

VILLAGE OF FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS

VILLAGE COUNCIL

MELANIE ROSE WHITE, *Mayor*
MICHAEL MEZEY, *Chairman*
CAROLINA ZUMARAN-JONES, *Vice Chairman*
PAULA DURBIN, *Secretary*
KATHLEEN G. COOPER, *Treasurer*
BRUCE R. PIRNIE, *Parliamentarian*
MICHAEL J. DORSEY
JULIAN P. MANSFIELD, *Village Manager*

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APPROVED MINUTES

PUBLIC SESSION

FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

Conducted via Zoom Audio

April 13, 2020

ATTENDEES:

Melanie Rose White, Mayor; Michael Mezey, Chairman; Carolina Zumaran-Jones, Vice Chairman; Paula Durbin, Secretary; Kathleen Cooper, Treasurer; Bruce Pirnie, Parliamentarian; Michael Dorsey, Council member; Julian Mansfield, Village Manager; Robert Shapiro, Assistant Village Manager; and 10 residents.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Mezey called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

COMMENTS/QUESTIONS TO AND FROM COUNCIL:

The Council heard questions and concerns from members of the audience.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. White made the following announcements:

On Monday, April 6, in open session the Village Council approved a motion to enter closed session pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provisions Article, Section 3-305(b)(7) to consult with counsel to obtain legal advice on a legal matter. During the closed session, the Council and the attorneys discussed the violation of a condition in the site plan at the Chevy Chase Center and possible litigation against the Chevy Chase Land Company.

The closure of the Giant at Chevy Chase Center resulting in the absence of a grocery store accessible to Friendship Heights residents at that location triggered the requirement of Chevy Chase Land Co. ("Land Co."), under its signed agreement/site plan with the Village, to provide or subsidize shuttle service to an equivalent grocery store. The Land Co. maintains the requirement is no longer applicable and wants it stricken. The Village Council has appealed to the County Executive's office to request that the Department of Permitting Services enforce the requirement. By dialing 311, residents can connect directly to the Montgomery County Government and file a complaint with the Department regarding the Land Co.'s failure to comply with the condition in the site plan. The more residents complain, the greater the likelihood that action will be taken to require that the Land Co. comply with its obligation to provide/subsidize bus service to the Westbard Giant.

The Council Finance Committee meeting originally scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, was cancelled.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Cooper seconded, to approve the minutes of the Council's public session of March 9. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

Ms. Cooper moved, Ms. White seconded, to approve the closed session minutes of April 6, as amended. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Ms. Cooper presented the financial summary for period ending March 31, 2020.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Report from the Community Advisory Committee: Ms. White reported that the Community Advisory Committee and 12 participants met via conference call on April 1 and discussed the following:

- (1) Health/safety measures at the farmer's market;
- (2) Excessively long flashing of the new HAWK signal;
- (3) The Chevy Chase Land Co.'s obligation to provide a grocery or shuttle service to a grocery per its agreement, as described *supra*;
- (4) Appreciation for the Council's modification of the bus schedule to include the Westbard Giant on Wednesdays;
- (5) The current marketing of two Highland House buildings as "The Highlands";
- (6) Health/safety measures taken in individual buildings;
- (7) The observation of social distancing in Village parks;
- (8) The commendable efforts of Anne O'Neil to create virtual programs/classes;

- (9) The orange utility markings on North Park from previous Washington Gas projects; and
- (10) The request for masks from the County or State and the County's response that (a) availability of masks is limited and (b) cost is not the issue.
The date of next meeting will be announced.

Report from the Program Advisory Committee: Ms. White reported that the Program Advisory Committee met on April 2 and discussed the following:

- (1) Health/safety measures in each building;
- (2) Appreciation for the Council's modification of the bus schedule to include the Westbard Giant on Wednesdays
- (3) A suggestion to profile various residents in upcoming newsletters; and
- (4) Suggestions post-pandemic Village programs to include river cruises and the reduction of plastic waste.
The date of the next meeting will be announced.

Report to the Community on Village Response to the Corona Virus:

Mr. Mansfield reported that the Center closed to the public in mid-March at the direction of the Council. Since then, a small staff is on site daily to conduct Village business and keep basic services running. Staff assure compliance with financial obligation by paying the bills and they work with contractors to assure landscaping, building maintenance and the shuttle bus company's ongoing services that as of March 25 include Wednesday trips to the Westbard Giant and the distribution of schedules. Communication with residents now relies more on the website to share information and updates. A new link on the main page provides information and resources on COVID-19, including state and county responses particularly relevant to the Village population.

Anne O'Neil initially reported that many programs would be cancelled through May. Staff has since discovered that clubs, lectures, classes and concerts could be offered on line through Zoom. A basic class in using the Zoom platform was scheduled. Building managers receive weekly emails on programs planned for the coming two weeks. Most residents comply with the County health order effective since mid-April requiring that shoppers wear masks in stores. Staff has 10 bandanas available to those who need them.

Staff is working on several concerts via YouTube. The art gallery has been suspended, but staff is working with the Montgomery Art Association to present the June show online.

A brief discussion followed.

OLD BUSINESS:

Discussion/vote on Page Park petition: Mr. Pirnie, moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded, that the Council acknowledge receipt of the petition on Page Park at its March meeting and commend the signatories for their interest in maintaining high standards for our Village. However, in view of the current emergency, the Council defers consideration of this matter until such time as people can safely conduct actual meetings and move about freely.

The motion failed. (3-4-0) Per the roll-call vote, Bruce Pirnie, Michael Dorsey and Michael Mezey voted in favor; Melanie White, Carolina Zumaya-Jones, Paula Durbin, and Kathleen Cooper voted against.

NEW BUSINESS:

Discussion/vote on proposals for Village audit: Mr. Mansfield reported that the three-year contract with auditors Lindsey & Associates expired with the fiscal 2019 audit. In response to a solicitation for bids made via contacting auditors specializing in municipal audits, the staff received three proposals, all priced over a three-year period and all very much in line with previous pricing. After a brief discussion:


Ms. Cooper moved, Ms. Durbin seconded, to approve the proposal from Lindsey & Associates to provide audit services for the Village of Friendship Heights for fiscal 2020 at a cost of \$11,000. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

The Council will look at the bids again next year and make a decision for fiscal 2021.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business before the Council, Ms. Cooper moved, Ms. Durbin seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Paula Durbin