



Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740
Tel. (301) 474-5000
Fax (301) 474-5002

MAYOR

Amanda M. Dewey

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)

Christopher S. Brittan Powell

Jason W. Papanikolas

Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes January 18, 2022| 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

Call to Order:

Mayor Amanda Dewey called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Ethan Sweep. Also present were Town Manager Laura Allen and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen and residents.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey reviewed the logistical needs of the meeting, including wearing a mask that covers both the nose and mouth, and speaking directly into the microphone when speaking.

2. Approval of Agenda

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to approve the agenda. CM Sweep seconded.

CM Brittan-Powell moved to amend the agenda, striking Discussion items (e) and (f) off the agenda. CM Papanikolas seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion Items

a. Council Rules Update

CM Papanikolas stated that he had offered to rewrite Council Rule 1, based on conversations he had been party to around the community. He also wanted to make the rule easier to understand when a new Councilmember is seated.

Council discussed several different elements of the rewritten rule, beginning with Agenda Management and the suggestion for dual sponsorship for an agenda item and that a Councilmember's name be attached to each agenda item. Resident Angie Wolfinger stated that she had concerns about the dual sponsorship suggestion, indicating that a resident may wind up speaking with only one Councilmember about issues and therefore issues may not have dual sponsorship.

There was also discussion regarding the length of time prior to a meeting that a CM may add an agenda item. Council determined that 3 business days prior to a meeting was the deadline to add an item. CM Brittan-Powell asked about emergent situations when action may need to be quickly. CM Papanikolas indicated that a special meeting would be the proper protocol for handling emergency situations. There was further discussion about resident input during worksessions and during Town Meetings, as well as the minutes approval process. Language was changed to reflect that the Town Clerk is the "recording secretary" of the meetings.

During discussion on Part I, Section 3 of Rule 1, it was clarified the Councilmember whose name is attached to the agenda item would be responsible for ensuring that the

documents required to address the item are included. Council also discussed decorum, the order of reporting during Mayor and Council reports, and the formatting of the agenda.

b. Council Priorities Update

Mayor Dewey reviewed that during the budget cycle last year Council identified a list of priorities that would be regularly reported on. In giving this report, TM Allen reported a grant has been awarded to the Town from the County to hire a traffic engineer that will evaluate the requests of the Walkable Bikeable Berwyn Heights taskforce. She outlined the process and the procedure that will occur to ensure this priority is completed. She further reviewed that the roof on the senior center has been replaced and the elevator replacement is scheduled for February of 2022, but supply chain issues may create delays. TM Allen addressed sustainability, indicating that the Thriving Earth Exchange project is well underway thanks to the Green Team. She also reported that a grant of \$6500 from the Thriving Earth Exchange was awarded and will help fund the project. She discussed effective communication, addressing that the Town has begun to use “Wordly” to provide real time translation of Council meetings. She also reviewed the efforts to increase Spanish language content in the Bulletin, as well as producing the e-newsletter in both English and Spanish and producing special editions of the e-newsletter when necessary to help address more immediate communication needs. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about the tree inventory project. TM Allen told Council that they are looking into purchasing a license for the software program (ArcGIS) that will allow them to update the data. CM Sweep suggested seeing if the County had a license that the Town could use. TM Allen also reported that the tree inventory may continue in the Spring.

c. ARPA Goals

Mayor Dewey reviewed the history of the ARPA spending process, noting that during the December 6, 2021 worksession, the Council established a timeline that included both goal setting and then determining a funding amount to be spent on each goal. She reiterated that this was for the first round of spending and not all the funding from ARPA would be allocated at this time. Resident Chris McComb spoke and stated that she would like to advocate for the focus of the spending to be a target approach to help residents in need and expressed concern that community voices might not be accurately represented. She further stated that while she agrees environmental issues are important, there are immediate needs of residents that need to be addressed and she would like money to be given directly to residents in need. CM Brittan-Powell expressed that he has continuing concerns the Hispanic and Latinx population of Berwyn Heights have not been adequately accounted for. Council debated the goals that were outlined as well as several of the sample projects for which funding might be used. CM Brittan-Powell stated that he believes a goal should be reaching out to the underserved population of Berwyn Heights. CM Papanikolas countered that rather than making that a separate goal, it should be included as part of the rubric by which projects are chosen. CM Sweep stated he felt that the conversation had taken several steps away from its stated purpose. Mayor Dewey reiterated the purpose of this discussion was to set the goals so that in the next meeting funds could be allocated. Resident Angie Wolfinger asked about the timeline from this meeting. She also asked about the projects that include bicycle and pedestrian safety. Council further discussed possible projects and goals that included technology aid. Council took a 5-minute break at 8:59PM. After reconvening, CM Brittan-Powell read an email from Resident Meg Miller that asked Council to consider improved mental health outreach, computer support for seniors, and

support for front line workers. She also stated that Council is accountable to residents and needs to be listening to resident input. Resident Allison Holmes sent in a matrix of projects for the Council to consider. CM Papanikolas stated that Council is responsible for listening to all residents. Angie Wolfinger stated she feels the Lake Artemesia example project doesn't feel like the type of stormwater project residents are anticipating when they discuss stormwater management. There was further discussion on reaching marginalized and underserved residents. Goals were stated as 1) Support mental health of Berwyn Heights residents in light of pandemic effects on mental health. 2) provide emergency assistance to Berwyn Heights residents experiencing financial hardship, with a focus on reaching marginalized residents. 3) Support educational growth and emotional wellbeing of students and families in light of pandemic related educational challenges 4) Reduce flooding, water quantity, and pollution in Berwyn Heights. 5) Strengthen community connections and improve communication between residents and town government with a particular focus on marginalized residents. 6) support health and safety of Berwyn Heights residents and staff. 7) Hire a public health expert to advise the Council on community needs and public health disparities and 8) Develop Town infrastructure and resources to facilitate community activities and relations including outdoors. Council homework is to present individual projects for staff to research, in writing, to the Town Manager, by February 7th.

d. DC's Stop Sign Camera Program: Possibility of analogous program if the Town did this through 'Code'

CM Brittan-Powell stated that numerous people have expressed concern about pedestrian safety due to people not stopping at stop signs. TM Allen replied that no municipality in the state of Maryland is given the authority to implement a stop sign camera program. She asked if Council wanted to allocate staff and attorney time to finding a work around. The consensus of the Council was no, that this item needs to be addressed at the State Legislative level.

e. Discussion around the possibility of using Code to address verbal assault behavior toward Police Officers.

Item removed from the agenda.

f. Exploring possible means and methods for alternate council meeting formats/modalities.

Item removed from the agenda.

g. Status update for BH Day Beer & Wine availability-verbal discussion

MPT Kulpa-Eddy stated that there is general support from the Rec Council for it. However, they will need to find a non-profit organization to agree to be the sponsor. The NPO must be a separate 501(c)(3) organization from the town.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey reported that there are new "modified mufflers prohibited" signs around town. She will be swearing in our newest police officer next Friday. She reviewed that she is on the MML legislative committee and that it has been meeting and will continue to meet every other week during the State legislative session to address the priorities of municipalities. She reported the Prince George's County Municipal Association will be meeting later in the week, on Thursday. She also reminded residents the Town is still looking for volunteers to be election judges. She reviewed the County School Board Transformation Task Force listening session. She also shared that the federal government will be delivering covid tests to households via requests made at covidtests.gov. She reviewed that the County is giving away at-home rapid tests and the Town would try to share those locations as they change rapidly. Finally, she shared about the Hyattsville vaccine clinic that will be occurring over the weekend.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy mentioned details on how to sign up to comment at the School Board Transformation Task Force Listening Session; how to attend the Prince George's County Master Plan of Transportation 2035 community meetings; and shared about the Prince George's County Heritage Area Boundary Expansion feasibility study. She reviewed that Christmas light recycling will be going on through the end of the month and reviewed the dates and times of the upcoming BHEAC and Historical Committee meetings.

CM Papanikolas stated that at this time there was no update from Code Compliance.

CM Brittan-Powell reviewed that the Council Priorities Update earlier in the meeting summarized much of the work from the Administration department.

CM Sweep reviewed that there is not much going on in Public Works but that the trash schedule for the week follows the Monday Holiday Trash schedule. He also reviewed that they are monitoring the possibility of snow. He read a letter of praise regarding Public Works response during the recent snowstorms into the record.

5. Resident & Community Comments

There were no further resident and community comments.

Adjournment

CM Sweep moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:58PM.