



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Amanda M. Dewey

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)
Christopher S. Brittan Powell
Jason W. Papanikolas
Ethan D. Sweep

Town Meeting Minutes February 9, 2022 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

Call to Order

Mayor Amanda Dewey called the meeting to order at 7PM. Present were Mayor Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Ethan Sweep, as well as Town Manager Laura Allen and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Also present were the Board of Election Supervisor applicants Sharmila Bhatia, Paul McNulty, Brandon Wong, and Debby Steele-Snyder.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Announcements:

Mayor Dewey highlighted several Covid test options, including the rapid tests available at the Berwyn Heights Police Department and from the County. The County is also distributing KN95 masks.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mayor Dewey asked the Council to consider an amendment to the agenda regarding a letter of support for Maryland Senate Bill 376.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to approve the amended agenda; CM Sweep seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Approval & Appointment of Board of Election Supervisors

Mayor Dewey reviewed that the Town Charter calls for a five (5) person Board of Election Supervisors. She noted that appointing more than five members would be an exception requiring Council approval. CM Brittan-Powell moved to appoint a seven (7) member Board of Elections Supervisors; CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously. CM Papanikolas moved to approve the seven (7) applicants to the Board of Elections Supervisors; CM Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Swearing in of Board of Election Supervisors

Mayor Dewey swore in the four applicants that were present at the meeting, explaining that the others (Lee Fuerst, Tracy O'Heir, Susan Kelley) would be sworn in at a later date. CM Brittan-Powell moved to appoint Sharmila Bhatia as Chief Election Judge; CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Consent

CM Sweep moved to approve the consent agenda; CM Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

6. Mayor and Council Reports

Mayor Dewey reviewed that the Greenbelt Corridor Visioning Meeting will be on Thursday, February 10th and that there will be a recording of the meeting made available as well as the interactive map open for public comment for about a month and a half after the meeting. She reviewed that the County has extended the indoor mask mandate until at least March 9. She further reviewed Covid testing options.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy shared that School Library Month is coming up in April and shared the Maryland Association of School Librarians is sponsoring an “I Love My School Library” contest and that information on how to submit an entry will be posted to the Town website. She also shared that the Talented and Gifted Lottery applications for Prince George’s County Public Schools is available on the PGCPs website and that those applications should be submitted by March 23rd. Finally, MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that one of the members of the Boys and Girls Club (Michael Hawke, Goalkeeper) has been signed to the Maryland Bobcats FC.

CM Papanikolas reviewed that there has been a decrease in the failure to get permits and that within the monthly written Code report there is an education piece on exterior property condition violations, including the three levels of violations: imminent threat, hazardous, and non-hazardous conditions. He reviewed the time that is generally provided to correct these violations.

CM Brittan-Powell reviewed that Administrative Staff is busy with ARPA and budget season.

CM Sweep shared that Public Works has been busy with January snow. They assisted the Police Department in painting over the 25mph signs on Edmonston Road, as the speed limit has been reduced to 20mph. He also reviewed the modified trash schedule for Presidents’ Day and when the street sweeper will next be in Town. In conclusion, he added that since snow was expected this weekend, residents should watch the Town website and social media for updates to services.

7. Committee Reports

Education Advisory Committee

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that the next meeting will be Monday February 28th at 7PM which will be virtual. They are accepting the second round of education grant applications through the 15th of February and particularly encourage applications that will benefit middle and high school students. They will also be reviewing the impact of possible school boundary changes on Town residents and any effect there may be on the Berwyn Heights Elementary School.

Green Team

Mayor Dewey shared that their virtual meeting will be Thursday, February 10 at 7PM. She added that the Town’s Bee City, USA application has been accepted. There are plans for a Townwide clean-up on March 12, that will focus on vine and invasive species removal. The Green Team submitted a letter of support for the County Climate Action Plan. Finally, a name has been chosen for the Thriving Earth Exchange project: “Canopy Defenders”.

Historical Committee

Debby Steele-Snyder shared that the next meeting will be February 23rd at 7:30pm and that the meeting will be virtual. The BHHC plans to participate in Berwyn Heights Day and they

are planning a wine and cheese event to be held in May. The BHHC is working on revising and expanding the walking tour, again working with Parks and Planning who helped develop the current walking tour. Ms. Steele-Snyder shared that the Prince George's County Historical Society has been hosting History Chats. The chats are available online at pghistory.org and past chats are available on YouTube. The BHHC is continuing to work on the oral history project.

Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness

Mayor Dewey shared that NW/EP met on February 2nd. They had opportunities to meet with the Police Department. The group continues to work on the trailer inventory. They discussed Narcan training. The next meeting will be March 2nd and they are still meeting virtually. Finally, a phone number to receive the federally distributed Covid rapid tests has been made available. That number is 1-800-232-0233.

Recreation Council

Ms. Susan Jones spoke for the Recreation Council. The Valentine's Day card making and cookie decorating event will be on February 12 from 2-4 and will have both indoor and outdoor options. It is family friendly, and the Rec Council will provide all the supplies. In March, there will be a potluck, held jointly with the Seniors. It may be outside if the weather cooperates. Also, the regifting "Christmas in April" party has been rescheduled for April 9th from 2-4pm and will be an adult only event. May 7th is Berwyn Heights Day, and everything will be outside, except the Seniors Club bake sale.

8. Old Business

a. Establishment of ARPA Fund/ Resolution 2-2022

Ms. Susan Jones asked that a permanent pavilion structure be built behind the senior center as part of the ARPA fund spending, including fixed outdoor heaters.

CM Brittan-Powell asked Mayor Dewey to clarify the purpose of the resolution. TM Allen explained that the purpose of this fund is to function as an accounting mechanism, similar to the General Fund and Public Safety Taxing District accounts. It insures transparency and ease of reporting. The Resolution does not commit the Council to any form of spending on projects of any kind. MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to approve the resolution; CM Brittan-Powell seconded. During discussion, MPT Kulpa-Eddy requested that the fund be housed in an interest-bearing account. The motion passed unanimously.

9. New Business

Mayor Dewey reviewed that the Maryland Municipal League requested municipalities consider a letter of support for Senate Bill 376. The bill streamlines the process for municipalities that want to take over responsibility of their streetlights from utilities. The Council engaged in discussion on if there were changes to be made to the letter language. CM Brittan-Powell stated for clarification that this is not something that Berwyn Heights is currently considering but it gives us (and other municipalities) the option to do so. CM Sweep believes the bill might give leverage to work with Pepco for lights and repairs, while CM Papanikolas agreed that this bill could give the Town more power to negotiate with Pepco. CM Sweep moved to approve the letter as written; CM Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

10. Resident & Community Comments

During resident comment, MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that the school flashing lights on Pontiac Street are flashing at all times of the day and night. TM Allen stated that staff is aware and an electrician is being asked to look at it.

Adjournment

CM Sweep moved to adjourn the meeting; CM Papanikolas seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:52PM.