



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Stephen D. Isler
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)
Amanda M. Dewey
Ethan D. Sweep
VACANT

Worksession Minutes January 14, 2019 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey and Ethan Sweep. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens.

1. **Announcements**

Mayor Isler commended Public Works and Police for a job well done in responding to the snow storm over the weekend.

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

The agenda item 'code compliance staffing changes' was deleted and 'review of mid-month newsletter' was added.

3. **Discussion Items**

Town Council priorities review & Quality of Life Commission recommendations: TM Broadbent distributed a spreadsheet on which the Quality of Life Commission's (QoL) recommendations are tracked. Different recommendations have been assigned to the departments best equipped to address them, and a few have already been implemented. The Council reviewed the QoL recommendations to identify those already covered by the priorities of the Council and those requiring additional action.

Street lights: adding street lights for dark areas is in progress; reporting of street light outages needs additional publicity.

Speeding: recommendation for adding speed humps ruled out. Public Works to recommend other traffic calming options based on the where speeding is a problem. Speed monitoring and new parking regulations can be part of solution.

More officers during peak hours: already in effect.

Kenilworth Ave & Pontiac Street traffic backups: Review any SHA traffic studies and recommendations to request longer light for outgoing traffic. Request meeting with SHA district engineer.

Police and DPW videos: Police have made videos. Public Information Aide might assist with video production.

Rental Housing Ordinance changes: TM Broadbent will propose amendments in the area of enforcement of code violations to make them municipal infractions appealable to the District Court. Definitions of family will become irrelevant with adoption of International Property Maintenance code using square footage as basis for number of tenants a rental house may have. Contrary to QoL recommendation, it is recommended to continue to perform annual inspections for all types of rental homes.

Code compliance complaints: reportable through website/ contact us.

Prioritization of clearly defined violations: Canopy/ carport issues will be addressed through amendment of Ordinance 104 – Building.

Clear marking of Code vehicle: completed.

Reduce trash & litter in and near business district: Code Department regularly issues clean lot violations. Green Team could work with business owners to contribute more trash containers and apply for Chesapeake Conservation Corps volunteers to engage businesses in green initiatives. TM Broadbent suggests considering making business licenses contingent on conformance with maintenance standards. Additionally, the Town might request to give input on the County's issuance of use and occupancy permits before they open.

Installation of addition refuse containers: Green Team proposes installing containers for recyclables rather than generic trash.

Install bilingual 'do not litter' signs: Agreed to implement.

Authorize Green Team to make recommendations on trash can installations: Already done.

Install traditional welcome signs at Town entrances with landscaping: Needs further discussion. Signs for announcing events wanted. Options include sliding letter signs, signs hung from larger welcome signs, or welcome signs.

Produce new welcome packet: Project for Public Information Aide.

Produce new telephone directory: Telephone numbers often not publicly available. Next Door app has directory.

Hire contractor for snow clearing: Resident's suggestion needs clarification.

Add picnic areas and parklets on Town property: Resident's recommendation accepted for further study of options.

Council agreed to receive quarterly progress reports on QoL recommendations as well as on Council priorities. Some recommendations may require funding decisions for the FY 2020 budget.

FY 2020 budget schedule: TM Broadbent explained her plans for the budget process. In February, department directors will attend worksessions to inform the Council about potential budget enhancements they are requesting and the Treasurer to explain the chart of accounts. In March, TM Broadbent has scheduled a visit from representatives of Old-Line Bank to talk about options for moving money into different accounts to earn more interest. For the March 23 special budget worksession, all directors will discuss their budgets and Town organizations will be invited to discuss budget requests. TM Broadbent also plans to change the year end budget amendment process with which the Town has traditionally reconciled its budgets.

Four Cities Agenda items: Mayor Isler said he had a discussion with Greenbelt's Mayor Emmett Jordan about changing the format of the Four Cities meeting. The topic of a spay/ neuter grant came up, for which the Four Cities had jointly applied a couple of years ago to fund cost-free spay/ neuter procedures for residents. Possible reapplication for the grant is to be placed on the next Four Cities agenda if the funds have run out. The Council also added the Beltway Plaza redevelopment and how to help furloughed employees affected by the government shut-down to the Four Cities agenda.

There ensued an extended discussion about whether a joint Four Cities response to the government shut down is useful and how the Town itself can help furloughed employees. It was agreed that the Town should publicize resources made available by Prince George's County and the Berwyn Presbyterian Church, and work through the Church for making donations. The church has a food pantry which is open to everyone affected by the shut-down.

Government shut down letter: Mayor Isler said that TM Broadbent has drafted a letter for the Council to call on the President and the leaders of the U.S. House and Senate to end the shut-down. The focuses on the hardships faced by federal employees and contractors and the negative impact on the regional economy as reasons for ending the shut-down. The Council approved the letter to be mailed.

Mid-month e-newsletter: Mayor Isler provided a completed mid-month e-newsletter and asked for further corrections or comments before it is published tomorrow. It was agreed to add information about government shut-down resources to the e-newsletter.

4. Minutes

There were none.

5. Department Reports

Mayor Isler commended Public Works and the Police for their response to the recent snow storm and said they are getting ready for another snow event tomorrow. Schools and Town offices could open late. Residents should check the County website or listen to WTOP for the latest updates. MPT Papanikolas agreed that snow clearing operations went well. He advised residents to watch out for icy roads as a hard freeze is predicted for tonight. CM Sweep encouraged everyone to move their cars into a driveway, where possible, to facilitate plowing. He also advised having a winter survival kit in one's car and gave other tips for traveling safely in winter conditions. CM Dewey added her appreciation for Police and Public Works employees for spending the night in Town to clear the roads and keeping everyone safe.

6. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the calendar. The second worksession in February was confirmed for Tuesday, February 19.

7. Citizens Discussion

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, commented on the replacement of new rain barrels around the Town Center. He was informed that County staff replaced them by mistake when they were working on the rain garden last spring. Mr. Ventura further suggested the Town save up money for a new police station instead of spending money on a study for reconfiguring the Town Center to accommodate the police. He believes there would not be enough parking space to have a police station at this location. He also suggested placing duct board around the electric vehicle charging station to prevent the charging cables from being grounded and tracking the cost of electricity used by the charging stations.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk