



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 October 3, 2022 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chamber

This meeting was held in the Council Chamber, 5700 Berwyn Road. Residents could comment by attending the meeting or by calling 301-474-9570 or emailing Clerk Friesen at mfriesen@berwynheightsmd.gov. Resident comments may be limited to 3 minutes.

Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:02PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tempore Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby and Councilmember Faustino Menjivar. Staff present were Town Manager Laura Allen and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Councilmember Jason Papanikolas was out with an excused absence.

Approval of the Agenda

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to amend the agenda to include Natural Disaster Relief Application and a workgroup for Community Engagement. There was discussion about holding a closed session and if a vote was required in open session to hold a closed session. CM Hemby seconded the motion to amend the agenda. The motion passed 3-1 with Mayor Kulpa-Eddy opposed, stating that the community should have adequate notice on the discussion items.

1. Mayor

a. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the Maryland Municipal League Fall conference schedule and shared that she and CM Papanikolas are registered. MPT Brittan-Powell, CM Hemby and CM Menjivar expressed interest in possibly attending. MPT Brittan-Powell encouraged all residents to get the updated Covid vaccine.

b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the calendar, adding a fire safety workshop on October 8th with the Volunteer Fire Department and MML Fall Conference dates. MPT Brittan-Powell asked if this would be a good time to review when to schedule someone to fit the houses for flood doors. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked that it be discussed later in the meeting.

c. News from the Town Manager

i. Report on Streets List

TM Allen reviewed that the Town will be using one of the County-approved paving vendors to begin work on the identified streets, beginning with 62nd Avenue in the first week of October, addressing curb and gutter repairs before road re-pavement. "No Parking" signs will be placed along the work area. TM Allen also updated that the other identified roads in poor condition will be repaved by WSSC during the summer of 2023. There was discussion regarding the delay on the WSSC repair of Edmonston Road and the need to at least fix the

potholes.

ii. Update on the Grant Manager RFP

TM Allen gave a verbal report on the RFQ for an ARPA Grant Administrator. She stated that she had clarified with the Mayor that the Business Grant was also going to be included in this person's responsibilities. She shared that the Business Grant application had been reviewed and comments made by several local businesses. There was discussion about setting up a review committee among Council so that the Business Grant program can go forward quickly. MPT Brittan-Powell asked if the Grant Administrator would also connect residents to other resources. CM Hemby agreed to help set up the Business Grant review committee.

d. Resident Comments

CM Hemby reported a comment from David Wolfinger that a tutorial should be given on how to use items to prevent flooding at home and perhaps to have a session on how to fit a flood door. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested that perhaps this could be an item for Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness (NW/EP) to take on. MPT Brittan-Powell shared that he had received comments from residents wondering why the ARPA relief payments haven't been sent and concerns about using ARPA funds to build a police department. He also shared thanks for CM Hemby and David Wolfinger helping residents with sandbags.

2. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that Trunk or Treat will be on Oct. 22nd from 6:30-8, but that the Police Department will not be able to participate this year. She added that the last Lake Artemesia Concert of the year will be on the 8th and that Team Trivia event will be back in November.

3. Public Safety

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy also gave thanks to CM Hemby and Dave Wolfinger for helping with filling sandbags and reaching out about activating NW/EP. She also reviewed in greater detail about the fire safety event with the VFD. She shared about the "Prince George's County Goes Pink" breast cancer awareness initiative. The closest event to the Town will be on the 27th of October at 8955 Edmonston Rd, in Greenbelt. The "Mammovan" will be on-site for free screenings. On October 20th there will be a webinar called More Healthy Days, highlighting wrap-around services for residents in need. Finally she shared that she attended the steering committee meeting for BHES and the Multicultural event held by the Police Department highlighted by several good dance troupes.

4. Public Works

CM Menjivar asked about access during road repaving. TM Allen confirmed that the vendor is good about making sure that residents will have full access to their residences during the project. CM Menjivar then shared about the new curbside option for composting that will begin on October 24th. There was discussion about food items that will and won't be accepted. TM Allen also explained that there have been consistent issues with the current compost vendor which prompted the change, as well as the County now accepting compost mixed in with yard waste.

5. Administration

a. Community Bulletin Board

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that there used to be a community bulletin board at Pops Park

and discussed the possibility of adding one at Town Hall as well. MPT Brittan-Powell suggested that a bulletin board at Town Hall could replace the parking lot signage. TM Allen shared that Chief Antolik and Director Pudner reviewed a number of options for bulletin boards and shared their recommendations. She further stated that it was possible to purchase one or two bulletin boards within the current budget but that if the Council wanted more, those would have to be worked into the FY24 budget. There was discussion about where to place the bulletin boards and who would maintain them. There was also a brief discussion of replacing the meeting notice board on the front of Town Hall.

b. Berwyn Heights Natural Disaster Mitigation Workgroup

MPT Brittan-Powell shared that CM Papanikolas had suggested the Disaster Mitigation committee might work better as a workgroup. He also shared that CM Menjivar has been working in Town with residents who have experienced flooding. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy and MPT Brittan-Powell discussed the organizational differences between a workgroup and a committee. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy also asked for more information on the Prince George's County Mitigation Advisory Committee which MPT Brittan-Powell referred to in the memo to Council. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked why this work would not be a part of NW/EP. MPT Brittan-Powell said that CM Menjivar would be working with outside agencies to help with known factors for flooding. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that this seems focused on the flooding issues. There was discussion about the approval process for a workgroup, with Mayor Kulpa-Eddy advocating for the involvement of NW/EP. MPT Brittan-Powell agreed to meet with NW/EP and make some changes to the workgroup document, such as stating that the workgroup is temporary.

c. Enhancement of Community Life Workgroup (amended agenda item)

MPT Brittan-Powell stated that this would be similar to efforts previously initiated in Town. This workgroup would include CM Hemby and MPT Brittan-Powell and appointed residents working on ways to enhance community life in Town. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked for clarification on how this is different than the Quality-of-Life Commission, which had open applications for participation. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy expressed concern that without an open application process, there is the appearance that Council is handpicking the decision makers for the Town. CM Hemby offered to help facilitate an application. There was discussion on how to disseminate the application so that there could be broad access while getting the workgroup started in a timely manner. A resident submitted comment anonymously stating, "If a workgroup is being "appointed" by council, it should be more than one council member determining who would be part of said group."

d. Ordinance 183B-ARPA/UMD School of Public Health Collaboration amendment

MPT Brittan-Powell reviewed that the purpose of this budget amendment is to ensure that money is available to use for costs associated with the collaboration with the UMD School of Public Health. TM Allen sought clarification on the funding source, which is the unallocated ARPA funds. TM Allen reviewed the ordinance number presented is incorrect as the Budget Ordinance for FY23 is Ord. 185 and this amendment should actually be Ordinance 185A. TM Allen also requested that the amendment address the fact that Council is increasing its budget for FY23 rather than reallocating funds within the set budget. TM Allen asked for clarification on if the expense will be contractual so it can be reflected in the Ordinance. MPT Brittan-Powell expressed a desire to make sure there is resident input on allocations.

e. Ordinance 183C- Stormwater

This Ordinance was introduced at the last Town Meeting. The Ordinance also will be renumbered to reflect the appropriate designation. This program will allocate \$80,000 to a stormwater study. After discussion, the program will be named The Berwyn Heights Watershed Model. The public hearing for this budget amendment will be held during the October Town Meeting. There was discussion on which meeting this would be voted on and it was concluded that it will also be voted on during the October Town Meeting.

f. Residential Retrofit Program-Update

MPT Brittan-Powell opened the conversation by inquiring about the need to have an application for the program as the science will determine what addresses are eligible to receive the funds. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy detailed the legal benefits to having an application. CM Hemby sought clarification about flood doors versus the portable flood gates to be used in the program. There was considerable discussion about whether the program should be a voucher program or if the Town would be involved in the installation and inspection afterwards. CM Hemby said we'd need to include a "hold harmless agreement". Discussion concluded that the Town Attorney would need to review the program. MPT Brittan-Powell advocated for using vendors vetted by College Park. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared about the differences in reporting requirements for ARPA funds between disbursements to individual residents and payments to contractors. TM Allen agreed to reach out to the City Manager of College Park. CM Hemby expressed concerns about the program being a refund, as for some families affected, it may be difficult for them to pay for items upfront. CM Menjivar expressed a desire to make the program effective quickly.

g. Natural Disaster Relief Fund (amended agenda item)

MPT Brittan-Powell shared that at the last worksession he was asked to incorporate feedback from Council on the Application for the Natural Disaster Relief Fund. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated that there was also to be feedback from Council on the program itself. MPT Brittan-Powell focused on the application. There was discussion regarding a definition of "Natural Disaster" as well as whether all types of disasters should be considered eligible. There was discussion about what type of expenses would be eligible for payment. MPT Brittan-Powell expressed a desire that this should be direct financial compensation. TM Allen inquired about where the funding for the program would come from, if it would be from Town reserves or ARPA funding? She also explained the differences between setting up a separate accounting fund or a line item in the budget, explaining that the latter would require a budget amendment. There was discussion on if the relief would be per person or per household and how to address multiple households at one address. There was discussion on the frequency of eligibility, as well as eligibility requirements and if this relief would be for recent past incidents or for only future incidents. The consensus was that this program would be for future incidents. There was discussion about how the source of funding will affect the eligibility requirements. The discussion also included how applications might be prioritized. There was continued discussion regarding how to best reach out to those who would need applications after a disaster, about the signatures required, and the necessity of a release and "hold harmless" agreement. Council questioned if relief funds would be given only to residents or if landlords who reside outside the Town would be eligible along with their tenants. There was considerable discussion over what expenses would be eligible for relief and Council encouraged residents to prepare documents

required to complete an application ahead of time and keep them in a “go kit”. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy and MPT Brittan-Powell discussed if changes were required on the application to address the issues discussed.

h. Town of BH Community Viewing of World Cup-Edgar Moctezuma

MPT Brittan-Powell stated that resident Edgar Moctezuma is passionate about the Town sponsoring a viewing of the World Cup. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested that this may fall under the PRECA purview, while MPT Brittan-Powell suggested it may fall under the proposed Community Life Workgroup and offered to work directly with Mr. Moctezuma to advance the showing. Logistics of the viewing were discussed.

6. Code Compliance

CM Hemby shared that there were reports of children playing in the yard of a home that is still uninhabitable after the windstorm. Code Compliance responded to the concerns quickly. CM Hemby also will be looking at concerns about the rental license process to make sure that landlords are providing safe spaces for their tenants. She encouraged tenants to speak to Councilmembers if they have concerns.

7. Adjournment

CM Hemby moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Menjivar seconded. After no discussion the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm.