved or sanctioned or requested any petition. So the individual's requesting signatures are not acting on behalf of the council or any council committee. And lastly, I'm proud to announce that all seven council members have office hours by appointment. I believe this is the first council that's done that. We want to meet with you at a time that's good for you and also good for us. But we want to discuss any ideas or suggestions that you may have, so please take advantage of that. Thank you.

**[01:05:30.22] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. The Treasurer's report, please.

**[01:05:35.10] - Speaker 2**

Okay, thanks, Martha. Briefly, on the operating side for the two-month period through August, our revenues are down 13,000 from the comparable period last year. The main reason for that is a decline in interest rates. The good news, however, is that property and income taxes are pretty much in line with last year, so we are not yet yet seeing any significant decline due to a slowing economy. But it's something that we got to keep a close eye on. On the expenditure side, spending came in \$22,000 lower than the comparable period last year. That's good news. Overall, the expenditures seem to be pretty much under control. The one issue is, I think police patrol expenditures have not fully kicked in yet, so we'll keep a close eye on that. I think all told, our operating budget is coming pretty much in line with expectations. On the capital side, expenditures totaled 46,000 for the two-month period, with the bulk of the funds going to renovations at the Red House, and additional funds went to engineering and related services at

Page Park. In terms Our use of fund balances, our cash reserves to continue to be very strong, totaling \$4.

**[01:07:05.06] - Speaker 2**

6 million at the end of July, in line with our 2025 ending balance. As to accounting procedures, in August, we added a listing of investments showing where our funds are invested, maturity dates, and that information. The listing will be included in subsequent monthly accounting statements and is intended to provide more transparency into how our funds are invested and provide notice to the council and residents on when funds are coming up for reinvestment. That's my report.

**[01:07:51.07] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. Now onto the-Mana, Chair. I just want to-I'm sorry.

**[01:07:55.12] - Speaker 8**

Yes, I just want to thank the Treasurer. There is more information available. Not a lot of people are seeking it, but for those, it is there. It's open, it's transparent, so I thank you.

**[01:08:09.01] - Speaker 4**

Thank you for speaking up when I don't see you at the end of the table here. Next, our committee reports. First, the Advisory Committee on Development. There'll be some appointments, and then an update on meetings.

**[01:08:27.11] - Speaker 7**

Okay. Okay. We appointed at the last meeting a chair of the Advisory Committee on Development, and that individual resigned on very short notice. There was some difficulty in finding someone who wanted to take up the role. We have spent a few weeks without a council appointed chair. Going forward, and this is the reason we're adding a third council member, that was a question that was asked, Council member Klein has agreed to on the role as chair. As President of the Elizabeth, she is familiar with the issues at the Geico site that affect the village. That's important because the timetable for the village to issue our comments is on an accelerated timetable at this point. We're going to talk more about that later. In addition, and I'm not, by the way, going to give the buildings where they live. I'm not sure if that's information we're allowed to disclose, so I'm going to hold off on that for now. But in addition to Council member Klein, I am appointing four additional members to join the committee. Dan Dozier, who

is a practicing attorney and President of the Carleton, Mike Steiner, and Sandy Silverman, who are retired architects, so they bring a great deal of expertise, and George Roman, who is a longtime village resident and has a master's degree in public administration.

**[01:09:56.23] - Speaker 7**

So all five of these individuals I really expect to make significant contributions to the committee.

**[01:10:05.12] - Speaker 4**

Mayor, I had previously asked you to divide the vote on that one individual who I need to abstain.

**[01:10:11.29] - Speaker 7**

Tell me if I don't word this correctly. Make I'm going to make a motion to add four individuals: Mike Steiner, Sandy Silverman, George Roman, and Council member Francine Klein, with Council member Klein designated as a chair.

**[01:10:30.00] - Speaker 4**

Do people understand the vote on this? Oh, sorry. Discussion, of course. Thank you. Thank you for saying that. Is there a second? We don't need it on a mayor's appointment on a committee. We don't need a second. We don't need a second? Well, I don't.

**[01:10:51.04] - Speaker 8**

Is the parliamentariat aware of that? We don't need a second on this?

**[01:10:54.17] - Speaker 4**

We haven't been doing it. I'm not seconding. I'm commenting. What am I called? You asked to discuss.

**[01:11:07.01] - Speaker 8**

I'm surprised anyone asked, frankly, about the number of people. I don't think it's confidential. The people on any committee, initially, I thought were to provide some balance. This is basically an unusual committee. It's neither a Citizens Committee nor a council committee. I can't speak for tradition, but it's been, I think, a common goal to have as much diversity as possible on these committees as far as which buildings, so there is at least some semblance of spread. Every one

of these individuals is qualified. But I think the three of the four or five new people are all from one building. They're all from 4620, and 4620 does have a lot of talented people, but so does the Elizabeth, so does the Carlton, so does every building here. We only have 12 or 13 people on the committee, and to have a total of four or five from one building, I don't think is the best use of appointments. Again, each one of the people is perfectly well qualified. I don't quarrel with that. But we don't have every building represented, I think, as well as some of the previous committees have tried to be.

**[01:12:45.06] - Speaker 8**

I would, with all due respect, Mayor Schafer, think we can't keep... How to say this? It's awkward. We can't keep adding people because the committees don't have a way of coalesce, especially an important committee like the Development Committee. Even if one or two people have left, one for medical reasons, adding new people is inevitably going to slow it down because when a new person comes in, they rightfully have questions to catch up. That has happened now for a few weeks, even though the committee has been meeting every week, which is very unusual and very commendable. I think the acting chair, Mr. Dosey, has done an excellent job in having us try to move forward, and meeting every week is something that I think should be continued. But I think when people leave, we don't have to immediately bring new ones because we have 12, 13 people to begin with, so some people will inevitably not be able to be in a meeting. Thank you, Madam Chair.

**[01:13:57.15] - Speaker 4**

Thank you, Council member Are there any other comments? Can we proceed with this vote?

**[01:14:04.03] - Speaker 7**

I'd just like to respond to some of that. The committee, again, without saying where any individual person lives, there is a fair representation among all the buildings, certainly all the condos. They're a residence of Willard Towers, 4620, Willaby, the Elizabeth, the Carleton. Sometimes it's hard to get people from the rental units. I believe that everybody who asked to be on the committee, maybe with one exception, was put on. It's not a question that people were randomly excluded. It's basically this is who asked to be put on the committee. That's where we are. I don't expect to be adding people going forward.

**[01:14:46.11] - Speaker 4**

Any more comments, discussion? Okay, so the motion is to appoint Francine Klein, George Roman, Sandy Silverman, and Michael Stein with Francine Klein. As chairman of the Advisory

Committee on Development. All in favor, if you could raise your hand. Six. Are you abstaining? I get. Okay. 6, 4, 1 abstain.

**[01:15:26.05] - Speaker 7**

Okay, so I nominate Dan Dozier to also join the development committee. Discussion?

**[01:15:36.08] - Speaker 4**

We'll proceed with the vote. All in favor, raise your hand. I am abstaining because of my relationship, but Others, please feel free to vote. Raise your hand if you... Three. Okay, that's another six to one abstain. Thank you. We We move on to the Policies and Procedures Committee, and Council member Baisal is the chairman.

**[01:16:11.29] - Speaker 2**

Thank you, Madam Chair. The When we met on August 25th and considered policies that are required by the state of Maryland, we completed a review of two of those policies, the debt policy and the Public Information Act policy, both of which can be found in the briefing books here. And we voted to recommend the passage by the Council of those two policies. The debt policy, fortunately, there is no current debt, and there's no plan to incur any debt. So that's good news. Importantly, except when there's a cash flow problem or an emergency, borrowing is limited to capital improvement projects. The Public Information Act, this policy sets out the procedures for filing and processing request for inspection and copying of village public records. Accordingly, I wanted to offer two motions, moving that the council adopt the debt policy.

**[01:17:20.16] - Speaker 4**

I second that. Discussion? Call the question. I call the question. The question is whether to adopt the new debt policy. All those in favor raise their hands. It looks unanimous. That motion passes. Thank you.

**[01:17:49.28] - Speaker 2**

The second motion is for the council to approve and adopt the Public Information Act policy. I second.

**[01:18:03.10] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. It's moved and seconded. Is there discussion? I always have discussion. Discussion on this?

**[01:18:14.18] - Speaker 7**

Yeah, I just want to make one point. For those people who might be interested in making a request, and this is addressed in paragraph 8, only the village manager is allowed to receive or respond to request for information Commission. I'm mentioning that because in the past, some people who may not be aware of the rules have submitted request directly to council members. We are directed by the village attorney not to respond to those. If you do want to make a request, Only to the village manager. Thank you. Or it's his designee. Is that what I looked at?

**[01:18:55.08] - Speaker 4**

Mr. Mansfield?

**[01:18:56.20] - Speaker 2**

Just to clarify, this is a revision to the existing policy, and the only change is that we're required to list immediately available public records on the website, and that's listed in that section.

**[01:19:09.02] - Speaker 3**

It's 05. It's just a list of immediately available public records. That's the reason for needing to revise the information.

**[01:19:16.13] - Speaker 4**

Right. And percentage-wise, it's a very small change compared to the length of the policy. So any more debate or questions? Okay. All in favor of adopting the Revised Public Information Act Policy. Raise your hand. That looks like the motion passes, seven to zero. We move on to new business. Did I skip something? I'm sorry. Council member Conlo, you were going to give a report on the development committee, and I'm sorry, I skipped I'll get you over that. I'm looking at my watch, and I'm unfortunately skipping things. So back to you. Thank you.

**[01:20:09.21] - Speaker 2**

Thank you, Martha. I'll make this very brief. The development committee has been meeting for the past five weeks on a weekly basis. The land planning issues related to the Geico site, the Friendship Heights Sector Plan, and other development issues are extremely complex, and it

can be difficult to navigate these types of issues and reach consensus. I think the good news is that we're coming together as a village to have discussions, work cooperatively, and ultimately speak with one voice. That's our goal. Broadly speaking, our vision and goals is to protect and preserve the high quality of life and friendship village. It's critical to do this that the village have a voice in future development plans that impact the village. This is essentially the goal of our committee. I think that we have a lot of good people working together and we're moving in the right direction. That's my update.

**[01:21:10.06] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. Comments, questions?

**[01:21:14.04] - Speaker 1**

Yes. I wonder if you would take a look at the plans to have bicycles along Western Avenue, because that strikes me as something that we might want to get an opinion out on as the village, because part of that is running through our space or on the boundary of it and really affects, I think, a lot of people who travel over to a river or Massachusetts Avenue. Excellent suggestion. I think we should do that. Yes. I got the impression that time was it's of the essence with regard to that. I was surprised to hear about that. As someone who uses Western a lot, I would be very disappointed to see its throughput for vehiculate traffic shrunk further. So thank you.

**[01:22:24.19] - Speaker 4**

Any other comments from Council members? Okay, we will Move on. That would be the Parks and Grounds Committee meeting. Is that what everybody else has here? Okay. So we had a meeting last Thursday with our project manager, the same individual, Jim Wilson, who was on the phone. He gave us probably a more detailed update on Page Park and saying many of the things that he said here tonight. Jim did warn us, as As he did very briefly, here that we should expect some change orders on the Red House, that the bid of the contractor may not be the total expenditure for us. That was our meeting on Parks and grounds. Now we go to a new business discussion vote on appointing Bill Cory to the Community Advisory Committee. This is another mayor's appointment.

**[01:23:34.07] - Speaker 7**

Yeah.

**[01:23:34.29] - Speaker 4**

Mayor Schafer.

**[01:23:36.01] - Speaker 7**

Thank you. Mr. Cory is a long-term resident of the village. He's a long-term member of the CAC, and I'm happy that he's willing to step up and be part of the committee. I think he's actually participated in the last couple of meetings anyway. Do I make a motion? Do you want it as a motion?

**[01:23:56.05] - Speaker 4**

Or to a point- A motion, and then we discuss.

**[01:23:58.08] - Speaker 7**

A motion to appoint Bill Curry to the Community Advisory Committee.

**[01:24:02.20] - Speaker 4**

Is there a... Mr. Cohn. We're discussing. Sorry. Okay. Any comments? Okay. All those in favor raise their hand. It is 7 to 0. The motion passes. The next item on the agenda relates to the same proposal that Jim Wilson mentioned when he was calling in, which is for Structural Engineering Services related to Page Park. This contract is not required to be voted on by the council, but for full disclosure, we included it in the packet. I'm asking the council if they feel... Is it the sense of the council that they would approve this and we don't have to go through a formal vote? If you could just speak up if you disagree. Our sense of the council is that we will move forward on that. I think time is of the essence also, Mr. Mansfield, so maybe you could get that out tomorrow. As I mentioned, the next item is a change, and this item is discussion vote concerning the Geiko site plan. Mayor, are you taking this?

**[01:25:47.11] - Speaker 7**

I didn't know that, but I think where we are is I think most of us or all of us have some, I don't know if objections are right, but concern, reservations, things we might need clarified. So I just wanted to... I'm not sure if I have the motion. You make a motion. No, do you have it? I don't. I sent. Thank you. So I'm going to make a motion to... Should I pull it? I don't see. Oh, okay. I'm sorry. So the motion, The motion is that it is the position of the Council of the Village of Friendship Heights to oppose the Geiko site plan as currently drafted.

**[01:26:41.21] - Speaker 4**

I will second that. And there's a discussion that we have now, and the mover, which is the mayor, has the first opportunity.

**[01:26:52.00] - Speaker 7**

Yeah, and I want to be clear. We're not here tonight to come up with what our concerns or objections may be. It's just to memorialize that we do have issues with it. Some people want certain site amenities that may or may not come about, but they're not specifically on the plan. Some of us have concerns about traffic. Some of us have concerns about where the location of some of the buildings, roads that are going through the site, and things that we're not comfortable with in its current form, and we want to just make it clear that we're not, at this point, fully on board with what's been proposed.

**[01:27:38.16] - Speaker 4**

Council member Muller.

**[01:27:40.07] - Speaker 8**

Well, I'm certainly not clear on what this motion what it's supposed to mean. First of all, it wasn't on the first or the second draft of the agenda. It's still not on the agenda that people get when they come in. It's certainly not on the website. There's no way that people can listen and understand where this is coming from. The council did not discuss any of its concerns. I know, yes, there are some questions, but the council has not heard as a counsel from Mr. Harris, who's here tonight. Mr. Harris, I know from the development committee, asked every week if he could be there. One time he had come, since it's a public meeting, and was essentially it was suggested that he leave because we were interviewing an attorney, which was not on the agenda either. This has really been a very confused situation. It's not been intentional, but it's been confusing. And if it's confusing to me as someone who's come to every meeting and who's been involved with the sector plans for the last 50 years, I can only imagine that people watching this or here tonight It must be a little confused.

**[01:29:01.08] - Speaker 8**

Where did this come from? Where did this come from that there's something opposed? We haven't discussed it. We haven't discussed it as a council. So if there's a question as a council, we can interchange ideas and maybe change opinions one way or the other. I don't think it's appropriate to have a motion that states opposition when there hasn't been any reason to feel there's opposition. I haven't heard as a council something. I've heard questions, and I haven't been able to hear Mr. Harris representing Geigow respond because he's offered to come to the

committee, he's offered to come here, and he's been denied that. I don't think that's right. I've known Mr. Harris for three sectors' worth. We've often been on opposite sides, but he's an honorable, experienced attorney that deserves the respect when he asked to speak to us as a council, be given that right. Mr. Harris, I know, has spoken to leaders of 4620, of the Willeby, of the Willard Towers, of the Elizabeth. I don't understand why the people, and not just the few leaders, let alone the full council, can hear them in one meeting. So I oppose anything that seems to have jumped to the conclusion based on private conversations.

**[01:30:41.06] - Speaker 8**

We're not supposed to do that, Mr. Mayor. We're not supposed to do that. The public is supposed to be able to hear us as we come up with something, not these vague ideas that have floated around that maybe individual council members have expressed. I'm sorry. I really am sorry because I do think I agree with the mayor that we have to try to find ways to come up with a consensus, which is what Mr. Harris asked us to do, by the way.

**[01:31:10.27] - Speaker 4**

Thank you, Council member Mueller. Council member Klein?

**[01:31:14.08] - Speaker 1**

Yes, thank you. Well, we do know certain things. We know what the 1998 plan says, and I welcome Mr. Harris's attendance at this meeting. I have had an opportunity to speak with him at his request. I have reviewed a copy of the plan that was given to me, not the formal larger plan, which if we hire a lawyer, the lawyer would do on our behalf. I see certain problems with the plan as it was drafted in 1998. That's 27 years ago. We've heard people say today that things have changed. Now, when we say we're When it comes to the plan, what that means as a practical matter is that we anticipate coming up with suggestions to change it, and I certainly have some. In order for us to do that effectively, You have to say, We need to negotiate something different. The way you do that is to say that the plan, as it exists now, does not meet the needs of the village of Friendship Heights because of traffic issues, because of the location of buildings on the site, because of the issues with green space, and the identification of amenities. And Geiko itself, and Mr. Harris is their representative, understand that they're not going to be able to use the parking lots the way they thought.

**[01:32:56.19] - Speaker 1**

And so they are asking for a change to the plan because things have changed. It's perfectly reasonable for us to begin a negotiation, as they've said, that they're willing to talk with us along

the same lines using the committee that we have, which we'll be meeting again this Thursday. I've told Mr. Harris that he'll be invited to a meeting to discuss these issues. But this is the way you begin the process of negotiating what is a plan that a What number of people have concerns about.

**[01:33:34.03] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. Any other discussion?

**[01:33:37.14] - Speaker 8**

Madam Chair, I would like to respectfully respond to that. I think the way you start negotiations is not to begin by saying you oppose. It's to say, sit down and discuss. Councilwoman Klein has said the plan as it exists has some problems. What specifically are they and how can we address those? Mr. Harris is here, and he can give us his comments. Maybe they won't be a problem. Maybe it will, but maybe it won't be. How can we oppose something that we haven't discussed?

**[01:34:13.28] - Speaker 4**

Thank you. Any more discussion?

**[01:34:17.04] - Speaker 1**

I've discussed some of my concerns with Mr. Harris, and they need to be further discussed. The best way to do that, then I know, is to say that at the present, we are not in a position to approve the plan, and that is something I support.

**[01:34:37.07] - Speaker 8**

To oppose the plan at this point doesn't mean we won't get to agreement, but it does It means that we have some work to do. But we're not aware of what your problems are that can be addressed.

**[01:34:52.02] - Speaker 4**

I think the chair needs to call on the person making comments. I don't think we do grass talk here. Would you like to have the final comment here before we move for a vote?

**[01:35:04.23] - Speaker 8**

If there are problems, we should discuss them in public. We are all here. Mr. Harris should have the opportunity and the privilege to be able to address those problems. Why do we have to announce that we're opposed to something when we haven't had a chance to see if we are opposed? I I don't doubt the sincerity of the vice chair, but what about others who've not personally spoken with Mr. Harris?

**[01:35:40.13] - Speaker 4**

We will have opportunities to do the things you're mentioning, and to lay all of this out and to negotiate, but we have a motion and a second. The motion is that's the position of the Council, the Village of Friendship Heights, to oppose the Geico site plan as currently drafted. I'm calling for the vote now. So all those in favor raise their hand. That is 6 to 1, and the motion passes. It's Mr. Mueller's opposed, 6 to... Oh, I'm sorry, opposed. I was looking at hands raised, and your hand wasn't raised. Do Do you want to do a voice vote or is that clear?

**[01:36:32.03] - Speaker 8**

No, I'm clearly opposed.

**[01:36:35.19] - Speaker 4**

Then we have recorded that.

**[01:36:37.13] - Speaker 8**

I don't know if this discussion means that Mr. Harris is invited to come to the next development committee. I have no idea since there's been no discussion, none.

**[01:36:49.14] - Speaker 1**

I'm going to hold a meeting on Thursday at the regular time, and I understand that Mr. Harris has come to other meetings. I won't be We're prepared on that day to have a fulsome exchange with him, but certainly the next week, we can have him talk at length. But we need to get the committee meeting at least once before we have Mr. Harris come back.

