



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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## Minutes Worksession July 6, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, and Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison and Anthony Schreiber. Also present was Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Clerk Kerstin Harper and interviewees Cheryl Jewitt, Maria Robles, Gerald Shields, and Lynn White, and resident Jeff Gourley

**1. Town Council vacancy interviews:** Mayor Kulpa-Eddy announced that this meeting will begin with interviews of the 4 residents who applied for the Town Council vacancy: Cheryl Jewitt, Maria Robles, Gerald Shields and Lynn White. The interviews will take place in closed session, with each candidate being allotted 1/2 hour and asked the same set of questions.

### 2. Executive Session

At 6:35 p.m., CM Dennison moved and MPT Rasmussen seconded to go into executive session. The motion passed 4 to 0. With interviews completed, CM Dennison moved and MPT Rasmussen seconded to end the executive session at 8:27 p.m.

### 3. Mayor

**Announcements:** Charles Hall, a long-time resident and valued Town employee, passed away on June 29, 2015. Fellow employees took the opportunity to say good bye at a subsequent memorial service and offer sympathies to his wife and children.

**Calendar:** The date for the first worksession in September was set for September 8.

**Minutes:** On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Schreiber, the June 15 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0. The June 10 Town meeting minutes were distributed.

MPT Rasmussen commented that proofreading minutes is a terrible use of the Council's time. He proposed Councilmembers be sent the minutes ahead of time to make edits, which would be incorporated into the minutes that will be approved at the upcoming worksession. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said a similar process is followed for the editing of Town meeting minutes and merits further discussion.

**Department reports:** Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that the Administration Department was busy planning

the July 10 reception for former Mayor Calvo in honor of his service. The Prince George's County Planning Department is holding a zoning rewrite public meeting entitled "Know Your Neighborhood" on July 25 at the Sports & Learning Complex to explain what zoning regulations are currently in place. A follow-up meeting entitled "Build Your Neighborhood" is scheduled for September 17, 7 p.m. at the Sports & Learning Complex, when citizens can give input on future zoning regulations. Further, Prince George's County Police have been performing some targeted actions in the Town. The Berwyn Heights Police Department has been informed and is working with County Police in the ongoing investigation.

MPT Rasmussen expressed his sympathies to the family of Charlie Hall, who postponed his retirement to help lead the Code Compliance Department through the periods when the Code Supervisor position was vacant. He had a lot of institutional knowledge and was able to maintain a cooperative relationship with homeowners while performing code duties. Code Officer Keelah Allen Smith attended the MML conference and helped serve at the Maryland Code and Zoning Officials Association exhibit.

CM Dennison reported that participation in the Town-wide yard sale was up this year, which resulted in a big tipping day. The Susan Jones Quartet jazz concert will be held this Thursday.

**Citizen comments:** Mayor Kulpa-Eddy received a comment on a code matter, which she forwarded to TA Cowles and Code Supervisor Glass.

At 8:50 p.m., the Council took a 5 minute break.

#### **4. Administration**

**Sidewalks update:** TA Cowles shared the good news that SHA fully funded the Town's request for an additional \$31,000 to pay for construction management services of the Safe Routes to School sidewalks on the 8900 block of 63rd Avenue. Further, Director Lockley has provided updated cost estimates for repairing curbs, gutters and sidewalks around the Town, beyond what is specified in the E&R Priority 1 sidewalks contract, to take advantage of E&R's exceptional unit prices for concrete work.

There are a total of 762' of curbs and gutters that need repairs at a cost of no more than \$19,000, some of which could be covered by the budget for the current sidewalks contract. The proposed curb and gutter repairs would occur on streets that are scheduled for resurfacing within the next 3 to 8 years. There are also a number of places that require repairs to aging sidewalks, which would cost an additional \$19,000. Those sinking and cracked sidewalks are mostly found on Pontiac Street, but a substantial portion are on Ballew Avenue where tree roots have lifted some sections of the sidewalk and pose a tripping hazard. This would cost up to \$6,700 to correct. A shifting driveway apron on Ruatan Street, which is the Town's responsibility, would cost an added \$660 to replace.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that she would make the Pontiac Street sidewalks a priority because many children walk to school along this route. She would also repair the driveway apron on Ruatan Street because it is inexpensive, but questioned whether this was really the Town's responsibility. She asked why the concrete work at 57th Avenue and Osage Street is not included, as the Council has previously agreed that it is a priority. TA Cowles will check whether this project has already been addressed and financed from the Public Works budget. She will also seek to confirm that the broken sidewalks panels on Pontiac Street can be replaced in kind, and do not fall under the new 5' wide sidewalk requirement for ADA compliance.

MPT Rasmussen sought clarification that all Pontiac Street sidewalks in need of repairs were

constructed at the same time. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy thought they were probably constructed when SHA turned over upgraded former State highways Pontiac Street and 58th Avenue to the Town in the mid-1980s. MPT Rasmussen suggested that it may be worth finding out what percentage of the total length of sidewalks the broken panels represent, and consider whether it is prudent to replace all with new ADA compliant 5' sidewalks. TA Cowles will look into it.

The Council expressed reservations about repairing the Ballew Avenue sidewalks because there is not much pedestrian traffic, and the curbs and gutters on Seminole, Ruatan and Quebec Streets if there is no structural reason other than these streets would be next in line for resurfacing. TA Cowles was asked to provide the additional information requested so that a decision can be made at the next worksession.

**Performance evaluations:** TA Cowles said she drafted a revised memorandum outlining the performance evaluation process. Department directors have already been given the draft memo and evaluation forms for completion of employees' evaluations by July 31. The employee evaluations will then be reviewed by the department heads/ councilmembers to be finalized by the end of August. The evaluations for department directors this year will be drafted by the Town Administrator and finalized in discussions with the Council. It is a slightly different process than in the past and conforms with the recently passed Ordinance 121 - Executive Powers & Duties. In other respects, the process follows previous practices. However, the evaluation process is likely to change more substantially next year after personnel consultants have had a look at it.

In response to CM Schreiber, TA Cowles said that she will assist Code Supervisor Glass in drafting the evaluations for his staff. MPT Rasmussen will also be able to provide input. Her own evaluation will be prepared by the Department Head for Administration with assistance from the Mayor and finalized by the Council during an executive session, as will all director and supervisor evaluations.

**Bulletin cover:** The following items were approved for the August Bulletin cover: National Night Out theme; headlines for National Night Out and Back to School and a jump for CERT training class. MPT Rasmussen proposed to keep Bulletin cover decisions off the Council agenda and empower the Town Administrator to approve the cover. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy disagreed as there may sometimes be news only the Council is aware of and wants to put on the cover.

Nothing was discussed under **5. Code Compliance, 6. Parks & Recreation, 7. Public Safety, and 8. Public Works.**

#### **9. Executive Session (9:36 p.m. -10:55 p.m.)**

CM Dennison moved and CM Schreiber seconded to go into executive session to select a candidate to fill the vacant Council seat. With the decision made, CM Dennison moved and CM Schreiber seconded to end the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk*