

# 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*

4433 SOUTH PARK AVENUE  
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815  
Phone: 301-656-2797  
Fax: 301-907-3922  
Email: [info@friendshipheightsmd.gov](mailto:info@friendshipheightsmd.gov)  
Website: [www.friendshipheightsmd.gov](http://www.friendshipheightsmd.gov)



## APPROVED MINUTES

### PUBLIC SESSION

### FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS VILLAGE COUNCIL MEETING

Conducted via Zoom

November 9, 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 seven 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.

### MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Ms. White announced the following:

The County would provide COVID-19 testing free to the public, on a walk-in basis only, on November 10, from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Wisconsin Place Recreation Center, 5311 Friendship Boulevard, near Whole Foods. No advance registration, insurance or doctor's order would be required.

The Village would be sponsoring a food truck event on Sunday, November 15, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Those interested were to order in advance for pickup from any of the four food trucks parked on Friendship Boulevard and South Park Avenue. Flyers were distributed to the buildings; ordering information was on our Website.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

**Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Cooper seconded, to approve the minutes of the Council's public session of October 13, as amended. The motion carried. (7-0-0)**

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

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

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Report from the Community Advisory Committee:** Ms. White reported that the Community Advisory Committee met via conference call on November 5 and discussed the following:

- (1) The ongoing safety hazard posed by dumpsters on Willard Avenue in front of Willard Towers;
- (2) The management of Willard Towers by the new owners.
- (3) The unsightliness of the pathway providing a short cut from Somerset Terrace to the garage at 5530 Wisconsin Avenue and the suggestion that the responsible party appropriately develop the surface using slate.
- (4) A report that a tenant of Willard Towers had died from Covid-19 after being hospitalized and concern that other tenants be informed.
- (5) A report that an employee of 4620 North Park Avenue had tested positive for Covid-19.
- (6) The fact that the Carleton and Willard Towers are the only residential buildings in the Village whose gyms are open and that a public gym is operating in the Barlow Building.
- (7) The lack of any official notice of the anticipated opening of Amazon Fresh in the Chevy Chase Collection Shopping Center.  
The next meeting date will be announced.

**Report from the Program Advisory Committee:** Ms. White reported that the Program Advisory Committee met via conference call on October 20 and discussed the following suggestions:

- (1) That medical lectures and activities be listed on the front page of the newsletter;

- (2) That a program to be offered on preparing automobiles for winter include a virtual mechanic;
- (3) That the Center offer a cooking class for men when it reopens;
- (4) That the Center invite an ornithologist to lecture on birds and conduct a walk in Norwood Park. Ms. Anne O'Neil will contact the Audubon Society.
- (5) That the Center organize a film program of musicals, each followed by a discussion.

The next meeting date will be announced.

**Report from the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights:**

Ms. White reported that the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights met via Zoom on October 21 and discussed the following:

- (1) The Capital Crescent Trail crossing; and,
- (2) The decline of retail in Friendship Heights.

The next meeting will be November 18 at 7:30 via Zoom.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Update to the Community on Village Response to the Corona Virus:** Ms. O'Neil of the Village staff reported that pharmacists from Giant Foods vaccinated 100 individuals against flu and pneumonia at the Village Center in October.

The Center's online programming for October included talks, virtual tours, classes, meetings, a children's Halloween party, and a bingo party for approximately 20 children ages 2-10 and their parents. The Center distributed 30 craft baskets.

In celebration of Native American Heritage Month and Veterans Day in November, the Center's online programming would include a talk on Native Americans in World War II; a YouTube video/lecture on the Native American ballerinas; a lecture on vertigo; the above-referenced food truck event; a talk by a representative of the County Office of Consumer Protection on holiday scams; a virtual tour of the Kimbell Art Museum; and a talk on cataracts by the Society for the Prevention of Blindness. A four-page dining guide is scheduled to be published in the December newsletter. The Twin Springs Fruit Farm will continue on site.

Mr. Mansfield reiterated the above-referenced availability of COVID-19 testing at the Wisconsin Place Recreation Center and announced the possibility of additional testing. The ballot box outside the Center had not been removed as scheduled, requiring follow-up with the County.

**Discussion on planning for Friendship Heights:** Per the discussion in September as to how the Council might proactively address the decline of

retail in the Friendship Heights area, Mr. Mezey announced the Council's formation of a committee of the whole Council; the intention to invite Norman Knopf to participate in its sessions; and the concerns to be addressed. The date of the first meeting was pending.

**Discussion/vote on proposal to rehabilitate grass strips:** Mr. Pirnie reported that staff solicited bids to install sod and lirope in grass strips as the Council authorized last month. Of the three bids received, staff recommended the Council approve the proposal submitted by Brightview as providing the best value to the Village. Its competitive price includes a 90-day warranty. Work should be undertaken in early spring so that the warranty covers the growing season.

Mr. Pirnie moved, Mr. Dorsey seconded, to approve the proposal from BrightView to rehabilitate grass strips in the Village at a total cost of \$13,822. The motion carried. (7-0-0)

Mr. Mansfield noted that Brightview may need to provide watering, which would incur its own cost.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Discussion on sending letter to County Planning Board:** The Council consented to becoming a signatory to the letter to the County Planning Board from a coalition of area municipalities and community organizations expressing concerns about the County's proposed THRIVE 2050 general plan.

**Discussion of unemployment insurance for Village employees:** Mr. Mezey stated that the issue of the eligibility of furloughed Village employees for unemployment benefits had arisen in connection with the coronavirus pandemic. He briefly presented the following information provided by Mr. Mansfield: All Village employees furloughed or laid off are eligible for unemployment benefits; the Village submits the required unemployment reports, but unlike some municipalities and businesses, does not make payments into the State unemployment fund. To receive compensation in the event of unemployment, eligible employees would follow the State process. The Village would then reimburse the State from its general fund.

There is no record of the decision to self-insure or of any application for benefits ever filed by a Village employee.

A brief discussion followed. The Council took no action on the Village's long-standing practice of self-insuring regarding payment of unemployment compensation.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**There being no further business before the Council, Ms. Durbin moved, Ms. Ms. White seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. to enter closed session pursuant to Maryland Code, General Provision Article, Section 3-305 (b)(1), to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals.**

Respectfully submitted,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Paula Durbin