



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 June 9, 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. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Laura Allen, Town Clerk Kerstin Harper, Historical Committee Chair Debby Steele-Snyder and Recreation Council President Susan Jones.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey said there have been complaints about a trash problem at Lake Artemesia due to a lack of trash cans. The Town is aware of the problem and is working with Park & Planning to solve it. In the meantime, visitors to the park are requested to carry their trash out. On the Covid vaccination front, vaccines continue to be widely available, including at local pharmacies, medical offices and at Six Flags. Vaccination is encouraged as there is an increase in more contagious cases due to a Delta variant of the Covid-19 virus.

2. Ceremonial Items

Pride Month Proclamation: Mayor Dewey read a proclamation celebrating Pride Month and declaring June pride month in the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Kerstin Harper Retirement Proclamation: Mayor Dewey read a proclamation marking the retirement of Town Clerk Harper, who has served as Town Clerk since 2003 as well as in a variety of volunteer positions. She extended her best wishes for the next chapter of her life.

Clerk Harper thanked the Council for the honor and delivered a good-bye message to friends and acquaintances in the community where she has lived for nearly 30 years and raised her children.

Susan Jones and Councilmember Chris Brittan Powell thanked Clerk Harper for her service.

3. Approval of the Agenda (out of order)

CM Sweep moved, and CM Brittan-Powell seconded to approve the agenda. The agenda was approved 5 to 0.

4. Public Hearings

Ordinance 181-C - FY 2021 CARES Act Budget Amendment: Mayor Dewey said this budget amendment accounts for funds received via the CARES Act, after the FY 2021 budget was adopted, to compensate the Town and Town businesses for impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

CM Brittan Powell moved, and CM Sweep seconded to open the public hearing. The motion passed 5 to 0. TM Allen elaborated that the Town received \$183,540 in CARES Act funding through Prince George's County. The funds were provided on a reimbursable basis in accordance with a spending plan approved by the County. The FY 2021 budget needs to be amended to account for receipt of these funds. Budget amendments require two readings, the first of which occurred at the May 12 Town Meeting. The budget amendment would be adopted under Old Business.

No comments were received. On a motion by CM Brittan-Powell, and second by CM Sweep, the Council voted 5 to 0 to close the hearing.

Comprehensive Fee & Fine Schedule: Mayor Dewey said the Council implemented a new process last year, whereby a comprehensive fee & fine schedule and any changes thereto are approved as part of the annual budget process. TM Allen explained that two changes to the fees schedule are proposed for adoption: 1) an increase in the notary fee from \$2.00 to \$4.00 per page to more accurately reflect the amount of staff time taken up by notarization; and 2) a decrease in the returned check fee from \$50.00 to \$35.00 to align it with fees generally charged by banking institutions. The revised schedule would be adopted by resolution under New Business and become effective immediately.

CM Papanikolas moved and CM Brittan Powell seconded to open the public hearing. The motion passed 5 to 0. CM Papanikolas asked why the surcharge for the returned check fee was not caught earlier. TM Allen said she does not know but the recommendation to reduce the fee came from the Police Chief. No comments were received. On a motion by CM Brittan-Powell, and second by CM Papanikolas, the Council voted 5 to 0 to close the hearing.

5. Consent Agenda

CM Sweep moved, and CM Brittan-Powell seconded to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed 5 to 0.

6. Mayor's & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Dewey said the coming Monday, she and other Mayors will meet with the County Executive to discuss American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and listen to what others are planning to do with the money. In addition, she will attend a Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) meeting and a Prince George's County Mayor's meeting in the coming weeks. In Covid-19 news, the mask mandate has been lifted at the state and County level, but unvaccinated people are encouraged to continue to wear masks. Businesses may require masks in their establishments. Mayor Dewey also announced a Coffee with Cops event this Friday. The program includes the swearing-in of a new officer.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy announced an upcoming in-person meeting to discuss the future of the Paint Branch Golf Course. Phase II of the PGCPs school boundaries initiative has started. Everyone is invited to comment on an interim report and 3 scenarios for realigning school boundaries. Further, the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission has begun to hold meetings, at which public input is accepted on State redistricting that occurs after each decennial Census. She attended a redistricting meeting for the Eastern Shore. The meeting for Prince George's County will be held on July 28. The Council might wish to discuss redistricting and its impact on Berwyn Heights at an upcoming worksession.

CM Papanikolas said Clerk Harper was one of the first people he met after moving to Berwyn Heights and that he will be sad to see her leave. In her remaining time, she will train the new Town Clerk, Melanie Friesen, who will start next week.

CM Brittan Powell said he too is sorry to see Clerk Harper go. Further, the Code Department has streamlined the process for responding to concerns about unfair treatment.

CM Sweep reported that the street sweeper will be in Town next week and requested residents to park off the street, if possible. He appreciates the Town collaborating with Park & Planning to get the trash problem at Lake Artemesia resolved. He thanked Clerk Harper for her service and helping him with filing his papers when he first ran for Town Council.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy thanked the Public Works Department for posting new speed limit signs on Pontiac Street and 58th Avenue, as well as putting up speed monitors.

7. Committee Reports

Education Advisory Committee: MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that BHEAC co-chair Joanna Whitaker has resigned as her family will go overseas for a time. The BHEAC is currently reviewing applications for 3 BH Community Center STEAM summer camp scholarships the Committee has sponsored. The Berwyn Heights Education Grant applications are now available on the [Town website/ forms page](#). The school year ends on June 15 and drivers are requested to watch out for kids.

Green Team: Mayor Dewey reported that the Green Team will meet tomorrow, at which time it will finalize its Trees of Distinction selections. Also on the agenda are Pepco's sustainable communities grant application, the status of the Thriving Earth Exchange project, a debrief of a Route 1 Green Team summit, the adopt-a-block (for litter removal) program, and a possible guided nature walk/ tree identification event.

Historical Committee: BHHC Chair Debby Steele Snyder reported that the Historical Committee will next meet virtually on June 23. At its last meeting, the Committee discussed the Town's risk management policy and the accompanying event planning form organizations are to complete before holding an event. The Committee would like to meet with the Town Manager, Mayor and/ or Mayor Pro Tem to discuss access to the museum and support from Town staff following Clerk Harper's departure. Further, the BHHC produced a new oral history video of Howard Johnson on the occasion of his 100th birthday and came out with a new magnet featuring a historic home. The Committee continues to publish two Berwyn Heights history quiz questions in the monthly Bulletin, with solutions announced in the following issue.

Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: Mayor Dewey reported that the NW/EP Committee discussed goals and priorities, the trailer inventory, and opportunities for training at its June 2 meeting. The Committee expressed interest in participating in National Night Out, if that event is held.

Mayor Dewey also reported that she contacted the Prince George's County's Dispatch System on its non-emergency line (301-352-1200) after receiving a number of complaints about not being able to get through. She noticed that the on-hold music/ message is a repeating voice recording that may give the impression that the caller has been kicked back to the beginning of the menu. However, that is not the case. Callers should continue to hold when the message starts and not hang up. Callers may be on hold for several minutes as the Dispatch Service has been very busy of late.

Recreation Council: Recreation Council President Susan Jones announced that there will be Town-wide combination Yard Sale/Craft Sale on June 19. Many residents have already signed up. She continues to be in touch with Park & Planning about holding an outdoor concert at Lake Artemesia in July. A decision about the rental and use of park facilities should forthcoming soon. If a concert cannot be held, the Recreation Council might host a corn hole tournament for outdoor fun.

CM Brittan-Powell and Mayor Dewey remarked that the Council discussed organizing a Town-wide cleanup with next year's yard sale, possibly in partnership with a non-profit that collects used household goods.

8. Old Business

Ordinance 181-C – 2nd Reading & Adoption of FY 2021 CARES Act Budget Amendment: Mayor Dewey reiterated that this Ordinance amends the FY 2021 budget to account for additional revenue the Town received through the CARES Act. She dispensed with the 2nd reading as the Ordinance was read upon introduction.

CM Brittan-Powell moved to adopt Ordinance 181-C. CM Sweep seconded. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked and TM Allen responded that approximately \$100,000 of the CARES Act expenditures listed under the rubric of 'miscellaneous' included hazardous duty pay, computers, personal protective equipment, deep cleaning of facilities, and small business grants. The motion passed 5 to 0.

9. New Business

Resolution 4-2021 – Adoption of Comprehensive Fee & Fine Schedule: Mayor Dewey said, as explained in the Public Hearing portion of the meeting, two fees were adjusted to reflect the actual cost of the service: the notary fee and the returned check fee.

CM Brittan-Powell moved, and CM Sweep seconded to adopt the Fee and Fine Schedule. MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that the online agenda packet does not link to the correct document and asked for it to be corrected. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Roadway Condition Report and Recommended Street Projects for FY 2022. TM Allen explained she asked Public Works Director Hall to review the Town's road condition report from 2017 and update it. The revised report, provided in the agenda packet, ranks street conditions as 'poor' color-coded red, 'fair' color-coded yellow and 'acceptable' color-coded green. The report is intended to inform the Council's funding decisions as to which streets to repair first. The Town is a little behind schedule in making repairs due to the pandemic, the absence of a Public Works Director and lack of Public Works staff.

TM Allen continued that the FY 2022 budget sets aside \$210,000 for road repairs. It is recommended that repairs be made to those streets in poor condition, which make up about 11% of Town streets. This means Town streets are generally in good shape with the remainder either in fair condition (31%) or acceptable condition (56%). The Council is requested to provide feedback on the list of streets to be repaired and direction on drafting a 5-year capital improvement plan (CIP) using the road repair schedule as a basis.

In discussion the following points were made:

- Branchville Road needs to be included in the report.
- Some data on previous work on particular streets is missing because it is not known.
- 1996 was the last time a large-scale road project was financed with bonds.

- Potential traffic impacts from the Beltway Plaza redevelopment should be mentioned in the CIP.

CM Sweep moved, and CM Brittan Powell seconded to approve the proposed list of street projects for FY 2022. The motion passed 5 to 0.

CM Brittan-Powell moved, and CM Papanikolas seconded to direct TM Allen to prepare a CIP. CM Brittan-Powell suggested thinking about including a sidewalk when Edmonston Road is resurfaced. Mayor Dewey asked TM Allen to take the Walkable, Bikeable Berwyn Heights Task Force (WBBH) recommendations into account when drafting the CIP. The motion passed 5 to 0.

10. Resident and Community Comments

MPT Kulpa-Eddy shared some comments she received, including who to report Comcast/ Xfinity wires to that are still dangling from telephone poles (answer: anyone at Town Hall or the Code Department); and whether captions could be added to broadcasts of Council meetings on BHTV (answer: with difficulty, because it would require editing of video files. However, playtimes for specific recordings are listed on the back cover of the Bulletin).

CM Brittan-Powell commented that the Town might have done more outreach to the Seniors and others about how the Town is responding to and reopening from the pandemic.

On a motion by CM Sweep and second by CM Papanikolas, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk