



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Stephen D. Isler

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)
Amanda M. Dewey
Jeffrey Jay Osmond
Ethan D. Sweep

Draft Worksession Minutes March 4, 2019 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Jeffrey Osmond and Ethan Sweep. Also present were Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent, Treasurer Michelle Rodriguez, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Detective Daniel Unger, Beltway Plaza Representatives Matthew Tedesco and Matt Leikan and citizens.

1. Announcements

The Beltway Plaza redevelopment was moved to the top of the agenda.

2. Presentations

Beltway Plaza redevelopment update: Mayor Isler welcomed Matthew Tedesco, Land Use Attorney with McNamee & Hosea, and Matt Leikan with Rodgers Consultants, for an update on the plans to redevelop Beltway Plaza. Mr. Tedesco said the Beltway Plaza conceptual site plan (CSP 18010) is scheduled for a Planning Board public hearing on March 14 in Upper Marlboro and is posted on their [website](#). The most important changes to the plan since the last meeting with this Council is the inclusion of multi-family housing and streetscaping along Greenbelt Road in Phase 1 of the redevelopment. This was done in response to input from the City of Greenbelt and the Town of Berwyn Heights. The developers hope to have the support of the municipalities as the plan goes through the approval process.

Mr. Leikan discussed the details of the concept plan pertaining to Phase I of the redevelopment. The plan would create a residential transition zone in the back of the mall along Breezewood Drive consisting of 175-250 two-family and single-family town houses as well 100-500 multi-family dwelling units with a variety of ownership types. The buildings will be interspersed with pocket parks, a large common area (approximately the length of a football field), mews, sidewalks and trail connections. The existing ring road would be improved with sidewalks and on-street parking and help the mall to continue to function while the property is being redeveloped. In response to input from the City of Greenbelt, the residential dwellings were redesigned in a more modernist style to reflect Greenbelt's Art Deco roots. Additionally, the streetscapes of Greenbelt Road and Breezewood Drive will be redesigned to make them more attractive and pedestrian friendly and to allow for better access into the site.

In response to questions, Mr. Leikan said the amount of green space, which was deemed inadequate by Greenbelt and Berwyn Heights, is typical for a development of this type and implements the relatively rigorous stormwater management requirements of the State of Maryland. Most green space will be combined into common areas, while individual homeowners would have only small green areas. The development, if built out to full extent, could raise around \$25 million in school fees, but the developers

have no control over where students would go to school or where a school might be located. A conceptual stormwater management plan that complies with existing regulations has already been approved. Specifics will not be determined until soils have been tested and detailed site plan (DSP) is drawn up.

Mr. Tedesco added, normally, a concept plan is not required for a Mixed-Use Infill (MUI) development, but it was done here because the project is very large and will proceed in multiple phases over many years. This means that many details that will be addressed in a DSP are not yet decided.

Mr. Leikan noted the developers organized a field trip for councilmembers and citizens to have a look at Kentlands, Bethesda Row and Pike & Rose in Montgomery County, which serve as models for the future Beltway Plaza. These life style centers integrate residential with commercial and entertainment uses to create a living neighborhood. They helped spark the New Urbanist movement that is presently reshaping cities and suburbs.

There ensued more discussion about the role of residential areas in sustaining a commercial center/ mall; the projected prices and ownership types of the dwelling units in the residential transition zone; and the stormwater management facilities proposed for the site. Lastly, Mr. Tedesco provided a timeline for the implementation of Phase I. Construction cannot begin until the concept plan, a preliminary plan of subdivision and a detailed site plan have been approved, a process that is likely to take at least 2 years.

3. Discussion Items

FY 2020 budget enhancements: The Council reviewed a list of FY 2020 budget enhancements proposed by the department directors at the February 4 and 19 worksessions to identify those enhancements that should be included in the proposed budget. The total of all enhancements on the list is \$692,000, including alternative options for some items. The anticipated increase in in real and personal property revenues for FY2020 is about \$100,000. due to an increased valuation in real property. This assumes the current tax rate of 53 cents per \$100 of assessed real property value is maintained.

For the discussion of the Police Department's budget, Chief Antolik and Detective Unger were present. The Council had requested information about the recommended number of police per capita for Berwyn Heights. TM Broadbent said that Berwyn Heights is in line with the State of Maryland per capita average for a police force, which includes civilian employees. The Council identified the following enhancements for funding in the FY 2020 budget:

Public Safety:

- + \$4,200 for 1 solar-powered speed monitoring sign, as opposed over a less expensive battery powered sign. This solar-powered monitor is longer-lasting, has lower maintenance costs, and has a 2-year warranty.
- + \$618 for 2 mini hand-held radar units.
- + \$115,000 for an additional experienced officer, if there are sufficient funds. The officer package includes a vehicle (\$44,200), uniform allowance (\$1,500), overtime (\$5,000) and shift differential (\$4,000) for that officer. A 9th officer allows for two officers to be on duty per shift. They would be able to back each other up when necessary, and one could remain on patrol if the other has to travel out of town when an arrest has been made.
- + \$44,200 for a police vehicle to replace an older vehicle. Several older vehicles in the fleet are incurring high maintenance costs. It is recommended that a reserve fund to replace police vehicles be established. If a choice had to be made between a replacement vehicle and an additional officer, Chief Antolik would choose the officer. The Council concurred.
- + \$11,500 for 3 police officer promotions, 1 Lieutenant and 2 Corporals.

Code Compliance:

- + \$1,000 for a 3rd iPad so each code officer can have his own. The tablets using Comcate software will play a more central role in managing code compliance cases.

Public Works:

- + \$15,000 for vehicle repairs. This item was reduced from \$30,000 in the expectation that the cost of repairs will decline with the replacement of the older trucks.
- + \$6,000 for tipping fees, which have been underfunded in recent years. It was noted that the Town does not have an enterprise fund to pay for the cost of disposing refuse and recyclables.
- + \$218,000 for road improvements, including a cul-de-sac in the 8300 block of 58th Avenue. Road projects are financed from an infrastructure reserve replenished by Highway User Revenues estimated to come in at \$140,000 and a 3-cent road tax of approximately \$80,000. Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, suggested the Town focus on asphalt work as opposed to concrete work for the next road improvement project. TM Broadbent replied the Town will rely on the Public Works Director's experience and judgment as to what is needed to bring a road up to standard. Meg Miller Shane, 57th Avenue commented, she trusts the Town to make the right decision regarding road repairs.
- + \$5,000 for replacing gutters and soffits at the Public Works garage.
- + \$2,000 for landscaping supplies.
- + \$10,000 in Urban Forest expenditures to continue the Town's tree planting and maintenance program.
- + \$10,000 for welcome signs, proposed by the Quality of Life Commission. This figure is a placeholder until the Council decides what type welcome signs it wants.
- + \$58,000 for new recycling bins and truck-mounted mechanical tippers. This figure may change as it is proposed to purchase some equipment from the FY 2019 budget.
- + \$18,000 for temporary labor at 20 hours/ per week to assist with leaf collection and other seasonal work.

Administration:

- + \$8,240 for reorganizing administrative staff.
- + \$8,000 for replacing carpets in Town Office.
- + \$6,000 for establishing a vacation leave payout reserve. This assumes a change in the policy for carrying over leave from one year to the next.
- + \$2,000 for scanning and preserving documents. This figure would fund a portion of creating an electronic archive.

Reserves:

- + \$106,215 transfer to maintain the vehicle replacement reserve fund.

COLA/Merit Increases

- + up to 39,750 for a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) between 1% and 3%. In addition, the Town has traditionally awarded a merit increase based on employees' annual performance evaluations. Alternatively, the Town could pay a higher COLA and no merit increases, or promote employees based on a system of step increases within a pay grade, followed by the federal government and some municipalities.

In discussion, CM Osmond said he does not like a cookie cutter system and would prefer a system that rewards performance. TM Broadbent said there are pluses and minuses in each approach. A performance-based pay increase system tends to leave behind those employees that need to be motivated and can create an increasing salary gap between employees doing the same work. The Council agreed to include a 2% COLA, with additional merit increases to be decided at a future worksession.

4. Minutes

On a motion by CM Sweep, seconded by CM Dewey, the February 4 worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0. The February 13 Town meeting minutes were reviewed to be approved at the March 13 Town meeting.

5. Department Reports

CM Dewey said she put out a call for volunteers to serve on the Education Advisory Committee and just received a couple of emails by interested residents. CM Dewey attended a school infrastructure meeting at Berwyn Heights Elementary School hosted by County Councilmember Danielle Glaros. Ms. Glaros discussed school overcrowding and PGCPs' capital improvement plan. CM Dewey also announced upcoming events, including the monthly Town cleanup on March 16, a St. Patrick's Day potluck hosted by the Seniors, and a raingarden replanting picnic on March 30.

TM Broadbent requested that residents refrain from including plastic bags among their recyclables because it can lead to the rejection of a load by the County's Materials Recycling Facility. Plastic bags and film of any type cause the facility's sorting machines to malfunction. The Town plans an education campaign on this issue and may soon put stickers on recycling bins saying they won't be picked up if they have plastic bags in the mix.

6. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the upcoming Town Council calendar.

7. Citizens Discussion

Phil Ventura, 57th Avenue, commented on lights being left on overnight in the second floor of the Town Center.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:36 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk