



# 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  
Jeffrey Jay Osmond

## Town Meeting Minutes July 10, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Ethan Sweep and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. Mayor Isler had an excused absence. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Detective Daniel Unger, Officer Thomas Hollowell and Officer William Duck, Public Works Director Kenneth Hall, Code Director Hollyce Goodwin, BHVFD Representative Matt Huddle and citizens.

### **1. Approval of Agenda**

CM Dewey moved and CM Sweep seconded to approve the agenda. The motion passed 4 to 0.

### **2. Proclamations**

**CI-5 Congratulations to Boys & Girls Club Soccer Teams:** MPT Papanikolas welcomed members of the Boys & Girls Club who were present, including the Treasurer Sandra Zuniga, the Registrar Tiffany Papanikolas, and U-15 Coach Agustin Zuniga. He said the Berwyn Heights Boys & Girls Club has a long history in this community and many residents have played in or coached teams. He as well as CM Osmond have coached several sports, including T-ball, soccer and track. It is his pleasure to sponsor this Proclamation and congratulate the two soccer teams who won their divisions in the Beltway-Baltimore soccer league and the two teams who made the playoffs in the Prince George's Boys & Girls Club soccer league. He read the Proclamation and proclaimed this day as Boys & Girls Club Day in the Town of Berwyn Heights.

### **3. Swearing-in**

**CI-6 Promotion of Officers Hollowell and Duck:** MPT Papanikolas performed the promotion of Officer Thomas Hollowell and William Duck from Private First Class to Corporal.

**CI-7 Promotion of Detective Unger:** MPT Papanikolas performed the promotion of Detective Daniel Unger from Sergeant to Lieutenant. Chief Antolik said that Detective Unger has accumulated a lot of experience and training under his tutelage and passed a rigorous 3-hour test by a 4-person panel of police chiefs and detectives to earn this promotion. He congratulated Detective Unger.

Detective Unger said the tests were challenging but by drawing on his long experience as an officer he was able to get through it. His new rank will not change his dedication to the Town. He will continue to do what he can to keep the Town safe.

On a motion by CM Sweep, seconded by CM Dewey, the Council took a 5-minute recess.

#### **4. Approval of Minutes**

CM Dewey moved and CM Sweep seconded to approve the June Town meeting minutes. The motion passed 4 to 0.

#### **5. Mayor's Report**

MPT Papanikolas said the Council in its first year in office used its best judgment to promote the well-being of residents and listened to their concerns about various Town issues, including the use of bonds. To create the FY 2020 budget, some difficult decisions were made. He hopes the Council will consider legislation to help mitigate the impact of tax increases on seniors and people with fixed incomes. He shared information about the State of Maryland's homeowner's tax credit program aimed at residents earning less than \$60,000 per year. Those eligible must apply by September 1 to the state program every year. Applications can be submitted online at [www.taxcredit.sdat.maryland.gov](http://www.taxcredit.sdat.maryland.gov) and paper applications will be made available at the Town office.

#### **6. Department Reports**

**Treasurer's Report:** Treasurer Rodriguez said with the end of the fiscal year, her department will continue to process payments until July 31 but encouraged all councilmembers, staff and committees to submit any pending FY 2019 bills to her as soon as possible. The Town also received a substantial quarterly income tax payment from the State's Comptroller's Office.

**Administration:** TM Broadbent said Town offices will be closed this Friday due to a staff retreat. It is intended to promote cooperation among staff, reflect on the accomplishments of the last year and prepare for the new demands of the coming year. The retreat will be guided by an experienced facilitator and is paid from rebates from the Town's insurance companies for good employee claims ratings. The same money also paid for new picnic tables that have been installed next to the Town office. The Department is also going through the budget to distill the projects that were funded for Council's approval to include the purchase of a new trash truck and new recycling Toters.

Phil Ventura, 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, asked why an old Saturn that was to be replaced by the new hybrid vehicle is still sitting in the parking lot and costing the Town money for maintenance. He also noted that the hybrid vehicle was not in parking lot over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend and hence not available for staff to use if needed.

TM Broadbent replied the Saturn will be auctioned off with several other old vehicles the Town plans to surplus. The Ford hybrid is her take-home vehicle, per Council decision, because she is on call 24 hours seven days a week.

**Code Compliance:** TM Broadbent introduced Hollyce Goodwin as the new Code Compliance Director. She started in her full-time capacity two days ago. She will deal with regular seasonal code issues, such as tall grass violations or construction without a permit as well as making sure that the electronic code management system Comcate is used to its full potential. The Department will also work on standardizing code letters and notices for eventual integration into Comcate.

Director Goodwin thanked the Town for giving her the opportunity to serve full-time as the Code Director and she is looking to working with the Council and staff going forward. CM Osmond said the Town is still looking to fill a full-time code inspector position and make improvements to the code as needed. TM Broadbent said she plans to bring the International Property Maintenance Code before the Council for discussion and adoption and put out guidance brochures on various code matters.

**Park, Recreation, Education & Civic Affairs:** CM Dewey reiterated the Treasurer's request for civic organizations to submit any outstanding receipts for expenses and announced upcoming events: The Volunteer Appreciation dinner on June 17 and a Lake Artemesia Concert featuring the Jan Knutson Trio on June 18. The Council is considering establishing a Walkable, Bikeable Berwyn Heights Task Force to be discussed at the next worksession. Interested residents are encouraged to contact her.

**Public Works:** Public Works Director Hall reported that the recycling Toters have been ordered and should be here within 5 to 6 weeks. He has interviewed applicants for a vacant position of a Class B driver and made an offer. The streetsweeper will be in Town from July 29 to August 2 and residents are requested to park off the street where possible. In response to questions, Director Hall said he is still seeking to fill a part-time position, and for the leaf season has the option of hiring temporary employees thanks to the additional funding in the FY 2020 budget. The Department has purchased a portable water tank that can be mounted on trucks and can be used to water trees and other purposes.

**Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department:** Matthew Huddle gave the report for the BHVFD. Work continues on the truck bays but should be done within a couple of weeks. The ladder truck is back from the repair shop and had 104 runs, the rescue squad 151, and the ambulance 247. BHVFD is also working on improving its communications and will use social media to keep residents informed about incidents and all things volunteer fire department.

**Police Department:** Chief Antolik reported that he and Detective Unger have done research on hybrid police vehicles and are in the process of receiving bids. Detective Unger gave the police activities report for June. There were 3 Part I offenses, one less than the 5-year average. Year to date there were 30 Part I offenses as opposed to the 5-year average of 28. The Police also issued 185 state and municipal infractions and 115 speed camera tickets.

Detective Unger further reported that an arrest has been made regarding the homicide victim found at Lake Artemesia in March. The suspect is a confirmed gang member who was a resident in Greenbelt. Greenbelt Police played a pivotal role in helping identify the suspect and getting him charged. Lastly, Detective Unger invited everyone to come out for National Night Out on August 6, 6:00 p.m. Many fun activities are planned. Chief Antolik added this year's theme is 'diversity & inclusion.' On August 21, the Police will hold a Seniors appreciation lunch for which a proclamation is being prepared. He hopes Councilmembers and TM Broadbent will be able to come.

In response to questions, Chief Antolik and Detective Unger said that a speed monitor will be ordered soon. Bicyclists who run stop signs are generally not ticketed. BHPD prefers to advise them that the same laws applying to vehicles apply to bicyclists because many don't seem to know that. Many violators are children and youth. Officer Rufino will be trained to be bike patrol officer and will focus on bicyclists. She will continue to investigate animal complaints and work with the County to enforce them.

## **7. Committee Reports**

**Education Advisory Committee:** CM Dewey announced the BHEAC is still actively recruiting members and working to connect with the PTA as well as with County officials and the school board. The next meeting is on July 29 and will focus on setting priorities for the Committee. All are welcome to attend.

**Green Team:** CM Dewey said the next Town cleanup is on July 20 at 10 am. There has been an increase in participation which necessitated a clarification of rules. Anyone under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent or other adult, and anyone between 16 and 18 must come with a parent or

a 'buddy.' The Committee is planning activities related to 'Trees of Distinction' and for the first Saturday in October an event focused on pets. This will include a vaccination and micro-chipping clinic and provide information on pet care and pet waste.

In response to CM Dewey, TM Broadbent said that Pepco is doing a vegetation maintenance project, including removal of several in the back of the Town Center. Pepco will also plant some new trees to replace some were replanted after the last maintenance project but died. She hopes to receive recommendations on where new trees should be planted. Volunteers are wanted to act as stewards for newly planted trees.

CM Dewey further reported the Shade Tree Board is focusing on educating residents about removing ivy from trees, which can kill them if left unchecked. There is also a concern about ivy growing on the trees along Edmonston Road on SHA property, making maintenance a difficult issue.

TM Broadbent said the Town is maintaining some of that area cutting back brush and grass. In response to citizen questions, she said any trees Pepco will plant on private property will be in the Town right-of-way and should be limited to trees that do not grow so tall as to interfere with power lines. She would also be willing to have the Town plant trees as far as 20' from the curb for property owners who desire them and agree to care for them. This would help restore the tree canopy reduced by Pepco's last vegetation management project.

**Historical Committee:** Clerk Harper reported that the Historical Committee has received a playback device that will be installed in the museum in the coming weeks, and is planning its November 10 celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Berwyn Heights Company. On National Night Out, the BHHC will make available a new refrigerator magnet of a historic home for those who like to collect them.

**Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness:** There was no report.

**Recreation Council:** Recreation Council representative Angela Wolfinger reported that the Jan Knutson Trio will perform at Lake Artemesia next Thursday, or in the Town Center if it rains. The Recreation Council will have a table at National Night Out and distribute handouts and have a suggestion box. The August meeting would fall on the same date and has been moved to July 30, 7:30 p.m. On August 29, 5 pm, the Berwyn Heights All Stars will conclude the summer concert series at Lake Artemesia. In response to CM Sweep, Ms. Wolfinger said a new resident attended the last meeting and proposed to try starting a film club. The idea is to watch a movie and then discuss it. Invitations have been posted on various social media.

## **8. Unfinished Business**

There was none.

## **9. New Business**

**Ordinance 179 - 1<sup>st</sup> Reading & Introduction of a Comprehensive Fee & Fine Schedule.** TM Broadbent explained this Ordinance combines all fee and fine schedules attached or embedded in various ordinances into one document but does not change any fee or fine amounts. The purpose is two-fold: 1) to make it easier for people to find fees and fines; and 2) to revise the comprehensive schedule as part of the annual budget process. In conjunction with the annual review of fees and fines, the ordinance mandates that a public hearing be held to provide an opportunity for comments. The Ordinance is accompanied by resolution that sets forth the fees and fines, but it requires no action tonight.

CM Sweep moved to introduce Ordinance 179. CM Dewey seconded. Councilmembers commented that it makes sense to have all fees in one easy to find document. The motion passed 4 to 0.

### **10. Citizen Comments**

Phil Ventura, 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue, commented he thinks English Ivy is not a problem as long as it taken care of and that there is no need for passing any legislation.

Angie Wolfinger asked whether there are any updates from Park & Planning on Sports Park. CM Dewey replied that the Town sent a letter to M-NCPPC about constructing a dog park at the location of the current T-ball field and expressing interest in a full-sized soccer field instead of triple purpose soccer, baseball field and hockey rink. TM Broadbent added she has spoken with an M-NCPPC planner who advised her to apply for a state grant to help fund the dog park, which can cost between \$100,000 to \$150,000, and make it a showcase for environmental management best practices.

There ensued a discussion about the desirability to have a usable baseball field in the future and a general public discussion about how the Town's sports fields are used. If the Sports Park is refurbished a pop-up canopy for concerts and other events might be considered.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk