



Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740
Tel. (301) 474-5000
Fax (301) 474-5002

Minutes Worksession April 17, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy and Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. Action Items

Designating a Councilmember to vote on behalf of the Council at PGCMA meetings: Mayor Jewitt explained that Councilmembers attending a PGCMA meeting are sometimes called upon to vote on a matter on the spot. If there was no prior consultation with the Council, he or she may feel compelled to abstain from voting. The Town Attorney was asked for an opinion on how to proceed. He advises that the Council should designate a Councilmember planning to attend a PGCMA meeting ahead of time to vote on any matter that may come up, or, if one Councilmember always attends PGCMA meetings, to designate that person to vote on behalf of the Council.

The Council discussed who should vote if more than one Councilmember attends a PGCMA meeting, and they cannot come to a consensus. It was agreed that the Councilmember who received the most votes during the previous election should vote on behalf of the Council. CM Rasmussen so moved. CM Shields seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Shade Tree Board Appointments: Mayor Jewitt said that 5 residents have volunteered to serve on the Shade Tree Board. CM Rasmussen said that Ordinance 122- Urban Forest provides for a 5-member Shade Tree Board to advise the Town Council on the planting and maintenance of trees and shrubs on Town property and Town right-of-ways, and to develop a comprehensive plan for the care of trees for approval by the Council. The Board is authorized to choose its own officers and make its own rules governing its proceedings. It is suggested that a Public Works employee serve as the staff liaison to the Council, since Public Works already has responsibility for landscaping and tree maintenance issues. There were no objections.

CM Rasmussen moved and CM Dennison seconded to appoint Laura and Jeff Knutson, Carolyn Muscar, Amanda Dewey and Calvin Sweeny as members of the Shade Tree Board for the remainder of the 47th Council's term. The motion passed 5 to 0.

2. Discussion Items

Alcohol on Berwyn Heights Day: Mayor Jewitt welcomed Boys & Girls Club officers Angela

Wolfinger and her step-father to give the Council an account of how the beer truck came to be a part of Berwyn Heights Day. Ms. Wolfinger explained that the Men's League, which is an offshoot of the Boys & Girls Club, first organized and staffed the truck from which beer was served to adult guests of Berwyn Heights Day. The Town paid for the beer, but proceeds went to the Boys & Girls Club. A couple of years ago, the Boys & Girls Club took over the operation of the beer truck, with receipts continuing to go the Club. Last year, the Club was asked to rope off an area in which the beer would be consumed, which will continue this year. Those who staff the truck are adult Boys & Girls Club parent volunteers and all patrons must produce an ID to ensure that alcohol is only served to adults.

TA Cowles added that the roped-off beer garden was instituted upon request by the Town's insurance company. The Town also obtains a one-day food and beverage license for Berwyn Heights Day. The Town Attorney advises that it is the Council's prerogative to continue the practice, as the Town Charter and ordinances do not prohibit it.

The Council discussed whether it is appropriate for the Town to subsidize this activity; whether the Town would be liable for any accidents that might arise due to beer consumption, and whether it is preferable to hire a licensed vendor to sell beer. It was agreed that this year's Berwyn Heights Day beer sales will go forward as planned. Councilmembers are to check with other municipalities how they handle alcohol consumption during community celebrations, and TA Cowles will look into the merits of studying the legal implications of alcohol being served at Town functions.

FY 2018 General Fund and PSTD Budgets: TA Cowles provided follow-up information on questions Councilmembers had about specific budget items. Frangible or 'green' ammunition has a 15% to 20% jam rate. Chief Antolik is not aware of any other municipal police department using green ammunition. A recycling fee of \$70 per year is charged by the Town to each household to cover the cost of collecting and disposing of recyclables. The fee appears on the Prince George's County's tax bill under 'other municipal charges', but it is not a tax. Municipalities may only tax real and personal property within their jurisdictions. A vendor will provide sample recycling bins in different sizes residents can try out on Berwyn Heights Day and indicate their preference.

In response to further questions, TA Cowles provided information on the *network & software support* line item in the Code Compliance budget; an increase in FY 2017 payroll processing expenditures in the Administration budget; costs associated with a transportation MOU with Joe's Movement Emporium the Town plans to adopt; and ATHA/PGCMA/MML membership dues. TA Cowles is drafting a memo on the *temporary labor* appropriation in the Public Works Department to be presented at the May 1 worksession and also compiling a survey of the use of studies and consultants over the last few years.

The Council continued the discussion with residents' feedback on the budget, increase/ decrease in the operating budget without salary increases, and the cost and status of the police body camera program.

Follow-up from Citizen Comments at April Town Meeting: CM Rasmussen said that several long-time residents commented on the increasingly restricted access to Town facilities at the last Town meeting, specifically the Public Works yard and the Council chambers. He asked if this is simply regret over the loss of a bygone era that is to be accepted or warrants an adjustment of policies. The Council discussed the reasons for restricting access, and agreed that there were valid safety reasons for doing so. The Town should strive to retain a welcoming atmosphere, provide ways for residents to visit Town facilities, and post signs that explain when and why access may be limited.

3. Minutes

On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Shields, the March 25 budget worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0 with corrections.

4. Announcements

CM Dennison's mother passed away last week. A memorial service will be held on May 13. A meeting with representatives of the Commercial District Management Authority (CDMA) will be held on April 18, 10:00 a.m. to review and approve the Public Safety Taxing District (PSTD) budget. Berwyn Heights Day will be held on May 6. Residents are encouraged to volunteer and participate. The Green Team is discussing suitable projects for Sustainable Maryland re-certification.

5. Department Reports

Mayor Jewitt commended Officer Ramirez for her professional response to a confrontational encounter with a resident. MPT Kulpa-Eddy announced upcoming events: Mulch Madness on April 22, a free mulch pickup day at the Prince George's County composting facility; County Councilmember Glaros' Town Hall & Resource Fair on April 26 where the County FY 2018 budget will be discussed; and Maryland Day at the University of Maryland on April 29. An update on the proposed high-speed maglev train between Washington, DC and Baltimore has published possible routes. Alternative F route crosses over the Greenbelt Metro Station and the north-west corner of Berwyn Heights. The Council may want to go on record as being opposed to this option and send a formal letter. CM Shields commented that any Maglev tracks should be as straight as possible, excluding alternatives A – F.

CM Rasmussen reported that he was contacted by a UMD Journalism School student about contentious topics to report on; that SHA informed the Town it is not eligible for a sound barrier along Kenilworth Avenue; and that Pepco's replanting effort is underway in the Edmonston Road barrier. He suggested that Berwyn Heights should work with Pepco to ensure that the trees planted survive.

6. Citizen Comments

Mayor Jewitt received a comment requesting a "Dear Mayor"/ "Dear Town Administrator" section in the Town Bulletin, where residents can submit comments for publication. A thank you goes to Mike Attick, who provided her with a revised MARC train schedule, an alternative transportation option for Metro's Green Line, which is undergoing repairs north of Prince George's Plaza station as part of WMATA's SafeTrack Surge #14.

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, commented by telephone on the trees planted by Pepco on Quebec Street, on Berwyn Height Day vendors, on the Public Work yard gate, and call waiting capacity of the new conference phone.

7. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the calendar for the upcoming month. The Four Cities meeting on April 26 in New Carrollton was added.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*