



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Worksession October 16, 2017

### **Executive Session (6:00 – 7:00 p.m.)**

Personnel Matter

### **Regular Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs), Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. CM Shields arrived at 7:30 p.m. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Clerk Kerstin Harper and Shade Tree Board Chair Amanda Dewey.

#### **1. Action Items**

There were none.

#### **2. Discussion Items**

***UMD Cooperation on Sustainability Projects:*** TA Cowles said she has worked with Green Team Coordinator Amanda Dewey to refine a list of potential projects for cooperation with the University of Maryland following a presentation at the August 7, 2017, worksession by Andrew Fellows, Community Outreach Program Manager at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies. The revised list incorporates comments from the Council and is divided into 2 subject areas: 1) community engagement and 2) municipal sustainability implementation efforts.

Under community engagement, the Town is looking for innovative ideas on how to better inform its residents and businesses about events and initiatives occurring in the community and to broaden the volunteer base. Under sustainability efforts, the Town's strategic plan and a recently-developed Sustainable Community action plan identify a broad range of sustainability goals, encompassing the environment, economy, transportation, housing, quality of life and land use. A sample of sustainability goals include:

- Reducing the amount of refuse sent to the landfill
- Exploring a regional food waste collection program
- Mitigating the effects of flooding
- Reducing polluted water run-off
- Decreasing litter
- Enhancing preservation of historic homes
- Increasing the tree canopy

With sustainability goals and strategies already well defined, the next step is to find ways to implement the goals, possibly using UMD students and faculty expertise, which may include:

- An assessment of funding amounts and mechanisms to achieve a project
- Tapping into technical expertise through partnerships
- Demonstration of the value of sustainability projects to private property owners

In response to questions, TA Cowles and Amanda Dewey replied that University collaborators could comprise students, faculty and staff. Grant writing expertise is one of the resources from which the Town could benefit in securing project funding. To engage with the University, a donation of \$10,000 to the University of Maryland College Park Foundation was requested. Based on contributions given by similarly-sized municipalities, a contribution of \$5,000 to \$7,000 is recommended. The Town's list of projects would then be "shopped around" to different departments and schools at the University to find interested partners. There is no guarantee that a good match would be found for all, or any of the Town's projects within the first year of the partnership; however, over time all the projects would be explored.

Further, it is expected that the implementation of a particular project would not primarily fall on the shoulders of Town staff but mobilize community members and organizations interested in the project. In addition, regional partnerships could develop around a project that build momentum and make implementation more likely.

CM Dennison moved and CM Rasmussen seconded to approve a one-time donation of \$6,000 to the University of College Park Foundation for the purpose of a campus-community collaboration on sustainability projects. The motion passed 5 to 0. CM Dennison moved and CM Rasmussen seconded to fund the donation from the unrestricted fund balance. The motion passed 5 to 0.

***Emergency Operations Plan review:*** TA Cowles highlighted the most recent changes in the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP). The Council made additional changes:

Page 8, Planning Facts and Assumptions, last bullet: add instructions on how to get to Doctors Community Hospital at 8118 Good Luck Road.

Page 9, Concept of Operations: add a bullet on requesting assistance from neighboring jurisdictions. Delete bullet 5 because it repeats what is stated elsewhere in EOP. Rephrase bullet 8 to state "the Town will activate its essential personnel policy" instead of "Essential personnel or their designees will be available at all times."

Page 13, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT): This item was flagged for a more detailed explanation of the role of CERT team pending a meeting with NW/EP Co-chair Mike Attick.

Page 15, Communications, last paragraph: add "or designee" after PIO.

It was noted that the appendices are not for public use because they contain some confidential information. However, all persons who have a designated role in the EOP will receive a complete copy of the plan.

***Trash and recycling collection reminders:*** TA Cowles explained that the Administration Department will initiate an educational effort on trash disposal and recycling regulations starting with colored, tear-out page in the November Bulletin, followed by an every-door direct mailer in December. Strict enforcement of the regulations will begin in January 2018. Refuse and recyclables not in compliance will be tagged with an explanatory sticker and will not be collected.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy and Mayor Jewitt instead requested that non-compliance be addressed with a Code fine, to prevent rats and other animals from being attracted to uncollected trash bags, which would

negatively impact neighbors. CM Rasmussen added that residents setting out refuse too early, as often happens with clean-outs of apartments and garages over a weekend, should also be cited.

**Emergency police vehicle:** Mayor Jewitt announced she will meet with TA Cowles and Chief Antolik to start discussing whether, and what type of emergency vehicle, the Town may want to acquire in lieu of the Humvee. She will keep Councilmembers informed of any specifics and seek their input if a vehicle is identified. CM Rasmussen said the discussion should start with a review of the mission of the Police Department and the equipment needed to fulfill that mission.

**WSSC proposed rate structures, letter of comment:** MPT Kulpa-Eddy gave a status update on WSSC's court-mandated rate restructuring efforts. WSSC is holding another round of hearings on a new set of 5 rate structure options. She provided a draft letter commenting on the proposed rates. She explained that the new proposals continue to include a uniform rate for high and low volume water users alike. This rate would be the simplest to implement, but would result in a 30% increase in rates for low volume users, comprising mostly residential customers, while decreasing rates for commercial customers by 20%. The remaining 4 options are different versions of a tiered rate structure based on water usage that would limit rate increases for low-use customers to 10%, as well as the rate decreases for commercial customers to 8% - 12%.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy said her proposed letter recommends WSSC adopt a "4-tier system with a two-person (110 gpd, average) and a 4-person (220 gpd, average) as the lowest price rate levels... [that] best fits the demographic seen in Prince George's County" and Berwyn Heights. While this option is not among the options currently on the table, it is consistent with usage in the current 16-tier system, and similar to Option 1 in a 2017 Phase 2 Final Report. The tiered system would also promote more conservation of water usage than a uniform rate.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked Councilmembers about their preferences prior to sending a letter. Comments on the proposed rate structures are due by October 31. Councilmembers suggested adding information on the percentage of seniors in Berwyn Heights negatively affected by any price increases, supporting a rate structure incentivizing water conservation, and supporting periodic reviews of the rate structure to evaluate their impact. The Council agreed to authorize MPT Kulpa-Eddy and TA Cowles to finalize the letter after attending an upcoming hearing, and submitting it to WSSC prior to October 31. Councilmembers would receive copies of the letter.

**Four Cities agenda:** The Council identified the following items for an October 25 Four Cities meeting: MDOT presentation on the proposed widening of BWI Parkway (MD 295), the Capital Beltway (I-495) and I-270; and updates on WSSC rate restructuring, the Purple Line and proposed Maglev train.

### **3. Minutes**

The Council reviewed the September 18 worksession minutes. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Shields, the minutes were approved 5 to 0.

### **4. Announcements, Department Reports, Citizen Comments**

Mayor Jewitt reported that she attended the MML conference in Rockville and participated in a utilities roundtable. Many participants had experienced similar issues with Pepco tree removals as Berwyn Heights had and engaged Pepco in a lively discussion. Mayor Jewitt attended a social media workshop and learned that social media is often the most effective way to reach residents or representatives. Highway User Revenues (HUR) were again a top MML priority, and she gave 2 interviews about how low and unpredictable HUR affect Berwyn Heights. It was suggested to involve residents in lobbying for

HUR. Mayor Jewitt attended a sold-out Paint ‘n Sip fundraiser, and reminded residents about dos and don’ts during snow storms.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported she attended a Maglev open house at Bowie State University which drew many visitors, as well as media representatives and elected officials. Different routes were discussed, but the route through Greenbelt Station and Berwyn Heights had been taken off the table. Four remaining options include a no-build option, two routes following the BWI Parkway and one following the Penn Line through New Carrollton. She also received a citizen comment about a street sign post that is down at 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Quebec Street.

CM Rasmussen received comments urging the Council to look for sites for a dog park. Options might include the T-Ball field at Indian Creek trail, an area immediately to the east of Sports Park, and an old Town right-of-way across from the Community Garden. CM Rasmussen updated the Council on the status of renovating his fire-damaged rental property on Ruatan Street, where a stop work order was issued because his contractor had neglected to file for a Town permit despite repeated reminders.

CM Shields announced upcoming events and the due date of October 27 for the recycling bin survey. He reported that he called Park & Planning about litter at Lake Artemesia, continues to work on the organizations policy, and that Public Works cleaned up Sports Park. He received comments on the Humvee, on a rental property putting out too much trash, on Metro’s pedestrian bridge being a patch job, and on placing the focus on getting recycling bins with wheels, but not trash cans. He offered the personal comment that the remaining proposed routes for a Maglev train still present problems for a true high-speed train.

## **5. Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the calendar. No changes were made.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk