



Town of Berwyn Heights

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

Minutes Town Meeting August 9, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison and Gerald Shields. CM Rasmussen had an excused absence. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Code Compliance Supervisor Freddie Glass, Public Works Director Stevie Cox, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper and citizens.

Mayor Jewitt led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Minutes

Clerk Harper read a summary of the July 12 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Shields, the minutes were approved 4 to 0.

2. Mayor's Report

Mayor Jewitt reported that Berwyn Heights hosted the Four Cities Coalition meeting, at which presentations on the new WSSC rate structure and WMATA's plans for the development of the Greenbelt Station North Core were received. Transit-oriented development is moving forward at the New Carrollton and College Park Metro stations. Berwyn Heights is joining forces with College Park and Greenbelt to seek a technical assistance grant through the Urban Land Institute to explore economic development opportunities along Rt. 193 corridor.

Mayor Jewitt noted that National Night Out was a success despite the rain and thanked all who helped organize it. At the last worksession, the Town Council had a presentation from Andrew Fellows, former Mayor of College Park and Community Outreach Program Manager at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies about partnering with the University on a tentative list of 10 environmental projects in Berwyn Heights. The Council also received a presentation from Berwyn Heights intern Alysha Davis on the status of a *Sustainable Communities* designation application. The designation will qualify the Town for a number of economic development assistance grants offered by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development.

3. Department Reports

Administration: MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that the proposed new WSSC rate structure for water use is likely to raise the rates for low use customers by 20% to 30%. The Council has sought, and

now received information about the impacts of the new rate structures to be able to give more effective input during the public comment period. WMATA representatives informed the Four Cities that, despite the cancellation of the FBI headquarters search, they will continue to pursue a full interchange for Greenbelt Station and have asked for support. A full interchange will make the Greenbelt Station North Core more attractive to potential developers.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that, at the last worksession, the Council reviewed and discussed an updated Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) for the Town, which was drafted by herself, NW/EP member Sarah Speth and TA Cowles. It has been reviewed by department directors, the Volunteer Fire Department and members of the NW/EP, and should be ready for public release at the September Town meeting. Residents are encouraged to give input. Later in September, the Town will host an emergency preparedness workshop with neighboring cities, as well as County and State agency representatives, at which the EOP will be used for a table top preparedness exercise.

TA Cowles reported that the Town has received reimbursement from a smart energy communities grant that helped pay for the new heating and air conditioning systems installed at the Town offices this summer. The annual performance evaluation cycle has been initiated, beginning with a self-evaluation of all employees. The application process for designating Berwyn Heights as a sustainable community is moving forward. In response to MPT Kulpa-Eddy, TA Cowles said that the low revenue for this quarter evident in the Treasurer's report is due to a later-than-usual receipt of Highway User Revenues.

Treasurer Rodriguez gave the Treasurer's report for July. In response to questions, she said that the main expense for the month was a new HVAC system. July shows 3 pay periods because the last pay period in June ended on July 1.

Code Compliance: Code Supervisor Glass gave the code activities report for July. The department issued 71 code violations, most for clean lot offenses, 4 building permits, 5 dumpster permits, 29 rental licenses, and collected total revenues of \$12,467. He also continued to work on getting the Town's commercial properties into compliance.

Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs: CM Shields reported that the dunk tank raised \$129 for the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department (BHVFD). He and a BHVFD firefighter had agreed to be dunked. The Maryland Municipal League (MML) invited him to serve on the planning committee for next year's convention. MML is also publicizing a nationwide city hall selfie contest. Any city can submit a selfie taken in front of a municipal building and be entered to win a selfie stick. Further, CM Shields announced that a free pre-school vaccination event will be held at Beltway Plaza Mall on August 19, and a garden cleanup at Berwyn Heights Elementary School on August 19. Lastly, a solar eclipse will occur on August 21. Special eclipse viewing glasses are available at the Town office and other locations.

Public Health and Safety: Chief Antolik gave the police activities report for July. There were 9 Part I offenses in June, as opposed the 5-year average of 6.6. The year-to-date total was 34 and the 5-year average 35.8. The police issued 274 state and municipal citations and 59 speed camera tickets, all on Greenbelt Road.

Chief Antolik announced that the BHPD has acquired an infrared thermometer to measure temperatures inside a vehicle in the event children or pets have been left inside unattended. BHPD will vigorously enforce such violations. BHPD set up an “internet exchange safe zone” in the BHPD parking lot, monitored by video cameras and marked by new signage. Anyone buying or selling online is encouraged to conduct their exchange of goods in that location.

Public Works: Public Works Director Cox reported that the Four Cities received demonstrations of street sweepers to replace the one currently in operation. He gave a presentation on upcoming infrastructure projects in Berwyn Heights to the Mid-Atlantic Chapter of the American Public Works Association, which resulted in several offers of assistance with a road analysis and facilities study the Town plans to undertake. In other news, a shipment of 100 new recycling bins is expected in early September, and *Emmell Land & Tree Care* was selected as the low bidder for the removal of a dead tree at Berwyn Road and Ruatan Street.

