



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Town Meeting October 8, 2014

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Calvo, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Kulpa-Eddy, CMs Dennison, Rasmussen and Schreiber. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Murphy, Chief of Police Antolik, Treasurer Lape, Clerk Harper, and Garth Beall of Renard Development Corporation.

Mayor Calvo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 1. Presentation

Mayor Calvo welcomed Garth Beall, Manager of Renard Development Corporation, the developer of the Greenbelt Station north core. He came to give an update on the FBI headquarters relocation process. Mr. Beall said, since his last presentation before the Town Council, Renard Development Corporation submitted a proposal for the future FBI headquarters at Greenbelt Station in response to a solicitation of expressions of interest by the General Services Administration (GSA), which manages the FBI site selection process. The proposed plans try to satisfy 3 objectives: 1) accommodate the new FBI headquarters to be built on the current Metro parking lot; 2) move Metro parking to a new parking garage closer to the Metro tracks; and 3) create a mixed-use development next to the Metro station, while providing access to the buses and kiss-and-ride.

Based on subsequent discussions with GSA, the site plan that best met the above objectives (Plan B) was selected. It moves the outer loop on-ramp of the Beltway interchange further north and adds an additional 2 1/2 acres to the GSA/ FBI parcel. The State Highway Administration (SHA) is already working on a new design for the on-ramp. Further, Plan B calls for a mixed-use development that has 800 residential units, a 300-room hotel, between 350,000 - 400,000 square feet of office space, and as much retail as can fit. The mixed-use development will be 8 stories high and accommodate bus stops and kiss-and-ride facilities. The FBI headquarters will be 13 stories high, and include parking for 3,750 cars.

Mr. Beall continued that the GSA is currently in the process of studying the environmental impact of relocating the FBI headquarters to the three locations in the running: Greenbelt Station, Landover Mall and Springfield, VA. As required by federal law, the impacts studied include traffic, noise, as well socio-economic, and cultural resources. This will be followed by issuance of Requests for Qualification (RFQ) of bidding teams, which will take place this winter; the completion of a draft Environmental Impact Study (EIS) in spring 2015; the issuance

of a Request for Proposals (RFP) in summer 2015; negotiation of responses to the RFPs in fall 2015; and the award of the contract in spring 2016.

Mr. Beall said he is confident that the contract will be awarded to Greenbelt Station. To get ready, the developer is working on obtaining bonds and permits, and finalizing the plans for the Metro parking garage. The garage has to be built first to be able to clear the surface parking lot, where a future FBI headquarters will be built. Construction is expected to take 16 to 18 months. If the project schedule stays on track, the project should be completed in spring 2020.

Renard Development has partnered with Related Management of New York and Elcor Development to build the \$1.2 billion FBI headquarters. The concept plan calls for a complex of 5 buildings, including 2 parking garages, that incorporate many green features, such as solar paneling on the parking garage, green roofs and state-of-the-art stormwater management facilities. Additionally, the development will leave intact the current Indian Creek flood plain and nearby wetlands, as well as undertake stream restoration work on Narragansett Run.

Mayor Calvo asked how GSA makes the decision to award the contract. Mr. Beall replied that the first consideration is cost, but environmental impacts, access by road and by rail are also very important criteria. He thinks Greenbelt Station is the best suited and the most ready of the 3 proposed sites. Here, the FBI headquarters would be located within an easy walk from the Metro station at 275 yards. The other sites will require a shuttle service. Also, Greenbelt Station already has an approved concept and preliminary site plan, and is on a fast track for approval of the detailed site plan. The other 2 sites have not yet started the design and approval process.

Mayor Calvo asked what Berwyn Heights and other neighboring municipalities can do to bring the FBI to Greenbelt Station. Mr. Beall said that a letter of support in the current scoping process would be most effective. A video by the Four Cities Coalition, highlighting the attractions and benefits of these communities, is also welcome. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that a letter of support by the Town has been prepared and is ready to go out by the deadline. Mayor Calvo concluded that Berwyn Heights is excited about the prospect of bringing the FBI here and is willing to help in any way possible. He thanked Mr. Beall for the presentation.

## **2. Minutes**

Clerk Harper read a summary of the September 10 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the minutes were approved 5 to 0.

## **3. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Lape gave the Treasurer's report for the month of September.

## **4. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Calvo reported that a new Town Administrator, Jessica Cowles, has been hired and will start this coming Monday. She previously worked for the City of Annapolis as a legislative and policy analyst and this will be her first position as a town administrator. She emerged as the top candidate from a long and intensive search process that included interviews by the Council, the directors, as well as staff and citizen panels. Ms. Cowles impressed the Council with her creativity and energy that will be important in moving the Town forward. Credit also goes to TA Murphy who laid the groundwork during his long tenure for hiring Ms. Cowles. The Council is

grateful for all his help with hiring the new town administrator and for agreeing to stay on to facilitate the transition.

Mayor Calvo continued that tonight the Council will bring to completion another long-term project. After 3 years of planning, the contract for building the priority 1 sidewalks project will be awarded later tonight. The Town received 4 bids, with the lowest one coming in significantly under budget at \$421,000. The project will also improve bus stops around Town with pads and benches. The work of former Councilmembers Wilkinson and Almoguera to expand the network of sidewalks should be remembered tonight.

At the last worksession, Public Works Director Lockley was present to discuss upcoming changes to the weekly trash collection, among other things. The Council agreed to move the Friday trash pickup to Thursday, servicing both north and south side homes on one day. This frees Public Works staff up to do other jobs on Fridays and is expected to yield big efficiencies and boost morale. The change will be implemented over the next 9 months as it requires the purchase of a larger trash truck and moving bulk trash collection to Mondays and Tuesdays.

Road repair plans was another topic discussed at the last worksession. WSSC will undertake a major water main replacement project next year that will result in digging trenches on many of the Town's streets. Apart from the disruption, this will afford the opportunity for the Town to piggyback onto WSSC's contract for resurfacing these streets, and realize substantial savings. Mayor Calvo, CM Schreiber, Director Lockley and TA Murphy met with WSSC representatives yesterday to discuss the project and how WSSC and the Town can become better partners in improving the Town's infrastructure under and above ground.

Mayor Calvo further reported that the Council recently awarded Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) and merit increases to 26 employees, effective November 1. All employees will receive a 1.5% COLA, and about half of the employees will receive an additional 1% in merit increases. Lastly, Berwyn Heights was awarded its *Sustainable Maryland* certification in September. This represents the culmination of a two-year effort, primarily by the Green Team, to sign up for the program and implement the projects needed to earn the certification. Credit also goes to the Public Works Department, which helped the Green Team throughout the process, particularly with setting up the community garden that was recently dedicated.

## **5. Department Reports**

**Administration:** MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she attended a listening session of the County Executive and his team last week. This is a great opportunity for residents to bring up any concerns about any County services directly with the executive team. Two more listening sessions will be held on October 9 at Oxon Hill High School and on October 16 at Flowers High School. Further, on October 18, a pro-bono legal services workshop will be held at the Greenbelt Library where residents can get help with mortgage foreclosures and loan modification problems.

In Town news, the Council received the priority 1 sidewalks bids and will award the contract later tonight. Mr. Murphy is still working on settling issues with the State Highway Administration (SHA) to get the sidewalks on the 8900 block of 63rd Avenue started, and with Prince George's County to finish the emergency generators project. Lastly, MPT Kulpa-Eddy

said she is looking forward to the Council's first worksession with the new Town Administrator in place.

**Code Compliance:** CM Rasmussen reported that the Code Department has hired a new part-time officer, Keelah Allen-Smith, to help with rental inspections. Ms. Allen-Smith is a full-time code officer for the City of College Park and brings a lot of experience to the job. Fall is a time when rental inspections spike because there is a lot of turnover in rental apartments, with students moving in for the new school year. The Code Department has seen an increase of failed inspections as it takes a closer look at deficiencies that pose a health and safety risk.

CM Rasmussen reminded residents that the Town requires a building permit whenever a County building permit is required. This includes major home improvement projects, as well as construction of additions, outbuildings and fences. Further, the Council has begun to review the Clean Lot Ordinance, and the accompanying Commercial Clean Lot Ordinance, to update regulations on the storage of inoperable vehicles and to tighten the process for fining repeat offenders and for abatement of vacant properties. Lastly, CM Rasmussen offered a definition for "phragmite," a tall, perennial reed that alters the ecological balance of wetlands, which had been mentioned in Mr. Beall's presentation on the Greenbelt Station development.

**Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs:** CM Dennison thanked retiring TA Murphy for all his help to her department over the years. She then reported that the Boys & Girls Club harvest fest was a big success. Many beautiful mums and pumpkins were sold for the benefit of the club. Upcoming events include Trunk or Treat on October 25, Halloween on October 31, Veterans Day on November 9 and the Holiday Tree Lighting on December 6. CM Dennison reminded residents that November 4 is Election Day, and voting occurs at the BHES cafeteria. Further, free flu shots are available on October 28 at the Springhill Lake community center.

**Public Health and Safety:** Chief Antolik gave the police activities report for September. There were 9 Part I offenses, which is in line with the 5-year average of 9.6. The year to date total is 53, which is above last year's total of 43, but still lower than the 5-year average of 62.2. The police also issued 151 State and Town citations and 101 speed camera citations. There was 1 arrest of an intoxicated Latino male for assaulting his girlfriend. In another assault the victim declined to press charges. There were also 3 thefts, including a motorcycle, which has since been recovered. Chief Antolik concluded with safety tips for trick-or-treating on Halloween.

Referring to the citation data in the monthly report, Mayor Calvo asked why there was a large drop-off of citations issued in September. Chief Antolik replied that it reflects the resignation of one officer, officers taking vacation, and officers being stationed at the school when students were returning from summer vacations.

**Public Works:** CM Schreiber reported that the Public Works staff completed the repair of 64 pot holes, using a new contractor, and that Bruce Hockman was selected as employee of the month. He reminded residents that filled trash cans should not exceed the 50 lbs. limit. Heavy trash cans are more difficult for the pickup crew to handle. Further, residents are encouraged to recycle more as the Town gets paid for recyclables, whereas it has to pay for depositing trash at the landfill. This will also help the Town transition to a new trash collection schedule where both the north and south side will be picked up on Thursdays for the second weekly collection.

## **6. Committee Reports**

**Green Team:** Mayor Calvo reported that the Green Team held a well-attended composting workshop this weekend, which is part of an effort to educate residents about options for reducing the trash they dispose. The Green Team also held initial discussions with CM Rasmussen about the role they might play in revising the Urban Forest Ordinance and devise rules to better care for the Town's tree canopy.

**Historical Committee:** CM Dennison announced that the Historical Committee will host a Veteran's Day event on November 9.

**Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness:** MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that the NW/EP participated in Greenbelt's emergency preparedness day on September 28. They brought their emergency trailer to help educate people about emergency readiness. Committee members will also be out this weekend to help with the 80th anniversary celebration of the Town of Edmonston. On Halloween, NW/EP will assist the police patrolling the Town to ensure the safety of trick-or-treaters. Lastly, residents were encouraged to respond to the NW/EP survey published in the October Bulletin to gauge what residents know about emergency preparedness. The survey continues to be available online through December at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/2SYBFVS>.

**Recreation Council:** Reported under Department Reports.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

**Ordinance 167-A - 2nd Reading and Adoption of FY 2015 Budget Amendments:** Clerk Harper read a summary of the Ordinance. CM Dennison moved to adopt it. CM Rasmussen seconded. Mayor Calvo explained that the Council usually adopts budget amendments in June at the end of a fiscal year to reconcile the budget. However, there were a number of developments that warrant an amendment at this time. The main driver were the salary adjustments that had to be made with the hiring of new TA Cowles while keeping TA Murphy on as a consultant to facilitate the transition. There were also several grants that require changes to the budget. This includes the Safe Routes to School grant, for which the Town will be reimbursed after it has spent the money for constructing the 63rd Avenue sidewalk; an \$80,000 grant from the State to install emergency generators the Town has to match; and a \$20,000 bike-way grant from the Maryland Heritage Area Authority (MHAA) that also requires a Town match. In addition, the amendments appropriate additional funds to purchase a Code tracking system.

CM Rasmussen clarified that a final decision on the purchase of the electronic code tracking system has not yet been made. The budget number is based on the research Code Supervisor Simpson has done comparing several systems. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked whether the amendment appropriates money for the replacement of the street sweeper. TA Murphy said it does as shown on page 2. With no further comments, the Council voted 5 to 0 to approve the budget amendment.

## **8. New Business**

**Resolution 11-2014 - Award of Sidewalk Construction Bid:** Clerk Harper read the Resolution. Mayor Calvo explained that the Council had the chance to review the sidewalk bids at the October 6 worksession and get some questions answered. The bid award is the cap stone of a

long process that officially started with a public hearing on sidewalks on October 3, 2011. At the time, the first revenue from speed cameras had come in, and the sidewalks were one of the capital projects considered for using this money.

Mayor Calvo continued that sidewalks were not built when most of the Town streets were first paved in the 1950s and 1960s. Today there is new interest in a walkable community, as Berwyn Heights is again filled with families with young children. Sidewalks became a priority of the previous Town Council where two Councilmembers with young children were strong sidewalks proponents. Unfortunately, the design and permit approval process proved much more difficult and lengthy than anticipated and these Councilmembers have since retired. Nonetheless, it is exciting to see this project realized after so much time and effort has been invested.

Mayor Calvo said the Council appropriated \$540,000 for the sidewalks projects, using money from the speed camera reserve, Metroland compensation and the surplus. The lowest bid by E&R Services at \$421,000 is substantially below budget, which is very good news. He is looking forward to seeing the sidewalks constructed as early as the end of this year, and children being able to walk to school on them next year.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy said she is sorry she cannot share the Council's enthusiasm. She is concerned that the sidewalks will bring a lot of changes to the Town, not all of them positive. There are several trees that will be cut down and more than that will be impacted by the construction. She is also concerned about the cost of the project, and that there may be additional expenses that did not show up in the bid tabulation sheet.

CM Dennison moved to adopt the Resolution. CM Schreiber seconded. The motion passed 4 to 1, with MPT Kulpa-Eddy opposed.

## **9. Citizens Discussion**

There was none.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*