



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Minutes Town Meeting February 14, 2018

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

MPT Kulpa-Eddy led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Swearing-in of Election Judges

MPT Kulpa-Eddy swore in Sharmila Bhatia as Chief Election Judge and then Alice Daly, Sharon McCraney, Paul McNulty, Debby Steele-Snyder and Robin Walukonis as election judges. They will administer the May 1st Town Council election.

2. Minutes

Clerk Harper read a summary of the January 10 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Shields, the minutes were approved 3 to 0.

3. Mayor's Report

MPT Kulpa-Eddy gave a combined Mayor's and Administration report. She, Mayor Jewitt and CM Dennison attended a Four Cities meeting in College Park, at which University of Maryland President Wallace Loh was a guest speaker. He provided updates on development efforts along Route 1, in which the University is collaborating with the City of College Park and other neighboring communities. She also attended a listening session with the County Executive, during which constituents gave input on the proposed FY 2019 County budget. Next, the County Council will review the proposed budget and will hold a public hearing on February 20 at the County Administration Building. The Town of Berwyn Heights has requested an update on storm water system improvements that were recommended as a result of a County 2015 hydrological study.

The Maryland Municipal League is rallying cities and towns to lobby the State legislature to fully restore Highway User Revenues (HUR). Cities and towns are called upon to send representatives to the public hearings scheduled for February 22 and March 7. HUR restoration

as a reliable funding stream for local infrastructure would be helpful in planning needed road repairs. The Town's all-day budget workshop is currently scheduled to be held on March 24, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Residents are welcome to attend but will be asked to hold their comments until the April 11 Town Meeting budget hearing.

4. Department Reports

Treasurer's Report: TA Cowles gave the Treasurer's report for January, as Treasurer Rodriguez was absent.

Administration: TA Cowles then reported on last month's activities of the Administration Department. The Department is busy drafting the FY 2019 Town budget, which will be presented to the Council at the March 5 worksession. She has been working with colleagues from College Park and Greenbelt on a scope of work for an Urban Land Institute technical assistance panel. The panel will discuss approaches to making improvements along the Route 193 Corridor between Route 1 and Kenilworth Avenue in a 2-day workshop. The Department is also developing options for financing road repairs based on an assessment of the condition of Town streets completed by the Public Works Department in December.

Berwyn Heights and other Prince George's municipalities have been discussing requests by communication companies to install small cell infrastructure on utility poles and other structures located in the public right of way. These devices are intended to improve wireless coverage in areas with less than optimal coverage, but there currently is no formal legal framework for approving such installations. The Four Cities are planning the purchase of a new street sweeper that is budgeted for FY 2019.

Code Compliance: TA Cowles gave the Code Compliance report, as Code Supervisor Glass was absent. In January, a total of 39 code violations were issued (of which 17 have been closed) as well as 2 building permits, and 3 dumpster permits. In rental homes activity, 1 new license was issued, bringing the total to 216. Eleven rental homes were inspected, 7 re-inspected, and 4 violations were issued. In response to CM Shields, TA Cowles explained that any outstanding code fines are attached as liens to the property, and will be collected in same manner as unpaid taxes.

Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs: CM Shields remembered the 17 students killed in a school shooting incident in Florida. He thanked NW/EP volunteers for helping in a search for a missing man last month, and encouraged all residents to volunteer for their favorite club or committee. He continues to work on a revised Town organization policy and requested Town organizations to submit their budget requests to him. He attended a Prince George's County Municipal Association meeting held jointly with the Montgomery County Municipal Association in Takoma Park, where the restoration of HUR was the top discussion item. Lastly, residents are encouraged to check if they are eligible for a homestead or income-dependent tax credit when paying their property taxes.

Stephen Isler, Parks & Recreation aide, reported that he worked with Town organizations to submit their proposed FY 2019 budgets, and has compiled them into a single spreadsheet for CM Shields' review. Mr. Isler invited residents to sign up for a CERT training class held on March 10 and 11.

The Green Team will be opening up the community garden in March, and is accepting plot applications for the upcoming season. The Green Team is also conducting an online survey to help gauge what green activities and events Town residents are interested in. The survey can be accessed at www.surveymonkey.com/r/R779XX. Participants have the chance to win 5 Silver Diner meal tickets. The Green Team continues to support the school garden and is busy planning a variety of Arbor Day activities on Berwyn Heights Day. Mr. Isler has met with BHES Principal Alerich and a teacher who is excited to launch an after-school garden club. A garden cleanup is planned for March 17, 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

Public Works: TA Cowles gave the Public Works report for January, as Director Hall was absent. Public Works hired a new part-time employee and installed a new fence and electronic gate at the Public Works yard. Residents should have received an every-door-direct mailer with recycling and refuse disposal instructions. Copies are still available at the Town office. During loose leaf collection season, the Department collected 932 cubic yards of leaves which are recycled at a nearby composting facility. In January, 71% of refuse collected was solid waste, 21% was recyclables, and 8% was yard waste.

TA Cowles said that Public Works is watching a minor storm system that will move through the area for potential snow. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that the crew prepared well for the last week's winter storm with a prior application of salt to the roads. CM Shields noted that the recycling cost for January amounted to \$726. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said the cost fluctuates with market prices for recyclables. TA Cowles added that the cost of recycling is always less than the cost of sending refuse to the landfill. Thus, a higher recycling rate represents savings to the Town.

Public Health and Safety: Chief Antolik announced that Officer Rufino started working on Monday and that 2 interns will start to work for the Police Department next Monday. He then gave the police activities report for January. There were only 2 Part I offenses, as opposed to the 5-year average of 5.4. The police issued approximately 163 state and municipal citations and 32 speed camera tickets, all on Greenbelt Road. Chief Antolik concluded by showing a video produced by Detective Unger announcing a *Coffee with Cops* on April 7, 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The 2-minute video will be repeated on the Town's cable channel at 8 p.m. every day.

In response to MPT Kulpa-Eddy's question about an incident at BHES, Chief Antolik explained the police received a complaint about a man following a student home from school. He was identified as a Town resident and has been warned not to trespass on school property again. The investigation is ongoing.

5. Committee Reports

Green Team: Presented by PRECA aide.

Historical Committee: Chair Debby Steele-Snyder reported that the Historical Committee continues to interview many long-time residents for its oral history program while adding prospective interviewees to the lineup. The BHHC spring reception is scheduled for March 18, 2:00 pm. The Committee was able to secure Aaron Marcavitch, Executive Director of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Area (ATHA), for a lecture and book signing of his *US Route 1* history.

In response to MPT Kulpa-Eddy, Ms. Steele-Snyder explained that more people are signing up for the oral histories project. Seniors appear to be getting used to cameras and recording equipment. This will be a long-term project.

Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness: Reported under Department reports.

Recreation Council: Recreation Council President Susan Jones announced a March 3 community potluck dinner and a March 31 Easter egg hunt at the Community Center grounds. This year the Recreation Council decided to use the Berwyn Heights Day band funds to hold a concert series instead. The first concert will be given by a mariachi band on April 8 at the Town Center 2nd floor. For Berwyn Heights Day, “Kenny, the Mailman’s” band will return by popular demand and entertain the crowds. More concerts will follow during the summer. Lastly, residents are encouraged to volunteer for Berwyn Heights Day and attend the upcoming Recreation Council meetings held on the first Tuesdays of each month.

6. Unfinished Business

Ordinance 110 - Ethics - 2nd Reading & Adoption of Amendments: Clerk Harper read the adopting language of the Ordinance. CM Dennison moved, and CM Shields seconded to adopt it. MPT Kulpa-Eddy explained that this Ordinance addresses public ethics in the Town of Berwyn Heights. In 2011, the State mandated the adoption by Maryland’s municipalities of new ethics regulations requiring detailed financial disclosures to prevent conflicts of interest, and to regulate lobbying by public officials. In 2017, the State passed the Public Integrity Act requiring further changes to local ethics laws, which are adopted in this amended Ordinance. CM Shields commented that he is glad the amended Ordinance no longer requires the disclosure of mutual-fund type assets. With no further comments, the amended Ordinance was adopted 3 to 0.

7. New Business

Ordinance 101 – Animals - 1st Reading & Introduction of Amendments: Clerk Harper explained that she unfortunately does not have adopting language for the 1st Reading of the Ordinance. She suggested that the Council postpone introduction of the Ordinance to the next Town meeting. MPT Kulpa-Eddy gave an overview of the proposed changes. The Animal Ordinance was last amended in 1993 and will be updated to better align it with Prince George’s County code as well as the Town’s Noise and Clean Lot Ordinances. The amended Ordinance will also provide new standards for the humane treatment of animals, a matter about which some residents have voiced concern. Additional changes are anticipated as the result of input from residents and the Prince George’s County Animal Management Division, whose director is expected to attend the next worksession.

CM Dennison moved to table the Ordinance until the March Town meeting. CM Shields seconded. The motion passed in a 3 to 0 vote.

8. Citizens Discussion

There was none.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk