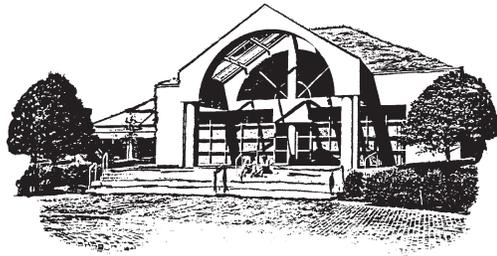


The Council Report

JULY 2001

News from the Friendship Heights Village Council—
the elected governing body of the Special Tax District
of the Village of Friendship Heights



Council Pursues Undergrounding Utility Lines

At this month's Council meeting, we heard a presentation from Steve Richter, a utility consultant for the Chase Tower developer, with his proposal to develop plans for removing and relocating overhead utility lines in the Village.

The Council and staff have been working for some time on this complicated Capital Improvements project, which involves coordination with the utility companies and the Chase Tower development.

Our ultimate goal is to remove four utility poles in the Village—three on South Park Avenue by Highland House and Highland House West, one on The Hills Plaza near the pay phone. The pole at the corner of South Park and Wisconsin will have to remain, since it carries power to other areas outside our jurisdiction. (The only other pole in the Village—on The Hills Plaza next to the Highland House West driveway—provides temporary power to the Chase Tower construction site and will be removed by the developer when Chase Tower is completed.)

The poles now carry lines for Pepco, Verizon (telephone), and Comcast (cable TV). Plans need to be developed to place each of these lines underground. Normally, Pepco officials develop the drawings themselves, but Pepco has indicated they will not be able to do that for some time due to a

heavy backlog of current work.

Consequently, we connected with Mr. Richter for a proposal to develop the drawings and submit them to Pepco on our behalf. The Council directed the Village Manager to attempt to secure competing bids in time for a follow-up discussion and vote at the August 13 Council meeting.

Legal Challenges Still Pending on Chevy Chase Center Development

Last month's Council Report detailed the Planning Board approval of the Chevy Chase Center site plan with a larger grocery store, which was certainly good news.

Several legal challenges to the development, however, still remain active. The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights and Chevy Chase Village have filed various appeals throughout the process. Currently, the suit seeking to overturn the Planning Board's approval of the preliminary plan has been appealed to the Court of Special Appeals, from whom we are still waiting for a verdict (the Circuit Court had upheld the plan approval).

A second legal challenge, against the approval to rezone a portion of the site, is scheduled for oral argument at the Circuit Court on September 20.

Throughout the various legal actions, our Council has consistently supported the Chevy Chase Center development plans as approved by the Planning Board, including the site plan that was approved in late May.

We remain concerned about any potential threat to substantially change or reverse the Planning Board approvals, particularly with regard to the grocery store (which will be expanded as a result of the site plan approval).

We are therefore continuing our participation in the legal proceedings by filing a response to the latest petition for judicial review on behalf of the Land Company.

Shuttle Bus Expected to Arrive Soon

As this issue of the Council Report goes to press, our bus contractor representative, Dan Hibbert of First Transit, is at the factory in South Bend, IN, to check on the status of our bus and the larger order he has placed on behalf of the County. The latest information from Mr. Hibbert is that the bus is still expected to arrive in late July or early August.

While we are all frustrated by the delay, we do appreciate your continued patience and look forward to having our new bus in operation as soon as possible.

(continued on back)

MVA Mobile Office—Monday, August 27, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The Council took the following actions at the July 9, 2001, meeting:

- Renewed membership in the Maryland Municipal League for 2001-2002;
- Confirmed third year of proposal from Bond Beebe, Village auditor, for FY 2001 audit services;
- Heard presentation from Steve Richter, utility consultant, on proposal to develop drawings for placing overhead utility lines underground (see lead story); directed Village Manager to attempt to secure competing bids;
- Approved request from 4615 North Park to allow them to install pavers within the public right-of-way from the front of the building entrance to the curb; directed staff to follow up with 4615 management on their selection of specific paver type and design.

Willoughby Park Nears Completion

We are also eagerly anticipating the completion of Willoughby Park. Our latest information from Clark Construction is that construction of the park should be completed by the end of July or early August.

However, various inspections and approvals from Pepco, the County, and the Park & Planning Commission need to be granted prior to removing the fence and opening the park for public use. It is unclear at this point how long this process may take, but Clark is working to coordinate the various steps involved. This means our dedication ceremony will probably be planned for September.

Willard Avenue Streetlights

As part of the Chase Tower development plan, the developer (the JBG Companies) will be installing streetlights on the north side of Willard Avenue from Wisconsin Avenue to the Willoughby. These lights will be the "Washington Globe" style currently in place on Wisconsin Avenue, which is different from the custom lightpoles we have in the streets maintained by the Village.

Several residents have inquired about the possibility of installing additional lighting on the north side of Willard Avenue from the Willoughby down to the Irene. Since Montgomery County maintains the road, sidewalk, and

lights on both sides of Willard (it is a County road), we have sent a letter to the County raising this issue and asking them to consider installing streetlights down Willard Avenue.

July 4 Celebration

Once again our July 4 festivities were a big success, and we were fortunate that the rain held off until the very end of the celebration. Special thanks to all the volunteers and staff who worked the event, and to our neighbor, Marriott Brighton Gardens, for cooking all those hot dogs. We served all 900!

—**Melanie Rose White**
Mayor

The Friendship Heights Village Council
4433 S. Park Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-656-2797
E-mail: friendshiphtsvillage@erols.com
Website: www.erols.com/friendshiphtsvillage