

## VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

### VILLAGE COUNCIL

MELANIE ROSE WHITE, *Mayor*  
ROBERT M. SCHWARZBART, *Chairman*  
LEONARD J. GRANT, *Vice Chairman*  
ELIZABETH DEMETRA HARRIS, *Secretary*  
ALVAN M. MORRIS, D.D.S., *Treasurer*  
JOHN MERTENS, *Parliamentarian*  
CLARA M. LOVETT, *Historian*  
JULIAN P. MANSFIELD, *Village Manager*  
LESLIE STRATHMANN, *Village Manager 1987-1996*

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### APPROVED MINUTES

### PUBLIC SESSION FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING July 14, 2014

#### **ATTENDEES:**

Melanie Rose White, Mayor; Robert Schwarzbart, Chairman; Leonard J. Grant, Vice Chairman; Elizabeth Demetra Harris, Secretary; Alvan M. Morris, Treasurer; John Mertens, Parliamentarian; Clara Lovett, Council Member; Julian Mansfield, Village Manager; Robert Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager; and 10 residents.

#### **ABSENT :**

None.

#### **CALL TO ORDER:**

At 7:30 p.m. Judge Schwarzbart called the Village Council Meeting to order.

Judge Schwarzbart stated that the playground is not on the agenda for this evening's meeting. The concept is still under study and will be discussed at a later date.

#### **COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM COUNCIL:**

Ms. Paula Durbin (4620 North Park) stated that she is still trying to understand the compromise to convert Page Park to a playground and leave Willoughby Park untouched. She reiterated several comments regarding the playgrounds that were discussed at previous meetings and deemed some of the comments contradictory. Ms. Durbin also stated that there are still perceptions of bias "swirling around" concerning the Page Park compromise. Ms. Durbin said that her unit overlooks Page Park and she, like other residents of 4620 North Park, enjoys the view, especially this time of year. She noted that they also agree that Page Park could certainly use some refurbishing but should be kept substantially as open space.

Ms. Joan Elliston (4620 North Park) stated that the parks are places of beauty to be enjoyed, and Page Park should remain as such, a green place to be enjoyed. She stated that there are already several nice playgrounds in the Friendship Heights area.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Ms. White made the following announcements:

Please welcome Clara Lovett, our newest Village Council member, who was officially confirmed and sworn in last week.

The Council's Capital Improvements Committee will meet on Tuesday, August 5, at 4:00 p.m. in the Village Center. This meeting will be open to the public.

The August Village Council meeting will be Tuesday, August 19 at 7:30 p.m. at the Village Center.

Mark your calendars for our annual Taste of Friendship Heights on Saturday, September 27, from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. Look for more details in the August and September newsletters.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

Ms. Harris presented the public and executive session minutes for the Council meetings held on June 17, 2014 and the executive session minutes of the Council Personnel Committee meeting held on June 16, 2014 and recommended approval.

- (R) Ms. Harris moved; Ms. White seconded, that the Council public and executive session minutes for the meetings held on June 17, 2014 and the executive session minutes of the Council Personnel Committee meeting held on June 16, 2014 be approved. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

Dr. Morris presented the financial summary for the period ending June 30, 2014.

Dr. Morris noted that June 30 was the end of the FY 2014. He read and requested that the text of a staff summary of the fiscal year be made a part of these minutes:

"On a cash basis, we ran a \$53,500 deficit this year against our original budget of a \$155,905 surplus.

We warned of some of this in the annual report. We learned in December when Al, Bob and I went to Annapolis, that income tax revenue was going to fall far short of last year. In actuality, it fell even lower than state officials predicted. As we have learned, and shared with the Council, a small number of people pay a significant portion of our income tax. If they have a good year, we have a good year. The opposite is also true and totally unpredictable.

We also experienced significantly lower parking enforcement revenues due to Marcia Kirby being out for a substantial period of time, and the inability of ABM to provide well-trained substitutes. We have addressed this issue with ABM.

In Al's Treasurer's Report in January, we said that we could still sneak by with a small surplus but "that could disappear if we have significant snow storms." We had significant snow storms.

We have budgeted a small surplus for FY2015 even allowing for lower income tax revenues in line with this year. We should do fine if the creek don't rise and the snow don't fall. At least above the normal amount.

We hear frequent comments about "how much money we have." That is certainly important, but we prefer to stay in the black on a day by day basis if we can."

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Presentation by Coalition for Smarter Growth on proposed Montgomery County Bus Rapid Transit network:** Mr. Mansfield introduced Ms. Kelly Blynn, a representative of the Coalition for Smarter Growth. Ms. Blynn gave a presentation on a new transit vision for Montgomery County. The focus of the presentation was the County's proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network, which would provide a dedicated bus lane on Wisconsin Avenue. A brief discussion ensued. Ms. Blynn encouraged the audience to get involved in getting the word out concerning BRT. She said that she would keep the Council informed.

**Discussion of vandalism in Willoughby Park:** Judge Schwarzbart stated that Dr. Morris approached him tonight regarding a matter of new business that has been added to the agenda.

Dr. Morris reported that a few years ago he informed the Council of a problem in Willoughby Park: soil washing down onto the sidewalk and a large segment of the green area during heavy rain. To correct the problem, the maintenance contractor installed perforated tubing to take the water away from the affected area and into the sewer drain. Boulders (four to eight inch rocks) were put down as protective

covering to keep debris from entering and clogging the tubing. Dr. Morris said that recently it has come to his attention that children have been removing these protective boulders. Consequently, the problem of the soil washing down onto the sidewalk and green areas has returned. He stated that when the maintenance contractor was asked to replace the boulders, the contractor informed him that the removal of the boulders was not a maintenance issue, but a vandalism issue.

Dr. Morris stated that he has brought the problem of vandalism in Willoughby Park to the Council to get their ideas for a possible solution. Hopefully, the solution would not be too costly. A brief discussion ensued.

- (R) **Mr. Mertens moved; Mr. Grant seconded, to turn the problem of vandalism in Willoughby Park over to the Capital Improvements Committee to study and explore a solution. The Capital Improvements Committee would report back to the Council. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

**Discussion/vote on renewal of membership to Maryland Municipal League:**  
Mr. Mansfield reported that the invoice for the renewal of membership to the Maryland Municipal League (MML) had been received, along with information provided by the MML about their activities. The total amount of \$8,248.28 represents a 2% increase over last year's membership.

- (R) **Mr. Mertens moved; Dr. Morris seconded, to approve the renewal of the Maryland Municipal League membership in the amount of \$8,248.28. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business before the Council, Mr. Mertens moved, Ms. Harris seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

Respectfully submitted,

  
Elizabeth Demetra Harris  
Secretary