



Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740
Tel. (301) 474-5000
Fax (301) 474-5002

MAYOR
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)
Shinita Hemby
Faustino Menjivar
Jason W. Papanikolas

Work Session Minutes August 14, 2023 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00PM. Present were Councilmember Shinita Hemby and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Staff present were Interim Town Manager Peter Jones, Town Treasurer Mike Lightfield, and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Councilmember Faustino Menjivar had an excused absence. Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell arrived at 7:03PM, after approval of the agenda.

Approval of the Agenda

CM Hemby moved to approve the agenda. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion the motion passed unanimously (3:0).

1. Mayor

a. Announcements

There were no announcements.

b. Calendar

Council reviewed the upcoming calendar noting that the Berwyn Heights Elementary School clean-up is August 20th. It was also noted that this worksession was originally scheduled for August 7th, but was rescheduled due to weather concerns.

c. Dates for ARPA Listening Session(s)

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that at a past meeting a resident requested another ARPA listening session. She then reviewed the opportunities that residents have had to make their thoughts on ARPA spending known and ways that residents can still make their thoughts known. After discussion, which included a consensus to present a reasonably firm ARPA budget at a listening session, it was decided to set aside a portion of the September 5th worksession for that purpose.

d. Funding Request for BHES Garden

Green Team member Michael Ellis joined the Council to discuss the garden at Berwyn Heights Elementary School. He met with Director Pudner, and stated Public Works and Director Pudner will be donating mulch for the project, as well as using a tiller to loosen the garden soil before the cleanup on Sunday. There are several concerns at the garden including damaged benches and compost bins in need of repair. Mr. Ellis reviewed that right now the upkeep of the garden is coming out of the pocket of a single teacher, and the Green Team would like to see the Town provide some funding as this pollinator garden will help satisfy Bee City requirements. He will be taking the benches to the welding shop at the University of Maryland to see if they can be repaired there for free. The Green Team is hoping to get a small group of volunteers who will commit to

working on the garden a few times a year. For funding, Mr. Ellis stated that Director Pudner believes the compost bins could be repaired for about \$900, \$1000 would be requested for plantings, and an additional \$1000 for educational signage at the garden. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked about costs of replacing the benches if they cannot be repaired. Mr. Ellis suggested another \$1000 might be sufficient. He also added that they are not in the planting phase of the garden yet but are planning ahead. There was discussion about other locations in Town for additional gardens, but Mr. Ellis expressed concern that the Town is looking to rely on the Green Team to maintain these spaces when it should be handled by Public Works for municipal land. CM Hemby asked for a list of plants that would be appropriate. Mr. Ellis reviewed that New England Aster, Butterfly Milkweed, and Winterberry (a native shrub) would be appropriate. He also has an interest in planting fall blooming flowers, such as Obedient Plants, so that the garden is in bloom during the school year. CM Hemby asked about the addition of artwork that would beautify the garden. Mr. Ellis stated it hadn't been discussed but that he would like to see something created by residents or by students at the school.

e. Monthly Reports by Department Directors Discussion

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that in September of 2019, under former Town Manager Broadbent, it was suggested that department directors come quarterly, rather than monthly. CM Papanikolas shared that department directors were being asked to attend monthly Town Meetings only to read the reports that were in the Consent Agenda. It was decided this was a function that could instead be done by the Council department liaison. CM Hemby suggested that directors come in on a rotating basis as part of a meeting to give an informative presentation on their department rather than coming to read a report. The consensus was that CM Hemby's suggestion should be followed up. MPT Brittan-Powell will take the lead on this.

f. UMD Good Neighbor Day Service Projects (Oct. 21st)

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed "Good Neighbor Day", sponsored by the University of Maryland, and the requirements for putting forward a project. She suggested the Town put forward the BHES pollinator garden as a project. Mr. Ellis commented that October could be a good time for planting, adding that he has led Good Neighbor Day projects for other elementary schools in the past. CM Papanikolas added that he could potentially lead a project to repair the compost bins. Mr. Ellis suggested that the two projects be combined and submitted as a single project for the Town. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy will be the lead on the combined project. CM Hemby added that she has an idea for a project and will submit it to Mayor Kulpa-Eddy.

g. ARPA Budget Amendment Discussion

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed the ARPA budget process so far. MPT Brittan-Powell suggested that rather than get into the detailed projects, to group "like" projects together and set aside funding at a general line-item level. Council discussed this in detail. TT Lightfield made changes to the budget in real time. During the discussion on stormwater, MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he would like to discuss homes that may not be viable and may need to be subject to eminent domain. CM Papanikolas stated that he was not sure that we should use ARPA funds for eminent domain. There was also discussion regarding if the homes have always been at risk or if they are at a greater risk due to climate change, which would set a precedent that may be negative as climate

change could put more houses at risk. Council continued to discuss the projects, noting some duplicative line-items and asking when those are found to eliminate one item, but keep the highest funding level of the two. Placemaking was discussed, with CM Papanikolas suggesting that this should be an architectural consultant. Grants were combined into a single line item, with discussion on whether this should also go under the role of the grants writer. ITM Jones highlighted that the aging-in-place item should be included in any budget amendment. MPT Brittan-Powell asked for confirmation that needs around hunger and housing security be captured. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy confirmed that this was done within the Grants line-items.

ITM Jones presented the Staff report on the impact of adding more contract positions. He reviewed his concerns that the Town is drastically increasing the responsibility of the Town Manager. He also expressed concern about continued funding of these services, as personnel cannot be funded through ARPA after December 31, 2024.

At MPT Brittan-Powell's request TT Lightfield shared that the Town could use ARPA to fund general governmental services under the "lost revenue" election. He noted this would have the advantage of not drawing down Town Reserves to fund services, leaving more for the Town to use for programing after ARPA ends. There was concern about this idea and the Town Attorney will be consulted.

h. Resident Comments

There were no resident comments.

2. Administration

MPT Brittan-Powell thanked ITM Jones for his dedication to the Town during his tenure.

a. Town Parking Issues and Permitting

MPT Brittan-Powell stated that residents have expressed concern over parking issues in Town. He shared the ordinance from College Park, noting their permit parking is driven by residents in the area who request it. He asked that Council review the College Park policy and determine if they would like to put forth something similar in Berwyn Heights. There was discussion about which department would implement the program and enforce the parking permits.

3. Code Compliance

CM Hemby shared that Code Compliance has received several letters from residents and encouraged residents to be respectful when sending in letters of complaint. She also asked for residents to take the initiative and participate in community groups. She highlighted several options of activities that the Town could support if they had volunteers to lead them, such as cooking, exercise, and language classes.

4. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs

There was no PRECA report.

a. Rec Council Elections and Appointment of New Members

CM Papanikolas shared that the Rec Council has asked Council to review Ordinance 113, which establishes and governs the Rec Council. It has not been updated since 1983. He noted that he would be happy to spearhead this project. Council will begin to work on it in October.

5. Public Safety

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed two police incidents that have recently taken place in Town. She highlighted that no residents were involved in either incident, which included a road rage episode and tracking a stolen vehicle which crossed multiple jurisdictions.

6. Public Works

There was no Public Works report.

7. Adjournment

CM Hemby moved to adjourn. CM Papanikolas seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously (4:0) and the meeting adjourned at 9:42PM.