



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Minutes Worksession October 6, 2014

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 Dennison, Chris Rasmussen and Anthony Schreiber. Also present was Town Administrator (TA) Edward Murphy, Director of Public Works Adrian Lockley, and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. Mayor

Agenda: A request of Berwyn Heights Elementary School to use the Town Center for an employee's going-away party was added.

Announcements: The new Town Administrator, Jessica Cowles, will officially start to work next Monday, October 13. TA Murphy will continue to work as a consultant until the end of October. A retirement party for Mr. Murphy will be held on October 23. The TA transition will be discussed in tonight's executive session. CM Dennison's mother recently celebrated her 89th birthday.

Calendar: The school board member elected to represent Berwyn Heights on November 4, is to be invited to the November 20 Berwyn Heights legislative dinner. The University of Maryland Inn & Conference Center will be considered as a location. The January 5, 2015 worksession was moved to January 12, and the second worksession to January 26.

Minutes: On a motion by CM Dennison and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the September 2 worksession minutes were adopted 5 to 0. The September 10 Town meeting minutes were distributed.

Department Reports: Mayor Calvo reported that he met with Jessica Cowles before he left on vacation. She was looking forward to getting started in the Town Administrator position. He also had a meeting with WSSC representatives in which they agreed to improve communications with Berwyn Heights about upcoming projects that involve street openings. The possibility of drafting a standard memorandum of understanding (MOU) when undertaking road construction in a municipality is under consideration. A follow up meeting will take place tomorrow to discuss the Indian Creek water main replacement project scheduled to start in summer 2015. It will affect a large number of streets in Town, including recently paved ones. Public Works Director Lockley was designated as the point man for interactions with WSSC.

CM Dennison said that she attended the Boys & Girls Club Harvest Fest fundraiser, which was very well attended. She also announced upcoming events and noted that a lunar eclipse, or 'blood moon,' will occur on October 8. CM Rasmussen reported that he attended the last Green Team meeting to discuss the Urban Forest initiative and to think about how to ensure the health of the Town's trees on both public and private property. He also raised the issue of re-establishing a shade tree board, which is provided for in Ordinance 122, and the role the Green Team might play in managing it. CM Rasmussen also attended the Community Garden dedication and yesterday's composting workshop, and completed an inspection to renew the rental license for his Osage Street property. The Code Department hired a new part-time code officer, Keelah Allen-Smith, to assist with rental inspections mostly after hours and on the weekend. Code Supervisor Simpson will attend the next worksession to give a status report after his first 3 months in office. Code has made an inventory of frequent problems found during rental inspections including: inoperable windows, missing outlets, chipping paint and incomplete paperwork, among others. Code is also running a little behind in license fees and code fines revenue collection.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she and CM Schreiber attended a General Services Administration (GSA) open house at which the environmental impacts of relocating the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt Station were presented. She also attended a listening session with County Executive Baker and his team at the Northwestern High School, where citizens voiced concerns about crime, code issues and printers in schools. CM Schreiber commended Bruce Hockman for being selected Public Works employee of the month.

Citizen comments: There were none.

BHHC appointments: Mayor Calvo explained that the Historical Committee asked the Council to appoint Jeffrey Baldwin-Bott and Kerstin Harper as voting members, while removing Maddie Allen. Mr. Baldwin-Bott will be a new member while Ms. Harper has been a staff liaison, but would now become a voting member to make it easier for the Committee to meet a quorum. CM Dennison moved and MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded to appoint them as full voting members.

In response to CM Rasmussen, Mayor Calvo explained that the Historical Committee's legislative authority is advisory. It is one of the Town's Committee's that came into being with adoption of a resolution by the Council. With no further comments, the members were appointed.

