



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 January 2, 2024 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Town Manager Kyle Snyder and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen were also present.

Approval of the Agenda

CM Papanikolas moved to approve the agenda. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously (4:0).

1. Mayor

a. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that the County's "Better Bag" bill is now in effect. She encouraged residents to bring reusable bags when shopping as residents will be charged a minimum of \$.10 for a paper or reusable bag. The Town has free reusable bags available at the Town Office.

Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell joined the meeting during the announcements at 7:02 PM.

b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the calendar and noted that the Four Cities Meeting will be held in College Park on January 25th.

c. M-NCPPC WBBH PAMC Action Plan Discussion

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that there are two action items for the Council tonight: to respond to the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) regarding their draft Action Plan, and to determine if a Town Hall is desired and if so, to set a date. She reviewed the memo she submitted to Council as part of the agenda packet, which included several suggested editorial changes as well as some specific requests for clarification. Noted questions included asking why these four locations were chosen for the plan (of the eleven submitted) and to add more detail on the crash data provided. She would like to have countermeasures defined before they are shown in the action plan, as referencing undefined countermeasures is challenging to understand. She also noted some of the lingo used is confusing and asked that these terms be clarified as part of the final Action Plan.

CM Menjivar expressed concerns about parking if the Town repurposes part of the

roadway into sidewalks/non-motorized pathways. MPT Brittan-Powell expressed that he doesn't necessarily agree the chosen locations are the priority locations. CM Papanikolas stated that he believes these to be sample locations, rather than priority locations. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked for follow-up for data on the items that Council had requested such as double stop signs, LED stop signs, and driveway mirrors. MPT Brittan-Powell wondered if M-NCPPC would be responsible for any of the work on Ballew as some of the countermeasures would be on land that they own. CM Papanikolas would like to know if M-NCPPC has a rubric that they use when prioritizing projects. TC Friesen read into the record an email from resident James Wilkinson and the response from M-NCPPC staff on adding a sidewalk extension to increase safety on Edmonston Road.

Council will submit comments to M-NCPPC and will see what kind of feedback is returned.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy opened the discussion on holding a Town Hall. While several dates and possibilities were discussed, ultimately, the Town will ask for written input from its institutional partners (such as PGCPD and BHVFD) and will plan a Town Hall for residents after a draft plan that can be shared is produced by M-NCPPC.

MPT Brittan-Powell stated that there are just a lot of items that aren't included in this project and wanted to know how the process would go. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy replied that she would expect that after the final plan is complete, that the reports from the various ad hoc committees that contributed to this project (WBBH, Safe Streets, and the Quality-of-Life Commission) would be reviewed to determine priorities. CM Papanikolas noted that it is likely this will be done by the next Council. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy noted that this Council will need to provide some sort of budget in FY2025 for these projects.

d. Tax Differential Discussion

TM Snyder reported that the Town received our report on the tax differential amounts from the County. Residents will receive a reduced payment on the County Tax Rate. He reviewed this is in large part due to work done on the part of the Town Departments providing services to residents in lieu of the County having to do them. MPT Brittan-Powell noted that most of the changes were from the Police Department but that the Town provides other services. TM Snyder responded that the Town already receives 100% credit for Public Works and Code Compliance, and most of the category changes from the County fell in the realm of Public Safety. He also noted that there are possible changes to further reduce the tax rate in FY2025 as the Town continues to implement changes. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy noted that just because the County's tax rate has gone down, that does not mean that residents will see a reduction in their overall property taxes as there are other charges from the County that are included in the tax bill. CM Papanikolas noted that Berwyn Heights Town taxes only account for about 1/3 of a tax bill. CM Hemby asked for an educational session on understanding a tax bill. TM Snyder replied that he believes he can create a presentation that can help explain a tax bill.

e. Four Cities Agenda Items

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the invitation from College Park for the upcoming Four Cities Meeting. Council discussed the agenda items that they would like to have added to the meeting. They have asked to put forth the County's Tax Differential Task Force

legislation and the Crossing Guard shortage, as well as Food and Housing insecurity which incorporates a larger “aging-in-place” discussion. Berwyn Heights hosts the Four Cities meeting in July, and the Council adopted the date of Wednesday, July 24th, 2024.

f. Resident Comments

There were no resident comments.

2. Administration

There was no administration report.

3. Code Compliance

CM Hemby asked TM Snyder for a meeting to work on the welcome packet with resident volunteers. She also invited residents to join her in working on the welcome packet. CM Hemby highlighted that landlords are responsible for their tenants’ behaviors and that some ordinance violations are the responsibility of landlords, not the tenants. She encouraged landlords to be proactive in managing their properties.

She also noted that flu is on the rise and encouraged residents to take precautions.

4. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs

The After Holiday (Re-Gifting) Party will be held on January 13th from 2-4pm in the Senior Center. There was no other PRECA report.

a. Town Organization Policy

TM Snyder reviewed that what is before Council is a very rough first draft of an ordinance to govern all Town organizations. He reviewed the history of the current Ordinance 113 that governs the Rec Council and dates back to 1983. TM Snyder noted there are a few groups that have their own Ordinances and Council may want to consider removing them from this ordinance. These groups are the Shade Tree Board, the Board of Election Supervisors and the Ethics Commission. The goal would be to have an umbrella ordinance that can stand alone but that the Town would be able to update by resolution as the list of organizations grow and change. As a response to a question from MPT Brittan-Powell, TM Snyder reviewed the section on finances, which outlines the methods for organizations to access funding. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy and CM Papanikolas noted an editorial comment on the need for consistency in what organizations are called, as several different terms are used throughout this draft. There was a brief discussion on what would constitute a “Committee” and an “Assembly”. There was discussion on what subjects may need to be added to the ordinance, such as an event policy and insurance requirements. CM Papanikolas expressed that this seems to make the Rec Council an advisory arm of the Town. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy opened comments to residents as some residents joined the meeting for this discussion. Angie Wolfinger, co-chair of the Rec Council, expressed concern over the power in being the umbrella organization, noting that they are all volunteers with limited time and she is unsure of their capacity to take on that responsibility as other Town organizations are not always present at their meetings. She asked for Council to consider changing their title from Rec Council to something else, to help differentiate their role from that of the elected body of the Town, particularly for non-English speakers. There was discussion on some of the benefits that would be granted recognized organizations, such as storage space and if there was enough space. Options were discussed, including storage at

Sports Park. TM Snyder will edit the current draft and bring it back to Council for their review at the next worksession.

5. Public Safety

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed two upcoming training courses, one for administering Narcan and the other on CPR/AED First Aid. She noted that registration will be required and that residents can contact the Town Office to register.

6. Public Works

CM Menjivar reminded residents this is the last week of loose leaf collection and that after January 5th, residents will need to have their leaves bagged for pick-up as yard waste. He noted the pilot compost bin program has gone well and wanted to at least address the possible need for additional bin purchases.

TM Snyder reviewed Public Works preparations for the possible winter storm over the coming weekend.

7. Adjournment

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to adjourn. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously (5:0) and the meeting adjourned at 8:38 PM.