



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## **Minutes Town Meeting September 14, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison. CM Chris Rasmussen had an excused absence. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens.

Mayor Jewitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **1. Announcements**

Mayor Jewitt announced that Councilmember Maria Robles resigned recently because she had to attend to pressing family matters. She expressed her intent to run again in the next election. The Council will interview candidates to fill the vacant position in executive session at the September 19 worksession.

Mayor Jewitt asked residents to remember on September 11 (Patriots Day) the many people who died in the attacks, as well as the heroes who helped save many lives. She also announced that the Town Council will undertake a strategic planning exercise on October 10, organized by University of Maryland consultants. As part of the exercise, the consultants plan to interview five residents to develop a vision for the Town. Interested residents are requested to submit their names to the Town Administrator by September 19.

### **2. Minutes**

Clerk Harper read a summary of the August 10 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and second by CM Dennison, the minutes were approved 3 to 0.

### **3. Treasurer's Report**

Treasurer Rodriguez gave the Treasurer's report for the month of August. She noted that the Town received a reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for expenses related to the January snow emergency in the amount of \$16,340.

#### **4. Mayor's Report**

Mayor Jewitt reported that Pepco has begun pruning trees in Town and will perform tree removals in October. Pepco is working closely with the Town to conform to the conditions set forth in the vegetation management permit approved by the Town Council in August. This Thursday she will attend a PGCMA meeting in New Carrollton and on Saturday, she will participate in an Emergency Management summit at Prince George's County Community College.

#### **5. Department Reports**

**Administration:** MPT Kulpa-Eddy gave an update on the Prince George's County zoning ordinance rewrite effort. The County's Planning Department released Module 3 on zoning processes and subdivision regulations. This topic is important to municipalities because it will regulate how towns and cities interact with the County on approving new developments and subdivisions. The Planning Department has scheduled hearings to receive public comments, with the last one occurring on September 15 at the College Park Airport Operations Building. Citizens can also obtain information and comment at the M-NCPPC zoning rewrite website <http://zoningpgc.pgplanning.com/>. The Town Council will review the draft Module 3 carefully during the coming weeks and submit its comments before the due date of November 1.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy also announced several other meetings of interest. Tomorrow night, she will attend a public hearing on the Prince George's County Public Schools FY 2018-2023 capital improvement plan (CIP), which has proposed funding for building two new middle schools in northern Prince George's County. The overcrowding in middle schools in this area has ripple effects down to the elementary schools. At Berwyn Heights Elementary School (BHES), three temporary classrooms were set up in the parking lot this year to house sixth graders because there is no room for them at Greenbelt Middle School. All parents of affected students and interested residents may want to make their views known at this hearing. Further, County Councilmember Glaros will host the Parkdale High School college and career fair on September 29, 5:30 p.m.

In Administration news, the new air conditioning units were installed. Pepco is in the process of pruning trees, and is adhering to the vegetation management plan approved by the Town Council, as evidenced by her observation of their work this

morning on Ruatan Street. The audit of the FY 2016 budget is ongoing, and the Council is looking forward to a presentation by the human resources consultants at the next worksession giving an overview of revised job classifications and pay scales for Town employees, as well as an updated personnel manual and performance evaluation system.

***Code Compliance:*** Mayor Jewitt said, in addition to its regular work load, the Code Department last month resolved the flooding issue in the 5600 block of Ruatan Street and ensured that all refuse containers in the commercial district are fenced in. She received a number of citizen comments related to code issues.

***Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs:*** Mayor Jewitt reported that BHES kicked off the school year with another successful “Hello Huskies” night. The Green Team will hold its garden party this Saturday from 3-5 p.m. and the Ice Cream Social follows on Tuesday, September 20, at 6:30 p.m.

***Public Works:*** CM Dennison reported that Public Works Director Cox is quickly learning the ins and outs of running his department and is recruiting for a new supervisor of operations to assist him. The 58<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue footpaths have been completed on time and within budget. The new air conditioning units are up and running and were financed in part with grant funds.

***Public Health & Safety:*** Chief Antolik first reported for the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department. The BHVFD operated on 7 working structure fires and 3 complex vehicle extractions. Total station runs for August came to 423. In addition, the fire station’s bunk room received a full renovation, with the main kitchen and gym next in line. BHVFD will commence its annual fund drive this month with a letter to all residents of Berwyn Heights, Westchester Park, College Park Estates and the Greenbelt Station development.

Officer Ramirez reported on “Coffee with Cops”, an event she was in charge of organizing. It went well, with 15-20 residents attending. The Berwyn Heights Police Department plans to hold such an event twice a year. She then read some comments received during the get-together, expressing thanks for BHPD’s support and help with family members, and keeping the Town safe.

Chief Antolik next gave the police activities report for August. There was 1 assault and 1 theft for a total of 2 Part I offenses, which is below the 5-year average of 4.8. Year-to-date, there were 35 Part I offenses, as opposed to the 5-year average of 41.6. Officers also issued approximately 281 municipal and state citations and 171 speed camera tickets, 16 on Pontiac Street. Further, BHPD hosted the Prince

George's County Chiefs of Police Association in August. New state mandates to publicize police departments' General Orders and Community Policing plans online were discussed. He is happy to report that BHPD already complied with the mandates. In addition, the Police Department's web page also has a new complaint/ commendation form, where residents can submit comments about the officers.

## **6. Committee Reports**

***Education Advisory Committee:*** No report.

***Green Team:*** The Community Garden party will take place on September 17, 3:00 p.m.

***Historical Committee:*** Clerk Harper noted that the Historical Committee will hold their annual fall wine and cheese reception on November 13, 2:00 p.m.

***Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness:*** Mike Attick announced that the next NW/EP meeting will take place on October 5, 7:00 p.m. The Committee is seeking new volunteers to be trained to help their families and their community in the event of an emergency. He recently had a request to show the NW/EP trailer to the County's Office of Emergency Management training captain and the captain was impressed. Last Friday night, his car was one of 4 that were broken into, which may lead the Neighborhood Watch to run later patrols. September is emergency preparedness month and features a number of related activities, including a Citizens Preparedness Conference on September 17, 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at Prince George's Community College.

***Recreation Council:*** No report.

## **7. Unfinished Business**

None.

## **8. New Business**

None.

## **9. Citizens Discussion**

Mike Attick, 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, asked if Pepco is pruning around street lights while in Town. Mayor Jewitt said only those trees approved for pruning or removal to clear power lines will be worked on. Mr. Attick also asked if the Town has an updated list of Pepco pole numbers. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that the Town Administrator

should have such a list in her files, and encouraged Mr. Attick to report any trees interfering with street lights to the Town office.

Mayor Jewitt reported she received several citizen comments, including kudos for the renovation of the 58<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue footpaths, a thank you for bringing up the security cameras for Town buildings, a complaint about the school flashers on Pontiac Street, and reports of a clean lot violation.

Joan Hayden, Seminole Street, commented via phone that the intersection of Berwyn Road and Charlton Avenue has poor visibility and needs improvement for traffic safety, that the Town should consider providing recycling bins with wheels, and that the process of reporting issues to the police needs clarification.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*