2. Public Works

Staff utilization: Mayor Calvo welcomed Public Works Director Lockley to discuss a range of issues affecting Public Works. Director Lockley began with an explanation of how he uses his 6 full-time and 2 permanent part-time employees to accomplish a normal week's workload. With all employees present, he has 296 man hours available to complete a week's refuse collection routine, excluding himself. Mondays and Tuesdays he needs 2 crews consisting of 1 driver and 2 laborers, each, to collect both household trash and yard waste on the north and south side of the Town. Wednesdays he needs a crew of 1 driver and 3 laborers to collect recyclables for the entire Town. This is an all day event that frequently cannot be completed in time to get to the recycling station before the afternoon deadline of 3:30 pm. The loads are dumped the following morning. On Thursdays and Fridays, the household trash is usually less, but 1 crew is needed to collect refuse and bulk trash, and another crew of 1 driver and 1 laborer to collect metals separately. Driving refuse to the landfill takes a crew of 1 driver and 1 laborer. Other tasks, such as maintenance of grounds, buildings and vehicles is carried out on an as needed basis and when there is time, mostly on Thursday and Friday afternoons.

CM Rasmussen asked if the switch to using a truck with an automated lift has been explored. It might speed up collection and reduce labor costs due to fewer work-related injuries and lost productivity. Director Lockley and TA Murphy said that the Council and Public Works Director have explored this option. The main problem with using an automated truck is parked cars, preventing the truck from reaching trash cans set out at the curb. Dumping of trash cans is not faster if the cans have to be carried from the curb around cars to the truck and back. If a can is too heavy, usually due to rain water collecting in it, two men will lift it.

Refuse collection reorganization: Mayor Calvo said that CM Schreiber has raised the issue of switching to once-a-week trash collection, which many municipalities have implemented in recent years. Several years ago, he advocated for once-a-week collection but eventually gave up on the idea. He realized that the current trash trucks are not big enough to fit the Town's weekly trash volume with once a week collection. Since then he has begun to talk with Director Lockley about consolidating the 2nd trash pickup on Thursdays.

Director Lockley said the transition to 3-day pickup is not a problem from the Public Works Department's perspective. The main issue is that residents on the south side of the Town would have to get used to a new pickup date. However, before the consolidation is carried out, bulk refuse collection needs to be switched to Mondays and Tuesdays. To a large extent, this is already taking place as residents cleanup and de-clutter their homes on weekends and put unwanted bulk trash out on the next available trash day. Approximately 75% of bulk trash is already picked up Mondays and Tuesdays. This actually works better for the Public Works department, because it will free up time on Fridays for other tasks. However, completion of the transition to 3-day pickup is contingent on the purchase of a second 27 cubic foot trash truck, which is scheduled for FY 2016. To have the truck delivered by July 1, 2015, it needs to be ordered at least 4 months prior.

To summarize, Director Lockley said he is planning to switch bulk refuse collection to Monday and Tuesday in January 2015, place an order for the new trash truck by February 2015, and consolidate the second trash pickup on Thursdays after taking delivery of the truck in July 2015.

At 8:10 p.m., the Council took a 5-minute break.

CM Rasmussen asked if the volume of household trash could be further reduced by incentivizing more recycling. Director Lockley said, after the Town switched to in-house recycling and initiated a recycling publicity campaign, trash disposal initially went down as recycling went up. Lately, however, recycling has increased only marginally, while trash disposal has remained constant. Mayor Calvo thought that this may be due to an increase in families with young children in Town, which generally produce more trash.

CM Rasmussen also asked if the Council has thought about charging fees for exceeding normal trash amounts to change incentives. Mayor Calvo said the Council has discussed it. In Berwyn Heights a small percentage of residents are probably responsible for throwing out half of all trash. The Town has tried to address this problem by citing egregious violators, who improperly dispose of their trash, not separating their recyclables, or committing other trash violations. The Council also discussed charging a fee for putting out more than one trash can, but chose not to go that route for now.

