



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 June 14, 2023| 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar, and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Also present were Interim Town Manager Peter Jones and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen as well as residents of the community.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy read the Pollinator Week Proclamation which is June 19-25, 2023. She also read the Pride Month Proclamation, declaring June 2023 Pride Month in Berwyn Heights.

2. Approval of Agenda

CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda. CM Menjivar seconded. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he would like greater discussion around the decision to extend ITM Jones' contract. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Consent

CM Menjivar moved to approve the consent agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he has heard comments that residents would appreciate the departmental reports be given by the department directors. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Mayor & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared an update from the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department about the recent fire on Seminole Place. While there was significant damage to the property, no residents were injured. BHVFD will be canvassing the area to provide smoke detectors. Residents are also able to get smoke detectors by reaching out to the BHVFD. Spanish-speaking residents will be assisted by a Spanish-speaking volunteer. She also updated residents on County Executive Alsobrooks' sandbag program and reminded residents that sandbags are available behind Town Center. She also reviewed the County's new laws on single use food items, such as paper napkins, straws, and plastic utensils. She encouraged residents to be prepared to ask for these items beginning June 1st.

MPT Brittan-Powell encouraged residents to participate in Pollinator Week and expressed his appreciation for Pride Month.

CM Hemby thanked residents who look after their neighbors but shared that she has received

several phone calls from residents who are experiencing excessive noise at all hours. She asked residents to refrain from revving their engines while driving through Town. She shared that there have been a number of incidents with unleashed dogs and encouraged residents to comply with leash restrictions. She added there have been residents who have not been cleaning up their pet waste, specifically on the field at the Elementary School. She encouraged residents to report violators and the Council will be exploring options to fine residents who do not clean up after their pets.

CM Menjivar also reviewed the County's sandbag program and stated the last bit of street restoration for FY23 is being completed. He added that food compost containers for curbside pickup should be available soon, hopefully in July. He also reviewed the curbside compost program. He stated that he didn't have an update on the restoration of Edmonston Road and that WSSC will soon begin another water main replacement project in the south end of Berwyn Heights. The Juneteenth trash schedule was reviewed, and residents were encouraged to not overload their trash cans and to use bins rather than loose bags.

CM Papanikolas shared that he did a police ride-along and that it was very eye opening. He reported that police are patrolling constantly, even if you may not see them. He reminded residents that school is out and to be conscientious when driving. He stated that Berwyn Heights Elementary School will be a Title 1 school next year, which will provide them more resources. There is no word on any upgrades to the building. He also let residents know that next year will be the final year of 6th grade at BHES and 6th grade will be integrated into the middle schools after that.

Resident Philip Newsom asked about rampant stop sign running in Town and asked if there were any cameras that could be used. It was explained that stop sign cameras are not yet legal in Maryland but that State legislation is being considered.

5. Committee Reports

- a. Education Advisory Committee- No report
- b. Green Team- Paul Kavanaugh reported that Berwyn Heights is a Bee City and thanked Therese Forbes who did a lot of work to make that happen as well as to put in a garden at BHES. The garden needs to be reestablished and the Green Team will be working on that after volunteers are in compliance with PGCPs requirements. He reported that Berwyn Heights resident Michael Ellis is the horticulturist at the University of Maryland who helped make the University a "Bee Campus USA". He also reported that the Green Team will be participating in the Route 1 Bee City Pollinator Festival. He concluded by adding that in order to maintain our Bee City certification the Town will need to establish a pollinator garden on municipal property. There was brief discussion on if the garden needed to be a single location or if it could be several small plots throughout the Town.
- c. Historical Committee: Debby Steele-Snyder updated that the next meeting will be on June 21st in the G. Love Room and then on July 26th. They will not be meeting in August but will be participating in National Night Out. The meeting on September 27th will have the election of officers and some of the members will need to be reappointed at that time. One of the Town's original houses is for sale. She also reported on a new mobile museum that will soon be available from the County and will be looking to have it visit the Town in the Fall.
- d. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the planned AED, Hands Only CPR, and PulsePoint App training class to be held on June 20th from 6-8PM in the Town Center.
- e. Recreation Council: Susan Jones stated the Town Wide yard sale is scheduled for Saturday, June 17th. She also shared about the upcoming concert with the Wild Anacostias on July 6th at

Lake Artemesia. The August concert is planned to be at Sports Park. The Rec Council will be participating in National Night Out. The July and August meetings will be rescheduled due to July 4th and National Night Out.

6. Old Business

There was no old business.

7. New Business

a. Introduction of Ethics Commission Members:

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the purpose and function of the Ethics Commission. She thanked the old members and introduced the new members: Philip Newsome, Alice Daly, and James Wilkinson. Mr. Newsome and Ms. Daly shared brief biographies and were sworn in. Mr. Wilkinson was unable to attend and will be sworn in at a later date. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy read his prepared biography.

b. Nomination and Selection of New Green Team Members:

CM Papanikolas introduced three new members of the Green Team and read their biographies. The new members are Edgar Moctezuma, Shira Francis, and Michael Ellis. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked for a motion to approve the new members. CM Papanikolas made the motion and MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Introduction of 18 Month ARPA Budget

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the proposed budget ordinance and stated the attached budget is still a work in progress. CM Papanikolas moved to introduce and waive the first reading of Ordinance 189. CM Hemby seconded. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he does not understand the numbers that are listed in the budget and believes they are repeatedly made in error. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy replied that some of the numbers come from past worksessions. MPT Brittan-Powell responded that he understands that the Ordinance needs to be introduced to get the process started but that the budget is in need of considerable revision. ITM Jones stated his frustration regarding the changing budgetary numbers. The motion to introduce Ordinance 189 passed 3:2 with MPT Brittan-Powell and CM Hemby opposed.

d. IT Vendor Contract Extension:

TC Friesen read the resolution into the record. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the current contract expires on June 30, and the Town needs a qualified vendor to provide CJIS access for the police department. A contract extension gives the Town time to pursue all options. MPT Brittan-Powell clarified this is a separate service from the A/V equipment upgrade. MPT Brittan-Powell moved to approve Resolution 06-2023. CM Menjivar seconded. The motion passed unanimously without discussion.

e. Interim Town Manager Contract Extension

TC Friesen read Resolution 05-2023 into the record. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that there were a few items that had not been considered when putting together the original TM search timeline (such as background checks), adding that at the last worksession, Council decided to extend ITM Jones contract and not forego these necessary reviews. CM Hemby moved to approve Resolution 05-2023. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell expressed his confusion about the timing on the resolution and the timeline for hiring a permanent Town Manager, and the decision-making process. He expressed concern that there is business that is not moving forward. He suggested using department heads as Acting Town Managers as has been done previously, which would also save the Town money. He expressed his opinion that many projects have been hindered under ITM Jones. He added that he has heard a number of comments from residents on the matter. CM Hemby responded that she

believes the Town was lost without a Town Manager, that there were complaints at that time, but that she has not heard any of the comments that MPT Brittan-Powell is stating he has heard. CM Papanikolas added that the indecision falls with the Council and is not the fault of ITM Jones. He added that it has been a problem in the past and will likely to continue to be an issue. MPT Brittan-Powell stated he has been following the Code of Conduct and is not denigrating any individual, but he is now stating things in what he believes to be the Town's best interest, adding that he would have preferred to do this in closed session. He would like the Council to give consideration to alternatives. CM Papanikolas stated that the motion needs to be addressed and would need to have a vote to consider other alternatives. The motion passed 3:2 with MPT Brittan-Powell and CM Menjivar opposed.

8. Resident & Community Comments

Mr. Ray Smith of Seminole Place asked about the estimated cost of the Town Manager Search. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that it is approximately \$25,000. He also asked about the Ethics Ordinance and wanted to know the last time it was reviewed and revised. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy replied that it was updated in January of 2023. Mr. Smith asked for copies of the old and new ordinances.

Ms. Susan Jones stated that in the past, Town Organizations were invited to participate in the interviews for the Town Manager and thinks that it would be nice if they were again, as they work with the Town Manager.

Mr. Smith asked who will be making the determination on members of the Resident Committee for interviews. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that it will be the Town Council.

Mr. Paul Kavanaugh gave an update on the Sustainable Maryland recertification. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy added that this is on the upcoming agenda. He asked for a stormwater plan, as this would give points to the application.

10. Adjournment

CM Hemby moved to adjourn. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.