



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Minutes Worksession July 2, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 6:45 p.m. Present were Mayor Christopher Rasmussen, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Lynn White, Councilmembers (CMs) Stephen Isler, and Ethan Sweep. Councilmember Jason Papanikolas had an excused absence. Also present were Interim Town Administrator (TA) Mike McLaughlin and Chief Antolik.

Administrative Review Board Meeting (6:03 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.)

The Council went into a closed session to sit as an Administrative Review board to decide a appeal of citation 18-409 by James Klein of 6013 Berwyn Road. On a motion by CM Isler, seconded by MPT White, the citation was withdrawn in a 4 to 0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Executive Session (6:15 p.m. - 7:15 p.m.)

The Council held an executive session to discuss the Town Manager search and to receive an update from Chief Antolik on an ongoing investigation. The executive session was closed at 7:15 p.m.

Regular Session (starting at 7:18 p.m.)

Clerk Kerstin Harper and Mike Attick joined the meeting.

1. Announcements

Mayor Rasmussen announced the foregoing closed session. He then read a statement of his resignation as Berwyn Heights Mayor, effective July 16, to accept a position as Director of Academic Affairs at the Colorado Department of Higher Education. A special session will be convened on July 16, following the regular worksession to swear in MPT White as Mayor and select a new Mayor Pro Tem. The council and Mr. Attick congratulated Mayor Rasmussen on his new job and thanked him for his leadership in launching the term of the 48th Council.

2. Discussion Items

Welcome signs: TA McLaughlin explained that Public Works Director Hall has obtained a cost estimate and two mockups for *Welcome to Berwyn Heights* signs from Kerley Signs. The previous had wanted upgrade the current signs because they are old and worn. The cost of 1 sign of either design is \$3,500 or 10,500 for 3 signs the would replace.

In discussion, CM Isler expressed his interest in an electronic sign that can display messages and announce upcoming events. The higher cost of such a sign might be covered from funds set aside for economic development in the FY 2019 budget. Councilmembers commented that the welcome and electronic signs have different purposes. Alternative estimates for welcome signs, an estimate for an

electronic sign, as well as clarification of the purpose of the economic development fund were requested. The importance of location for an electronic sign was noted.

Electric recharging station: TA McLaughlin explained that the Town was awarded a \$20,000 matching grant for an electric vehicle by the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA), with the Town having to contribute \$10,000. The grant names a Ford C-Max as the electric vehicle to be obtained. But Ford has announced it will stop production of the C-Max. The Town has asked to substitute another electric or hybrid plug-in vehicle but has not received a reply yet. Additionally, Public Works Director Hall has learned that the State of Maryland provides grants for electric charging stations. It is recommended that the Town apply to obtain 2 charging stations, if the alternate electric vehicle purchase is approved, and that they be of the credit card payment type to discourage over-long charging sessions. Two locations have been proposed in the parking lot behind the Town Center.

The Council discussed locations. Both isolated and visible places were recommended. Isolated places would avoid tying up valuable parking near the Town office entrance, while more visible locations would advertise electric vehicle use. Charging stations more distant from the Town Center buildings would be costlier to install, as this would require boring under paved surfaces to lay the electric lines. Director Hall will obtain cost estimates for installing charging stations at the locations discussed tonight, as well the total remaining cost for the Town to obtain the vehicle and charging stations.

Vehicle damage: Mayor Rasmussen said the private vehicle of an employee was damaged with pellet gun shots, it is believed, while the employee attended a worksession. The vehicle's alarm went off during the worksession. The employee believes that his vehicle was targeted and requested reimbursement for the estimated \$1,184 in repairs. Mayor Rasmussen said he placed the matter on the agenda because it may set a precedent.

In discussion, the following points were made:

- The Town does not normally pay for damage to personal vehicles;
- It is not known whether the damage occurred while the employee was at the worksession since it was not reported until the next morning;
- The estimate provided for repairing 2 pellet holes in a fender is high.

It was agreed TA McLaughlin find out if the Town's insurance would pay for the damage. If it does not pay for the damage, another repair estimate should be obtained. Alternately, the Town might offer to pay for the deductible of the employee's insurance claim. Mr. Attick commented the Town did not pay for damage to an employee's car that occurred under similar circumstances some 10 years ago.

Quality of Life Commission: Mayor Rasmussen provided a document intended to be a roadmap for the work of the Citizens Commission on Quality of Life, which the Council appointed at the June 20 Town meeting. It broadly defines the purpose of the Citizen Commission and proposes a workplan from the time of its first meeting on July 9 to the presentation of a final report at the October 10 Town meeting. Acting Chair of the Commission Angela Wolfinger will call the meeting to order, and MPT White may swear in the members before the Commission proceeds with electing its chair deciding on how to move forward.

Mayor Rasmussen said the Council has the option of providing staff support for the Commission. This might include a recording secretary and persons who help structure the Commission's activities, obtain needed data, and prepare the presentation of the final report. UMD's Institute of Governmental Service & Research would be able to perform this kind of service. Unused funds in the *Town Administrator Salary* and *PRECA Aide* appropriations might be used to pay for the work. Another possibility is to find out if the

work could be done as a UMD-Town collaboration project, administered by Andrew Fellows, which the Town signed up for in 2017.

In discussion, MPT White said she does not support hiring a consultant for the Commission. But offered to ask Mr. Fellows if this could be a Town-UMD collaboration project when he is in Berwyn Heights for a meeting. CM Isler said he thought the Council tasked the Commission of 15 capable residents to do this work and make recommendations to the Council, not to hire a consultant to do this work for them. If they need assistance with research and finding data, the Town could step in at that point to help. CM Sweep said it would be difficult for any recording secretary to engage in the proceedings. The Council agreed to wait and see how the first meeting goes and what the Commission members want to do, then decide whether staff support is needed.

Council priorities final list: The Council reviewed the latest version of the priorities list developed for the coming term. It was agreed to adopt the list as is at the July 11 Town meeting, while acknowledging it is a “living document” that can be changed to allow for input from a new Councilmember or Town manager.

E-newsletter: MPT White proposed to add a weekly newsletter covering important Town news to the Town’s arsenal of communication channels. The newsletter, a sample of which was provided in the agenda packet, would be delivered electronically to residents who sign up for it. The delivery could occur via an electronic mail service, such as Mail Chimp or Constant Contact, or through the Town website. The website allows residents to subscribe to different types of news, such as weather and public safety alerts, and an e-newsletter could be added to that function. The newsletter is in .pdf format and can be distributed through other channels as well, including the old Berwyn Heights Discussion Group list server and any private lists Councilmembers may develop. The Council liked the idea of a new, more frequent communication channel and agreed that the newsletter should be made available through the Town website.

Dog park draft letter: TA McLaughlin provided a draft letter to the Director of the Maryland-National Park & Planning Commission’s (M-NCPP) Parks & Recreation Department expressing the Council’s interest in partnering with M-NCPPC to open a dog park in the location of an existing T-Ball field, which is on Park & Planning property. The Council reviewed the letter and CM Sweep said he would like to make some changes before the letter is finalized and sent.

Monthly reports key performance indicators: Mayor Rasmussen said he placed this on the agenda to have the Council review the monthly departmental reports and give input on which performance indicators they would like to see. As this would be a longer discussion, he asked to table the item to the next worksession. The Council agreed.

2. Minutes

The Council reviewed the June 5 and June 18 worksession minutes. On a motion by CM Isler, seconded by MPT White, the June 5 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0. On a motion by CM Isler, seconded by MPT White, the June 18 worksession minutes were approved in a 4 to 0 vote.

3. Department Reports

The Council reviewed the proposed agenda for the July 11 Town meeting. No changes were made.

MPT White thanked resident Betsy Dowling for inviting the Council to picnic at the Berwyn Presbyterian Church. She reported a meeting with Andy Fellows, Community Outreach Director at the University of

Maryland i-School, will take place next Friday to discuss the Town-UMD collaboration projects developed by the previous Council. The possibility of partnering with University on some of this Council's priorities will be explored.

CM Isler reported he also attended the event at the Berwyn Presbyterian Church, spent time to get to know the Seniors and met up with Public Works Director Hall to receive an overview of the department. Further, he is working with the Community Center and Cpl. Krouse on coordinating publicity for National Night Out on August 7.

CM Sweep reported he has worked with Amanda Dewey and Casey Blalock on setting up a Facebook page "Friends of the Berwyn Heights Dog Park" to organize support for the dog park. They have discussed launching a petition to demonstrate broad support for a dog park to M-NCPPC.

Mayor Rasmussen said the Council has narrowed the field of candidates for the Town manager position to 5, of which 4 have confirmed their presence for interviews with the Council, staff and a citizen panel that will be established for the purpose. The search consultant is working on an interview schedule. Mayor Rasmussen thanked all those who attended the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and Mike Attick for a presentation on preventing heat-related illness. Earlier, the Council was briefed by the Chief on an ongoing investigation related to a serious incident, the details of which cannot be disclosed.

4. Citizen Comments

Mike Attick, 62nd Ave, asked whether the Town Manager candidates were from the local area; whether the Council has recently adopted a Charter amendment; whether the electric charging stations discussed earlier would take credit cards; whether charging time is limited; whether Town employees can be asked to park in the rear parking lot; and whether volunteers may drive Town vehicles. Mr. Attick further commented there were 19 incidents of pellet gun damage to vehicles last week and the employee's vehicle may have been one in many that were damaged. A bad utility patch/ pothole hinders traffic flow from Greenbelt Road onto 62nd Avenue. A number of cat owners have told him they don't support a dog park. The school property continues to be unkempt, even after Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) maintenance staff made an attempt to mow. Mr. Attick concluded with expressing his regrets that Mayor Rasmussen is resigning.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk