

# 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

**Worksession Minutes**

**July 12, 2021 | 7:00 p.m.**

**Regular Meeting (7:00 pm)**

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency 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

**Call to Order**

Due to technical difficulties the meeting was delayed until 8:00PM. Meeting was called to order at 8:00PM. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, CM Christopher Brittan-Powell, CM Jason Papanikolas, Town Manager Laura Allen, and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. CM Ethan Sweep was excused absent. During the Call to Order Mayor Dewey addressed that the Council had been in Executive Session for article 1 (Personnel) matters. She took a motion to close the Executive Session from MPT Kulpa-Eddy which was seconded by CM Brittan-Powell. Motion passed unanimously after no discussion.

1. **Announcements**

Mayor Dewey encouraged all residents who are unvaccinated to get vaccinated.

1. **Approval of Agenda**

MPT Kulpa-Eddy motioned to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by CM Brittan-Powell and passed unanimously and without discussion.

1. **Discussion Items**
2. **4 Cities Agenda Items-Verbal Discussion**

Council was invited to bring forward items for the 4 Cities Commission Agenda. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 28, 2021. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked that the Town consider bringing a speaker in from the Prince George’s County or State of Maryland Redistricting Commissions. She also requested that we inquire with College Park about the details regarding use of their new Dog Park. Additionally, she would like to engage the group on potential Comcast/I-Net changes. Mayor Dewey suggested that the Town should ask the other Communities about their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) process. MPT Kulpa-Eddy also requested an update on the status and plans for the re-opening of Prince George’s County Public Schools, perhaps bringing in a representative from the School Board. Additionally, CM Brittan-Powell suggested an update on the Greenbelt Road working group may be included, but as CM Sweep (the point person for Berwyn Heights) is absent, it will be confirmed later.

1. **Draft “Don’t Block the Box” Language, Ordinance Change**

This ordinance is brought about as part of Walkable Bikeable Berwyn Heights (WBBH) Taskforce recommendations. The proposed changes refer to Ordinance 119: Traffic and Parking. TM Allen suggested that the ordinance change be titled “Don’t Block the Intersection” which, while not alliterative, is clearer. She reported that the language of this ordinance will give the Police Department the power to enforce and fine violators. She also reported that the Chief of Police has identified a number of items in the ordinance that the Police Department already has the power to enforce. The ordinance change will allow for a $75 fine for blocking an intersection. This language is proposed to be added in section 4.F.-11A of Ordinance 119. There is already language in the ordinance to address other concerns from WBBH regarding blocking of crosswalks. To enact the ordinance change, the council would need to present it at two Town Meetings, with a subsequent 20 day waiting period to allow time for residents to request that the changes go to referendum before enforcement begins. TM Allen then sought Council input. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if the ordinance might include a definition of “intersection”. Council discussed several intersections that have parking/visibility issues. Mayor Dewey requested the TM Allen find out if including the definition of an intersection is a common practice. CM Brittan-Powell made the point that with effective enforcement, other communities have been successful in changing behavior on this issue. Mayor Dewey also asked on behalf of CM Sweep about parking enforcement for residents who are unable to move their vehicles after 72 hours (e.g., they are on vacation). CM Brittan-Powell responded that the language does include greater than 72-hour parking for vehicles that are parked at or near their residence. CM Papanikolas would like to see parking enforcement for vehicles parked closer than 10 yards of a stop sign. He also suggested that the Town request that State Highway Administration (SHA) adjust the timing on the light at the Pontiac/Kenilworth intersection, as triggering the sensor is part of the reason why vehicles block the Pontiac/Edmonston intersection. The Mayor asked CM Papanikolas for clarification on if the request to SHA should come before or after the legislation (Ordinance 119). CM Brittan-Powell asked about adding rumble strips to see if that may decrease accidents at the Pontiac/Kenilworth intersection. TM Allen replied that rumble strips may trigger noise complaints. CM Papanikolas asks if temporary rumble strips are available to try out. Mayor Dewey confirmed that the Council seems to be in general consensus about the ordinance change, but that the Council would like to have a few questions answered.

1. **Hybrid Council Meetings-Verbal Report**

TM Allen presented some of the challenges of holding hybrid meetings. She reported being in conversation with Greenbelt as they work on a similar project. Some other area Councils are looking to resume in-person meetings soon. Mayor Dewey asked if the Councils that are looking to resume in-person meetings are including residents or just Councilmembers. CM Brittan-Powell asked if there is a required way to hold a public meeting. Mayor Dewey responded that what she understands from MML is that what makes a meeting “public” is what the community comes to expect. TM Allen explained that meetings must be accessible both to people in terms of attendance and accessibility in terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

1. **Department Reports**

*Mayor Dewey* reported that the Town meeting is in two days, on Wednesday, July 14th. She reported that the Green Team will be meeting on the 13th. She encouraged vaccination again, stating that there is a plateau in cases of COVID-19 in Prince George’s County. She also highlighted that District 3 County CM Glaros is hosting a virtual meeting with the new County Police Chief on the 15th and encouraged people to attend. She also reviewed the federal broadband benefit and reiterated that the Police Department is adding focus on noise disturbances. She encouraged residents to reach out to the Police Department on specific types of noises and specific times.

*MPT Kulpa-Eddy* reviewed attending the ARPA presentation on June 22nd. She highlighted that the revenue loss calculation will be a focus, as it offers the most flexibility for spending. She reviewed Comcast leaving I-Net and the impact that may have on municipalities, She also attended the Maryland Digital Inclusion Educational Summit on the digital divide. She attended the MML summer Conference and the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance Graduate Course. MPT Kulpa-Eddy brought forward that the first redistricting hearing for Prince George’s County is July 19th at 5PM and encourages people to register. Berwyn Heights does not appear to be affected by any of the current proposed redistricting plans. She also spoke about the Paint Branch Golf Course and how citizen engagement swayed them to try and save the golf course while working with the University of Maryland on what they need as well. She asked people to watch social media and the Town website for more on the Child Tax Credit.

*CM Papanikolas* saved his updates for the Town Meeting on Wednesday.

*CM Brittan-Powell* also saved his updates for the Town Meeting.

1. **Resident & Community Comments**

There were no calls or emails. MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she has had requests for information on National Night Out. TM Allen replied that there will be more details on that by Wednesday. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked for clarification on the registering vaccination status for use of the Senior Center.

 **Adjournment**

CM Papanikolas moved to adjourn the meeting. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded. Motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:12PM.

Respectfully Submitted, Melanie Friesen 7/22/2021