**[01:37:17.27] - Speaker 4**

He will be invited to the next council meeting.

**[01:37:22.21] - Speaker 8**

He will be invited to give another three-minute, truncated presentation?

**[01:37:26.23] - Speaker 4**

No, not three minutes. Not limited to three minutes. All right. Okay. The next topic is the RFP for the Pedestrian Safety Study. Mr. Conwell.

**[01:37:39.08] - Speaker 2**

Thanks, Martha. We're proposing a pedestrian safety study of all the intersections, both within the village and on boundary intersections along Wisconsin and Willard, for example. I think one of the issues is we have pedestrian safety issues today. They're only likely to get worse in the future as new development occurs. Over the past decade or so, there's been a lot of advances in technology, camera enforcement, flashing speed signs and the like. So one of the rationales for the proposed study is to evaluate how we might improve pedestrian safety by deploying new technology along with more traditional methods. The proposed RFP is to conduct a study of intersections in two phases. The first phase focuses on what are considered the three most problematic intersections within the village, including North Park and Friendship, South Park and Friendship, and South Park and Hills Plaza. This phase approach gives us more flexibility to better manage the project, including firm selection, timing, and costs. Just to be clear, there's no cost associated with issuing the RFP. After the village manager with the support of volunteer council members reviews and recommends a proposal. That proposal, including the costs of the phase one study, will be submitted for review and approval by the Finance Committee and Council.

**[01:39:18.28] - Speaker 2**

Three firms have been recommended for contacting to submit proposals, and additional firms may be contacted as well. So I think that's where we stand. I would ask the committee to support the request that we issue a request for a proposal.

**[01:39:40.07] - Speaker 8**

That's a motion.

**[01:39:41.22] - Speaker 4**

I interpret that as a motion, correct, to approve the issuance of a request for proposals for the pedestrian safety study? Yes.

**[01:39:50.15] - Speaker 8**

I'll second. I'll defer.

**[01:39:54.28] - Speaker 4**

We have a second discussion. Yes. Mayor Schafer.

**[01:40:02.17] - Speaker 7**

I know you said, I just want to make sure I'm clear on it. So this RFP gives us ultimately the right to study every intersection. We won't have to go back. Okay. And you also said other firms may be contacted. I assume in addition to the three firms, we're still going through the normal RFP process. Yes. So it's not maybe contact. We will go through and solicit from these other three identified. Yes. Okay. All right. Thank you.

**[01:40:32.10] - Speaker 4**

Other comments, questions? I'd like to say, speaking as someone who's had so many near misses and been almost run over, I feel lucky to be alive here to be able to strongly advocate and support this effort you're making, and I appreciate what you're doing. Thanks. Thank you.

**[01:40:51.26] - Speaker 2**

I have a comment, too.

**[01:40:53.02] - Speaker 1**

I really think it was instructive to hear from Lieutenant Orkin today. As we When we go forward with the contracting process, which is needed, I really hope he gets involved with the perspective, because to learn that so much of it, so many of the near misses are coming as a result of folks who are visiting here on business of one sort or another, really does put a different perspective on it and may call for certain additional measures at some of the intersections, especially where the medical building, the intersection right out here at Friendship Boulevard and North Park. So thank you.

**[01:41:45.13] - Speaker 2**

Thanks. I completely agree. And so thanks. I appreciate it.

**[01:41:51.29] - Speaker 4**

I think we're ready to call for the vote. There was a motion and a second to approve the issuance of a request for proposals for a pedestrian safety study. All in favor, could you raise your hand, please? And that looks like seven, zero. The motion passes. Now, we will be entering a closed meeting, and I have to read something aloud. I move to close the public meeting and enter into close session under General Provisions, Article 3-305(b)(1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an employee, appointee, or official over whom it has jurisdiction or any other personnel matter that affects Are there more or more specific individuals. Is there a second for this? Okay, second. I guess we all are voting to go into close session. Thank you very much for everyone who came. Your participation makes a big difference, and we like to hear from you. So thank you very much. I think we'll...