



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Stephen D. Isler
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)
Amanda M. Dewey
Jeffrey Jay Osmond
Ethan D. Sweep

Worksession Minutes September 16, 2019 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Ethan Sweep, and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Assistant to the Town Manager Yvonne Odoi and citizens.

1. Announcements

Mayor Isler thanked Police Clerk Muralles and everyone who organized the multi-cultural event last Saturday. He, MPT Papanikolas and CM Sweep attended as well as many residents and had a great time. He with MPT Papanikolas and CM Dewey also attended the send-off of BHES teacher Bret Goldstein last Wednesday on his 100-mile bike ride to North Bay to raise funds for students to attend the North Bay adventure camp. An enthusiastic crowd came out to support him. TM Broadbent announced that offices will be closed on September 27 for a staff retreat.

2. Discussion Items

Project tracking: TM Broadbent explained that she and her Assistant Yvonne Odoi have set up a system to track projects. The system is intended to ensure that suggestions and projects, some initiated by the previous Council, are followed up upon. It is also a way for her to check the status of new initiatives and capital projects without having to ask staff. Ms. Odoi has been tasked with tracking all projects and obtaining updates from staff on a monthly basis. Each project is broken down into a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 9 milestones for completion. At some point, the timely reaching of milestones will be used as a performance measure, although this will have to wait for the next fiscal year. Milestone dates are flexible and can be changed if more time is needed to accomplish them.

TM Broadbent said one of the things she would like to see happen is for directors to come to a Council meeting on a quarterly basis and discuss the projects that are being tracked. This would obviate the need for directors to attend every Town meeting and give a monthly status report of which a written version is already available.

Ms. Odoi provided a spreadsheet on which all projects and their milestones are listed and explained the layout. She said the project list is organized by department and by position and some projects are tracked in 2 or more departments if there it is a cross-departmental effort. She then gave a detailed account of the projects. TM Broadbent highlighted several projects including the merging of Administration and Police Department QuickBooks accounts, production of professional videos using KHarper

the cable TV reserve, and a bond bill request to make improvements to the Town Center.

In response to questions from the Council, TM Broadbent and Assistant Odoi explained that the reaching of a milestone on the spreadsheet will be indicated by color code. Staff will be asked to look into posting the spreadsheet on a cloud-based shared drive. A field indicating the origins of a project is to be added to the spreadsheet later.

Citizen Survey: CM Dewey said the idea of a citizen survey came from the Council's desire to have a more accurate understanding of the preferences and opinions of the Town as to inform future decisions. Memoranda with an updated timeline for the survey and a draft list of survey questions are provided. Tonight, she hopes the Council will identify priority topics to be covered in the survey. After this meeting, Town departments and organizations will be asked to submit topics and then she will have a test group at the University of Maryland give feedback on the survey.

CM Dewey introduced Casey Blalock, resident of Goucher Drive. Mr. Blalock has a PhD in Sociology and works for the Census Bureau. He agreed to attend this meeting to help the Council formulate survey questions. Mr. Blalock said he analyzes survey data as part of his job but focuses on international issues.

There ensued a discussion of the survey with regard to methodology. Councilmembers agreed that it would be useful to:

- organize the survey into topic sections;
- add filter questions;
- focus on questions gauging the general satisfaction or dissatisfaction with Town services;
- have Town departments provide descriptions of their most important services;
- minimize open-ended questions such as "What service are you dissatisfied with and why?";
- include questions to gauge knowledge of services provided;
- include more questions about Town communications with residents.

The Council also made changes to the phrasing of the introduction and several questions to clarify meaning, minimize misunderstanding and add information. It was agreed to send the survey on Town letterhead to indicate who is conducting the survey and to allow the members in the household to select who should fill out the survey. CM Dewey will incorporate the changes proposed tonight and add questions proposed by Town departments and organizations for the next survey discussion at the November 4 worksession.

MNCPPC Open Space correspondence: TM Broadbent suggested postponing discussion of this item to a future worksession. CM Osmond so moved. MPT Papanikolas seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0. CM Dewey said the Council should wait to discuss the related issue of the construction of a dog park until input from residents is received through the survey.

3. Town Council -e-newsletter

Mayor Isler said he does not have a draft of the newsletter prepared and asked to resume publication of the e-newsletter in October.

4. Minutes

The Council reviewed the August 19 worksession. CM Osmond moved, and CM Sweep seconded to adopt the minutes. The motion passed 5 to 0.

5. Department Reports

Mayor Isler reported that the multi-cultural event hosted by BHPD last Saturday was great fun. More events like these are planned for the future.

MPT Papanikolas said his ride-along on the trash truck was very enlightening. The relatively small Public Works team gets a lot done before most residents leave their homes in the morning. They are a friendly bunch and greet every resident they see when they pick up trash.

CM Sweep said he attended the multi-cultural event as well and thanked those who organized it. He had a good time and especially enjoyed the tasty papusas. He also announced the sequence of streets to be resurfaced in the coming weeks and the upcoming distribution of the new recycling bins. Old recycling bins may be used for yard waste.

CM Dewey said she has been busy drafting the survey and preparing for the first meeting of the Walkable, Bikeable Berwyn Heights Task Force to be held on September 18. She has also met with the Education Advisory Committee which is busy meeting with various education stakeholders.

CM Osmond said he signed up for the MML fall conference and would be happy to share a ride with any others who are attending. He asked if any applications for the vacant code officer position have been received and was informed that none were received yet.

6. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the upcoming Town Council schedule. No changes were made. Mayor Isler and CM Dewey will attend the next PGCMA meeting. CM Dewey announced the details for the Pop-up Pet Event.

7. Citizens Discussion

Phil Ventura commented that the survey is very interesting, but the Town should make sure the respondents remain anonymous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk