



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

Prince George's County, Maryland

Incorporated in 1896 ~ Sixth Oldest Municipality in PG County

WORKSESSION MINUTES MAY 18, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheye Calvo, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy and Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Deni and Chris Rasmussen. CM Anthony Schreiber had an excused absence. Also present was Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. MAYOR

Announcements: There were none.

Calendar: The June 1 worksession was confirmed. The next Four Cities meeting hosted by Berwyn Heights will take place on July 29th. Invitations to representative are to go out to the Department of Permits, Inspections & Enforcement (DPIE) and WSSC. The August 3 and 17 worksessions were moved to August 24.

Minutes: On a motion by CM Dennison and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy the April 20 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0. On a motion by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and second by CM Dennison, the May 4 worksession was approved 4 to 0.

Department reports: CM Rasmussen announced that Code Supervisor Freddie Glass has started to work. CM Dennison reported that Berwyn Heights Day 1 was a success and that the Town wide Yard Sale will be held on June 20. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that the Administration Department is wrapping up the sidewalks project and preparing for bidding the emergency generator project.

Mayor Calvo reported that the Green Team held a rain barrel workshop this weekend and had very good attendance. Twenty-six barrels were distributed, with 4 to Public Works. The new sidewalks to see are coming together great and he enjoys seeing people using them. The letter from the Town Council to the County Council opposing the proposed tax increases is in his hands for editing and will be sent out tomorrow.

Citizen discussion: MPT Kulpa Eddy received a comment that there was a break in WSSC's temporary bypass lines on 57th Avenue, but were quickly repaired and also received comments relating to the call-a-bus during a recent CERT class. Mayor Calvo received a comment regarding Pepco's tree cutting efforts along the street and the stumps that were left behind.

Town Council vacancy: Mayor Calvo said when a Mayor resigns two things need to be decided: succession and how to fill the vacancy. The Town Charter specifies that a Mayor is succeeded by the Mayor Pro Tem but it is silent on how the next Mayor Pro Tem is selected. The Charter also gives the Council leeway on how to fill the vacancy. Recent precedent has been for the Council to appoint a resident from a pool of applicants after the vacancy has been posted in the Town Bulletin. The vacancy in 2009 was filled by inviting applicants to a special meeting for interviews by the Town Council. Interviews and selection were made in executive session.

Mayor Calvo said the Charter prescribes that a vacancy must be filled within 45 days. He offered to make his resignation effective by the June 10 Town meeting to give the Council more time for the selection process. The vacancy should be advertised in the June Bulletin, and possibly in the July Bulletin, with an interview sometime in early July.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that applicants will now be required to submit a financial disclosure with their letter of interest to comply with the new Ethics Ordinance. For an open forum at which residents could meet the candidates and ask questions has been contemplated. Mayor Calvo said that this would put up an additional hurdle for applicants and is likely to discourage some. It has not been done before and he advises against it. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that a new Mayor Pro Tem also needs to be selected. It was agreed that the Council will discuss the Mayor Pro Tem position at the next worksession, with the expectation to make a selection and have a Councilmember sworn in at the June Town meeting.

At 7:41 p.m., the Council took a 10 minute break.

Town Council priorities: Mayor Calvo said that with a new leadership on the Council imminent, it is an opportune time to take stock of priorities. Good progress has been made on last year's priorities: a new Town Administrator has been hired; the sidewalks project is nearing completion, while emergency generators project is being revised; a street renovation plan is in the works; and money has been set aside for an economic development study; an urban forest initiative and an overview of personnel policies.

The Council revisited other priorities. Policies that still need to be reviewed and revised include fiscal policies, Council Rules and the Town's Election Ordinance. Planned changes to the trash collection schedule, trash standards and recycling rules need to be communicated to residents. The Administration Department will improve outreach and communication with residents and upgrade the agenda packet. With respect to Code Compliance, an MOU with the County on commercial vehicles and other zoning issues was to be explored. A hydraulic study by Prince George's County of the Town's stormwater drains needs to be followed up. For Public Safety, the Council was to help the Police and the Volunteer Fire Department in finding better accommodations.

FY 2015 budget amendments: TA Cowles provided an updated FY 2015 budget amendment and noted that the only change from the introduced version is the addition of \$35,000 in expenses for the demolition of 2 condemned homes under Surplus - Capital Projects & Purchases. She then reviewed and explained each line item budget amendment. The overall amount to be pulled from surplus for operating expenses is projected to be \$83,000, which is below the \$101,000 budgeted.

Mayor Calvo clarified adjustments made to speed camera and Metroland revenues, which were used to fund the priority 1 sidewalks project. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that income tax revenues are coming in at the projected pace. TA Cowles replied they are expected to come in above projections, with two disbursements outstanding. However, a recent Supreme Court decision striking down a Maryland law double taxing out-of-state residents, may have some ramifications that cannot be quantified.

Nothing was discussed under **2. Code Compliance, 3. Parks and Recreation, 4. Public Safety and 5. Public Works.**

6. ADMINISTRATION

Sidewalks update: TA Cowles said the priority 1 sidewalks construction is moving along quickly now. Everything should be wrapped up by the end of June, including additional curb and gutter work, repairs of existing sidewalks, pouring of bus pads and Public Works yard stormwater remediation. A section of sidewalks in front of the Pop's Park and the ADA ramp at the school remain to be replaced.

TA Cowles continued that momentum towards launching the Safe Routes to School sidewalks project has also been building. SHA is ready to sign off on the engineering plans and bids will be advertised on May 28. A bid conference will likely be held around June 4 with bids due on June 18. The emergency generators project will likely be out around the same timetable. The engineering plans have been revised for a smaller generator at the Town Center and will entail a reconfiguration of the electrical panels, which will take into account a planned HVAC system upgrade at the Town Center.

Mayor Calvo suggested making a decision on requesting additional concrete work from this contractor by June 1, so that it can be paid from this year's budget. Further, the 'no parking' signs in front of the Town Center could be removed, and none may be needed in front of the school, as the roadway appears to have enough room for parked vehicles and traffic.

Bikeway plan: Clerk Harper presented additional aspects of the bikeway plan for which the Town received a Maryland Heritage Areas grant, including pro-interpretive signs for Town entrances, bike racks and repair station. She said that interpretive signs have a different content that depends on their proposed location. A sign at the Indian Creek bridge focuses on the Indian Heritage; a sign at Pontiac and Edmonston Road focuses on historic homes; and a sign at 58th and Green Road has a commerce and industry theme.

The plan specifies two different types of racks: coil-type racks accommodating up to 10 bikes and post-type racks that accommodate up to 2 bikes. The coil racks are proposed for the school and Sports Park. The post-type racks are proposed for the Town Center, Pop's Park, Indian Creek Park and/ or Sports Park. The Council commented that the number of bike racks should be based not only on current usage but take into account a possible increase in bike ridership in the future. The school might best be located next to the cafeteria entrance.

With respect to the interpretive signs, the map of the Town should be enlarged to show greater detail. Points of interest detailed below the map should reference a historic walking tour rather than individual historic homes, as well as indicate the location of rest rooms and other public amenities. The write-ups should be concise as possible. Mayor Calvo thought the story of Berwyn Heights told on the signs should focus on the building of the community instead of its public establishment, and highlight the Town's diversity.

The Council had no objections to the types of racks and repair stations specified and their proposed locations. Sign content should be further revised.

Variance request: TA Cowles said that the Town last Friday received a variance request to enlarge a driveway at 6216 Quebec Street from its current size of approximately 10' x 20' to 20' x 40'. The owners of the property were notified that the variance would be heard tonight but did not come.

Mayor Calvo said that the enlargement nearly triples the size of the driveway. This property often has a number of commercial trucks parked in front of it, and a larger driveway may be intended to get them off the road. The Council has approved other driveway expansions but usually with conditions. However, to get some type of agreement on how the driveway should be built, the owner needs to be present. In the owner's absence, he would oppose the variance and ask the owner to come back.

CM Rasmussen asked why the Town would allow commercial vehicles to be parked in Town at all since they are not allowed by the County. Mayor Calvo said that the Town generally tries to be friendly to businesses as long as owners don't impose on their neighbors and the Town. However, if a homeowner has a fleet of vehicles associated with a business, he needs to rent a parking lot somewhere else. Another concern is that the additional pavement contributes to more stormwater runoff downhill, which is why the Council has previously asked homeowners to use pervious pavers when rebuilding their driveways or make other offsets.

Mayor Calvo asked for a motion to oppose the variance as it now stands. CM Rasmussen so moved. CM Dennison seconded. The motion passed 4 to 0.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION (9:25 P.M - 10:17 P.M.)

On a motion by CM Dennison and second by MPT Kulpa Eddy, the Council went into executive session to discuss a personnel matter. With matter discussed, Dennison moved and MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded to end the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*