Mayor Calvo asked Director Lockley if he has a backup plan if Monday's trash volume becomes too large to be picked up with one truck on a regular basis. Director Lockley said that this happens only occasionally. He then sends a second truck to the landfill. Another option is to ask residents not to set out more than 2 trash cans on Mondays and reserve leftover trash for Thursday pickups. The Council discussed several other options: 1) move the dividing line between north and south side a block to the north, to even out the number of homes that need to be serviced for each side; 2) plan on using two trucks on Monday, but hold them until the next morning to drive to the landfill. In the morning, this might be accomplished with just the driver because there would be no lines at the landfill that require an assistant; and 3) divide the Town into thirds and collect trash only once a week. The Council deemed Option 1 to be the least disruptive and easiest to implement backup plan if Monday pickup becomes too much to handle. It was agreed to switch to 3-day trash collection in accordance with the plan outlined by Director Lockley. Residents need to be educated about the planned changes as soon as possible.

Recycling guidelines: Director Lockley explained that Waste Management (WM), the operator of the Prince George's recycling facility, has implemented more stringent quality control measures for recyclables. Any portion of a truck load of recyclable materials deemed to be unacceptable by WM inspectors does not qualify for payment. This includes all items currently on the list of non-recyclables, such as Styrofoam, ropes, hoses, chains, or containers with food residue. In addition, anything in opaque plastic bags will not be counted as recyclable because WM inspectors cannot see what is inside. Last time, Berwyn Heights disposed of its recyclables, 30% of the load was not counted as recyclable and excluded from payment.

Mayor Calvo said this is not necessarily bad. If the stricter enforcement increases purity of the recycled material, payment for recyclables should theoretically go up. For the Town it means launching another publicity campaign to educate residents. TA Murphy said that the Town's recycling flyer will have to be redone, then mailed to residents, probably more than once, to be followed by citations for non-compliance. CM Rasmussen suggested that someone go door-to-door to talk to residents about what goes into their recycling bins. Possibly the Green Team could be consulted to come up with a plan. The Council agreed for staff to develop an educational plan and to begin publicizing the changes as soon as possible.

Road repair update: Director Lockley reported that a new contractor completed the patching of potholes last week. This year, the repairs were made with hot patch, as last year's cold patch repairs did not hold up well. The contractor he is using will also do an inspection of Town streets to evaluate their overall condition. The inspection will become the basis for developing/ updating a priority list of streets that need to be repaved.

Mayor Calvo said that he wants to understand what a large-scale road repair project would cost to get all Town roads into good condition. Such a project could possibly be undertaken in conjunction with the upcoming WSSC water main replacement. Utilizing WSSC contractors might save the Town a considerable amount of money. A big project would have to be bonded, but could be more economical than doing many small-scale projects. It needs to be determined if the savings from doing a large-scale project are greater than the interest on a bond. The value of repaved streets in improving curb appeal would become more significant if the FBI headquarters relocates to Greenbelt Station, and more people are looking for housing in the nearby communities.

TA Murphy said he asked WSSC to come in and give a presentation about their project, which is going

to affect mostly the western half of the Town. This should give the Town a time frame for its road improvement program. TA Murphy also noted that WSSC will have to cut down and prune trees in connection with this project. They have obtained a permit from the Department of Natural Resources for the tree work, and submitted a detailed by-address plan to the Town. The marked trees are both in the Town right-of-way and on private property. Mayor Calvo commented that it would be nice to have a map with the trees, and some explanation of why pruning or removal is necessary. CM Rasmussen noted the document states that all tree removals require the consent of the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Bus stop pads and benches: TA Murphy said that the FY 2015 budget contains \$5,000 for bus stop pads and benches to be installed as part of the priority 1 sidewalks project. He has developed a list of 10 bus stop locations based on usage by riders for contractors to use in preparing their bids. The Council is requested to review the list and revise it if needed. Due to the lateness of the hour, it was agreed that Councilmembers review the list at home and make a decision at the next worksession.

Administration

Sidewalks bids: TA Murphy said the bidding for the priority 1 sidewalks project was advertised in the Washington Post and in a web-based trade publication, Construction Journal, in conformance with the Town Charter. Four bids were received. The lowest bid was by E&R Services of Lanham, which came in \$120,000 below budget at \$421,000, then NZI Construction of Beltsville at \$433,200, then GT Contracting Corporation at \$544,700, and Olney Masonry Corporation at \$556,300. The Council is requested to award the winning bid at the October 8 Town meeting.

Mayor Calvo said he is surprised that there is no bid tabulation sheet with a breakdown of costs for the different aspects of the project. He would like to know in more detail why the bids differ. Apart from price, there may be other factors he would base award of the contract on, such as flexibility to make changes to the project. After checking his email, TA Murphy was able to provide a bid analysis by C.P. Johnson Engineers, including a bid tabulation sheet comparing unit prices for 67 components of the project. CM Schreiber said he is comfortable with making a selection with the engineers having reviewed the bids and given assurances that all bids are provided by reputable contractors. With the engineer's analysis in hand, the Council was asked to review the bid sheets and check with TA Murphy if they have questions. The award of the bid will be on the agenda for the next Town meeting.

Budget amendment: TA Murphy said that the FY 2015 budget amendments are not yet finished. He had to add the State of Maryland's \$80,000 contribution for the emergency generators, the Town's \$20,000 share of the bike way grant, and salary adjustments. He will have draft ready to send out to the Council tomorrow so that it can review the amendments prior to adoption at the October 8 Town meeting.

Merit pay: Mayor Calvo said that TA Murphy prepared 4 different options to award cost of living increases (COLAs) and merit increases for staff to become effective with the first payroll in November. The options are based on 26 employees who were evaluated. This year, employee ratings have been higher across the board than in previous years, with ratings ranging between 3.55 and 4.5 on a scale of 1 to 5. Thus 2 sets of options were prepared with higher cutoff points for merit pay: a 3.8 cutoff that would result in 13 employees receiving merit pay and 13 not receiving merit pay; and a 4.0 cutoff that would result in 9 employees receiving merit pay and 17 not. All employees will receive COLAs regardless of rating.

For both cutoff scenarios, there are two different rate increases: 1) a 2% increase for employees that qualify for merit pay and a 1% increase for employees who qualify only for a COLA; and 2) a 2.5% increase for employees that qualify for merit pay and 1.5% increase for employees that only qualify for a COLA.

Mayor Calvo, CM Rasmussen and CM Schreiber preferred Option 4, which provides for a 2.5% / 1.5% increase with a 3.8 cutoff point; MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Dennison preferred Option 2 with a 2.5% / 1.5% increase with a 4.0 cutoff point. CM Schreiber moved to adopt Option 4. CM Rasmussen seconded. The motion passed 3 to 2, with MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Dennison opposed.

Clean Lot Ordinance: Consideration of revisions to the Clean Lot Ordinance were postponed. TA Murphy said that he polled 16 Prince George's County municipalities regarding inoperable vehicles. Only two municipalities allow cars without valid tags to be stored on private property.

Town Center rental fee exception: Mayor Calvo said that Berwyn Heights Elementary School staff will hold a going-away party for longtime secretary Almura Geter and asked if the rental fee could be waived. CM Schreiber moved to waive the fee. CM Dennison seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0.

FBI headquarters letter of support: MPT Kulpa-Eddy provided a draft letter supporting the relocation of the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt Station in the context of a GSA environmental impact scoping project. Comments are due on October 23. Councilmembers agreed to review the letter and discuss it at the next worksession.

7. Executive Session (10:20 p.m. - 10:44 p.m.)

On a motion by CM Schreiber and second by CM Dennison, the Council went into executive session to discuss the on-boarding of the new town administrator. With the matter discussed, CM Schreiber moved and CM Dennison seconded to end the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*