



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Lynn White

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Stephen Isler, (Mayor Pro Tem)
Jason Papanikolas
Ethan Sweep
Amanda Dewey

Minutes Town Meeting September 13, 2018

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Lynn White, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Stephen Isler, Councilmembers (CMs) Jason Papanikolas, Ethan Sweep and appointed CM Amanda Dewey. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Detective Daniel Unger, Public Works Director Kenneth Hall, Code Compliance Supervisor Freddie Glass, Clerk of the Circuit Court Representative Kimberly Lyles and citizens.

Mayor White led the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Minutes

Clerk Harper read a summary of the August 8 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by MPT Isler, seconded by CM Papanikolas, the minutes were approved 4 to 0.

2. Swearing-in

Clerk of the Circuit Court Representative Kimberly Lyles swore in Councilmember Amanda Dewey and Town Manager Maria Broadbent.

3. Mayor's Report

Mayor White reported that the CERT training last weekend drew around 100 attendees from around Maryland, testifying to the good reputation Berwyn Heights has in the emergency preparedness community. Interim TA McLaughlin ended his tenure with Berwyn Heights during which he managed the transition to a new Council, a change in leadership and the onboarding of TM Broadbent. Among the things the Council will be discussing next is how to pay for Phase II of the road repair program in the absence of the bond funds. Meanwhile Phase I repairs are progressing, with some street sections including Pontiac Street, completed.

Mayor White welcomed CM Amanda Dewey to the Council and announced that she will be heading Public Health and Safety, while she will be the liaison to the Parks, Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs (PRECA) Department. On the occasion of National Emergency Preparedness month and Hurricane Florence approaching, she has published a list of emergency contacts in the weekly e-newsletter, which people may want to keep on hand. The newsletter is posted on the Council page of the Town website. Since she will be away to help out with hurricane response, the Friday afternoon

Mayor's Tea will be canceled. The tea is an opportunity for the Mayor and Council to interact with constituents, listen to their concerns and answer questions.

Administration: MPT Isler said he is planning to start working on a welcome packet once TM Broadbent has eased into her job and has some time to think about how to tackle the project. He has met with TM Broadbent to discuss a variety of departmental issues. Residents are requested to drive carefully as school is back in session and students are walking in the streets.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Rodriguez gave the Treasurer's report for July.

Town Manager's Report: TM Broadbent provided a revised Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to the Council. It has updated emergency contacts in the back as well as an updated Emergency Declaration. The revised Declaration, once signed by the Mayor, would be available ahead of any emergency and extend to the recovery period. With regard to Hurricane Florence, she has been in contact with the Prince George's County Emergency Operations Center and is receiving its alerts. The County has opened an emergency shelter at the University of Maryland where residents may go if they experience power outages or flooding.

TM Broadbent suggested that senior staff and the Council get together to discuss the Town's emergency response in the near future so that they are on the same page when an emergency arises. Mayor White agreed that would be helpful. In that context, she would also like the Council to be briefed on the June 2014 flash flood and how the Town handled the response to it.

Code Compliance: Code Supervisor Glass gave the code activities report. During the month of August, the town lost 1 rental unit and gained 2 for a total of 213 active units. The Code Department issued 22 rental licenses, performed 38 rental inspections, 6 re-inspections and assessed 2 fines. The Department also issued 38 clean lot violations and added 1 vacant home.

CM Papanikolas said the Department has followed up on the canopy permit issue many residents had complained about. TM Broadbent has contacted various people in the County government to clarify whether or not canopies require a building permit but has not received a conclusive answer. She, CM Papanikolas and Supervisor Glass will continue to seek clarification. In response to Mayor White, Code Supervisor Glass said he plans to meet with the Quality of Life Commission once a date has been set.

PRECA: Mayor White announced that she will meet with the leaders of the Town organizations on September 19 and hopes to meet quarterly to maintain an ongoing dialogue with them. She will circulate the latest version of the Town organizations policy and get further input toward completing it. In this manner she hopes to find ways of engaging more members of this community.

Public Works: Public Works Director Hall gave the report for August. The Department's staff was busy overseeing the road repair and tree maintenance projects, which included 2 tree removals; re-installed traffic signs along Pontiac Street; cut grass and trimmed branches in Town right of way on a weekly basis and removed a large wasp nest at the Town Center. In the coming month, oversight of the street and tree projects will continue. Existing crosswalks and stop lines will be repainted and some vehicles will undergo scheduled maintenance. Director Hall also reported the refuse collection totals for August

and gave an overview of street work completed with associated costs.

In response to Mayor White, Director Hall said bills for street work have been broken down by street; the Phase I street list has been pared down to those streets in most urgent need of repairs; the Phase II street list has been revised to take into account an upcoming WSSC water main replacement project; and plans for curb and sidewalk work remain unchanged.

Citizens commented that the contractor's trucks are too heavy and may damage Town streets. It was suggested that truck weight be limited, or trucks re-routed over Branchville Road and Ballew Avenue. Director Hall said using smaller trucks would prolong the street work and rerouting them through the industrial zone would be impractical as they would have to traverse the Town to get to the work sites. Further, citizens noted that WSSC does a poor job resurfacing streets and suggested the Town ask WSSC to give them the money instead of doing the repaving. Mike Attick asked if money has been earmarked to repair the emergency trailer.

Public Safety: Chief Antolik clarified that the Police enforce trucks driving through Town. However, they do not issue citations for trucks that do business within Town limits. He then asked Mathew Hulle of the Berwyn Heights Volunteer Fire Department (BHVFD) to give an update on Hurricane Florence. Mr. Hulle said BHVFD has staff in place to respond to the Hurricane, including a reconnaissance unit. Citizens are advised to make sure sump pumps are working, and emergency supplies and medicines are at hand. Chief Antolik gave additional advice on preparing for the storm and provided emergency contact information.

Police intern Al Flores, a criminal justice student at the University of Maryland, gave a briefing on the *CoCo with a PoPo* event he has been charged with planning. The event is scheduled for November 10, 11 a.m. and will provide an opportunity for citizens to get to know their officers on a personal level. Families are welcome and a gingerbread-making and hot cocoa preparation station will be in operation.

Detective Unger gave the monthly crime report. There were 7 Part I offenses, which is above the 5-year average of 5.4. Three of those crimes have been solved, with suspects arrested in a 2nd degree rape and a robbery at 7-Eleven. A stolen auto report turned out to be false. The Police also wrote 187 state and municipal citations and 52 speed camera tickets.

In response to questions, Chief Antolik and TM Broadbent said the Senior Center is not a full-fledged emergency shelter, such as are operated by the County, but can serve as a cooling or warming center. If residents need to go to a shelter the Town can provide transportation. The call-a-bus currently is in Greenbelt but will be brought back when the Town needs it. Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, expressed his opinion that the Town Center could be used as a shelter in an emergency, as there are now emergency generators to provide power. Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, expressed his opinion that the Town Center could be used as a shelter in an emergency, as there are now emergency generators to provide power.

CM Dewey thanked the Police for being out patrolling during the first week of school. She also noted that the service of the UMD shuttle coming through Berwyn Heights has been drastically cut. This has led to overcrowded buses and residents traveling to the campus left stranded because they cannot not board. She has brought the situation to the attention of the UMD Transportation Office and hopes they will address it.

BHVFD Report: Firefighter Matthew Hulle reported the BHVFD run statistics and noted that the Department is soliciting bids to replace its old rescue squad. BHVFD is prepared for Hurricane Florence and will respond to any emergencies residents may face.

Nathan Kite, 58th Avenue, reported a leaking fire hydrant across the street from his house. CM Sweep asked residents to come to the podium and state their name and address if they want to comment. There ensued a brief discussion about meeting protocol.

4. Committee Reports

Quality of Life Commission: Chair Meg Miller Shane reported the Commission will hold its last full meeting on October 8, prior to presenting its recommendations to the Town Council at the October 10 Town meeting. She also stated that the Code subcommittee has received information from the Chief Engineer of the Department of Permitting, Inspections & Enforcement (DPIE) on canopies, clarifying that they are temporary structures, which do not require a permit.

Mayor White thanked the Commission members for their good work. She thought the attendance of Chief Antolik and Director Hall at sub-committee meetings was very productive and may be something that could continue on a quarterly basis.

Education Advisory Committee: Mayor White said that the Committee needs a new chair. Residents with an interest in education are welcome to apply. She will work with the Education Advisory Committees of the Four Cities Coalition and hopes to help organize an Education Town Hall meeting involving all schools the students from these cities attend.

Green Team: Diana Agonoy reported that the Green Team continues to hold litter cleanups each third Saturday of each month. Supplies are provided to all participants. On September 29, the Community Garden will celebrate its 5th annual garden party and picnic, this year with live music. The garden is located in the 8800 block of 58th Avenue and all are welcome to attend. On November 3, 12 p.m. the Green Team will hold a native species scavenger hunt for children.

Historical Committee: Chair Debby Steele-Snyder reported that the Historical Committee will next meet on September 25 and elect its officers for the next year. The Committee continues to work on adding to the digital walking tour and the oral history program. Any resident or former resident who would like to share stories and memories of an earlier Berwyn Heights should contact the Committee to be recorded either on or off camera. The BHHC fall reception will be held on November 11, 2 pm.

Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: NW/EP Co-Chair Mike Attick said that 54 people took the CERT training workshop in August. Berwyn Heights' CERT Team is one of the top teams in Maryland. The commemorative 9-11 stair climb at Fort Washington has been canceled due to the hurricane. Mr. Attick clarified that the Town Center cannot function as an emergency shelter because it does not meet many of the requirements, such as showers and bathrooms, kitchens and pantries, among others. He also requested that the emergency trailer be included in the vehicle maintenance schedule. The NW/EP is seeking new volunteers. Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month.

Recreation Council: President Susan Jones announced upcoming events: free ice cream will be served at the ice cream social on September 20; Pumpkins, mums and crafts are offered at the Boys & Girls Club's fall festival on October 6; Halloween will be celebrated in the confines of the Community Center parking lot during Trunk or Treat on October 20. Prizes will be awarded for the best decorated car and costume. The Recreation Council will host a novelty Berwyn Heights team trivia night on November 2, a quiz focused on Berwyn Heights. Interested residents should contact the Town office to form teams. The annual tree lighting is scheduled for December 8. Lastly, the Recreation Council has been asked to make the Berwyn Heights Day parade more interesting and is inviting residents and organizations to come up with ideas for floats.

Mayor White said she plans to discuss hiring a new Recreation Council aide with the Council to support the full slate of events the Recreation Council puts together every year.

5. Unfinished Business

There was none.

5. New Business

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Small Watershed Grant Support: Mayor White said the Council has been asked to support the grant application for a small watershed grant of the UMD campus connected communities (c3) program, of which Berwyn Heights is a member. The Council has already expressed its support for the grant proposal at the last worksession and now plans to formally approve the letter of support. MPT Isler so moved. CM Dewey seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0.

Resolution 06-2018 - Electric Vehicle Purchase: TM Broadbent explained the Town received an energy efficiency grant from the Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) to help finance the purchase of an electric vehicle. The grant pays \$20,000 towards the purchase of the vehicle. The Resolution would authorize the purchase of a Ford Fusion Energi Hybrid sedan at the cost of \$27,100 from Apple Ford of Columbia through a State of Maryland blanket purchase order. Thanks go to Administrative Assistant Yvonne Odoi for completing the grant application.

In response to questions, TM Broadbent said that Director Hall is working on the bid proposal for an electric charging station. The Ford Fusion meets the criteria of the MEA grant. This car is intended to replace the less energy efficient 15-year old Saturn, the Administration Department currently uses.

CM Sweep moved, and MPT Isler seconded to approve Resolution 06-2018. The motion passed 4 to 1, with Mayor White opposed.

Damage to Personal Vehicle: CM Papanikolas said the Council at the last worksession agreed to deny the request of Code Supervisor Glass to be reimbursed for damage to his personal vehicle that occurred while he attended a Council meeting. He moved the Council take formal action to deny the request. CM Sweep seconded. The motion passed 4-0-1, with CM Dewey abstaining.

7. Citizen Comments

Nathan Kite, 58th Avenue, said he has obtained many building permits from Prince George's County for various construction projects on his property. He questions why Berwyn Heights charges the same fee

as the County, although it does not provide the same technical review services. Further, he objects to being charged a Town fee for a change to an existing County permit.

CM Papanikolas replied the fee schedule was adopted by a prior Council. He agrees that Berwyn Heights does not have the technical expertise to review building plans and will bring the Town building permit fee before the Council for discussion. Meg Miller Shane commented the Quality of Life Commission is also addressing this issue and will make a recommendation on building permit fees.

Bob Baker, Osage Street, asked where the canopy permit requirement came from. He believes a permit is not required for a temporary structure, such as a pop-up canopy. CM Papanikolas and TM Broadbent replied that the Town has received conflicting information from the County about whether or not a permit is required and is still trying to get clarity. Mr. Baker further stated that his neighbor has piled up dirt against his fence, using it as retaining wall without a permit but has received no violation. This seems to be evidence of inconsistent enforcement of Town Code.

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, commented that code enforcement used be more relaxed but thinks today's Code Department is more efficient and keeps better records than it used to. Mr. Ventura asked if the Council feels comfortable with the proportion of concrete work versus asphalt work being done as part of the street project. He believes new sidewalks in front of the school and new curbs along the 5900 block of Seminole Street were not necessary and asked if the project has remained within budget.

MPT Isler replied that the project so far is under budget. The Council supports a meeting of TM Broadbent, Director Hall and Mr. Ventura to discuss the street project and the reasons for replacing certain curbs and sidewalks. There ensued more discussion about need for new curbs and sidewalks and the cost of the street project.

A resident of Cunningham Drive asked how the electric vehicle would be used. She was told that Administration staff would use the vehicle to attend meetings and run errands. Code staff would use it as a backup vehicle.

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, asked whether he could have a copy of the EOP and what is the expected amount of Highway User Revenues this year. He also commented on the Town Attorney's attendance of Council meetings; untimely painting of crosswalks at Quebec Street and 62nd Avenue; employees parking in front of the Town office; the complexity of the Town code and the need to undo some of the recent changes to the code defining the roles of the Council and senior staff. Mayor White noted that the Council may want to set up a protocol for requesting the Town Attorney's services and look into getting a second Town Attorney.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*

Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk