



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR

Amanda M. Dewey

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Jodie A. Kulpa-Eddy (Mayor Pro Tem)

Christopher S. Brittan Powell

Jason W. Papanikolas

Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes November 1, 2021 | 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency and was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents could comment by calling (301) 474-9570 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov

Call to Order

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present at the meeting were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, and Councilmember Ethan Sweep. Also present were Town Manager Laura Allen, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Code Compliance Director Hollyce Goodwin, and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey stated that Prince George's County is close to the CDC threshold for changing recommendations on indoor mask wearing and that the County may be reevaluating the mandate. However, the mandate remains in place. She also stated that vaccine boosters are readily available. She reminded residents that November 11 is Veterans' Day, and that Town Offices will be closed. MPT Kulpa-Eddy stated that November 2nd is Election Day and while Berwyn Heights doesn't have any elections, neighboring communities do.

2. Approval of Agenda

CM Sweep moved to approve the agenda. CM Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Discussion Items

a. Vaccine Requirement Policy

TM Allen shared her staff report with Council stating that the draft vaccine requirement policy presented is based on Greenbelt's policy. She reviewed several differences in policies, highlighting that Greenbelt's policy includes Council, but not volunteers and that the County policy includes volunteers but not elected officials. She asked for feedback on the draft policy. CM Papanikolas stated that he felt that Council should lead by example and be included in the policy, but that he had less concern about requiring volunteers to be vaccinated. CM Sweep also stated that he agreed that Council should be included in the requirements but suggested that he would like to see safety protocols in place for volunteers. Mayor Dewey agreed that Council should be

included in, however CM Brittan-Powell stated that he had concerns that including Council in the requirements would prevent some residents from seeking elected office. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if this would be a policy that would affect new hires in perpetuity and about how testing would work for employees who choose testing over vaccination. CM Papanikolas suggested that the policy be reviewed annually. CM Sweep agreed that the policy should be reviewed on a timeline rather than health metrics that could swing wildly making the policy confusing and difficult to follow. Mayor Dewey stated that she understood the Council had general support for Councilmembers to be included, but not volunteers; for there to be specificity on the policy review timelines; and to look for policy implementation to happen in late February.

b. In-person Council Meetings- verbal discussion

There was general support from the Council for a return to in-person meetings. CM Papanikolas stated that MML led him to believe that successful hybrid meetings were nearly impossible given the technology the Town has access to. Mayor Dewey expressed concerns about room capacity. CM Brittan-Powell suggested that meetings outside might be a consideration. CM Sweep suggested that perhaps it might be best to keep meetings fluid, considering what might happen if one or more CMs became ill. TM Allen expressed concerns about having proper notice of the change if meeting were to change formats. There was support for the Council attempting to return to in-person meetings for December.

c. Listening Session Review from October 26-verbal discussion

Council discussed the Listening Session that was held on October 26, 2021, in the Senior Center. For approximately an hour and half Council revisited several topics presented in the listening session. Areas of concern and consideration included conduct and procedures of both Code Compliance and the Police Department, concerns about engagement and accessibility of Council with residents, and concerns about staffing both in Administration and in Public Works. Council had the opportunity to directly ask Director Goodwin and Chief Antolik questions about their departments (for example, the Code citation and appeals processes; Police enforcement of loud mufflers and speeding).

d. Review of Signs at Town Hall-verbal discussion

Council reviewed the signage in the Town Hall Parking Lot. TM Allen stated that the signs were implemented after several small children were playing in the parking lot without supervision. Staff had concerns about the safety of the children. The signs were purchased after a conversation with the Town Attorney and Chief of Police in order to allow for enforcement. CM Brittan-Powell expressed concern that the language is off-putting and not friendly. Chief Antolik agreed that the signs are not friendly but reiterated that notice must be given. TM Allen explained that the signs were not personalized for the Town but were rather canned verbiage. Resident Mike Attick called to ask if the parking lot is public property, as was stated in a previous meeting. CM Papanikolas stated that the parking lot of Town Hall is a public parking lot but that doesn't mean rules in the public trust can't be made for it. Mayor Dewey summarized the Council's desire to have TM Allen speak with the Town Attorney to see if there are signs that could be posted that have a more welcoming tone as well as pursue a community bulletin board that could be used to post a "Code of Conduct" regarding the

use of the parking lot.

e. Redistricting Update-verbal discussion

Council reviewed the issues with the redistricting map presented by the County Council, and the fact that they had already signed on to the letter from College Park and the 4 Cities coalition. Discussion focused on the issue of transparency in the process and MPT Kulpa-Eddy expressed that she had difficulty determining the proposed County Councilmanic boundaries for Berwyn Heights. Mayor Dewey will draft a letter for Council to vote on during the November Town Meeting.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey highlighted the upcoming ARPA Spending and Budget Community Meetings. She encouraged the participation of residents at one of the meetings. She also reviewed that masks will be required at the in-person meetings provided that the County is still mandating masks at that time. She invited TM Allen to add anything, and TM Allen stated that the facilitators will be putting together a summary report of the sessions which will provide guidance. Mayor Dewey reviewed eligibility for Covid vaccine boosters and encouraged everyone who is eligible to make an appointment. She congratulated the Rec Council and the Police Department for successful Trunk-or-Treat and Halloween events. In upcoming events, she stated that there are community meetings almost every night. She reminded residents that the Town offices will be closed on Thursday, November 11 for Veterans Day.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the Prince George's County Municipal Association meeting that occurred on October 21st, and featured presentations on Rental Assistance and the United Way, as well as the issue of redistricting the County. She also spoke briefly about the 4 Cities Coalition meeting that had presentations from District 22 representatives, the office of Prince George's County State Attorney Aisha Braveboy, and Scott Hancock, Executive Director for the Maryland Municipal League. She also reviewed the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the I495/270 corridor toll road project. Berwyn Heights is not directly affected. She also encouraged participation with the Prince George's County Public Schools draft boundaries conversations. Information on how to join will be posted on the Town's website. She reminded residents of the red-light camera public hearings that will be occurring during the November Town Meetings and requested residents comment on what kind of education the community would like in order to understand these proposed changes.

CM Papanikolas stated that Code had been thoroughly discussed earlier in the meeting and wanted to highlight the Code article in the October Bulletin. He also reiterated that he's available for residents to reach out to him about their concerns.

CM Brittan-Powell stated that he's continuing to have conversations with residents and will be reaching out to fellow Councilmembers for discussion. He will be traveling for about a week and a half and then plans to have conversations with the Town Manager when he returns.

CM Sweep began by highlighting the Prince George's County Department of Public Works Snow Summit that will be held virtually on November 18 at 6 PM. He also reviewed November trash schedules for the Town with the two holidays in the month. The street sweeper will be in Town the last week of November. Leaf collection has begun and CM Sweep reminded residents to put out leaves only, not sticks.

Mayor Dewey reviewed the Town Wide trash clean-up and pumpkin smash. MPT Kulpa-Eddy highlighted the Rec Council food drive. Both events will be occurring on Saturday, November 6 from 10 am-1 pm.

5. Resident & Community Comments

Resident Mike Attick called and suggested that the Senior Center could hold overflow from in-person meetings, where they could watch the meeting on the TV but be able to comment in person during resident comment time. He also expressed gratitude for the Council that came to the listening session and stated that the reason the Council is hearing the same comments from residents repeatedly is because residents don't feel their comments are being responded to. He also asked if any member of Council had met the new Public Works Director. Mayor Dewey confirmed that Council had met the Director. He continued and expressed that there has been a lot of changes in Director positions since the Town Manager title change in 2014 from Town Administrator. He also stated that while Council can be reached by phone, residents are directed to contact the Town Manager. He continued that the street markings at Edmonston and Pontiac are confusing. He stated his belief that the Ethics Commission should look into more than just the financial aspects of Candidates. Mayor Dewey stated that the markings at Edmonston and Pontiac are part of the "Don't Block the Intersection" ordinance amendment. CM Sweep responded that as the CM over Public Works, he was kept abreast for the entire hiring process for Public Works Director. Mayor Dewey stated that the decision to hire was made unanimously by Council vote. CM Papanikolas stated that it was a closed session because of HR law.

Adjournment

CM Sweep moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:06PM.