



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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**MAYOR**  
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy

**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)  
Shinita Hemby  
Faustino Menjivar  
Jason W. Papanikolas

## Town Meeting Minutes Town Council Chambers January 10, 2024 | 7:00 p.m.

### Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Also present was Town Manager Kyle Snyder, Town Clerk Melanie Friesen, and residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights.

### Pledge of Allegiance

#### 1. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that CM Menjivar was unable to join the meeting due to illness. MPT Brittan-Powell shared about the passing of resident David Williams.

#### 2. Approval of Agenda

CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously, 4:0.

#### 3. Public Hearing:

##### Ordinance 101: Animals (amended)

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy introduced the amended ordinance and discussed the history of the changes that are included in this amendment. Specifically, the ordinance clarifies that failure to pick up pet waste on public property or leaving it on private property without permission of the owner is a municipal infraction. It also addresses the ability for the Town to levy a fine, and the process for appeal.

Resident Patty Dennison stated that she believes it is a good idea. With no further comments from residents, the hearing was closed.

#### 4. Consent

CM Papanikolas moved to approve the consent agenda. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

#### 5. Mayor & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the Prince George's County "Better Bag" legislation which bans single use plastic bags at the point of sale in many instances and requires retailers to charge at least \$.10 each for paper or reusable bags. She noted that businesses have until March 31, 2024 to come into compliance, but encouraged residents to begin bringing reusable bags when shopping. She noted the Town has reusable Berwyn Heights bags available at the Town Office and encouraged residents to drop by and pick one up. She then shared with residents ways for eligible

homeowners to receive assistance with weatherization, noting that Prince George's County does not have its own weatherization program, but shares a program with St. Mary's County and to not be surprised by being referred to that location. She reviewed the upcoming Four Cities meeting, highlighting that Berwyn Heights will lead discussions on the County's Tax Differential legislation, the crossing guard situation and housing and food insecurity. Lastly, she noted that Police Officer Recruit Rebeca Portilla is still in the academy and that Officer Rufino will be rejoining the Police Department this month.

MPT Brittan-Powell thanked all the departments for their response to the rainstorm.

CM Hemby reviewed the plans for the new Welcome packet, including a group which will meet quarterly to introduce new residents to all the Town has to offer.

CM Papanikolas thanked TM Snyder and Public Works for their storm response. He noted that many activities are coming up and encouraged residents to join in or volunteer.

TM Snyder reported on Public Works as CM Menjivar was unavailable. He reviewed that loose leaf season has come to an end and that crews are preparing for snow season. He shared that the new Public Works truck has been delivered. He noted Town vehicles have been ordered in white instead of black as that color is more available in the current market. He shared that the new Dingo, a versatile piece of equipment has been delivered and staff have been training on it. He closed by summarizing the improvements to Pops Park.

## **6. Committee Reports**

- a. Green Team: CM Papanikolas shared the summary that the Green Team sent in, highlighting the Town compost bins (available while supplies last), the Team's excitement to work with TM Snyder on their priorities, which include pollinator gardens, stormwater mitigation, arborist consultations with residents, and reducing the urban heat island effects in large paved areas of Town. They also discussed how the Jemez Principles can be applied to the Green Team to advance their diversity and inclusion efforts.
- b. Historical Committee: Debby Steele-Snyder reviewed the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting where they discussed historic homes in Town and the construction work being done on them. They are going to develop a sub-committee to create an informational packet to be shared with realtors as well as current, potential, and new owners of historic properties. The goal is to make this a win/win outcome for everyone. Mr. Tom Gross of the County's Historic Preservation Commission has expressed interest in meeting with the BHHC to engage the issues of historic homes. A historic marker in Town was knocked over and will need to be reinstalled, but the posts were custom made and quite expensive, so she is hoping that the current post can be salvaged. The next meeting is January 24<sup>th</sup> and all are welcome. MPT Brittan-Powell thanked the Committee and the Council briefly engaged in further discussion on historic homes.
- c. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy announced the two upcoming safety training courses in February. On February 7<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Narcan training and opioid educational session. This will take the place of the regular NW/EP meeting, but registration is required by February 1<sup>st</sup> in order to receive a Narcan kit at the conclusion of the training. On February 24<sup>th</sup>, there will be a CPR/AED/First Aid class from 1-4PM and registration is required by February 22<sup>nd</sup>. Interested residents should contact the Town Office to register for either or both of these classes.
- d. Recreation Council: Susan Jones mentioned the Post Holiday Party on Saturday, January 13 from 2-4PM. She also highlighted the February 4 Bluegrass concert featuring the Rock Creek Revival Band. March 15<sup>th</sup> will see another Trivia Night. They are also in the planning stages of Berwyn Heights Day and are looking for suggestions on vendors, rides, and more. The next meeting is February 6<sup>th</sup> and all are welcome, but also feel free to email Susan with suggestions.

## **7. Old Business**

- a. Adoption of Ordinance 101: Animals (amended)

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the amendments to the ordinance once again and asked CM Hemby if she had any comments as she was the driving force behind the change. CM Hemby noted it is unfortunate that this is what is needed to discourage people from leaving their pet waste behind in public spaces.

CM Hemby moved to approve Ordinance 101. CM Papanikolas seconded with waiving the second reading. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell expressed that he had received comments on the amendments indicating residents didn't feel the enforcement was clear and that they were going to be expected to enforce the ordinance. He expressed his intention to abstain from voting. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy clarified that only appropriate Town staff would be responsible for enforcement. MPT Brittan-Powell left the meeting for a family emergency at 7:51pm. TC Friesen read the introduction of the ordinance at the request of Mayor Kulpa-Eddy. The motion carried unanimously (3:0).

## **8. New Business**

### **a. TM Snyder Presentation- Economic Forecast:**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that she asked TM Snyder to prepare an economic forecast presentation to kick off this year's budget season. TM Snyder reviewed highlights from the State of the Economy report prepared by the Comptroller of Maryland and the Maryland Municipal League. He noted that despite the impact of the Federal Government on the State of Maryland, the State has fallen behind in economic growth compared to our neighboring states and the US since 2016. The State has seen its first decrease in population since WWII, while the US as a whole saw modest population growth. He noted the cost of living is driving migration patterns and people are moving from higher cost of living areas to those that are lower. He noted the State's 2024 Legislative Session will address significant fiscal challenges including a structural deficit of \$761 million dollars (given that sales tax, corporate tax, and casino revenue are not growing as much as anticipated) and a Transportation budget shortfall of \$3.3 billion.

## **9. Resident & Community Comments**

There were no resident comments.

## **10. Adjournment**

CM Hemby moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously (3:0) and the meeting adjourned at 8:02PM.