



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 Council Chambers March 13, 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 and Councilmember Shinita Hemby. Also present were staff members Town Manager Kyle Snyder and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. County Councilmember Eric Olson and his Chief of Staff Julio Murrillo were here for their presentation. Residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights were also present.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that CM Menjivar had an excused absence and that CM Papanikolas would be joining the meeting late.

- **Women's History Month Proclamation**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy read the proclamation. MPT Brittan-Powell thanked Mayor Kulpa-Eddy for her strong leadership in the community.

2. Approval of Agenda

CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell asked for inclusion of an item about property acquisition. It was decided to include this instead as part of a closed meeting on March 18th with possible follow-up at a later open session. With no other discussion, the motion passed unanimously (3:0).

3. County CM Olson Presentation

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy introduced CM Olson, who represents District 3 (which includes the Town of Berwyn Heights) on the County Council, highlighting his assistance in getting WSSC to pave the rest of Edmonston Road last summer and his work as chair of the Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee.

CM Olson stated the biggest issue in front of the County Council is the annual budget, which they will receive in two days. He noted it contains a shortfall of \$171 million. He shared about the upcoming District 3 Town Hall and Resource Fair on April 11th with more details coming. He has focused his efforts on quality-of-life issues, as well as focusing on accountability across County Government, but especially within DPIE. He touched on several subjects including: commercial vehicle parking, landlord/tenant issues, sediment in waterways, forest conservation, the 10 year solid waste plan and affordable housing, including a community housing trust. He gave an update

on the Purple Line, noting that it is now scheduled to be opened in 2027. Construction should be complete in 2026, but there will be a year of testing prior to opening to the public. He shared about his work on creating walkable urban streets, noting that we have the highest pedestrian fatality rate of any jurisdiction in the region. He is also working with County CM Fisher on school pedestrian safety, highlighting the urgent need for more school crossing guards and efforts to recruit for those roles. He reviewed the Senior Property Tax Credit and how it turned out many seniors didn't actually qualify. CB007-2024 has been introduced to correct those issues. He also mentioned working on a voluntary registration so that first responders dispatched through 911 can receive information on residents with special needs that they might use to prevent an avoidable tragedy.

CM Papanikolas joined the meeting at 7:23PM.

CM Olson opened the floor for questions. MPT Brittan-Powell noted that so many of the issues facing the region are economic and asked about cost of living and food insecurity. CM Olson replied that he is working with experts to see about developing a food bank in the area, as non-profits have more access to food than they have available storage, but this is a multiyear project. CM Hemby expressed her concerns about how Prince George's County Public Schools sports programs are failing students. CM Olson replied that while the County Council provides the school system with funding, it is managed by the school board and encouraged CM Hemby to reach out to School Board Representative Jonathon Briggs. CM Papanikolas shared his concerns about the noise and safety issues on Kenilworth (State Hwy 201), noting that while none of Kenilworth Ave runs through Berwyn Heights, it is a quality-of-life issue for many residents in Town. After discussion, CM Olson will seek data on Kenilworth to see if there are solutions. CM Olson shared his contact information with Council and residents.

4. Consent Agenda

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to accept, CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

5. Mayor & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared her recent activities including attending the PGCMA meeting in Morningside. She also attended the Municipal Retreat with Chief Antolik in Laurel hosted by the State's Attorney for Prince George's County. She highlighted that Boys and Girls Clubs were discussed as resources, but that the Berwyn Heights Boys and Girls Club is not on the State list she received from the meeting. Lastly, she reviewed her experience at the Maryland Mayors Association meeting.

MPT Brittan-Powell shared his appreciation for his Council colleagues. He noted revisiting some of his favorite authors as a part of Black History and Women's History Months. He expressed a desire to continue to fight to take some of the edge off economic challenges.

CM Hemby stated that during Town events focusing on Black and Women's History, as an African American woman she would like to see the focus shift off slavery and onto the accomplishments of African Americans while fighting a system of oppression.

CM Papanikolas spoke about election season, noting that local elections are the elections that impact residents the most and urged everyone to get involved and vote. He encouraged residents to give input on the budget during this coming budget season and to make their priorities known. He also highlighted the Berwyn Heights Tax Credit, which gives eligible individuals 10% off the Town's property tax levy.

6. Committee Reports

- a. Green Team: There was no Green Team report.
- b. Historical Committee: Chair Debby Steele-Snyder reviewed the last BHHC meeting where staff archaeologist Jennifer Stabler and intern Janet Adesina from the Historic Preservation Society came and spoke about the options for historic homes where work has been done without following the proper process. Historic Preservation does have the ability to require homes to be restored to their previous appearance at the homeowner's expense and using qualified contractors. Ms. Steele-Snyder shared the information was very helpful. She continued that the post for the damaged Historic Marker is being remade. The BHHC is working on Berwyn Heights Day where they will be hosting the County's Sankofa Mobile Museum. They are also looking forward to hosting a summer wine and cheese event.
- c. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Committee: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy mentioned the upcoming blood drive, with TM Snyder sharing that there will be another blood drive on July 18th. NW/EP did a debrief on the Narcan and CPR/First Aid classes held in February and discussed possible future training courses. They are also preparing for Berwyn Heights Day.
- d. Recreation Council: Treasurer Dave Wolfinger shared the Rec Council's focus is on Berwyn Heights Day with lots of information in the Bulletin. There is discussion of porch concerts in April, but nothing has been firmly decided; watch for future details. There will be a Team Trivia event this Friday.

7. Old Business

There was no old business.

8. New Business

- a. BHHC Member Removal
BHHC Chair Debby Steele-Snyder noted that two members need to be removed. Dick Ahrens has sold their property and moved out of town, which makes him ineligible to be a member. Brittany Jacoby is resigning for personal reasons.
CM Hemby moved to accept the removal of the members from the committee. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously. CM Hemby noted her thanks to the volunteers who serve in town organizations.
- b. Resolution 01-2024 Fees and Fines
Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that the Town Council adopted an amended Ordinance 101 in January 2024 which made leaving pet waste on public property a municipal infraction. This resolution amends the fees and fines schedule to bring Town fines for that infraction in line with the County's fines on the same.
CM Hemby moved to adopt Resolution 01-2024. CM Papanikolas seconded. In discussion, CM Hemby thanked residents for their work to keep the field at the elementary school clean. MPT Brittan-Powell thanked CM Hemby for her work on this issue. CM Hemby reminded residents of the many pet waste stations around Town. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.
- c. Resolution 03-2024 Record Retention
Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that each municipality is required to have a Record Retention policy on file with the Maryland State Archives. This resolution affirms that the Council has reviewed the policy and is recommending it be submitted to the Maryland State Archives for their final approval. CM Papanikolas moved to approve the resolution. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. In discussion, CM Hemby thanked TC Friesen for her work on the project. The

motion passed unanimously.

d. Resolution 04-2024 Bulletin Vendor

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy summarized that the Town has been in discussions with LPi, a printing company that works specifically with communities and senior centers on their newsletters. Town staff would still be responsible for providing the content, but LPi staff takes on the advertising responsibilities and produces the Bulletin for the Town at no cost beyond shipping and handling.

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to approve the resolution. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

e. Resolution 05-2024 Ballot Questions

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that the amended Ordinance 109 (Elections) requires that any Council proposed ballot questions be introduced and passed at the March Town Meeting. She reviewed that these non-binding questions are simply seeking the input of residents of the Town on these important issues. She reviewed the questions, which include moving the Town Council election to a day that would consistently fall after Berwyn Heights Day, lowering the municipal voting age to 16, allowing for non-citizens to vote in municipal elections, and a poll on resident's interest in the Town taking on debt for capital improvements.

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to approve resolution 05-2024. CM Papanikolas seconded. In discussion, CM Papanikolas noted a run-on sentence in Question 3 (non-citizen voting), indicating that the question must be posted as written on the ballot. He requested an amendment to correct the grammatical error. With that amendment, the motion passed unanimously.

f. Introduction of Ordinance 113

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the history of the amendment to the Town Organization Ordinance, noting that it comes at the request for clarity from volunteers, Staff and Council as well as in response to FY21 audit findings.

CM Papanikolas moved to introduce Ordinance 113 and waive the first reading. CM Hemby seconded. In discussion, it was noted there will be a public hearing next month and resident input is encouraged. MPT Brittan-Powell noted that he was hesitant about the amendment originally. With no further comment, the motion passed unanimously.

g. Introduction of Property Acquisition

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that a resident has offered a parcel of land to be donated to the Town for a park, noting that there will also be a public hearing on this next month.

CM Papanikolas moved to introduce Ordinance 190 and waive the first reading. CM Hemby seconded. In discussion, Mayor Kulpa-Eddy noted the property in question is at the corner of Pontiac Street, Quebec Street, and 57th Avenue. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

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, and the meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.