



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Worksession August 7, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Alysha Davis, Amanda Dewey and Andrew Fellows.

### 1. Action Items

There were none.

### 2. Discussion Items

***Sustainable Communities application update (discussed out of order):*** TA Cowles introduced Alysha Davis, a University of Maryland (UMD) graduate student in public policy. She is an intern in the Town's Administration Department and has been working primarily on a *Sustainable Community* application for the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Ms. Davis gave an overview of the program. Established in 2010 under the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the program seeks to support comprehensive strategies for development and revitalization in older communities, with an emphasis on infrastructure improvements, multi-modal transportation and green development. The *Sustainable Community* designation is a threshold requirement for certain DHCD programs, such as, Community Legacy, Neighborhood BusinessWorks, Strategic Demolition and Smart Growth Impact Fund.

Ms. Davis said that the *Sustainable Community* application process has several requirements, most of which have been met:

- 1) A workgroup of community stakeholders who are charged with assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the applicant community has been established (consisting of CM Shields, TA Cowles, Clerk Harper, Shade Tree Board Chair Amanda Dewey and Washington First Bank Manager Amber Burton),
- 2) An action plan for community development has been drafted and distributed to the Council for feedback.
- 3) A Council resolution supporting the *Sustainable Community* boundaries and action plan remains to be drafted and is scheduled for adoption at the September Town meeting.

In Q & A, TA Cowles clarified that *Sustainable Community* designation is sought for the entire Town, not just a portion, such as the business district. If the designation is achieved, a host of new resources,

including grants and technical assistance become available for businesses, residents and community organizations. The program is limited to older communities inside the Beltway, which has been declared a priority funding area by the State. The proposed action plan draws on and aligns with the strategic plan the Council developed last year. It incorporates stakeholder input received at the time. The application is due in early October and the designation is valid for 5 years, at which point communities have to reapply. The Council is requested to review the action plan and give feedback by August 25, so it can be reviewed at the September 11 worksession and finalized.

***UMD community partnerships:*** Mayor Jewitt welcomed Andrew Fellows, former Mayor of College Park and Community Outreach Program Manager at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies, or iSchool. The iSchool teaches data analytics, or the analysis and management of large data sets and how to use data to make peoples' lives better. It ties into the smart cities movement (an urban development vision to integrate information and communication technology (ICT) and the Internet of things (IoT) technology in a secure fashion to manage a city's assets. These assets include city departments' information systems, schools, libraries, transportation systems, hospitals, power plants, water supply networks, waste management, law enforcement, and other community services).

Mr. Fellows said that campus-community cooperation is intended to work in both directions: communities seek to utilize intellectual resources from the University, while community ideas inform topics and projects for the University to study. Last year was the pilot year, and he worked with 4 communities (College Park, University Park, Riverdale Park and Hyattsville) to help identify 10 projects of sustainability and resiliency on which they want to work with the University. The communities each donated between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to fund future initiatives.

In Q & A, Mr. Fellows said that he was able to initiate around 50 community projects with raised funds of \$135,000 by working closely with faculty and student volunteers. If Berwyn Heights decides to participate in the program, it would be requested to make a one-time donation (\$10,000 is suggested) and submit a list of projects in which the Town is interested. These should be projects that show promise for a strong, long-term collaboration with the University. The donated money goes directly to the UMD-College Park Foundation. He will then respond with suggestions to refine the project ideas and identify possible collaborators within the University.

***List of potential projects for collaboration with UMD:*** Mayor Jewitt welcomed Amanda Dewey, Green Team member and UMD student, for a presentation of potential collaborative projects with the University. Ms. Dewey said that the project list was developed by the Green Team and Town staff and focuses on sustainability projects that would benefit from the University's expertise:

- Municipal sustainability plan.
- Watershed storm water plan. This project would explore options for reducing flooding problems in coordination with Prince George's County, which is responsible for the storm water system.
- Incorporating BHES gardens into the classroom. This project would seek to integrate maintenance of the BHES gardens into the curriculum to address declining engagement by teachers and parents.
- Regional food waste collection program. This project would explore collaboration with the County and neighboring municipalities on collecting and composting food waste.
- Strategies for engaging residents on recycling effort. This program would seek to educate residents about recycling correctly, possibly with the help of an app.
- Strategies for engaging private property owners on environmental issues. This project would seek to educate residents about options to make their properties more environmentally friendly by reducing storm water runoff, planting trees and curbing invasive species.

- Litter prevention campaign. This project might include a study of where litter comes from, enlisting residents in cleanups, and stricter enforcement.

In discussion, Councilmembers brought up items that might be added to a project list, including: preservation of mature trees; using goats to control weeds in public right of ways; reducing the deer, feral cat, and rat populations; improving trail safety; preservation of historic homes; disposal of construction and demolition debris; repairing the T-Ball field parking area; and preventing rainwater ponding near Indian Creek. Councilmembers also expressed a preference for prioritizing storm water problems and trail safety.

TA Cowles offered to provide a more detailed description of the projects on the list and resubmit it for a Council decision in late September. Funds for utilizing Mr. Fellow's services could come from the education line item in the Town Council budget or the unrestricted fund balance.

***Emergency Operations Plan:*** MPT Kulpa-Eddy presented an updated Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for the Town, drafted by herself, TA Cowles and Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Committee (NW/EP) member Sarah Speth. The Town's current EOP dates from 2002 and is in need of an overhaul. The updated plan is guided by the 2010 National Incident Management System (NIMS) of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and contains a hazard and threat analysis, an assessment of capabilities, and assignment of responsibilities for responding to incidents and emergencies. The plan has been reviewed by the Town departments, the Volunteer Fire Department and members of the NW/EP.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy requested that Councilmembers review the document and give feedback by the August 21 worksession, focusing on policy issues found primarily in the "Planning facts and assumptions" section and the "Communications" section. The goal is to have a compact reference source that anyone can quickly become familiar with. It is hoped the next version of the plan is available for a public presentation at the September Town meeting and for a table top emergency management drill on September 20.

In Q & A, TA Cowles said that the September 20 workshop would include College Park, Greenbelt and possibly New Carrollton. Some of the larger public safety policy issues the Council has recently wrestled with would be on the agenda, as well as the table-top drill to test the plan. A final version of the Emergency Operations Plan is not expected to be ready until after the workshop.

### **3. Minutes**

On a motion by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and second by CM Dennison, the July 10 worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0. The July 12 Town meeting minutes were distributed for adoption at the Town meeting.

Clerk Harper presented a long version and a short version of the July 24 worksession minutes, with a recommendation to approve the short version. A shorter written version should be sufficient since video recordings of Council meetings are now streamed on the Town's website, and can viewed at any time. The videos are time-stamped (or indexed to the meeting agenda) so that users can easily find and view the topic in which they are interested. The Council had no objection in principle to shorter minutes, but requested that controversial issues be covered in more depth. With regard to the July 24 minutes, the Council agreed to adopt the long version and, on a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Rasmussen, approved them 5 to 0.

#### **4. Announcements/ Department Reports**

Mayor Jewitt said she thought that National Night Out was a success despite the rain and thanked all who planned and participated in it, especially Cpl. Krouse, who was the principal organizer. Mayor Jewitt also reported on the Four Cities Meeting, hosted by Berwyn Heights, at which WMATA and WSSC representatives made presentations, and read a resident's letter of support for the acquisition of the Humvee.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported at the Four Cities meeting WMATA representatives stated that they continue to push for a full Beltway interchange for Greenbelt Station and the Four Cities plan to send a letter of support to the State. Other issues discussed at that meeting were the small cell towers, the North County animal shelter, a Route 193 corridor economic development study jointly funded by Berwyn Heights, College Park and Greenbelt, and maintenance of public recycling dumpsters. MPT Kulpa-Eddy also announced that prior to the start of the school year, Maryland will have a sales-tax-free week starting on August 13, and a free immunization event for children on August 19 at Beltway Plaza.

CM Rasmussen reported on a Minneapolis, Minnesota program to preserve mature ash trees, a dumpster having been placed at his property that had a fire, and his winning the NW/EP wine raffle on National Night Out. CM Shields announced an upcoming CERT training convention on September 23-24, and a BH CERT *sip and paint* fundraiser on October 13. He also reported that he helped raise \$129 for the Volunteer Fire Department by volunteering for the dunk tank on National Night Out, and that he continues to work on a citizen survey of Town services. He advised residents to check the Berwyn Heights Bulletin and website for news and events instead of relying on the *Next Door* app.

#### **6. Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the calendar. The September 18 worksession may be moved to September 25, if more time is needed for staff to prepare.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk