



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Minutes Town Meeting August 12, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, CMs Patricia Dennison, Maria Robles, and Anthony Schreiber. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Minutes

Clerk Harper read a summary of the July 8 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by MPT Rasmussen, the minutes were approved 5 to 0.

2. Treasurer's Report

TA Cowles gave the Treasurer's report for the month of July as Treasurer Lape had retired.

3. Mayor's Report

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reported that longtime Treasurer Suzan Lape retired on July 31, 2015. A temporary accountant has taken her place until the Town can hire a new treasurer. The Council is in the process of reviewing the duties and responsibilities of the treasurer and is drafting a new job description, which will serve to recruit the next treasurer. It is hoped that the position will be filled by the end of this year.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that two long-time residents have recently passed away. Jean McConnell, who was the Senior's Club President for 30 years, died on June 30. She was very active in the community and her church and served on the Recreation Council and Historical Committee for many years. The Town also lost Elwood McClary of 59th Avenue, who died on August 7.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy announced that departmental assignments of councilmembers changed following CM Robles' appointment to the Council. CM Robles is now heading the Code Compliance Department, MPT Rasmussen the Administration Department, and Mayor Kulpa-Eddy the Police Department.

In other news, the Town of Berwyn Heights hosted the last Four Cities meeting, where a representative from the Department on Permits, Inspection and Enforcement (DPIE) gave an overview of the agency and received questions about the permitting process. DPIE also responded favorably to citizen concerns about the proposed farmers market permit fee increases brought up at the meeting, and rolled back the increases at least for the coming year. The meeting drew veterans concerned about the closing of the Veterans' Outpatient Clinic in Greenbelt. They were informed that transportation will be provided for any elderly or disabled veterans who want to utilize the services at the south county facility in Camp Springs.

Further, there was an update on the pedestrian bridge that has been closed since it was damaged when a construction crane hit it this spring. WMATA and the contractor building the test track are close to settling the insurance claims relating to the accident, and moving ahead with repairing the bridge by November this year. The shooting of the Four Cities video to promote the relocation of the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt Station is nearing completion. A "World Premiere" showing of the video will take place on August 30, 1 p.m. at the Old Greenbelt Theater. Finally, the Spellman House Apartments in College Park, which offers assisted living for low income seniors, has some openings on their waiting list. Anyone interested can contact the Town office for more information.

4. Department Reports

Administration: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reported that the contract for the emergency generators has been signed and construction is likely to begin within the next couple of months. It is hoped that the generators will be installed by the end of the year and henceforth provide reliable backup power during a power outage. The Administration Department is also working on revising the Town treasurer's job description and finding a new treasurer.

Code Compliance: MPT Rasmussen said it was a privilege to emcee National Night Out, which was well attended despite a light rain. He thanked the police and public works staff for all their preparations. He also thanked Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford for speaking at the event and spending time visiting with all the clubs and booths represented. It was an honor to participate in the memorial tree planting for former Code Officer Charlie Hall with his wife Dianna, son Michael and a grandson.

In Code news, he will soon meet with CM Robles to hand over the Code Department and brief her on its operations. He plans to talk about the recently amended Clean Lot Ordinance and the substantial changes made in the approach to curbing invasive species, especially bamboo, storing unregistered vehicles, and maintaining accessory structures. Lastly, he has made progress toward his public pledge to lose 40 lbs. as part of the "Lose It to Win It" campaign. He lost 10 lbs. as a result of a 30-minute walk to work that comes with his new job in D.C.

Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs: CM Dennison reported that school starts on August 25. Drivers should watch out for students.

Public Health and Safety: Chief Antolik remarked on another successful National Night Out and thanked the NW/EP Committee volunteers for their help in manning the grills, Public Works for setting up and MPT Rasmussen for being Master of Ceremonies. He then gave the police activities report for July. There were 2 assaults and 7 larcenies for a total of 9 Part I offenses, which is higher than the 5-year average of 6.8. The year to date total is 41, slightly above the 5-

year average of 40.8. Residents are advised not to leave valuables in their cars, where most of the larcenies occur. The police wrote 198 state and municipal citations and 156 speed camera tickets, all on Greenbelt Road.

Chief Antolik then read an email from resident Michael Hunt commending Officer Ignowski for his thorough and professional response to a security alarm going off in his daughter's house while being abroad. Lastly, Chief Antolik showed the new Berwyn Heights police patch that will soon be worn by the officers.

In response to questions, Chief Antolik said that he plans to move the speed camera from Edmonston Road to Pontiac Street with the beginning of the school year. Residents are reminded that the police will not give warnings but immediately issue tickets for any traffic violation during the first two weeks of school. A theft of \$1,500 from a vehicle is believed to have been perpetrated by a person who knew it was in the glove box.

Public Works: CM Schreiber thanked the Police for hosting National Night Out and the Public Works Department for helping with setup and cleanup. Nichelle Howard was chosen employee of the month for educating residents on the changes in the trash collection schedule, reducing violations from 150 to less than 10 in a 30-day period. He was pleased to find 3 DPW employees helping out with Greenbelt's last recycling day.

CM Robles reported that she attended the July 25 Prince George's County zoning rewrite workshop. This was an opportunity to meet the rewrite team and learn how zoning can shape a neighborhood. The next meeting will be on September 17 at the Sports & Learning Complex.

5. Committee Reports

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: NW/EP Co-Chair Ron Shane reported that the Committee will hold a night time emergency preparedness drill on September 12 at BHES and are in need of volunteers to act as victims and citizen helpers. The mass casualty drill will be a joint exercise with the CERT teams of neighboring cities who are likely to help each other in an actual emergency. Volunteers can sign up at berwyn.heights.certs@hotmail.com.

In response to CM Schreiber, Mr. Shane said that a worst case scenario emergency would be a train accident with an explosion of chemicals, for example. CERTS are trained to respond to such an incident, but would only do so if professional first responders are not able to. Once professionals are on the scene, they would take over command. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy added that the type of freight trains carry is not made public, but a special National Capital Area force is supervising such shipments and is ready to respond should an accident occur.

6. Unfinished Business

There was none.

7. New Business

Resolution 04 -2015 - MD Smart Energy Community, Electricity Usage: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy explained that the first two resolutions on the agenda tonight are related to a Maryland Energy Administration Grant Public Works Director Lockley obtained, and pledge the Town to become a 'smart energy community.' The grant will be used to upgrade the HVAC system in the Senior Center and other measures to reduce electricity and gasoline consumption. Clerk Harper read the

Resolution. CM Dennison moved to adopt it, CM Robles seconded. The motion was approved 5 to 0.

Resolution 05-2015 - MD Smart Energy Community, Gas Usage: Clerk Harper read the Resolution. CM Schreiber moved to adopt it. CM Dennison seconded. CM Schreiber explained that the gasoline savings will be achieved mainly by equipping Town vehicles with new idling technology. The motion was approved in a 5 to 0 vote.

Resolution 06-2015 - M-NCPPC Bike Repair Station Agreement: Clerk Harper said that this agreement gives the Town permission to install and maintain a bike repair station at the Berwyn Heights Community Center. She then read the Resolution. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy explained that the agreement is related to a grant the Town received from the Maryland Heritage Areas Authority (MHAA) to make the Town more bicycle friendly. This includes installation of bike racks, bike repair stations, shared bike routes and signage. The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission requires an agreement to spell out the conditions under which a bike repair station can be placed on their property. On a motion by MPT Rasmussen and second by CM Dennison, the Resolution was adopted in a 5 to 0 vote.

8. Citizens Discussion

Ron Shane, 57th Avenue, had an addition to the NW/EP report. He said that a recent CERT training class was very well organized with instructors coming from several Prince George's cities and Fairfax and had 21 participants. The next meeting will be on September 2.

Ron Shane further noted that James Northly, another longtime resident, also passed away. Then he made a complaint about the new trash collection schedule, saying that the uneven intervals between collections causes problems for south side residents. CM Schreiber replied that all sides of the change were considered, but the new schedule was thought to have more advantages. Residents that have too much trash accumulating over the weekend might purchase another trash can for the overflow, or try to recycle more.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*