



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

Worksession Minutes June 21, 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 join the meeting via Zoom and comment by telephone and email.

Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Christopher Brittan-Powell, Jason Papanikolas and Ethan Sweep. Also, present were Town Manager (TM) Laura Allen, current Town Clerk Kerstin Harper and newly hired Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Andrew Fellows joined for Discussion Item 3A.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey wished all a belated Happy Juneteenth and gave a brief history of the Holiday. She asked that TM Allen include an item on July's agenda a discussion on adding a floating holiday for Staff in July as a response to the fact that the Town was unable to close their offices on such short notice in response to President Biden's declaration of the Federal Holiday. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if creating a floating holiday will have budgetary effects as well as if the floating holiday would be scheduled during the fiscal year or the remainder of the calendar year.

Mayor Dewey and TM Allen introduced the new Town Clerk, Melanie Friesen.
Mayor Dewey read the proclamation for National Pollinator Week.

2. Approval of Agenda

MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved to approve the agenda. CM Sweep seconded. After no discussion, motion approved unanimously.

3. Discussion Items

A. CCC summary and update

Andrew Fellows from the University of Maryland joined to discuss Campus Community Connections (CCC). This is the 6th and final year of the CCC pilot program. There were 10 initial projects for the program. Since Berwyn Heights involvement with the program and their interest in Civic Engagement, that also became a priority for the University. There are faculty and staff that live in BH that are interested in working on the Invasive Species issues with the Town. They have not been successful in identifying a more local composting site. There were two projects in a row to work on stormwater and flooding and plans to work with Staff and Elected Officials to develop a Fall project around this as well. There will be a summer project that is called the Stormwater-Internet of Things, which will include on and off campus stormwater sensors to help develop a regional way to address stormwater management and flood risk mitigation. Sustainability is interconnected and stormwater is connected to tree canopy which is something that BH has taken a leadership role on. Historic Homes Preservation: there is a department of Preservation at the University and while no projects have been implemented it remains a possibility. Invasive Species is the current project and will be working with TM Allen and volunteer scientists to develop an Invasive Species identification tool or app for removal.

Mayor Dewey asked what the Council can be doing to help. Mr. Fellows suggested that the 10 projects identified in 2016 do not need to be the only projects that are worked on and that engagement from the Council on any projects would be welcomed.

B. Composting program update

Renewal of the composting contract is coming up. TM Allen shared a chart of compost amounts collected and cost for the Fiscal Year. She invited Council to ask questions before entering contract negotiations with Compost Crew. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if there has been a return of finished material from the Compost Crew. TM Allen will follow up. Mayor Dewey asked about increasing engagement and to see if Compost Crew has any ideas on this. CM Sweep suggested that sending everyone in Town a compost bag and reaching out to the community at large once again would be a good idea. CM Papanikolas asked if the current 4 bins are sufficient or if we actually need to increase the number of bins. TM Allen says she will explore with Compost Crew about the cost of adding a bin if one is needed to hold the waste that is being deposited. Mayor Dewey spoke about curbside composting not being realistic at this time but expresses hope that it may become so in the future. Additionally, she informed Council that Berwyn Heights will be seeing increased Tipping Fees from the County in the near future to “come in line with other jurisdictions”.

C. WBBH TF Status Report

TM Allen reminded Council that \$30,000 was dedicated in FY21 to WBBH. Council identified priority items in previous meetings. Working with the police department and public works, several items have been completed. Items have been quantified as high or low effort. Some items were one and done and were completed. A number of items are in progress. There are items that have not been initiated yet. One item is setting a Town wide speed limit of 20MPH and the speed camera vendor for the Town of Berwyn Heights says that the entirety of the Town falls within the boundaries of what could be considered as a school zone to make this possible. There are four items that TM Allen recommended having a professional traffic study done to determine if these items make sense after having a professional opinion. These items are 1) to institute a direction change of the one-way portion of Seminole St and make Seminole Pl a one-way route. 2) Add speed tables around the blind curves after the Greenbelt Rd. overpass in both directions. 3) Create a one-way (westbound only) route for the block of Berwyn Rd between 60th and Charlton Ave. Alternative, parking could be limited to the north side of Berwyn Rd so that cars could pass the blind hill safely, which would then also provide space for a protected pedestrian walkway and allow for bidirectional bicyclist traffic. 4) Construct raised intersections (aka “speed table”) to emphasize the 4-way and 3-way stops at 58th Ave, Cunningham Dr. and 60th Ave. TM Allen suggested that the Town determine if there is a way to piggyback on a competitively bid traffic engineer. TM Allen recommended that Council allocate the \$30,000 that has been dedicated for FY2022 to WBBH to be spent on the traffic study, which is the amount that she estimated to be the rough cost for the traffic study for the four identified items. If Council determines that they do not want to dedicate the funding to the traffic study, they will either need to pull from reserves or they will need to transfer money from another area to this to complete the study. TM Allen asked Council for questions. CM Brittan-Powell asked if the previous traffic studies that have been done are adequate to answer the questions. TM Allen responded that the studies would not be current enough or have studied areas that are relevant to answer the questions at hand. CM Brittan-Powell asked about cost. TM Allen responded that traffic studies are done on an hourly basis and at rates determined by the skills of staff from the engineering group. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked what would be involved in a traffic study. TM Allen said that they will study what we ask them to look at. She expresses concern about changing the one-way road (Seminole Street) would result in having wider issues with traffic pattern. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked for clarification on areas that will be studied, as well as if the study will include taking into consideration the different types of vehicles that utilize the routes. CM Sweep suggested looking at speed tables that address the different sized wheelbases of emergency vehicles so that they would be able to drive without being affected by the speed tables. CM Brittan-Powell wondered if there would be any kind of compensation or consideration for residents that are inconvenienced by the

changes in the one-way. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about if the study would come from this budget year or next. TM Allen clarified that this would likely be the entirety of the FY2022 budget for this line item. CM Papanikolas commented that most of the “low hanging fruit” of projects have been completed and asked if a traffic study could clarify what projects should be done and if the proposed approaches are the best approach or if there is a better way to address the problems. TM Allen agreed that a traffic study could clarify the direction of the projects. TM Allen noted that many of the other pending projects will cost staff time, rather than having expenditures and so that progress can be made on those without effecting the budget. CM Brittan-Powell wondered if consideration will be given to the firm that did the previous traffic study. TM Allen said that they do have a good reputation, but that she would be looking to piggyback on a recently competitively bid traffic study contract. Mayor Dewey confirmed there is consensus that TM Allen should continue to pursue the feasibility of conducting traffic study. TM Allen wanted to credit Public Works with all that they have done so quickly to implement the projects so far.

D. ARPA update and engagement process.

Mayor Dewey introduced the item by saying that TM Allen and MPT Kulpa-Eddy have been attending many webinars on the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). TM Allen walked Council through a presentation on the Plan. TM Allen clarified that the Town has gone through the process to request funding. The Town will be required to submit reports annually through December of 2026. The Town is required to keep records on ARPA for 5 years. TM Allen continued to clarify the role of the State of Maryland on the funding. TM Allen said that the Town is taking steps to adjust the sweep accounts to maximize the interest earned on the funds. The funding cannot be more than 75% of the operating budget as of Jan. 2020. TM Allen went over the ineligible uses for the funds, 1) to offset tax cuts 2) deposit into pension or rainy-day funds 3) fund debt service, legal settlements, or matching funds on other grant requests. 4) general infrastructure spending unless under the revenue provision. Eligible expenses are 1) Addressing Negative Economic Impacts and Public Health Response, including mitigation and prevention activities, medical expenses for care and services, behavioral health care, public health and safety staff payroll and benefits, and activities to address the disparities in public health outcomes. 2) Revenue Loss- this involves a detailed calculation that compares actual pandemic era revenue to estimate of revenue as if the pandemic had not occurred. It is under this provision that the funding can be used for general infrastructure. 3) Premium pay 4) Water, sewer, stormwater, and broadband infrastructure. TM Allen emphasized the importance of making a case for funding, including soliciting community input, considering Council Action/or resolutions, to think about how the project would be described on the front page of the local newspaper, to explain why the use of the funds is necessary, find the harm/need you are looking to address and determine how the expenditure would address the harm/need. TM Allen opened the floor to questions. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked if the information requested by the State had been submitted to meet the June 30, 2021. TM Allen confirmed that while the Town has not received final confirmation, the submission was in before the deadline. MPT Kulpa-Eddy expressed that there is concern that the guidance still isn't clear on what projects are eligible. TM Allen stated that this is wording of the interim final guidance, that questions are still open until July 16th. TM Allen said there are some really interesting projects that we can do regarding Stormwater but wants to make sure of the reporting requirements. Mayor Dewey stated that the guidance is intentionally broad and would like the Town to keep it broad and not overly limit ourselves. Mayor Dewey began the conversation regarding community engagement. First would be broad education regarding what are the eligible categories are and then engaging the community in a wide variety of ways. Mayor Dewey would like a survey in the July e-newsletter of broad categories, then in August put the survey in the full Bulletin and then if there is an in-person National Night Out event, to include some sort of engagement and education during that event, then again in the e-newsletter. In September, conduct a follow up survey to narrow down from the broad use categories, signs and on-line link at Pops Park and other locations directing to an online survey. MPT Kulpa-Eddy had concerns about having enough information in July to do an online survey and wants to push back the survey a month. She had further concerns that stormwater isn't outlined in allowable uses. TM Allen said

that Treasury has provided guidance that stormwater is an allowable expense. MPT Kulpa-Eddy commented that relying on the e-newsletter and online surveys leaves out a portion of the community that do not receive their information online. Mayor Dewey said that this is a very good point and suggested that in September or October we do a special worksession or live event to make sure all residents have an opportunity to engage the process. Mayor Dewey encouraged Council to engage residents individually to ensure all portions of the population are reached. Mayor Dewey said the next step is the online survey and offered to work with TM Allen to create the survey.

E. Gun Prevention Partner donation request

Mayor Dewey received an email request for a donation from States Attorney Braveboy's office for a donation for gun violence prevention. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked what the donation will be used for as the event that is referenced has already taken place. Mayor Dewey said the County is starting a campaign about gun violence. MPT Kulpa-Eddy had concerns that money donated won't actually benefit Town residents, that the money will benefit other communities. CM Sweep agreed in part, but also stated that gun violence is an issue that effects a broad swath of the population and would support sending a donation. MPT Kulpa-Eddy wondered why the County isn't funding this in full. Mayor Dewey said she was unable to attend the event and is willing to take questions- CM Sweep wanted to know what their plans are beyond Gun Violence Awareness Month. CM Papanikolas said he has done some research to try and determine what the money is for and was unable to find answers. He had concerns that this is a sensitive political issue. Mayor Dewey will contact the representative at the office for more details and report back.

F. MML summer conference

Mayor Dewey, MPT Kulpa-Eddy, CM Sweep, and TM Allen will be attending in person, with CM Brittan-Powell and CM Papanikolas attending virtually in July. Details and sessions were discussed ensuring that representatives of the Town are attending a broad variety of sessions and that most of the offered sessions will be attended by at least one member of the Council or Staff.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey congratulated the Recreation Council on the yard/craft sale. Climate action meeting for PG County on Thursday, seeking input from residents on climate change issues. There was an incident at the Hockey Rink several months ago of racist graffiti. She wanted to acknowledge it publicly and let the community know that it is in the jurisdiction of Park and Planning and they are investigating but do not anticipate that there will be any satisfactory results from the investigation. She also wanted to thank everyone who attended the Coffee with a Cop event. Finally, Mayor Dewey wanted to highlight some relief funding from Pepco. It will be an automatic credit, but Pepco will be calling eligible people to inform them.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy also attended Coffee with a Cop and thought it went well. She has been attending many webinars on ARPA. She also attended the PGCMA meeting on June 17 virtually; their biggest concern is the moratorium on evictions ending on July 1st, especially with federal pandemic unemployment benefits ending July 3rd. She encouraged residents to reach out if they are in need so that they can be connected with County and State programs that can help them. PG County Executive opened up registration for the Alsobrooks Passport Experience for youth ages 12-18 a variety of activities to choose from this summer. Residents can access a Google doc where they can see the full list of activities and then can register at Eventbrite.com for just \$20 Registered youth must pick up their passport at the Sports and Learning Complex on June 28th. Seniors Club there is a meeting tomorrow at 11AM open to all vaccinated seniors registered with Town Hall. The Historical Committee is meeting virtually Wednesday June 23rd at 7:30pm, discussing the digital walking tour and possibility of remaking the Berwyn Heights Museum. The Recreation Council is meeting on July 6th at 7PM discussing a potential Town Social to be held on July 21st from 6-8 to be held at the Berwyn Heights Community Center on Pontiac Street. Neighborhood Watch is July 7th. Green Team is the week after that. The Educational Advisory Committee is not meeting this month. Their next meeting is July 26th. They did

have 3 students that received scholarships to attend the STEAM Camp at the Community Center. The Educational Grant Request is on the Town website and round one proposal questions are due by July 20th, with completed applications due August 15th.

CM Papanikolas welcomed the new Town Clerk and welcomed a Scout from Troop 2016 attending the worksession to meet merit badge requirements.

CM Brittan-Powell has received a few complaints that code officers have come on to property, especially backyards, without permission and will be sharing that with the head of Code. Mayor Dewey asked that CM Brittan-Powell include TM Allen in discussions with Code.

CM Sweep asked if there are any updates about the trash cans at Lake Artemesia. Mayor Dewey reports that TM Allen had been back and forth with Park and Planning and that the reduction of trash cans is a result of trash can cleaning as well as reducing the carbon footprint. The Green Team spent some time at the Lake at various times and it does appear that the trash problem seems to be resolving, except on the island area. CM Sweep expressed concern that there are no pet waste receptacles either. CM Brittan-Powell noted at this point that there are several dead and dying trees in Sports Park area that have been marked for removal.

5. Resident & Community Comments

No Resident or Community Comments.

Adjournment

MPT Kulpa-Eddy made the motion to adjourn. CM Sweep seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 9:24PM.

Signed: *Melanie Friesen*, Town Clerk