



# 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

## Work Session Minutes September 18, 2023 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

### Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar, and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Also present were staff members Town Manager Kyle Snyder, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Lieutenant Dan Unger, and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Sharmila Bhatia was present to speak on the Election Ordinance.

### Approval of the Agenda

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy requested moving item 2.a. to under the Calendar item. CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda as amended. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. In discussion, MPT Brittan-Powell requested to ensure enough time was dedicated to the ARPA discussion. CM Menjivar asked to be sure to include trash bins as part of the ARPA discussion. With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### 1. Mayor

#### a. Announcements

MPT Brittan-Powell encouraged safety while driving, especially when students are around. He also thanked the Rec Council for a successful Ice Cream Social. CM Papanikolas shared about "Hello Huskies" night.

#### b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy mentioned the upcoming Multicultural Event on October 14<sup>th</sup>, and the Maryland Municipal League Fall Conference on October 15-17<sup>th</sup>, reminding Council that it will be a long day on the 16<sup>th</sup> as there is also a worksession that evening. State Senator Alonzo Washington is proposing a District 22 all-inclusive legislative dinner, promising that all delegates would be present, and that each municipality would have adequate time to speak with their representatives. While concerns were voiced about sufficient time with delegates, Council will try it for a year, forgoing the traditional Berwyn Heights Legislative Dinner.

#### c. Public Safety Concerns Including Sports Park and Organized Auto Theft

Chief Antolik joined Council and Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that during the last Town Meeting there were some concerns raised about automobile break-ins and drug dealing. MPT Brittan-Powell added that there seems to be a lot of petty theft from vehicles by apparently organized crews, as well as low level drug dealing at Sports Park and at other

locations around Town. CM Menjivar reviewed that there has been a long history of smoking marijuana at Sports Park. Chief Antolik acknowledged the concerns and will work with the Maryland Park Police to do more patrols around Sports Park, as that is their jurisdiction. MPT Brittan-Powell also reported drug dealing from vehicles at 57<sup>th</sup> and Osage. Chief Antolik will review the situation. He then shared the statistics of theft from vehicles for the County and the sector of the County that contains Berwyn Heights, which shows that this is not a location-specific concern, but rather that thefts are on the rise across the County. Chief Antolik also reviewed incidents of the BHPD recovering stolen property. He added that when incidents happen, residents are helpful. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested residents consider joining the Neighborhood Watch committee. CM Hemby commended the Chief and his staff, adding that a healthy community does not just rely on their police, but the schools and residents doing their part as well. She asked about ways to report incidents when residents do not want to call 911. She also reviewed an incident of erratic driving during school dismissal at BHES. Chief Antolik shared that during evening hours, residents are able to call or text him directly at (240)508-9940 or by email at chief@berwynheightsmd.gov. He also added that they can reach Lt. Unger at (240) 508-9944 or by email at dunger@berwynheightsmd.gov. He asked for incidents that happen late at night, to please call 911. He also shared that the police will do home security inspections for residents by request and if residents are interested to call the BHPD main number to schedule an appointment. CM Menjivar asked about staffing levels. Chief Antolik responded that it would need to be a conversation for another time as there are many factors to take into consideration.

**d. Ordinance 109 (Elections) Draft Review**

Chief Election Judge Sharmila Bhatia joined Council. TC Friesen reviewed the Staff Report, highlighting that there are a few areas of the proposed changes which are simply clarifications, while some are more complicated. There was discussion on withdrawal deadlines for the candidates. There was discussion on the opportunity for all candidates to place yard signs on Town property on how that might affect other forms of electioneering. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy indicated that the idea of moving the election day would likely be a non-binding ballot question. CM Papanikolas stated that he would like to revise the way Section 5. C. *Compensation* is worded, by simply tying it to the State or County compensation instead. The Council had considerable discussion about early voting and how that would work. Ms. Bhatia pointed out that the purpose is to make voting more accessible to those who might be unable to come on a Tuesday for whatever reason. Ultimately, the consensus was to move forward with early voting with the understanding that it may not happen at the upcoming 2024 election. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about lowering the voting age to 16 and to allow for non-citizen voting. Ms. Bhatia pointed out there is a town registry for voters who, for whatever reason, might not want to register to vote at the County level. TC Friesen noted that there is no citizenship check with that registry and that while it does not specifically include non-citizens it also doesn't exclude them. These propositions will both be introduced as ballot questions at the May 2024 election.

**e. Review Draft Bulletin Policy**

TC Friesen reviewed that there have been no changes to the policy or Staff Report as Council has not provided feedback to-date. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy indicated she recently learned of some clarifications on attributions of submissions that she would like to

ensure are included.

- f. Review iConsultancy Project: Berwyn Heights Stormwater Dashboard (Phase II)**  
Mayor Kulpa-Eddy clarified that iConsultancy is the new name for the program formerly known as Campus Community Connections. MPT Brittan-Powell shared that this proposal is a continuation of the previous project done with the Town for a stormwater dashboard webpage. This would include interactive pieces to help residents and visitors get a real layout of the town. In discussion, it was determined to move forward with the program with clarifications of changing the alternate contact to TM Snyder. There was willingness to also move forward with the proposed \$5,000 donation, but Council would like a little additional clarification before committing to that. There is a desire to make sure that this proposal really focuses on Berwyn Heights internally and not on the boundaries of the Town.

**g. ARPA Budget Discussion**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the current budget amendment ordinance, indicating that there are still options to add funding, including the previously discussed iConsultancy donation. CM Menjivar reviewed that there are several areas in Town that have drainage issues causing hazardous conditions. He would like to see ARPA funding used to solve the issues at 57<sup>th</sup> and Osage. There was discussion regarding the options and solutions, noting that the \$110,000 would be for a drainage pipe that would be behind the curb, and restoration of the curb and driveway aprons that would be damaged in the installation. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that she would like to see an updated road condition report. CM Papanikolas would like to see the report include water problems involving Town roads. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that there are dedicated funds from Highway User Revenues and the local road tax that should be used for these kinds of projects. ARPA funding was not excluded but as Council would like more information, it may not be included in the current budget amendment.

CM Menjivar also spoke about the need for a standardized trash can so that the tipper on the trash trucks can be utilized to prevent injury. There was discussion how this might be accomplished and if the Town really needs to buy toters as they might not be universally welcomed. After what type of toters might be acceptable is determined, it may be a budget issue for a future year, but not included in this particular ARPA amendment.

CM Papanikolas reviewed the request from the Holy Redeemer school for their "Monster Dash". CM Papanikolas emphasized that no funding would be used for religious education, but rather extracurricular programs and events. Council did not express concern about donating, but rather discussed if it should come from ARPA or from the Education Grant within the General Fund budget. \$750 will be donated, but they will also be asked to fill out the Education Grant form.

MPT Brittan-Powell spoke on the general approach that the Council is taking towards spending the ARPA budget. CM Papanikolas shared that he believes when we have a concrete and reasonable amount for a project, the funds should be allocated. He advocated for \$600,000 to be dedicated for stormwater as the Town has a reasonable quote from the County. There was discussion on which government body is responsible for paying that quote. While it was not universally accepted among Council that the Town should be paying the costs, \$600,000 for stormwater management will be added into the budget amendment.

CM Hemby shared that the school is asking for a small shed.

**h. Resident Comments**

There were no resident comments.

**2. Public Safety**

There was no report for Public Safety.

**a. Public Safety Concerns Including Sports Park and Organized Auto Theft (reordered to 1.c)**

**3. Public Works**

There was no report for Public Works. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about open positions. TM Snyder said that he has been in contact with Director Pudner and will be bringing that to the Council in the near future.

**a. Drainage Concerns at 57<sup>th</sup> Ave/Osage and Possible Funding Sources**

This item was included in the ARPA discussion.

**4. Administration**

There was no report for Administration.

**a. Staff Recommendations Regarding Administration Reorganization**

TM Snyder reviewed that with the departure of a longtime staff member there are options to revise the roles of Administrative Staff. He shared that some of the duties of the Assistant to the Town Manager would be shifted to the Town Clerk and the Assistant to the Town Manager would be made an Office Manager. There was discussion on the title of the Assistant, as an Office Manager or Administrator. Consensus was to move forward with the proposed reorganization.

**5. Code Compliance**

CM Hemby shared that residents are still building without a permit. Code is recommending putting a door hanger on every door in Town to remind them of this requirement and have this done every few years to account for new residents. She also encouraged residents to get a carbon monoxide detector.

**6. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs**

There was no report from PRECA.

**a. Holy Redeemer Monster Dash Sponsorship**

This was included in the ARPA discussion.

**b. Removal of Educational Advisory Committee from Town Meeting Agenda**

CM Papanikolas reviewed that the EAC has dissolved since Covid, with members moving out of the area. He would like to have their reporting requirement removed from Town Meeting agendas until they have a new mandate and membership. There was consensus to remove them and mark them as inactive on the Town Organizations policy and update the Bulletin contact page accordingly.

**7. Adjournment**

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Menjivar seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 9:20PM.