



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 March 4, 2024 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:03PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Also present were Town Manager Kyle Snyder, Town Clerk Melanie Friesen and residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Approval of the Agenda

CM Menjivar moved to approve the agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

1. Mayor

a. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy announced that the meeting was starting late due to a closed session immediately prior to this open meeting. The closed meeting was held under Maryland Code Annotated, General Provisions Article, § 3-305 (b)(1) and (b)(3) to discuss a personnel matter as well as to discuss the acquiring of real property. All Councilmembers except CM Menjivar were present and voted to close the meeting. TM Snyder was also present for most of the meeting. While this was primarily an informative discussion, Council voted 4-0 to authorize Mayor Kulpa-Eddy to sign a "Letter of Intent" for a particular property.

CM Hemby announced that she has been seeking ways to highlight the accomplishments of youth in the area. She shared that Jordan Owens, a high school student from Greenbelt, has published a horror novel and will be doing a book signing at the Greenbelt Community Center.

b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy highlighted the upcoming Women's History Month Event with Cornerstone which will be held on March 9, 2024 at 1PM.

c. UMD-SPH Survey Review

TM Snyder reviewed the partnership with the University of Maryland School of Public Health and the progress to-date. Council reviewed the proposed survey and made several comments, which generally focused around defining some of the words and

phrases used, and being able to filter responses by residency. Council discussed the balance between keeping questions vague enough to allow freedom in answers but also specific enough to produce responses that are usable. CM Hemby suggested concluding the survey with an open ended question along the lines of “Do you have any other comments to share”.

d. Res XXX Updated Fees and Fines

TM Snyder reviewed that he has checked with the County and brought the pet waste fines into alignment with County citations. With only brief discussion, Council consensus was to vote on the updated resolution at the March Town Meeting.

e. Ballot Question Discussion

TC Friesen reviewed that Ordinance 109 codified that if the Council wishes to have ballot questions in the May election, those questions must be introduced via resolution at the March Town Meeting. Council reviewed the questions that have been discussed to date which are:

- Moving the election to after Berwyn Heights Day to allow for early voting at Berwyn Heights Day
- Lowering the municipal voting age to 16
- Allow non-citizens to vote in Berwyn Heights Town elections

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy requested a ballot question on bonds and debt. Council discussed and agreed to include a simple question on the Town’s willingness to take on debt in addition to the three previously discussed questions.

f. FY25 Budget-Draft 1

TM Snyder presented his first draft of the budget for Fiscal Year 25 (FY25). He reviewed the staff report. Highlights include the Town’s tax rate and current assessable tax base (which increased due to construction of the new Aldi grocery store), an overview of potential merit and COLA salary increases, a ten year overview of the Vehicle Replacement Fund, and a shift in how the town will be funding road repairs. Council discussed the tax rate possibilities and how those would affect residents’ property taxes. Council acknowledged that the tax rate for FY24 was intentionally lowered to help with an anticipated recession and that the rate was unsustainable and would need to be increased. Tax rates between \$0.4966 (constant yield) and \$.5808/\$100 assessed property value were discussed. Council discussed the Vehicle Reserve Fund as TM Snyder presented out how the reserve fund should function over the next ten years. Concerns about the rising cost of vehicles was raised, with CM Papanikolas suggesting that we set aside more money per vehicle than the current replacement cost.

Council also discussed the upcoming budget calendar and noted there are no major planned changes to the Public Safety Taxing District. TM Snyder reviewed that the current draft budget presented to Council does not fund several items that were discussed as priorities. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy would like to see some changes to the spreadsheet to include the adopted FY22 and FY23 actual budget numbers. There was discussion about a few specific line items, such as Youth Services and the Emergency Assistance Fund. Staff will review the emergency fund resolution.

g. Resident Comments

Resident Paul Kavanaugh of Berwyn Road shared a written draft of his comments and questions with Council. He thanked Town Staff for all their support in Bee City recertification. He noted disappointment with no Black History Month events in Town as well as lack of response to an email he had sent to Council. He advocated for a strategic plan during the next Council term. He asked about the status of the Welcome Packet as well as the Shade Tree Board which is a requirement to be a Tree City. He asked about the Town's Arbor Day plans and the status of the arborist. He touched on fiscal items which included reducing the frequency of trash pick-up, asking about the police department and possible options there and requested a pie chart that shows where the Town's money is spent as well as the ARPA funds.

2. Public Works

CM Menjivar noted that loose leaf pick-up ended in January and asked residents to bag their yard waste. He added that the warm weather has allowed Public Works to get a head start on spring cleaning of the Town's rights-of-way. He shared that Pepco will be in Town trimming trees that conflict with powerlines. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked residents who have concerns about Pepco to let Town Staff know as there is a brief window to give feedback on the proposed tree trimming plan.

3. Administration

MPT Brittan-Powell asked TM Snyder to review the status of the department. TM Snyder shared that the PRECA Aide and Grant Writer positions have been filled. There will be a welcome event for new residents prior to the Women's History Event on Saturday and that invitations were sent to homes that had been sold in recent months. He concluded by noting that the FY22 audit has been concluded and they are nearing completion on the FY23 audit.

a. Bulletin Vendor Resolution

TC Friesen reviewed the staff report and stated that the goal for the evening is consensus on moving forward with the switch of vendors. Consensus was reached and a resolution to approve moving the Bulletin to LPi will be part of the March Town Meeting.

b. Record Retention Approval Resolution

TC Friesen reviewed that this is another quick consensus item, having responded to Council questions regarding the policy and making a few minor changes. Council discussed the implications. TC Friesen noted that she does not believe any money needs to be allocated in FY25 but some may be needed in FY26 for document scanning and shipping costs. Council will consider a resolution to approve the policy as part of the Town Meeting in March.

4. Code Compliance

There was no Code Compliance Report.

5. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs

There was no PRECA Report.

a. Town Organization Ordinance Draft 5

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared a cleaned-up version of the Ordinance, but noted there are still a few changes in section 9 that need to be added. TM Snyder noted that he had made changes in section 9 in the working draft in SharePoint that refer to LGIT's

insurance policies. Council discussed introducing the Ordinance in March. Council discussed ensuring that referenced policies are passed by resolution rather than codified as part of the Ordinance. Consensus was to introduce the updated Town Organization Ordinance at the March Town Meeting.

6. Public Safety

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that WMATA is considering eliminating the R12 Metro bus route, which serves Berwyn Heights. She encouraged residents to fill out the WMATA budget survey online.

a. Automated Traffic Enforcement

TM Snyder reviewed that the current ordinance is from 2010 for speed cameras and was amended to include redlight cameras. He noted there have been a number of changes over the years and there are more possible changes in automated traffic enforcement on the horizon. He was seeking Council direction on moving this toward a more generic ordinance for automated traffic enforcement and wanted to see if Council wished to tackle this in the remainder of this term or wait until after the election. After discussion, Council would like to see the Ordinance introduced at the April Town Meeting.

7. Adjournment

CM Papanikolas moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:55PM.