

# Minutes

## Worksession

### May 2, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, and Councilmember (CM) Maria Robles. CMs Dennison and White were absent with apologies. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

#### **1. Mayor**

**Announcements:** Town Council elections will take place tomorrow. Town employees were appreciated for public servant recognition this week.

**Calendar:** The May 9 budget worksession was cancelled. Free tipping day was taken off the calendar as the County landfill is not holding this day. The first worksession in July was moved to Tuesday, July 5 so as not conflict with Independence Day. The date for National Night Out was corrected to August 2.

**Minutes:** On a motion by MPT Rasmussen and second by CM Robles, the April 4 worksession minutes were approved 3 to 0. On a motion by CM Robles and second by MPT Rasmussen, the April 11 budget worksession minutes were approved 3 to 0.

**Department reports:** CM Robles reported that several residents called in to inquire whether they needed permits to perform work on their property. She encouraged all residents to call the Code Department if they have questions about permits. Ms. Robles also noted that the condemned homes on 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Cunningham Drive have been demolished. Another property on 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue behind the X-Tra gas station is slated to be demolished by the owner, then subdivided and rebuilt. The County approves subdivisions and the Town will also review it if a variance is required.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy stated a burglary that was reported early last month turned out to be the home owner entering his house. The incident was removed from the Part I offenses list. On April 19, the Commercial District Management Authority (CDMA) met and approved the Public Safety Taxing District (PSTD) budget. The meeting was attended by representatives from the County's Economic Development Corporation to brief CDMA members on its activities. The EDC offers many training opportunities, particularly for veterans, high school dropouts and former prisoners.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy continued that she and CM Robles attended District 3 Town Hall & Resource Fair County Councilwoman Dannielle Glaros organized. She learned that Good Luck Road was prioritized for resurfacing and that a Styrofoam ban will go into effect on July 1. CM Robles talked with Ms. Glaros about which non-profits are working with Parkdale High School to improve the school. Collaboration among the Education Advisory Committees of the Four Cities was discussed at the last meeting in New Carrollton and is making progress. Schools are encouraged when residents adopt them as a cause and help out.

Also discussed were Pepco's tree trimming activities. Pepco has been resisting requests from the City

of Greenbelt for maps showing trees on private property, citing privacy concerns. In Berwyn Heights, Pepco tree trimming is still in the planning phase. Concerns were expressed about Pepco's consultants trying to intimidate home owners into removing trees. TA Cowles said that Pepco representatives told her in a meeting last week that they would share only maps of public trees, to which she replied that it is contrary to what was promised earlier. Berwyn Heights would not issue a permit unless complete plans are provided. MPT Rasmussen expressed the opinion that the tree trimming business is evil and that Pepco is hell-bent on destroying as many trees as it can.

MPT Rasmussen asked for information on the improvement of the 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue footpath. TA Cowles said that the footpath is located on a "paper street" and that the Town owns the right of way on both sides of the path, as well property to the west and south of it. She has obtained a quote from a contractor for rebuilding the path and has spoken with an arborist about trees near the path that may pose a safety risk. No trees will be taken down until the Council has had a chance to review the options, including building a retaining wall to prevent erosion. Reconstruction of the foot path might be discussed in the broader context of what the Town wants to do with the property it owns nearby.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that she attended a meeting at the offices of Congressman Steny Hoyer on April 29 regarding the FBI headquarters. An issue has been raised about the number of parking spaces needed at Greenbelt Metro station. The Four Cities are contemplating writing another letter in support of relocating the FBI headquarters to Greenbelt Station. Three developers will be submitting proposals to GSA by June 22, 2016 for all locations currently under consideration. GSA will then make a selection from those proposals. The priority is on security and bringing all FBI offices together at one location. Final environmental impact statements are expected in November 2016.

***Citizen comments:*** Mayor Kulpa-Eddy received comments about speeding, best use of Greenbelt Station money, bicycle wayfinding signs, and communication of snow emergency procedures.

## **2. Administration**

***FY 2017 budget:*** TA Cowles said that there are no changes to the FY 2017 budget since it was introduced. The health insurance costs, which are based on joining the LGIT health cooperative, are final. The Town submitted the initial paperwork to obtain the quote and is ready to join if the Council decides to move forward. LGIT will also provide new dental, vision and life insurance plans. The employees have not raised objections after looking up the new provider's networks. MPT Rasmussen moved and CM Robles seconded to join the LGIT health cooperative, effective July 1. The motion passed 3 to 0.

***FY 2016 budget amendments:*** MPT Rasmussen said that at the end of each fiscal year budgets have to be amended to reconcile appropriations with actual expenses. Salary adjustments, staff changes, capital project overruns and grants that occur throughout the year often require additional funds to be spent or unplanned revenues to be allocated.

TA Cowles explained that on the revenue side, expenses for emergency generators, Safe Routes to School sidewalks and residential property demolitions were originally budgeted in FY 2015 but the money was not spent. The funds were returned to the unrestricted fund balance and then expended in FY 2016. On the expenditure side, additional money was spent in the departmental salary appropriations, on sidewalks, curb and gutter repairs, and a Public Works truck. The Town expects to be reimbursed for a portion of these expenditures from FEMA for snow emergency overtime, and from the State of Maryland for half of the cost of the emergency generators.

In response to questions, TA Cowles said that the compensation for additional hours worked by the Town clerk during the budget season has not been budgeted for FY 2017 because it is difficult to predict how many additional hours will be worked. She expects that approximately \$20,000 of \$50,000 taken from surplus will be returned to the fund balance. Originally, \$35,000 was budgeted for two property demolitions, but the price tag has gone down to \$15,000 because one of the demolitions was paid by the owners. Without further changes, the FY 2016 budget amendments will be introduced at the May Town meeting.

***Pedestrian bridge update:*** TA Cowles said she has been given information that the pedestrian bridge over the Metro tracks will not open until 3 to 4 weeks after installation of the replaced bridge section to finish electric wiring and inspect the completed bridge. There are questions about the integrity of the ramps, and Berwyn Heights and College Park are checking with WMATA for plans they may have for a complete replacement of the bridge. Different options for accessing the bridge have been discussed, including an ADA accessible ramp and elevators.

MPT Rasmussen asked for an update on the 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue flooding problem that was raised by a citizen. After the last rains, a large section of the 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue roadway was under water again. TA Cowles said that the County has begun working with Prince George's municipalities on implementing storm water management projects and best practices. Two storm water mitigation projects in Berwyn Heights have been discussed. The 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue problem may qualify for County funding.

***Bulletin cover:*** The following items were approved for the June Bulletin cover: Yard Sale theme and announcement; end of the school year; and FY 2016 budget amendments adoption.

Nothing was discussed under **3. Code Compliance, 4. Parks and Recreation, and 5. Public Safety.**

## **6. Public Works**

***WSSC projects updates:*** TA Cowles said that several WSSC projects are in progress in Town: The water main replacement project is awaiting completion in early 2017 with a final resurfacing of either half or full width of the disturbed roadways. In addition, a sewer rehabilitation project is taking place along Indian Creek, which is utilizing large pumps for cleanouts. A location near Greenbelt Road is almost complete, with stream restoration and replanting going on now. Further south, pumps have been moved to different locations. Machines and equipment will remain in place through Berwyn Heights Day. TA Cowles was asked to request the contractor to fence off the project site and make the area safe for fun runners. She will also look into redirecting the fun run to avoid the slatted planks behind the hockey rink.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked if TA Cowles has information about a Washington Gas project on Swarthmore Avenue that left behind a bad temporary patch. TA Cowles will try to speak with the contractors and find out.

***Green Team appointment:*** TA Cowles said the Green Team has requested the Council to appoint resident Amanda Dewey as a new member. She has been volunteering for the Green Team since September 2015. She has brought new ideas and recently organized a successful built-a-bat-house event in February. In response to MPT Rasmussen, TA Cowles said that the Council appoints members for committees that were established by Council resolution. The Recreation Council operates in

accordance with its own ordinance. The Council may at some point want to review the authorizing resolutions and bylaws for the committees to ensure they are all treated the same. On a motion by CM Robles, and second by MPT Rasmussen, the Council approved the appointment 3 to 0.

In response to CM Robles, TA Cowles said that the new website is expected to go live next week but adjustments will continue to be made until June. For the transition period the current Town and police websites will continue to operate. Thereafter, visitors will be redirected to the new website.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

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Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk