

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

Minutes of Meeting on July 19, 2017

Next Meeting: Monday, September 18, 2017

Attendees

Brookdale: Bob Cope, Manuel Ochoa, Amy Rispin, Richard Podoski
Chevy Chase West: Naomi Spinrad
Chevy Chase Village:
Friendship Heights: Mike Dorsey, Melanie White,
Glen Echo Heights:
Kenwood (the subdivision): Jenny Sue Dunner, Pat Johnson
Kenwood condominium:
Kenwood House Coop: Sue Schumacher, Jean Iker, Judy Throckmorton
Kenwood Place:
Town of Somerset: Jack Grink
Somerset House II:
Springfield: Phyllis Edelman, Cynthia Green, Pete Salinger
Sumner:
Sumner Village Condo:
Westmoreland Hills:
Westbard Mews:
Westwood Mews:
Wood Acres: Myla Williams

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Ms. Schumacher called the meeting to order at 8:01 PM

Administrative Business

- The agenda for the meeting was approved.
- The minutes of June 21, 2017 was approved with one minor correction by Myla Williams, who said that the PHED voted down the ZTA 16-17 motion, not the County Council. This item dealt with Rooftop Terraces.
- Treasurer's Report: Sue Schumacher reported that since our last meeting the following members have paid their dues: the Village of Friendship Heights, and Kenwood House Cooperative.
- Sue Schumacher reported that the MCCF did not meet, so there is no report.

- There will be no August meeting of the CCCFH.
- The September meeting of the CCCFH is scheduled on **Monday, September 18, 2017 at 8:00 PM**, due to Rosh Hashanah starting Wednesday evening, and the non-availability of the Somerset Town Hall on Tuesday night.

Reports

5550 Friendship Blvd. (Melanie Rose White) – Melanie followed up on her June report to the CCCFH, saying that on July 12th the attorney wrote that “the property owners are not looking to amend the Sector Plan, but rather they are seeking a “floating zone designation to allow the same density but with a taller building and a considerably smaller footprint.”

He also claimed that that the property is “severely underdeveloped compared to all of the surrounding properties.”

Also on July 12, the real estate advisor to the property owner and a colleague met with about 35 residents of The Elizabeth Condominium in the Village, also presenting the 180-foot building option (current office building at 5550 Friendship would remain) and mentioned the alternative – a 90-foot building (current office building would be removed).

Melanie stated that the developers never addressed the most common sentiment of residents heard at the meeting – “We don’t want anything built there.”

Update on the Bethesda Overlay (Naomi Spinrad) – Naomi said that many had hoped that the area south of Bradley would be exempt from height incentives for affordable housing.

The County Council on July 18th dashed that expectation for most of the area.

It was an ugly meeting, and there are still many unanswered questions about what happened. Sometime between the council session on 7/11 and the meeting on 7/18, the HOC sent an email to all council members, and asked that the Barclay Apartments on Bradley be included in the Height Incentive Area, so that it would be eligible for additional height for every unit above the 15% required.

Naomi said that the HOC attached two exhibits to the email, and that both contained errors, but that the Council did not act to remove the errors.

What this means is that the entire block between Chevy Chase Drive, Bradley, and Offutt is eligible for additional height if they include more than 15% MPDUs. HOC, a nonprofit organization that the county relies

on for a great deal of affordable housing, typically has 30-60% MPDUs. These properties still have to go through the normal sketch and site plans approvals, which allow for public comments. It will be primarily up to adjacent properties to pursue this, although umbrella organizations and neighboring communities may be supportive.

Save Westbard suit hearing (Phyllis Edelman and Amy Rispin) - the hearing on the lawsuit against the County Council, supported by SaveWestbard, was postponed from July until mid-August. The Court could dismiss any of the motions filed or provide for summary judgment at that time. If that doesn't occur, a trial could be held in the fall.

In addition, both Equity One/Regency Centers and SaveWestbard supporters have filed separate formal administrative appeals with the Circuit Court regarding the Sketch Plan approved in the spring by the Planning Board.

With consideration of the issue concerning the African American burial ground on the HOC property, two bills have been introduced in the County Council to protect cemeteries. State law currently provides some protection, but the Council proposals will be more stringent.

Westbard Self-Storage Building (Jenny Sue Dunner) summarized the issues:

- (1) the building overlaps into the stream buffer, but they are donating land for a "potential park"
- (2) the proposed building is huge – it's the largest storage building in the area, in part because the developer is calling the lowest floor a "cellar" in the FAR
- (3) the proposed driveway is too narrow, with only an 18 foot right-of-way.

Apparently, the county has notified the developer that they will need to address these issues.

FHCC Transportation Management District (Manuel Ochoa, CCCFH representative) reported that at the corner of Wisconsin and Willard Avenues (Chico's), the State Highway Administration (SHA) began to pave the corners after 15 years of lobbying. The SHA used obsolete standards to pave the corner ramps. The bump-ups are tripping hazards to pedestrians, especially seniors and the disabled. The SHA agreed to repave the corners using the updated standards without bump-ups.

Manuel also reported on the County's Bicycle Master Plan. The County has proposed various alignments through Friendship Heights including through Page Park and the Town of Somerset. Another alignment would continue along Willard Avenue to River Road. There were concerns about a bike lane that impeded traffic during rush hour, blocking driveways, and garbage and other delivery trucks. Manuel invited members to a work session to agree on a join alignment to recommend to the County by September.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 PM.

Respectfully submitted by Pete Salinger, Recording Secretary