



TOWN OF BERWYN HEIGHTS

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MAYOR
Stephen D. Isler
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)
Amanda M. Dewey
Ethan D. Sweep
VACANT

Town Meeting Minutes January 9, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, and Ethan Sweep. Also Present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Detective Daniel Unger, Public Works Director Hall, Code Officer Hollyce Goodwin and citizens.

1. Approval of Agenda

MPT Papanikolas moved and CM Dewey seconded to approve the agenda. The motion passed 4 to 0.

2. Proclamation in Memory of Adrien Forbes

Mayor Isler read a proclamation to remember long-serving Code Officer Forbes who died unexpectedly in December after a brief illness. CM Dewey and TM Broadbent attended the memorial service and CM Dewey read the proclamation, which was much appreciated.

3. Hearing on Charter Amendment re Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Isler explained that this Charter Amendment seeks to clarify when the Mayor is absent and the Mayor Pro Tem assumes the duties of the office, as it pertains to signing of documents. The Council plans to adopt this Amendment, which was first introduced at the November 14, 2018 Town meeting, later in this meeting.

Mayor Isler opened the public hearing at 7:06 p.m. Susan Jones, Pontiac Street, asked if this Amendment allows the Council to sign documents even if the Mayor is not absent. Mayor Isler replied it does. Section C of the Amendment authorizes a supermajority of the Council to declare that a Mayor has failed to perform his or her duties in public vote and proceed with the signing of documents or taking actions, on which the Council as a whole agrees. With no further questions, Mayor Isler closed the hearing at 7:09 p.m.

4. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by CM Dewey, seconded by CM Sweep, the minutes of the December 12 Town meeting minutes were approved 4 to 0.

5. Mayor's Report

Mayor Isler said most Councilmembers and many staff enjoyed time off over the holidays. Councilmembers took time to look at all the holiday decorations around Town to select the best decorated house, best decorated yard and 'Best Christmas Spirit.' The winners are: 5804 Ruatan Street – best decorated house; 5820 Quebec Street – best decorated yard; and a group of homes in 5900 block of Ruatan Street – best Christmas Spirit.

6. Department Reports

Town Manager's Report: TM Broadbent reported she has worked on finalizing the agreement for the Men's Basketball League to use the Community Center gymnasium up for adoption tonight; drafting a resolution to formally define the Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness' (NW/EP) relationship with the Town; and transferring the Quality of Life Commission recommendations to a spreadsheet for tracking implementation. She has also started to prepare for the FY 2020 budget season and scheduled the Directors to attend upcoming work sessions to discuss their budget requests.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer Rodriguez gave the report for December. The Town received its income and real estate tax disbursements. On the expenditure side, the Maryland State Retirement contribution was paid, and a new hybrid vehicle for Administration Department purchased, partially covered by a Maryland Energy Administration grant. The total expense for the street renovation project now stands at \$776,600. TM Broadbent said the project is almost complete, with the exception of some minor work to be done in the spring.

Code Compliance: Code Officer Hollyce Goodwin reported for Supervisor Glass. She reminded residents to store firewood 6" above the ground, to cover all inoperable vehicles with fitted car covers; and to bag all leaves for disposal, as curbside collection season has ended. If residents wish to dispose of appliances and tires they must schedule the pickup through the Town office and pay special pickup fees of \$25 and \$5, respectively. Bulk refuse pickups can also be scheduled through the Administration Department. All regular household trash should be placed at the curb in a container with a tightly-fitting lid by 7:30 a.m. Ms. Goodwin said the Code Department will miss Adrien Forbes and asked residents to keep him in their thoughts.

Parks & Recreation: There was no report.

Public Works: CM Sweep said that there was some confusion about the refuse collection dates during New Year's week. Many residents put their trash out on the wrong days. Public Works will make an effort to publicize the schedule better next year.

Public Works Director Hall reported that the last work on the street project will be the installation of a new stormwater drain and inlet on Berwyn Road. Public Works employees did a great job painting of the Town Center walls and ceiling. Residents are requested to park in driveways where possible when the street sweeper is in Town and during the snow storm predicted for this weekend.

Public Safety: CM Dewey thanked the Police for keeping the Town safe over the holidays. Chief Antolik said BPD officers are saddened by the passing of Code Officer Forbes and will miss him.

Detective Unger reported there were 8 Part I offenses in December, which included 5 more airbag thefts. The good news is that a search warrant carried out in Montgomery County resulted in the recovery of a trove of airbags and the arrest of several suspects. It is hoped this will end the wave of airbag thefts in this area. Year to date, there were 61 Part I offenses, better than the 68.8 5-year average. A 10-year retrospective shows a continued downward trend in serious crimes. Larcenies and burglaries are the most prevalent crimes and Berwyn Heights remains one of the safest places in Prince George's County.

In response to questions, Detective Unger said no airbags were reported stolen since the search warrant was executed around December 23, 2018. He does not know to whom the airbags might have been resold but that may be uncovered by the ongoing investigation. Detective Unger also explained the difference between robbery, burglary and larceny.

Lastly, Detective Unger reported, in late December, BHPD conducted a traffic survey during rush hours in the 8900 block of 58th and 60th Avenues before the intersection with Greenbelt Road. The purpose was to understand whether cars parked in the roadway contribute to traffic backups on these streets. Based on the survey, BHPD recommends that signs with 'no parking between the hours of 8 – 10 am and 4 – 6 pm be posted either along both sides of 58th and 60th Avenue, or just along the northbound lanes. The parking prohibition would affect that half of these blocks nearest to Greenbelt Road.

7. Committee Reports

Education Advisory Committee: Mayor Isler reported that he and MPT Papanikolas attended the Parkdale High School holiday party, which was very well attended. Their presence was appreciated. Councilmembers plan to attend other local school events.

Green Team: CM Dewey announced that the Green Team and Shade Tree Board will meet tomorrow and welcomed anyone to attend. The monthly Town cleanups will continue through winter, with the next one taking place next Saturday at 10 a.m. Participants are encouraged to bring children, friends and dogs. Supplies will be provided. Residents should mark their calendars for a raingarden event on March 30.

Historical Committee: Clerk Harper reported that 2 new members appointed by the Town Council in December attended the last meeting and contributed interesting information to the conversation. Several BHHC members attended holiday parties of the Prince George's Historical Society and Maryland Milestones.

Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness: No report.

Recreation Council: Chair Susan Jones announced a Regifting Party taking place the coming Sunday at 2 p.m. People can bring a wrapped, unused, and unwanted gift to exchange in a fun game, or just drop in to chat over wine and cheese. Ms. Jones also announced a Valentine's craft event on February 9, and a Pot 'o Gold potluck dinner on March 16. For Berwyn Heights Day, the Recreation Council would like to do something different and invites families and community groups to make a float for the parade. Cash prizes will be awarded for the best ones. If residents have any other ideas for Berwyn Heights Day they can propose them at a meeting or send an email to Ms. Jones.

8. Unfinished Business

Resolution 13-2018 – 3rd Reading & Adoption of Charter Amendment Clarifying Mayor Pro Tem

Authority: Clerk Harper read the Resolution. There being no other comments, CM Sweep moved, and CM Dewey seconded to adopt the Charter Amendment. The motion passed 4 to 0.

9. New Business

Variance 37-15 – Driveway Expansion at 6216 Quebec Street: TM Broadbent explained that this variance had come before the Council once before in a slightly different form. In the most recent application the property owner requests a variance to widen their driveway to a 15' by 35' pad in

contravention of the zoning requirement that no driveway shall be located directly in front of a dwelling between the front street line and sides of the dwelling. The applicant owns a construction business and likely would park trucks in the driveway.

When the variance was discussed at previous work sessions, staff recommended, and the Council agreed to impose conditions on its support for the variance, which are outlined in a memorandum. When the County receives notice from a municipality that it supports a variance with conditions, the County denies the variance and asks the petitioner to resubmit an application that complies with the conditions. It is possible that the Council will see a revised application on which it is asked to give input in the future.

Mayor Isler added that the Council had 3 major concerns about the proposed driveway:

1. it would abut the front steps of the house and a vehicle could drive into them;
2. it would be very close to the neighbor's yard and not leave much of a buffer;
3. it may impact the tree growing in the front yard.

CM Dewey added that this property has no unusual circumstance that would cause a hardship if a variance is not granted.

MPT Papanikolas moved to approve the variance with the conditions outlined in a memorandum. CM Sweep seconded. The motion passed 4 to 0.

Resolution 1-2019 – Adoption of Community Center Use Agreement: TM Broadbent explained the documents to be approved tonight comprise a Resolution designating the Men's League as a Town organization and authorizing the Mayor to sign the agreement with the Maryland-National Park & Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) for the use of the Berwyn Heights Community Center and the agreement itself. She inquired about extending the hours allotted the League in this agreement and was informed it would cost \$75 an hour to keep the Community Center open to extend play times.

CM Dewey said the Council would have liked Park & Planning to be more accommodating about extending the hours but believes this is the best deal to be had. Mayor Isler said he is proud to sign the agreement, which continues to give the Men's League access to the Community Center gym and recognizes the League as an official Town organization. The League is an example of what a community organization should be. Men's League president Jim McGinnis said that the League has been operating for over 40 years. He thanked the Council and TM Broadbent for their efforts in renewing the agreement and making it possible to continue to play.

CM Dewey moved and MPT Papanikolas seconded to adopt the Resolution and approve the agreement. The motion passed 4 to 0.

9. Citizen Comments

There were none.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk