

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

Minutes of Meeting on Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Next Meeting: Wednesday, November 15, 2017

Somerset Town Hall (4501 Cumberland Ave.)

Attendees

Brookdale:

Chevy Chase West: Lloyd Guerci

Chevy Chase Village:

Friendship Heights: Mike Dorsey, Norman Knopf, Melanie White, Carolina Zumarán-Jones

Glen Echo Heights: Harry Pfohl

Kenwood (the subdivision): Jenny Sue Dunner, Pat Johnson

Kenwood Condominium: Sue Schumacher

Kenwood House Coop:

Kenwood Place Condo:

Town of Somerset: Jack Frink, Barbara Zeughouser

Springfield: Phyllis Edelman, Cynthia Green, Pete Salinger

Sumner:

Sumner Village Condo:

Westmoreland Citizens Assoc: Barry Miller

Westbard Mews: Lynne Battle

Westwood Mews: Frank Anderson

Wood Acres:

Website Editor: Jennifer O'Keefe

Administrative:

- The meeting was called to order by Harry Pfohl at 8:07 p.m.
- The agenda for Wednesday, October 18, 2017 was approved.
- The minutes of the September 18, 2017 meeting were approved.
- Treasurer's Report—Sue Schumacher reported that dues were received since the last meeting for the 2017-2018 year from the Village of Drummond and Sumner Village Condominium. Green Acres-Glen Cove, Kenwood Place Condo and Sumner have not paid their dues and advised that these community names should be omitted from the CCCFH letterhead.
- Montgomery County Civic Federation – (Sue Schumacher) Montgomery Co. Chief of Police J. Thomas Manger was one of the guests. He discussed crime rates in the county and the gang, MS 13 as well as opioid deaths in the county. An additional discussion was on the smaller cell towers for the county which will go in residential neighborhoods.

Guest Presentation:

Presentation by guests: Bob Harris, attorney representing Lerch, Early, & Brewer in Bethesda, Md; and Bob Stoddard, Development Consultant, regarding the property at 5550 Friendship Blvd, Chevy Chase, MD.

Harris made a point that the current zoning, CR-3, Ht = 90 ft., allows up to 371,000 sq. ft of development plus additional density if housing includes MPDU's. Current building on that site is 75'. The owner of the property is suggesting a taller, thinner building up to 180' in order to

development plus additional density if housing includes MPDU's. Current building on that site is 75'. The owner of the property is suggesting a taller, thinner building up to 180' in order to preserve more open space on the property. The 180' is in keeping with similar buildings in the area (Willoughby – 180'; Somerset House – 209'). The new building proposed would add 165-175,000 sq. ft. and potentially 85-95 residential (condo) units. There would be no retail in the building. Green space left on the site would be on a corner of the property, approximately 10,000 sq. ft.

The developer has two options for changing the zoning on this property: 1) to file a local map amendment or 2) wait for sector plan revision. The owner has decided to follow the former.

Reports/Discussion:

Discussion of 5550 Friendship Heights Presentation:

A discussion followed after the visitors left. Norman Knopf pointed out that “what you see is not what you’ll get” as the sketch plan is nonbinding. The site plan will decide how the site is really developed and could well result in less green space than is now represented as well as additional density.

There is a planning board hearing on this Dec. 7th and the local map amendment will go before a hearing examiner Dec. 18th. Melanie White, Mayor of the Village of Friendship Heights said the Village Council is unanimously opposed to this development. There is concern about the impact of traffic with additional residents, how fire trucks and emergency vehicles will be able to get to Brighton Gardens (senior citizens’ home) and the building proposed, and the blockage of views from The Willoughby.

A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to support the position of the Friendship Heights Village and to draft a letter from the CCCFH to oppose this development. It was recommended that a representative from the CCCFH testify before the Planning Board and Hearing Examiner in opposition to this development.

Bicycle Plan Update:

Lloyd Guerci reported that Parks and Planning has dropped the use of Stratford Road as a bike route. Neither the Town of Drummond, Chevy Chase West nor the Village of Friendship Heights approved of this road being used as a bike route.

Westbard Self Storage:

Several members of the CCCFH, including Lloyd Guerci, Harry Pfohl, Lynne Battle, Phyllis Edelman and Jenny Sue Dunner met with Neil Braunstein, Susanne Paul, Elza Hisel-McCoy, Marco Fuster and Robert Kronenberg who joined the meeting a bit later to discuss this plan.

Planners agreed with many of our criticisms of the plan: building should not be in stream valley buffer; path between the McDonald’s wall and the proposed storage facility should be wider; better parking should be provided between body shop and proposed building. Lynne Battle expressed concern about added underground square footage and that this is area that is not included in the FAR.

This item was on the Planning Board agenda for Thursday, Braunstein has suggested an extension to Nov. 2nd. Planning Board hearing is tentatively Dec. 14th.

Proposed cemetery/burial ground:

Legislation is on the Council agenda for this week. The CCCFH sent a letter commenting on the legislation.

Update on Westbard Sector Plan:

Mediation with the Macedonia Baptist Church, the HOC, Regency, the planning department, fell apart after two meetings. Sam Stiebel & Rafael Munoz of Regency have been meeting with representatives of the various civic organizations. They did not divulge much information, but reading between the lines, it is thought they intend to reduce the density of the plans proposed by Equity One and concentrate on the retail and possibly forgo underground parking.

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New Business:

No New Business was discussed.

The motion to adjourn was made, seconded, and passed at 9:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Phyllis Edelman

Recording Secretary