



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 October 4, 2021 | 7:00 p.m.

This meeting was held by videoconference due to the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency and was broadcast on Berwyn Heights cable TV channels and streamed on the Town website. Residents could comment by calling (301) 474-9570 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov

Call to Order

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order at 7PM. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, Councilmember Ethan Sweep, as well as Town Manager Laura Allen and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Aspasia Xypolia from the Prince George's County Department of Housing and Community Development joined the meeting for Discussion Item 3a.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey thanked all the residents who have already filled out the ARPA survey. She reminded everyone that the indoor mask mandate has been extended to at least Oct. 25, 2021 in Prince George's County and that includes all Town buildings, including the Senior Center and G. Love Room. She also reminded residents that Monday, Oct. 11th is Indigenous Peoples' Day and that trash services will be altered. Finally, she shared that there are new translation services for meetings for residents who join via Zoom, using the drop down under custom livestreaming service menu.

a. Energy Proclamation, Mayor Dewey

Mayor Dewey shared that Wednesday, October 6 is National Energy Efficiency Day and read a proclamation declaring the first Wednesday in October to be Energy Efficiency Day in Berwyn Heights.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Discussion Items

a. County Dept. of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) presentation

Mayor Dewey introduced Aspasia Xypolia from the County Dept. of Housing and Community Development. Ms. Xypolia shared a presentation that highlighted the mission of the DHCD. The focus of the presentation was on the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) as well as the Homeownership Assistance Program. ERAP is designed to assist residents with delinquent rent and utility payments that began on or

after April 1, 2020 due to loss of income because of COVID-19. The Pathway to Purchase program provides first-time eligible home buyers with up to \$10,000 for down payment and closing cost assistance. CM Brittan-Powell thanked Ms. Xypolia for her presentation and then asked about mortgage assistance for current homeowners. Ms. Xypolia explained that the mortgage assistance program funded by the American Rescue Plan Act did not go down to the local jurisdictions, but rather is being done at the State level. DHCD is working with home counseling agencies that are prepared and able to help homeowners when the final plan has been developed. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked about which department is responsible for Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). Ms. Xypolia explained that DHCD is responsible for those as well. MPT Kulpa-Eddy was invited to forward her emails and questions regarding the CDBG directly to Ms. Xypolia.

b. Draft Red Light Camera Ordinance (amendment to Ord. 149)

TM Allen reported that the Town's current speed camera vendor, altumint is able to provide red light cameras for the Town. She also reported that in consultation with the Chief of Police, it made the most sense to amend Ordinance 149, the speed camera ordinance, rather than draft an entirely separate ordinance. The fee structure with altumint is 40% of the ticket fine goes to the vendor and 60% to the Town. Given that the current fine for a speed camera violation is \$40, TM Allen recommended that the Council set a red-light camera fines also at \$40 with a \$25 fine for late payment which is the same fine for a late payment on a speed camera. CM Brittan-Powell asked if the red-light cameras would have the portability to be used at different intersections similar to the speed cameras. TM Allen explained that they would be portable, but that eventually a permanent camera could be installed. Both CM Brittan-Powell and MPT Kulpa-Eddy pointed out areas of the draft ordinance that needed language updates to reflect the changes being made to include red-light cameras. MPT Kulpa-Eddy stated that Prince George's County is currently fining \$75 and wanted to know if there was a reasoning for setting the fine lower. She asked what other jurisdictions in the area are charging. She expressed that she would like to be consistent with other jurisdictions. CM Brittan-Powell asked how long a vehicle must be stopped before turning right on red. It was agreed that there should be an educational component to the length of time for a stop before a turn on red. CM Papanikolas suggested that perhaps the Council might consider making all intersections "no turn on red" intersections. CM Papanikolas spoke about the fact that he hears from residents that they maintain the main portion of traffic violations are from non-residents. He inquired if it would be possible to learn from the red-light and speed cameras if the violators live in Berwyn Heights or not. CM Brittan-Powell stated he believed the opposite, that most violators are residents. CM Sweep expressed concern over the amount of data collected and what was done with it. CM Papanikolas stated that he would suggest a periodic snapshot of the camera data only to know if violators were residents or not. TM Allen stated that she would look into what information is available.

c. 4 Cities Agenda Items- Discussion

Mayor Dewey opened discussion on possible agenda items for the 4 Cities Agenda Items. MPT Kulpa-Eddy suggested that we add red-light cameras and fines to the agenda to inquire what our neighboring communities do. CM Papanikolas suggested that we ask about ARPA spending. With no other comments, Mayor Dewey suggested if there are other items, that Council feel free to email their ideas as it can be handled administratively.

d. MML Fall Conference Discussion

Mayor Dewey provided an update on the MML Fall Conference. She stated that there are no plans for a vaccine or mask mandate. Her understanding was that the Montgomery County Municipal Association was going to be writing a letter in response to the lack of protocols. She also stated that some members of PGCMA had decided not to attend and expressed their concerns to MML at a recent meeting, but there was not an association-wide response. It is unclear if there were going to be changes in the voting protocols for the Legislative priorities. Mayor Dewey had decided not to attend and canceled her registration. Remaining attendees MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Papanikolas discussed which sessions they would attend.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey began by thanking Delegate Washington and the Greenbelt Road task force for a successful and informative community safety walk. The Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday at 7PM. The organization has cleaned up their listserve so if you are interested in being included, reach out to Mayor Dewey or use the contact information in the Bulletin. Thursday, 5:30-7:30 there will be a gun violence prevention event held at Bladensburg hosted by the States Attorney's Office. The Police Department is hosting a trunk-or-treat and vaccine event on Halloween from 2-5PM. Mayor Dewey reported she had her regularly scheduled meeting with County Councilmember Glaros with other Mayors and municipal leaders. The County Climate action plan advisory group that she is a part of will be meeting the following week and her term is ending at the end of October and the public comment period will begin in November. The Thriving Earth Exchange project is progressing. She thanked everyone who has engaged with her on the American Rescue Plan Act and filled out the survey. She let the community know that the deadline for the survey would be October 11. Finally, she addressed the proposed toll lane expansion of the Beltway. There is a supplementary draft environmental impact statement that is available on the project. MDot SHA is accepting public comments through November 15th. There will be two hearings where comments can be made. Both are November 1st, one at 2PM and the other at 6PM.

Residents can learn more at <https://oplanesmd.com/sdeis>

MPT Kulpa-Eddy followed up by asking about which portion of the proposed Beltway expansion the DEIS referred to. Mayor Dewey confirmed that it was the American Legion Bridge to I-270 corridor section. MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported on a couple of school related issues, including that while meals are free to all Prince George's County Public School students, families who are eligible still need to fill out their Free and Reduced Meals applications to remain eligible and these are due by October 31. Additionally, PGCPs will be discontinuing free dinners for students that are not part of before- and after-school programs. There are weekly meal distributions for students who are virtual learners this term; the nearest site for pick up is Greenbelt Middle School. Additionally, Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients will see a change in their benefits effective October 1st, due to changes in the Cost of Living adjustment and the end of federal supports. She also reported on the Rec Council meeting that will be held both in person and virtually. The Berwyn Heights Elementary School PTA will be having a PTA party on October 12 from 6-7pm in front of the school, as an opportunity to meet the new PTA and get involved.

CM Papanikolas reported that the athletic fields at Parkdale High School were due to be renovated. The Parkdale student body president hosted a roundtable on diversity, equity, and inclusion with staff. He encouraged residents to contact the Town office if they have questions or concerns with Code Compliance issues.

CM Brittan-Powell stated that there was not much to report from Administration. CM Sweep also stated there isn't much to report for Public Works. The street sweeper will be in Town the week of the 18th and Greenbelt electronics recycling will be the 23rd. Please note the changes to the trash schedule for the week of October 11th, when the offices are closed for Indigenous Peoples' Day. Finally, for National Coming Out Day, there will be an event in Sports Park from noon to 2:30 pm.

5. Resident & Community Comments

MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked on behalf of a resident if/when the meetings will begin to be in person. TM Allen reported that this is a technical issue and the solutions are still pending. There were no other comments.

Adjournment

CM Sweep moved to adjourn the meeting. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously at 8:15PM.