In the upcoming weeks, a bad switch for the emergency generators that had caused the generators to run off schedule will be replaced, and new stop lines and crosswalks will be painted in designated locations, but more permanent markings will not be installed until after the Town’s next road resurfacing project. DPW will also install new stop signs and parking lanes on Berwyn Road and correct the 15 mph speed limit markings on Quebec Street.

Mayor Jewitt noted that new stop lines on Berwyn Road have started to peel. CM Shields asked whether the new recycling bins will have wheels. Director Cox said they will not. The decision to purchase wheeled bins await a decision by the Council on whether to equip trucks with an automatic lift. MPT Kulpa-Eddy requested an updated vehicle maintenance report and a refuse collection pie chart that legibly differentiates (in black-and-white) the different categories of refuse collected.

4. Committee Reports

Green Team: Green Team member Diana Agonoy announced that the Green Team will lead the August 19 garden cleanup at the elementary school, and that the community garden picnic is scheduled for September 30. Residents are requested to submit any ideas for what they would like the Green Team to do at begreen.berwynheights@gmail.com. The ideas will be discussed at the next meeting held on September 14.

Historical Committee: Clerk Harper reported that a digital walking tour application for Berwyn Heights created by M-NCPPC’s GIS Section is being reviewed by the Historic Preservation Section. The BHHC’s oral history team continues to interview residents about their memories of an earlier Berwyn Heights. The next meeting will be on September 26, when next year’s officers will be elected.

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: CM Shields announced an upcoming CERT conference on September 23-24 held at Flowers High School, and an emergency preparedness workshop on September 20, hosted by Berwyn Heights. MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that a smoke detector installation drive is planned for late September and a *Sip ‘n Paint* CERT fundraiser is scheduled for October 13.

Recreation Council: Recreation Council President Susan Jones announced upcoming events, including a September 19 Ice Cream Social, an October 21 Trunk or Treat Halloween party,

which this year is held jointly with College Park, and a November 4 Town-wide cleanup under the auspices of the Green Team.

TA Cowles noted that the Town has an opening for a part-time Recreation Aide to support the Recreation Council's event program and help coordinate activities of the various Town organizations. A stipend of \$4,000 has been budgeted for the position in the FY 2018 budget.

5. Unfinished Business

There was none.

6. New Business

There was none.

7. Citizens Discussion

Mayor Jewitt thanked Phil Ventura for his input on the misplaced stop lines, and reported the comments she received on an increasing rat problem, inadequate signage of pedestrian crossings, possible plans to charge Town organizations for the use of the Town Center, and TA Cowles' assistance on a rental license issue. MPT Kulpa-Eddy received a comment on a gas odor in the Town Center rental facility. CM Shields thanked the Karate and Seniors Club for their input on a Town organizations policy and reported a comment in support of the Town's acquisition of a Humvee.

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, commented on the wasteful use of metered water by WSSC, the inadequate maintenance of Berwyn Heights' storm water drains by Prince George's County, the inferior quality of the Town's blue recycling containers, and the removal of a long-dead tree on Berwyn Road at Ruatan Street.

Pat Agee, Paxton Court, commented on a rat problem in her neighborhood, which she attributed to improper trash disposal. She urged the Council to consider getting larger trash cans for the residents, and spend money to add automatic lifts to the trucks that this approach would require.

Daria Reamy, Cunningham Drive, commented that there is a long-standing rat problem in her area as well. She believes it is related to trash and unkempt yards with wood piles that provide a refuge for rats.

Selani Weiner, Villanova Road, reported she saw a rat for the first time on her street near a large pile of refuse left in front of a rental home on her street. The landlord, who does not live in Berwyn Heights, continued to place refuse at the curb over the weekend although she advised him that trash should not be placed at the curb until the day of collection. She suggested that rental home owners, who do not observe the Town's regulations, should have their license revoked.

Phil Ventura commented that Public Works recently removed a large pile of refuse near his home on a Friday, when there is no scheduled trash collection. This helps the neighborhood but may set up the expectation that the Town will always come out to remove such trash instead of fining those who don't follow the rules.

Daisy Verona, Paxton Court, suggested that the Town publish something about the refuse disposal regulations in the Bulletin in Spanish. As far she knows, no effort is made to educate the Spanish-speaking residents about the rules, and they often don't know how to properly dispose of trash. She would be happy to help distribute such information.

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, commented by telephone that the Town should move forward with getting recycling bins with wheels, including installing automatic lifts on the trash trucks. Further, he has not received a response from the Town on whether they can assist with collecting names of residents for a smoke detector installation drive sponsored by the NW/EP and BHVFD on September 30.

Joan Hayden, Seminole Street, telephoned to ask about an expected publication date for the citizen survey and DPW's planned purchase of 100 recycling bins. She objected to the purchase of the current variety bins because they are difficult to move. Further, the recycling bin test on Berwyn Heights Day might have been set up in a better location.

MaryAnne Wallup, Paxton Court, stated her preference for recycling bins and trash cans on wheels with attached lids. Secondly, the recently-instituted Thursday trash collection day is not useful for residents south of Pontiac Street as not much trash accumulates in a couple of days.

Mike Attick telephoned a second time to seek clarification on the Town's role in the smoke detector installation event.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk