



# 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 January 12, 2022| 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the recent surge of the omicron variant of COVID-19 and was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents could comment by calling (301) 474-9570 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at [adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov](mailto:adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov)

### Call to Order

Mayor Amanda Dewey called the meeting to order at 7PM. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, and Councilmember Ethan Sweep. Also present were Town Manager Laura Allen, Town Clerk Melanie Friesen, Lt. Daniel Unger, Officer Brandon Wright and Officer Jonathan Lowndes. Committee representatives Susan Jones and Debby Steele-Snyder were also present. Councilmember Jason Papanikolas was excused.

### Pledge of Allegiance

#### 1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey announced that there will be a Hyattsville vaccine clinic at the United Methodist Church on Belcrest Road this weekend for all ages, 5 and up.

Lt. Unger introduced the newest police officers, Brandon Wright and Jonathan Lowndes. Officer Wright is from Upstate New York. He is a graduate of the University of Maryland Police Academy and is a volunteer firefighter with College Park as well. Officer Lowndes is also originally from New York, is a father of 3 young adults, is a former Marine and comes to us from the Greenbelt Police Department.

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

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

#### 3. Consent

CM Brittan Powell moved to approve the Consent agenda. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously.

#### 4. Mayor and Council Reports

*Mayor Dewey* reminded everyone how to receive alerts from the Town by subscribing on the Town website. Residents can also check the website and social media for updated information and trash schedule changes. With snow predicted for the weekend, she recommended checking out the PW page of the website for winter weather tips. The Town is seeking applications for the Board of Elections, due at the end of the month. She attended the first full session of the

MML legislative committee, looking at what bills have been filed. The priorities of MML are restoring Highway User Revenue, allowing municipalities to form their own Police Accountability Boards, and addressing climate change. The Mayor reviewed Town meetings and community committee meetings. She mentioned the need for applicants for the PG Police Accountability Board; the forms are due by January 28.

*MPT Kulpa-Eddy* mentioned the Affordable Connectivity Program, a new program that replaces the Emergency Broadband Benefit program and includes new ways to qualify. You may need to requalify if you currently are a beneficiary. In addition, she mentioned Senator Pinsky's scholarship program is now available, and applications are due by April 3.

*CM Brittan-Powell* stated that Administration is involved in budget season as well as ARPA spending, including updating the website for usability.

*CM Sweep* shared that there is predicted snow and rain this weekend and encouraged residents to keep the roads clear if the storms come. Decisions about changes to the trash schedule should be available by Friday afternoon. The street sweeper is currently in Town, so please keep your vehicle parked off the street if you can. Monday, January 17<sup>th</sup> is MLK day. Town offices will be closed and there is an altered trash schedule.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reminded residents that the Police Department is compiling a list of volunteers for people who need assistance with snow shoveling.

## **5. Committee Reports**

- a. Education Advisory Committee: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that they will be meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, likely virtually. Applications are being accepted for the second round of Education Grant funding. The grant request application is available on the website and are due Feb 15. A \$2000 grant was approved in the first round for the BHES for the expansion of their school garden.
- b. Green Team: First meeting of the year will on the 13<sup>th</sup> virtually. Thriving Earth Exchange volunteers did a quick survey of the Town to gather broad information on invasive species. The project is still looking for volunteers and interested residents can reach out to the Mayor or the Green Team. The Green Team is also working on Bee-City USA and quarterly Town cleanups. Christmas light recycling is going on through the end of the month in front of town hall.
- c. Historical Committee: Ms. Steele-Snyder stated the regular meeting schedule is resumed this month. They will be meeting virtually. They still plan to host an event, hopefully in late May so it can be outside. The committee is still working on getting their own email address. MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that there is discussion about updating the historical house walking tour as well as gathering information for those who are looking for grant money to renovate their historical houses.
- d. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported they recently had a meeting and met with the new police officer. A new generator has been purchased for the trailer and the generator will be installed sooner than planned. Discussion also focused on illegal fireworks and how to communicate to residents about alternative ways to celebrate the Holidays.

Recreation Council: Ms. Susan Jones stated the meeting last night determined that due to the current Covid surge the regifting party has been cancelled. There is no way to safely hold the event so they are hoping to reschedule in the spring, weather and health permitting. The Valentine cookie decorating and card making event will continue as planned, Feb 12 from 2-4. No decisions have been made about the March potluck. Berwyn Heights Day should be a full in-person event since it is a primarily outdoor event, and the Rec Council is discussing ways to manage the pancake breakfast and senior bake sale. The Rec Council is already in contact with the ride vendor, band and DJ and will be in contact with the parade participants from 2 years ago. MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that the committee is looking for

other ideas for more outdoor activities. CM Brittan-Powell reiterated his thoughts about more options for outdoor activities for the community. CM Brittan-Powell and Ms. Jones discussed putting a pavilion in place for outdoor meeting space. Mayor Dewey reminded the Council that CM Brittan-Powell has brought this to the group before and is awaiting his proposal. CM Brittan-Powell suggested putting together a committee to draft a proposal around building a pavilion or temporary structure for outdoor meeting space. TM Allen reminded everyone about the purchasing policy in place and offered to send it to anyone who is interested.

## **6. New Business**

### **a. Meeting Policy- Resolution 1-2022**

Mayor Dewey reviewed the proposed Resolution that will determine when the Council will be meeting in-person or virtually based on the Covid situation.

Residents Angie Wolfinger and Mr. Dave Wolfinger commented on updating the website to make it more apparent when a meeting has been moved to virtual and why this meeting was moved to virtual.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy stated that she was happy to get back to in-person meetings in December, but when the Covid numbers released by the State (delayed due to a cyberattack) were high, she felt that meeting considerations needed to be reviewed. She wants to meet in-person, as do the County schools (PGCPS), and she felt like this was a good organization to follow. CM Sweep echoed that he was also excited to be in-person in December, and how draining virtual meetings are; however, with the numbers being so high currently, it was a hard decision and that for safety it made sense for the time being to go temporarily back to virtual meetings.

Mr. Mike Attick called to ask if the Council was planning to be in-person on Monday the 18<sup>th</sup> because the schools are back in person. Mayor Dewey stated that is the plan as outlined. Ms. Angie Wolfinger asked for clarification on the school closures.

CM Brittan-Powell asked for an amendment to the Resolution: “to establish the capability to hold alternative modalities of meeting other than fully indoors-in-person or fully remote. Included in these efforts will be equipment and locations that will facilitate effective development of such modalities.”

Mayor Dewey asked for clarification on where this would fit in the Resolution.

CM Brittan-Powell suggested it would be included the “Now Therefore” section.

CM Sweep stated that he doesn’t know where this would fit, because this is about determining only if a meeting should be in-person or virtual, but not about the processes of holding a meeting. The Council debated the proposed amendment and about where it would be placed in the Resolution, should it be accepted. Resident Joan Hayden called and expressed that she doesn’t understand why the Council has spent 45 minutes discussing a resolution that determines when a meeting would be in-person or virtual when this should be a simple decision. She suggested that Council table the discussion.

CM Sweep made a motion to approve the resolution as written. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded. MPT Kulpa-Eddy stated that she needs to see CM Brittan-Powell’s proposal in writing, and would be happy to bring it back in February to consider an amendment. CM Brittan-Powell thanked his fellow CM for their feedback on the motion. The motion passed with three in favor (Mayor Dewey, MPT Kulpa-Eddy, CM Sweep), none opposed. CM Brittan-Powell abstained.

## **7. Resident & Community Comments**

There were no additional comments.

### **Adjournment:**

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to adjourn, CM Sweep seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:39PM.