

VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

VILLAGE COUNCIL

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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 November 10, 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, Historian; Julian Mansfield, Village Manager; Robert Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager; and 15 residents.

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Ms. White introduced Delegate-Elect Marc Korman of District 16, Maryland House of Delegates. Mr. Korman thanked the Council for allowing him to stop in to say hello. He stated the Village will continue to have great representation in the legislature with Delegates Ariana Kelly, William Frick and himself; and recently elected Senator Susan Lee and Attorney General Brian Frosh. Mr. Korman noted that he is looking forward to working with the community over the next four years.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM COUNCIL:

The audience reiterated their questions and concerns that the renovation of Page Park would ultimately destroy the beautiful trees in Page Park. They cited the Review of Potential Impacts of Proposed Site Improvement section of the arborist report as validation that many trees would be removed, paths realigned, and the installation of playground equipment and hardscape would damage the roots of 14 to 15 trees.

Questions from the audience included:

- How many trees would be removed from Page Park for the renovation?
- Were the wounds on the Copper Beech tree caused by the two-year neglect of the Page Park trees pending the Council's decision to improve the Park?
- According to the environment specialist report, what impact would Page Park renovations have on the environment?
- Is the environmental report available to the public?
- Who is responsible for replacing trees in the empty tree boxes on Willard Avenue?

The consensus of the audience remained unchanged: Do not build a playground in Page Park—leave it natural, but maintain and care for the trees.

Judge Schwarzbart stated that the Copper Beech tree was considered to be removed early on because it appeared to be dying. It was bleeding, losing a lot of bark and leaves. Later, it was determined that with some maintenance and treatment the tree could be saved. He also noted that the trees in Page Park were not neglected for two years and neglect was not the cause of the condition of the Copper Beech or any other trees in the Park.

Dr. Morris stated that only three trees: the Crabapple, American Holly and Slippery Elm are recommended for removal because of their poor form or poor condition.

Mr. Mansfield noted that the environmental report (in the form of an email) was for an assessment of the County forest conservation easement area behind the Park to determine the Park renovations compliance with the forest conservation regulations. He stated that the conclusion was that the Park renovations will have no conservation impact. Mr. Mansfield agreed to send the email to all who request it. Mr. Mansfield also stated that Montgomery County is responsible for the replacement of the trees on Willard Avenue.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. White made the following announcements:

The Council held an executive session on October 14 to discuss personnel issues.

The Council will hold an executive session following tonight's meeting to discuss personnel issues.

A shredding truck will be in the Village on Wednesday, November 12, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. This service is free and open to Village residents.

Please join us this Saturday, November 15, at 9:15 a.m., for the fourth and final Centennial Saturday program at the Village Center.

The Capital Improvements Committee will meet on Tuesday, December 2, at 5:30 p.m., at the Village Center. This meeting will be open to the public.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ms. Harris presented the minutes for the Council public session and the executive session held on October 14, 2014 and recommended approval.

- (R) Ms. Harris moved; Mr. Grant seconded, that the Council public session and the executive session minutes for the meetings held on October 14, 2014 be approved. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Dr. Morris presented the financial summary for the period ending October 31, 2014.

OLD BUSINESS:

Page Park Playground—Discussion with the Arborist: Mr. Mansfield introduced Andy Streagle, the arborist with A. Morton Thomas & Associates, Inc. Mr. Streagle reported that he looked at 15 trees in Page Park and recommended 3 for removal.

The audience concerns included the open wounds on the lower trunk of the Copper Beech and root damage to the trees (trees would eventually die) by the placement of playground equipment in the Park and the removal of 14 trees as noted in the Park renovation drawings.

Mr. Streagle stated that the Copper Beech is in good condition and with more treatment should continue to survive. He explained the recommended tree protection measures listed in his report. The recommendations included pruning low hanging branches, root pruning, providing tree protection around critical root zones, etc. Mr. Streagle stated that with the recommended tree protection measures, the trees should flourish and have a long life. Regarding the damage to the tree roots by the playground equipment: He stated that the revised park design will reconfigure the placement of the equipment to the area away from the trees to mitigate damage to the tree roots. Mr. Streagle assured the audience that A. Morton Thomas and Associates has the experience and expertise to place the equipment carefully and properly so as to not kill the trees.

Dr. Morris reiterated that the removal of 14 trees was part of the original Grace Fielder drawings. The revised drawings recommend the removal of only three trees.

To clarify the concern that the Council was scrapping Grace Fielder's plan for the Page Park playground, Ms. White stated that the Fielder design was not being scrapped entirely. The Council is very pleased with a lot of the Grace Fielder design; including the quantity, color and type of equipment. The relocation of the equipment is a major part of the revised plans for Page Park.

Judge Schwarzbart added that the Council listened to the residents and in response to their reactions and the concerns of the Council, incorporated many of the ideas into the revised plans. He stated that by proceeding with the guidance of the arborist to preserve the tree covers, the Council is trying to do what it can to serve the changing demographics and the community as a whole with a park that all can enjoy and be proud of for many years to come.

- (R) Mr. Mertens moved; Ms. Lovett seconded, that the Friendship Heights Village Council modify the Grace Fielder plans for the Page Park Playground to place the playground equipment in the upper right hand corner of the Park (northeast corner). The designer will make this modification under the direction of the village manager. The motion carried. (5-2-0)**

NEW BUSINESS

Update from Council Historian Clara Lovett: Ms. Lovett stated that during the Centennial Year there is a great need to organize and preserve the Village historical documents, legal documents, and pertinent information. She stated that she is in the process of reviewing and assessing the enormous amount of information stored in the basement of the Village Center. Ms. Lovett noted that in February 2012, the Council complied with the Maryland state law to establish guidelines for document retention. Ms. Lovett stated that she has not seen information that dates back 100 years and made an appeal to the community to share copies of information that they have in their homes to be placed in the Village archives.

Update from Council member Len Grant on remaining Centennial programs for this year: Mr. Grant, Chairman of the Centennial Committee, reported that there are only three remaining Centennial programs remaining for this year. The programs will be held in the Village Center.

- Saturday, November 15 at 9:15 a.m., the theme will be future land use development and the historic governance of the Village. The speakers will

include Dr. Alfred Muller, former Mayor, and Ms. Cleonice Tavani, Community Leader.

- Friday, November 21 at 2:00 p.m., we welcome distinguished Village resident Sandra Youla. Ms. Youla is a preservation expert and will discuss mid-century architecture in Friendship Heights.
- Sunday, November 23 at 12:30 p.m. there will be a luncheon and Centennial fashion show. The fashion show will feature clothing dating from 1914 to the present.

Mr. Grant noted that the new edition of the Village Centennial history book is soon to be released. The last history book was released about twenty years ago. He thanked Mayor White for the work she had done in preparing the book and asked her to give an update.

Ms. White stated that the book has been a long time coming. The final edits will be completed this week and to the printer in about ten days. It will take about two weeks to print. The book took longer than anticipated to complete, but this allowed time to include photographs and text from this year which is also a nice touch.

Mr. Grant stated that hopefully the Centennial Park will open next spring and will be enjoyed by all, especially the “younger set.”

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, Mr. Mertens moved, Ms. White seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 p.m. and move to Executive session to discuss personnel matters as cited under Section 10-508(a)(1)(i) of the Maryland State Code. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

Respectfully submitted,


Elizabeth Demetra Harris
Secretary