



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 August 2, 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 (443) 646-3529 or e-mailing Mayor Dewey at adewey@berwynheightsmd.gov

Call to Order

Mayor Dewey called the meeting to order at 7:01PM. Present were Mayor Amanda Dewey, Mayor Pro Tempore Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas, Councilmember Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Ethan Sweep, Town Manager Laura Allen and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen.

1. Announcements

Mayor Dewey reported that there was an executive session immediately prior to the open session during which they discussed a personnel matter, a real property matter, and sought advice of counsel. There were no other announcements.

2. Approval of Agenda

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

3. Discussion Items

a. Tree Planting Rebate Program

TM Allen presented a staff report and draft program that would institute a rebate of up to \$150 for trees planted by residents on their property. This program would be a change from previous year(s) where Town Staff purchased and planted the trees requested. In the draft program, residents would work with the Public Works Director to determine appropriate placement and ultimately the Public Works Director or designee would review the planting and sign off on the reimbursement request when all elements of the program have been met by the homeowner. This would take approximately 2-4 weeks. TM Allen plans to work with the Green Team to create a list of approved trees that would be eligible for the rebate.

CM Brittan-Powell expressed concerns about soil quality, if staff had an arborist available to advise residents, and the time of year that the plantings could occur. MPT Kulpa-Eddy expressed concerns about the "hold harmless" agreement language in the draft presented, whether there would be a time limit imposed on Public Works' access to the property, and language in the agreement that indicates that maintenance of the tree will be the responsibility of the homeowner and any future owners of the property. TM Allen will adjust some language to address concerns presented.

b. Risk Management Policy

TM Allen gave a staff report regarding the need for a Risk Management Policy. The Town is a member of the Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) and as part of the policy renewal process, staff completes a Loss Control Survey during which TM Allen determined some essential items were not in place. LGIT recommended adopting a written Risk Management Policy, implementing defensive driver training, and expanding the safety review process to include all departments in order for the Town to be eligible to receive credit on the liability insurance renewal bill. TM Allen then presented a draft version of a Risk Management policy that is consistent with GFOA's best practices in Risk Management. TM Allen also explained that the Chief of Police has agreed to expand his role in Safety to head the Safety Committee. MPT Kulpa-Eddy expressed desire for clarification on who the Risk Management Policy would apply to and who would be responsive to the Safety Committee. TM Allen clarified that the Risk Management Policy and Safety Committee applies only to Town staff and property.

4. Department Reports

Mayor Dewey reported that she has been selected to serve on the Residents Advisory Council for the County's Climate Action Plan process. That appointment will be through the month of September. The National Night In event is tomorrow (August 3) and will be a parade that follows the Santa Route and there will be sirens throughout town between 7-8PM. She reminded residents that the Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness meeting will be Wednesday, August 4 at 7PM. She reported that she will attend an ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) webinar and gave a brief recap of the 4 Cities Meeting that happened on July 28th, that included a presentation from Delegate Nicole Williams on redistricting, a presentation from PGPCS (Prince George's County Public Schools), and a proposal for a possible new composting program. Another item that came out of the 4 Cities meeting are INET/broadband/infrastructure questions and putting together a group to learn about these issues. If residents are interested in viewing a recording of the meeting, please reach out to Mayor Dewey or Clerk Friesen. On the 23rd, the Police Department had their annual department meeting. Mayor Dewey gave a COVID update and said that we are in the 3rd week of increasing cases and increasing hospitalizations. She emphasized that it is more important than ever to be vaccinated. She reported that it is not yet mandated in Prince George's County to wear a mask indoors but encouraged people to wear a mask.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported on the Maryland Homeowners and Renters Tax Credit. This provides tax relief for residents making a combined income of less than \$60,000. To learn more, visit the Town "News and Announcements" Website for a link. The State of Maryland held their redistricting listening session for Prince George's County on July 28th, and the County held their sessions on July 19th and 26th. The next steps will be to review the census data, which should be released in mid- August. The State will hold a virtual hearing on August 25th to draft any needed changes to the current district maps. The County deadline is September 1st. MPT Kulpa-Eddy has not seen anything to date that should affect Berwyn Heights, but she will be following the redistricting plans. She reported attending the July 20 detailed site plan public meeting for Beltway Plaza redevelopment. She attended the July 21 Town Social. There is still Emergency Broadband Benefit funding available, for more information see the announcement on the Town website posted on July 8. From the 4 Cities meeting she reported that the College Park Dog Park is open and available for anyone to use. The Rec Council has a summer concert at Lake Artemesia on Thursday August 5th. It will be moved indoors to the

Community Center next to the Elementary School in case of rain or severe heat. The next Rec Council meeting will be Wednesday, August 4th. MPT Kulpa-Eddy also promoted the “Stuff the Bus” event. Berwyn Heights residents can take school supplies to the BHPD until August 16th. CM Papanikolas reported that there are no new issues in Code Compliance. He reported that while he is on vacation, he is still available by phone and email.

CM Brittan-Powell reported that there are no issues in Administration and that there is a solid team there.

CM Sweep reported that road construction has begun on Cunningham, Goucher, and Quebec, and to drive carefully around the crews. MPT Kulpa-Eddy also mentioned the road work on Edmonston, which is being done by WSSC.

5. Resident & Community Comments

MPT Kulpa-Eddy presented a request from the Berwyn Heights Historical Committee to add reappointment of members to the August Town Meeting. She also reported receiving an email from a resident about trash accumulation at Lake Artemesia. She asked if there was anything further that Parks & Planning could do; perhaps more trash cans or more frequent pick-ups of the trash would be helpful.

Mike Attick called in and asked if there are any restrictions on trees being planted if they are not planning on participating in the rebate program. Mayor Dewey explained that there would be no restrictions on trees planted if they are not participating in the rebate. Mr. Attick also asked about the Town’s responsibility for trees planted in the right-of-way or that are encroaching on Utility Lines. Mayor Dewey explained that the Town takes responsibility for trees that are on Town property and that Pepco is willing to address trees that threaten power lines. Mr. Attick asked if the police write a report for every accident involving a Town vehicle. TM Allen responded that yes, the police write a report for every accident that involves a Town vehicle. TM Allen said in the zoom chat that residents should always check where their utilities are. MPT Kulpa-Eddy replied that Miss Utility will only check for utilities on public property, so it is up to property owners to determine where underground utilities lie on their property after seeing where Miss Utility marks the public property. Mayor Dewey received an email request for speed bumps on 60th Avenue, south of the school. Mayor Dewey received an email from Joan Hayden on Seminole asking who is responsible for trees on the fence line. Mayor Dewey explained that the fence line doesn’t necessarily indicate the end of a property and that whoever owns the property that the tree is on is responsible for the tree. Mike Attick called back to say that community group meetings were missed on calendar page in the Bulletin.

Adjournment

CM Sweep motioned to adjourn the meeting. MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded the motion. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted, *Melanie Friesen* Town Clerk 8/9/2021