



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

Town Meeting Minutes March 10, 2021 | 7:00 pm

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency. The meeting was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents were given the opportunity to comment by telephone, Zoom, and email.

Call to Order 7:00 p.m.

Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Chris Brittan-Powell, Jason Papanikolas and Ethan Sweep. CM Brittan-Powell arrived at 7:20 p.m. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Laura Allen, Treasurer Mike Lightfield, Town Clerk Kerstin Harper, Historical Committee Chair Debby Steele-Snyder and Recreation Council President Susan Jones.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey stated that the Council held an executive session virtually on a personnel matter on March 1, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. She moved to enter the statement into the record. CM Papanikolas seconded. The motion passed 4 to 0.

Mayor Dewey extended the Council's condolences to the family of former resident and Assistant Public Works Director Jim Houser who passed away recently.

2. Approval of the Agenda

CM Sweep moved and CM Papanikolas seconded to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved 4 to 0.

3. Introduction of Treasurer Lightfield

Mayor Dewey welcomed new Town Treasurer Mike Lightfield. She said the Council is excited to have a person with Mr. Lightfield's experience step into this critical position especially during budget season. TM Allen said that Mr. Lightfield has served as treasurer for several other small municipalities in the area and has helped them reform payment processing and budgeting processes. Mr. Lightfield has been hired as an independent contractor, which will save the Town a bit of money.

Mr. Lightfield thanked the Town for the opportunity to serve and is looking forward to applying his experience in municipal finance for the benefit of Berwyn Heights.

4. Consent Agenda

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to amend the consent agenda to remove the February 10 worksession minutes, which need further corrections. CM Papanikolas seconded. The motion was approved 4 to 0. CM Sweep moved and MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 4 to 0.

5. Mayor's Report

Mayor Dewey reported that this is a busy time of year and staff is working hard on preparing next year's budget. She attended meetings with State Attorney Braveboy discussing the programs her office is focused on, and with County Councilmember Glaros providing updates on vaccine distribution and a rental assistance program relaunch. Further, she helped chair an MML meeting on conflict resolution and had a meeting with the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department about planned Town facility upgrades.

In Covid-19 vaccination news, the County is now operating in phase 1-c, which includes all persons aged 65 and above, among others. Everyone is encouraged to register for vaccination appointment notification in multiple places through the County's website to increase one's chances of being vaccinated sooner. Lastly, Mayor Dewey alerted residents to phone scams that ask people to purchase gift cards. She advised not to respond to such calls and contact BHPD for assistance.

6. Councilmember Reports

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reminded residents that daylight savings time begins this Saturday. She announced that Delegate Washington will hold a virtual meeting on March 11, at which eligibility for Maryland's RELIEF Act tax benefits will be discussed. WMATA's budget comment period will end on March 16. The budget proposes to close several Metro stations, including College Park, for FY 2022 due to budget shortfalls. On March 3, MPT Kulpa-Eddy attended a webinar on Pepco's filing regarding planned upgrades to its electrical grid and associated rate increases. She is in the process of drafting a comment letter regarding the filing, which she will submit for Council's consideration at an upcoming worksession.

CM Papanikolas reported that through his work he is aware of an increase in unemployment insurance fraud, whereby people apply for insurance payouts using a false identity. He is happy to advise anybody affected by this, including where to turn to resolve such a problem.

CM Sweep reported that the streetsweeper is in Town this week. Residents can help keep streets clean by picking up their litter while out and about in the warmer weather. The Greenbelt Road working group will hold a meeting tomorrow. He plans to give a report at the coming worksession.

CM Brittan Powell reported that the Code team continues to handle code matters deftly. Mayor Dewey added that she enjoys reading the reformatted monthly code reports, which highlight important themes. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if a date has been set to discuss drainage issues. TM Allen replied that drainage issues will be discussed at the April 5 worksession, with County staff in attendance.

7. Committee Reports

Education Advisory Committee: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that the BHEAC completed the education grant application form and is now drafting a grant submission and review process. To assist, TM Allen provided a sample grant review process from another municipality where she has worked in the past. Prince George's Public Schools are reopening on a hybrid model in April. It allows students to split

their time between in-person and remote learning. Residents are requested to keep an eye out for students walking to school. The BHEAC will next meet on March 22.

Green Team: Mayor Dewey reported that the Green Team has started an adopt-a-block program whereby residents can volunteer to pick up litter in specific areas individually or as a family. The Green Team is also discussing Bee City USA certification, commenting on the Pepco filing and the Maglev draft environmental impact statement, as well as cats, the community garden and trees. MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that the re-emergence of cicadas was discussed and how to protect young trees.

Historical Committee: BHHC Chair Debby Steele Snyder reported that the Historical Committee is working on putting together a scavenger hunt for Berwyn Heights Day, highlighting some of the historic properties in Town. In the event there is a parade, the Committee plans to participate. Further, the Committee has begun to expand its digital walking tour hosted on the Park & Planning on-line platform and continues to work on a disclaimer for the Duncanson Avenue marker.

Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she attended the last NW/EP meeting where the Committee decided to remain a Town Committee as opposed to becoming a Town Assembly. Nominations for new officers were taken and an election will be held in April. At that point, bylaws will be reviewed and a determination about the NW/EP's mission made. The new trailer has arrived and will be stocked with supplies after an inventory of existing supplies is taken later in spring.

Recreation Council: Recreation Council President Susan Jones announced a St. Patrick's Day concert with Brendan Pelan that will be broadcast on March 17 on BHTV and the Recreation Council's YouTube channel. BHPD is sponsoring a 'potof gold' event in which children can win a 'pot of gold' for creating a St. Patrick's Day picture they post in their windows.

Berwyn Heights Day planning is in progress, but there is still uncertainty about which activities can take place due to Covid-19 restrictions, including a parade. A decision will be forthcoming on April 1. Activities that will take place include a scavenger hunt for which the Education Advisory Committee and Historical Committee will supply clues, distribution of craft kits, and sale of special edition Berwyn Heights Day T-shirts. Variations on a pancake breakfast will be explored by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Brittan Powell. Written proposals for other activities should be submitted to the Town Manager by April 1.

8. Old Business

There was none.

9. New Business

Resolution 3-2021 – Employee Handbook Changes: Mayor Dewey said this Resolution seeks to align certain personnel policies set forth in the Employee Handbook with current practices. TM Allen explained that the Resolution would implement changes to the overtime and adverse weather policies. The proposed overtime policy allows holiday hours to be counted toward the defined 40-hour work week on which overtime pay (1 ½ x regular pay) is calculated, as has been the practice since 2016. Overtime often kicks in when employees are asked to work extra hours beyond their regularly scheduled hours to serve the community, either because of adverse weather or other reasons.

TM Allen continued that the Town's adverse weather policy and associated overtime pay is currently tied to the closure of Town offices. This has caused confusion during the pandemic as Town offices

have been closed for nearly a year. The proposed change would tie the policy to the declaration of an adverse weather event by the Town Manager regardless of the status of Town offices. Another small change to the adverse weather policy was recommended by Chief Antolik. He advises that officers do not receive overtime pay when called to work on the weekend to respond to an adverse weather event.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Sweep thanked TM Allen for clarifying the policy around heretofore unforeseen circumstances of a pandemic. CM Papanikolas moved to adopt the Resolution. CM Sweep seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0.

10. Resident and Community Comments

CM Brittan-Powell asked if there have been any new developments about making Wi-Fi connectivity available throughout the Town and facilitating tutoring of BHES students by members of the community. CM Papanikolas said that he has not had time to look into the Wi-Fi issue but may have something to report in April. Mayor Dewey said that several Town organizations are looking into ways to maintain community connections and could be asked to present their ideas to the Council. Lastly, CM Brittan-Powell congratulated CM Sweep on running a productive Greenbelt Task Force meeting.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that Edmonston Road at Pontiac Street is currently under construction and detours are in effect.

On a motion by CM Sweep and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk