



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Minutes Town Meeting August 10, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, and Maria Robles. CM Chris Rasmussen had an excused absence. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens. Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez had an excused absence.

Mayor Jewitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Announcements

Mayor Jewitt thanked everyone who helped with a great National Night Out. Senator Pinsky and Delegate Washington were in attendance and US Representative Hoyer sent staff to deliver greetings. The dunk tank raised a little over \$200.

2. Minutes

Clerk Harper read a summary of the July 13 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by CM Robles and second by CM Dennison, the minutes were approved 4 to 0.

3. Treasurer's Report

TA Cowles gave the Treasurer's report for the month of July. In response to MPT Kulpa-Eddy, TA Cowles explained that the Health Reimbursement Account used in conjunction with the Town's previous health insurance plan will be kept open until all outstanding obligations have been paid. No Council action is required to close it.

4. Mayor's Report

Mayor Jewitt reported that the Council spent much time discussing proposed tree removals by Pepco and an urban forest study by consultants SavATree. The Council continues to work on coming up with a definitive list for Town (public) tree removals by cross-referencing Pepco's and the consultants' lists and receiving input from residents. The vetted list will serve as the basis for issuing a permit to Pepco to clear vegetation around its power lines. Mayor Jewitt further reported that Berwyn Heights hosted the July Four Cities Coalition meeting and had a presentation on the new *mbike* bike share system operating at the University of Maryland campus and surrounding College Park neighborhoods. The system allows users to rent a bike for a limited time using a credit card.

5. Department Reports

Administration: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that the Administration Department is working with contractors to finish a punch list for the emergency generators project. Two air conditioning units at the Town Center were replaced because they were old and failing. The Department also continues to prepare for the annual audit and is working with human resources consultants on revising the Town's personnel manual.

In other news, the Prince George's County Click 311 will be updated to provide better access to the County's customer service request system. The Town's new website offers access to a variety of Town services, from appliance pickup to Town Center rentals, through a *Contact Us* button on the home page. August has been declared *Low Income Home Energy Assistance Action Month*. This State-managed program offers a number of grants to help defray heating and cooling expenses of low income families. More information is available at the Department of Housing and Urban Development website <http://dhr.maryland.gov/office-of-home-energy-programs/local-home-energy-program-office/>, or by contacting the Prince George's County Social Services Department at (301) 909-6300.

Code Compliance: Mayor Jewitt reported for CM Rasmussen that a fuel leak on a Cunningham Drive property was reported to the Maryland Department of the Environment, which came out to inspect. The Town will work with the property owner on remediation. A water main break on 63rd Avenue has been repaired and a temporary asphalt patch applied. Code violations for July included 29 high grass and 17 clean lot offenses.

Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs: CM Robles thanked the Police for organizing a successful National Night Out and all the civic organizations for participating in the event. On August 23, schools will be back in session and drivers are asked to watch out for students. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) is gearing up for the next school year and is hosting a number of events, starting with a kindergarten playdate at Pop's Park on August 20, where parents can exchange information about Berwyn Heights Elementary School and gently-used school uniforms can be purchased for as little as \$1.00. Parents may also want to mark their calendars for a "Boo-Hoo" coffee on August 23, Back-to-School Night on September 8, and "Hello Huskies" on September 13.

Public Health and Safety: Chief Antolik gave the report for the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department (BHVFD). On August 13, the BHVFD will hold its annual awards banquet. The Hyattsville Fire Department will cover the station. Thanks go to the Mayor and Town Council for sending a letter of support to the County Executive regarding the chain of command issue. In July, BHVFD volunteers operated on 6 working structure fires and 3 vehicle extractions in addition to many other calls.

Chief Antolik continued with the police activities report. There were 5 Part I offenses in July, compared with the 5-year average of 5.8. There were 33 Part I offenses year-to-date, compared to the 5-year average of 36.8. In addition, the officers issued some 260 State and municipal citations and 114 speed camera tickets. Residents are reminded to watch out for students when schools open on August 23. Enrollment in a citizens' police academy training course running from September 19 – December 12 is now open. Interested residents should contact him to be nominated. Lastly, on August 27, BHPD will host a *Coffee with Cops*, where residents can meet the officers, ask questions and share concerns. Council and staff are also welcome to attend.

Public Works: CM Dennison reported that the new Public Works Director Stevie Cox started to work this Monday. The crew continued its regular work picking up refuse and keeping the Town clean.

6. Committee Reports

Education Advisory Committee: CM Robles reported that the BHEAC will next meet on August 18. On National Night Out they kicked off a year-long reading challenge for students entitled “Don’t Lego That Book.” Prizes will be awarded on Berwyn Heights Day 2017. Parents have expressed concerns about 3 temporary classrooms that have been placed in the school parking lot because the school is overcrowded. The Town has no control over the placement of temporaries, but the BHEAC will start looking into the possibility of adjusting the school’s boundaries to reduce the student population.

Green Team: Several members of the Green Team attended a presentation on the Town’s urban forest study to learn more about the health of the tree canopy and about proposed tree removals. They are in the process of drafting a letter to inform residents about their right to decline tree removals by Pepco on their private property. She will ask for this letter to be on the next meeting agenda so the Council can give input before it goes out to residents.

Historical Committee: BHHC chair Clerk Harper reported that the Historical Committee is producing an oral histories highlights video, which will be shown at its Fall event on November 13, at 2 p.m. The next meeting is on September 20, during which the election of officers will take place.

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: Committee Co-chair Mike Attick said that this year’s National Night Out was the first one at which there was not some type of crisis or mishap. He thanked the Council for supporting this popular event. September is National Preparedness Month and the Committee will show anyone, who attends its September 7 meeting, how to put together a family survival kit. More information can be found in the next Bulletin.

Recreation Council: CM Robles announced that the next Recreation Council meeting will be on September 6, 7:00 p.m. and the Ice Cream Social will take place on September 20, 6:30 p.m. at the Town Center. Anyone who has fresh ideas and an interest in staging community events is welcome to attend the Recreation Council meetings.

7. Unfinished Business

There was none.

8. New Business

There was none.

9. Citizens Discussion

CM Robles said that she had a citizen comment expressing concern about the temporaries at the school and excitement about the reestablishment of the Education Advisory Committee. The resident encouraged the Committee and the Council to take up the boundary issue and for all residents to be engaged in school matters.

Mike Attick asked where the money in the Public Safety Taxing District budget goes. TA Cowles replied that this special tax is used to fund expenses associated with employing one police officer.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*