



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Town Meeting June 12, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Calvo, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Wilkinson, CMs Almoguera, Dennison, and Kulpa-Eddy. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Murphy, Chief of Police Antolik, Treasurer Lape, ATHA Executive Director Aaron Marcavitch and citizens. Clerk Harper had an excused absence.

Mayor Calvo led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### 1. Minutes

TA Murphy read a summary of the May 8 Town meeting minutes. On a motion by MPT Wilkinson and second by CM Dennison, the minutes were approved 5 to 0.

### 2. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Lape gave the Treasurer's report for the month of May.

### 3. Mayor's Report

Mayor Calvo gave an overview of the Council's summer agenda. The engineering of sidewalks is moving forward slowly; Greenbelt Station is poised to commence construction; a significant rewriting of Ordinance No. 118 – Roads & Rights of Way is under way; different options for the engineering of emergency generators, including solar backup batteries, are being prepared; a decision by the Council to extend the hours for school zones and designate a part of 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue as a school zone are being reviewed by the Town attorney for implementation; the old computer room in the Senior Center is being renovated; and a memorandum of understanding with Prince George's County regarding on street parking of commercial vehicles is planned.

Mayor Calvo continued that Pepco has confirmed that it will plant holly trees along the east side of Edmonston Road this fall to complete the restoration of the buffer zone. The Prince George's County Municipal Association (PGCMA) recently amended its bylaws to establish a non-profit education fund to replace the old scholarship fund. Mayor Calvo was elected as the chair. He was also re-elected to the PGCMA Board of Directors.

During the last month, Mayor Calvo visited with the Berwyn Heights Elementary School 4<sup>th</sup> graders to guide them through the annual "If I Were Mayor" essay contest. He also had the honor to give the 6<sup>th</sup> grade commencement address. The promotion ceremony was organized by

teacher Bret Goldstein, capped by a photo shoot in the school's new peace garden. The peace garden, which was finished this spring with a patio and benches, has become a favorite spot for students, and an ideal place for school related celebrations.

Mayor Calvo read the winning "If I Were Mayor" essay by Julia Groen. She wrote:

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If I were Mayor I would bring the arts to Berwyn Heights by doing these things to improve Berwyn Heights and other communities surrounding it. Every first Saturday in July, I would host an arts festival to learn, teach and donate [to] the arts. It would be free to learn, but you would have to have the Mayor's approval to teach. There would also be a place where you could donate your work to either a charity or a raffle, which would cost: a dollar. Also, there would be sale of professional work, and the supplies needed for some activities. There would also be a performance for anyone that participated in certain classes could be in. There would be regular classes for kids and adults, beginning and advanced. Also, I would create Skype accounts so that people could get answers when they need them. Sometimes though, I would have normal sales to fund the classes and to pay the people managing the Skype accounts. And every now and then I would have performances for fun. And, there would occasionally be clinics for some stuff. If I were Mayor, I would do these few things to make Berwyn Heights and other communities surrounding it a kinder, more creative and musical place to live.

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Mayor Calvo noted that there were 3 worthy runners-up in the contest: Michelle Garcia wrote an essay on composting; Nichole Montero wrote an essay on how to fix up the Town's ball fields; and Alexander Swisdak wrote an essay on beautification.

Mayor Calvo said that he spoke with Principal Singer and agreed to meet with PGCPs maintenance personnel about maintaining the school grounds. Lastly, on behalf of the Council, he sent condolences to the Rojas family on the death of Manuel Rojas of Ruatan Street, and congratulated the Denali-Bronto Family of Edmonston Road on the birth of a daughter.

#### **4. Department Reports**

**Administration:** CM Almoguera reported that the FY 2013 audit has started and the renovation of the old media center/library is in progress. When completed, the Town will have another meeting room for Town organizations to use. The demolition of Pop's Park will be finished by the end of this week. Next week, she will meet with the vendor to set a date for installation. The completion of the new playground will be celebrated with a grand opening and family potluck.

**Code Compliance:** CM Kulpa-Eddy announced that tipping day is scheduled for June 27. Residents can dispose of yard sale leftovers, bulk trash and appliances for free. However, hazardous materials such as paints, solvents, batteries, empty propane and helium tanks, insecticides and other poisons are not accepted. Residents may take those to the Brown Station landfill, which has a free hazardous waste drive-through. It is open from 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Thursday – Saturday. Seniors and handicapped persons can schedule an at home pickup of hazardous materials by calling 301-883-5045. Medications also require special handling. They should be crushed and mixed with sand or a similar substance before throwing them in the trash, or they can be returned to CVS and certain other pharmacies for disposal.

**Parks and Recreation:** CM Dennison reported that Prince George's County Public Schools closed on June 7 for summer vacation. Greenbelt Middle School successfully completed its first year in the new building. She also noted that the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner will take place on June 19 and that longtime resident Edna Waters died at age 102. A funeral service will be held on Friday.

**Public Safety:** Chief Antolik gave the police activities report for May. There were 6 Part I offenses, which is slightly below the 5-year average of 6.1. The year-to-date total is 24, well below the 5-year average of 34.6. Speed camera citations for May totaled 398, with 73 issued in the 5900 block of Pontiac Street, 109 in the 6200 block of Pontiac Street and 216 on Greenbelt Road. In addition, 211 citations were issued in May, of which 91 were State citations and 44 Town citations. This is slightly above the previous month's totals. Chief Antolik concluded by thanking TA Murphy for helping with the application for a COPS grant, which funds part of an officer's salary for his first 3 years of service. In this case, the grant would help fund the 9<sup>th</sup> officer position the Council eliminated in the FY 2014 budget, and to maintain a fully staffed police department.

Mayor Calvo commented that citations for May, with 1.5 citations issued per 10-hour shift, are low. Chief Antolik replied ticket writing often depends on circumstances including other calls for service and the weather. CM Kulpa-Eddy noted that 57 warnings were also issued, which should probably be taken into account when computing the citation average.

**Public Works:** MPT Wilkinson reported that drivers should be on the lookout for children playing in the street with school out for the summer. The announcement for the Safe Routes to School grants has been postponed to the end of June. The street sweeper will be in Berwyn Heights from July 8 – 19, and will be inspected prior to use. The Boys & Girls Club is getting ready to install a new pad for a storage shed on the Pontiac Street field. Public Works has been assisting the Club. Public Works was also busy with the demolition of the old media center and Pops Park playground, saving the Town money on hiring contractors. June 27 is tipping day when Public Works will collect bulk trash after the Town-wide yard sale and take it to the landfill free of charge. It will also collect regular trash for the entire Town and drop south side trash collection on Friday. The next electronics recycling day is on July 27 and residents can drop off their old electronics equipment at the Berwyn Heights Public Works yard the week prior.

MPT Wilkinson continued that he and Greenbelt's Mayor Pro Tem Emmett Jordan founded a new organization during the MML conference: the informal association of mayor pro tems, vice mayors and deputy mayors (IAMPTDMVM), which will meet sometime in the next few months. Former Councilmember Tom Reynolds assisted in compiling the list of deputy mayors for Maryland municipalities. Further, Berwyn Heights will host the next Four Cities meeting on July 24 at which the Purple Line outreach team will make a presentation.

## **6. Committee Reports**

**Historical Committee:** No report.

**Green Team:** No report.

**Neighborhood Watch/ Neighborhood Preparedness:** CM Kulpa-Eddy announced that the NW/EP will hold its next meeting on July 3, and will continue to plan for National Night Out.

**Parks and Recreation, Education and Civic Affairs:** CM Dennison announced that the Town-wide yard sale will be held on June 22.

## **5. Presentation**

**ATHA update:** Executive Director of the Anacostia Trails Heritage Association (ATHA) Aaron Marcavitch was present to give an update on the Maryland Milestones and ATHA program. This is done as part of an annual visit to all ATHA member communities to explain how their membership dollars are spent.

Mr. Marcavitch said, currently, ATHA activities are focused on the War of 1812, and next year will be a big year. One of the many planned activities is a parade of small tall ships on the Potomac River starting at Fort Washington in September. If any ATHA community has an idea for an event or program related to the War of 1812, ATHA can help finance it with grants between \$500 - \$1,000.

Beyond the War of 1812 programming, ATHA is planning to promote bicycle tourism in connection with the extension of the Anacostia trail system into D.C. When the trails are finished, Washington will have one of the largest urban hiker/biker systems in the country. Among the plans to increase use and usability of the trail system, is an expansion of a bike share program based on the College Park model to include other ATHA communities. In addition, way-finding tools and an index of services available are being developed for the Anacostia trails. Over the longer term, there are plans to establish a campus at which students will be trained to work as bicycle tour guides and take tourists to interesting destinations.

ATHA is also working with the University of Maryland to better connect those who work and study there with the surrounding communities. Berwyn Heights is well situated to be a part of these programs and become a destination for bicyclists. ATHA continues to promote and support events taking place in ATHA communities, such as Berwyn Heights Day. They are publicized with social media, which recently has begun to generate inquiries from abroad.

Mayor Calvo commented that ATHA could be an excellent vehicle to introduce people, who may have a negative image of Prince George's County, to this area. The promotion of places and events that can be accessed by the trails is a great service. One of the upcoming events that would benefit from ATHA publicity is the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Lake Artemesia concert planned for September 21. Last year's concert by the Susan Jones Jazz Ensemble was very well received and drew many people who happened to be in the area.

Mayor Calvo noted that Berwyn Heights missed out on the ATHA signage program, and was not listed as a member community when the signs were first posted. He hopes this might be corrected in the future. He further suggested that the possible relocation of the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt Station presents a great opportunity to rebrand the area and give it an economic boost.

Mr. Marcavitch replied he will make sure that the Lake Artemesia concert is advertised on ATHA's website and through e-blasts. ATHA can make funds available to support it, if needed.

He agreed that the FBI headquarters relocation would present a great opportunity. When the trails connect to Greenbelt Station, bicyclists can ride all the way from the D.C. waterfront to Greenbelt and take the Metro back. Since becoming ATHA's executive director, he has led an effort to rejuvenate the organization's image and lead it into a new direction. The *Maryland Milestones* slogan was adopted to reflect the new direction and discard old stereotypes of Prince George's County. As part of the re-branding, new and better signage will be created. It will show how to get from one place to another and it will include Berwyn Heights.

Further, ATHA has plans to add old Bowie to the heritage area with a transportation theme. This, too, will need to be reflected in new ATHA maps and signage. Another concept ATHA is exploring is the creation of a parks district that would include the communities of Berwyn Heights, College Park, University Park and Greenbelt with a trail connection to Greenbelt National Park and its camp site.

Mayor Calvo said that he likes the parks district idea. Berwyn Heights is in the process of adding sidewalks to the streets that people could use to get from the Indian Creek trail to Greenbelt Park, and SHA has recently improved the pedestrian crossing at Kenilworth Avenue and Pontiac Street. However, a better trail from Westchester Park into Greenbelt Park may have to be built. Mr. Marcavitch thought that there is money available to implement the concept, and he is happy to meet with the Council to discuss it further.

In response to CM Almoguera, Mr. Marcavitch said that a schedule for War of 1812 events, including the "small talls" parade, can be found at the Prince George's War of 1812 website and at [www.MarylandMilestones.org](http://www.MarylandMilestones.org), where one can sign up for e-blasts. In response to MPT Wilkinson, Mr. Marcavitch said that the best way to bike to Franklin's restaurant and brewery from Berwyn Heights, is to use the Indian Creek trail to Riverdale Road, then go on Riverdale Road to the Town Center and from there use the old trolley trail, which should be completed by this fall. Mayor Calvo added one can also bike to Edmonston, and then use Decatur Street to get to Franklin's. He thanked Mr. Marcavitch for the update.

## **6. Unfinished Business**

***Ordinance No. 162 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading & Adoption of FY 2013 Town Budget Amendments:*** TA Murphy read the Ordinance. MPT Wilkinson moved to adopt it. CM Dennison seconded. Mayor Calvo gave an overview of the budget amendments. He said most of the changes deal with distributing \$24,000 in merit increases to the departmental budgets. The largest change is the addition of \$91,000 in grant money to the PRECA budget for the Pop's Park renovation. However, this should be added to the capital budget instead. Other changes were made in the reserves and the capital budgets to pay for cost overruns in Town Center renovations, BHTV upgrades and Public Works vehicles.

Mayor Calvo asked for a motion to amend Ordinance No. 162 to add the Pop's Park's grant money to the capital operating budget. CM Almoguera so moved. CM Dennison seconded. The motion passed 5 to 0. MPT Wilkinson commented that he has received many positive comments about the improved quality of the TV broadcasts and the renovation of the Council chamber, funded with the PEG cable reserve. The Council voted 5 to 0 to approve the FY 2013 budget amendments.

**Ordinance No. 163 - 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading & Adoption of FY 2013 Public Safety Taxing District Budget Amendments:** TA Murphy read the Ordinance. MPT Wilkinson moved to adopt it. CM Dennison seconded. Mayor Calvo explained that this Ordinance amends the PSTD budget to pay for cost overruns of \$4,800 in outfitting a police vehicle that was purchased last year. The Council voted 5 to 0 to approve the Ordinance.

## **7. New Business**

**Resolution No. 5-2013 – Police Mutual Aid Agreement:** TA Murphy read the Resolution. MPT Wilkinson moved to adopt it. CM Dennison seconded. Mayor Calvo explained that this Resolution formalizes mutual aid arrangements already in existence between the Town of Berwyn Heights and the City of Greenbelt, whose police officers jointly patrol Greenbelt Road and back each other up when needed. Berwyn Heights also has a cooperative relationship with the Town of Edmonston, where 2 former Berwyn Heights officers now work, in fire arms training and other areas. Initially, the agreement was planned to be county-wide, but the Council thought it was better to start small and see how it works. The Resolution adds a provision that requires Chief Antolik to report whenever police assistance is given or received. This should give the Council a sense of how often it occurs.

Chief Antolik commented that he is pleased the Council is adopting this agreement, which he proposed, and thinks it is great way to share police resources. With no further comments, the Council voted 5 to 0 to adopt the agreement.

## **8. Citizens Discussion**

Mayor Calvo noted that a severe weather warning has been issued and advised residents to be prepared for a possible power outage. If a large scale power outage occurs, the Town will open an emergency center at the Town Center. MPT Wilkinson advised that people should charge their wireless devices, get gas for their cars and ice for refrigeration before the storm hits.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:39 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*