



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Budget Worksession April 13, 2015

### **Executive Session (5:00 p.m. - 7:18 p.m.)**

The executive session was called to order at 5:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheye Calvo, MPT Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, CMs Patricia Dennison, Chris Rasmussen and Anthony Schreiber, as well as Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles. On a motion by CM Schreiber and second by CM Dennison, the Council went into executive session to discuss code supervisor interviews. With matter discussed, CM Schreiber moved and CM Dennison seconded to close the executive session.

The public meeting was called to order at 7:26 p.m. Town Clerk Kerstin Harper joined the meeting.

### **1. Mayor**

**Announcements:** Preceding this meeting, the Council had two executive sessions related to personnel matters, which was the reason for the late start of the regular meeting. There will not be an executive session following this meeting, as originally planned. On April 22, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., the Commercial District Management Authority (CDMA) will convene to give input on the proposed FY 2016 Public Safety Taxing District budget. The meeting is open to the public.

CM Schreiber's Men's League basketball team had a win in the playoffs and will advance to the next round. CM Rasmussen thanked Councilmembers for their expressions of sympathy on the death of his mother. On April 20, he will start his new job and will not be able to attend the worksession.

### **2. Budget**

Mayor Calvo noted that TA Cowles provided new budget spreadsheets and one-page summary of the FY 2016 budget. They contain the most recent changes made by the Council, including raising the money to be pulled from surplus from \$20,000 to \$40,000. Most of this money will go toward the salary pool, which was raised from \$17,000 to \$34,000 to remain competitive with neighboring municipalities. The remainder will go into a 'kitty' to pay for possible overages in some line items. On the capital side, the Council also authorized expenditures of \$3,200 from the Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness reserve, appropriated a \$3,000 contribution from surplus for improvements to the Sports Park batting cage, \$17,500 from surplus for a personnel consultant, and

\$30,000 from the Greenbelt Station reserve for an economic development study. In addition, the Council agreed that money should be set aside for an urban tree initiative, but it requires a framework to determine funding levels.

Mayor Calvo said that the *street repairs* line item in the Public Works budget was increased from \$10,000 to \$20,000 to pay for patching the Town's deteriorating roads. However, a more comprehensive plan is needed for renovating all Town streets. Public Works Director Lockley has been invited to discuss the roads at the next worksession. There are a number of different problems that should be fixed in the short term, such as the storm water drainage issues highlighted by Director Lockley at a previous worksession. This and other needed curb and gutter work could possibly be performed by the sidewalk contractor now in Town. As part of a comprehensive plan, an inventory of all current problems afflicting the roads is needed. Beyond that, a framework for fixing the roads over the long term should be developed, including options on how to pay for it.

CM Rasmussen asked what kind of standards the Town would use when budgeting for road renovation: less expensive but aesthetically acceptable versus more expensive but durable. Mayor Calvo agreed that is a central point. It may be advantageous to patch roads until there are enough savings to pay for a major project in cash and avoid debt payments. However, at some point, postponing resurfacing will damage the sub-base and necessitate a more expensive replacement of the entire road bed.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy questioned whether there is enough money in the *bulletin* and *copier maintenance* line items of the Administration Department budget. TA Cowles said that she will check into it. CM Rasmussen asked if there are any guidelines for developing a comprehensive tree program. He has looked into different types of matching funds offered by County and State agencies, re-establishing a tree board, and amending Ordinance 122 - Urban Forest. Mayor Calvo said that guidelines for replanting trees would be useful. The Edmonston Road buffer was cleared by Pepco and to some extent replanted, but still seems incomplete. On the other hand, vines are still overrunning the buffer and should probably be cleared. Any tree program should have an educational component that advises on which trees should be planted where and how to care for them.

In conclusion, Mayor Calvo noted that there are several open issues in the FY 2016 budget that still need to be addressed: a roads plan, a method for tracking gas usage in the Public Works Department and health insurance.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Kerstin Harper