



# Town of Berwyn Heights

5700 Berwyn Road  
Berwyn Heights, MD 20740  
Tel. (301) 474-5000  
Fax (301) 474-5002

## Minutes Worksession May 1, 2017

### **Executive Session (6:33 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)**

On a motion by CM Dennison and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the four Councilmembers present went into executive session to begin discussion of a real property issue. The Executive Session was suspended at 7:00 pm to begin the regular meeting.

### **Regular Meeting**

The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy and Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. CM Shields arrived at 7:40 p.m. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Clerk Kerstin Harper, and Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Co-Chairs Mike Attick and Merrill Weinrich.

#### **1. Announcements**

The Council did not complete deliberations on the real property matter discussed in executive session and will go back into executive session after the meeting. CM Shields will arrive late because he is attending a principal selection meeting at Berwyn Heights Elementary School. Mayor Jewitt will not be able to attend the May 15 worksession. MPT Kulpa-Eddy will chair that meeting.

#### **2. Action Items**

***Agreement with Joe's Movement Emporium:*** TA Cowles said that Joe's Movement Emporium has signed the draft agreement that incorporated several changes and clarifications requested by the Town Council. The agreement has been reviewed by the Town Attorney. Under the agreement, Joe's Movement Emporium is granted use of the Town's leased call-a-bus between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m., Monday – Friday to transport students to afternoon dance and movement enrichment activities. Joe's Movement will pay the Town \$40 per day or \$800 per month for the use of the bus and provide the insured bus driver. The bus remains insured under the Town's general liability insurance and the Town will pay for gas and maintenance. Traffic violations will be the responsibility of Joe's Movement Emporium.

After further clarifications, the Council agreed to place the agreement on the Town meeting agenda for adoption.

***Update to speed camera agreement with OptoTraffic:*** TA Cowles explained that State law has changed

since the Town signed an agreement with OptoTraffic in March 2010 to provide speed camera monitoring services. This requires an amendment of the agreement. Speed camera vendors may no longer collect a percentage of speed camera revenue, but must charge a flat fee. OptoTraffic is proposing a \$12 lookup fee per speed camera ticket, or about 30% of a \$40 ticket. This results in approximately the same amount of revenue as under the old percentage system, where the Town received 61% and OptoTraffic 39% of speed camera ticket revenue.

In response to questions, TA Cowles said a lookup fee is when a Berwyn Heights police officer reviews a speeding violation identified by the speed camera, which includes verifying tags and owner address information through the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA), and issues a ticket. The Town would also be charged for a lookup that does not result in a violation, or for a violation issued in error. TA Cowles will contact OptoTraffic to find out how many lookups occur without a ticket being issued. She will provide the information before the Council adopts the amended agreement at the May 10 Town meeting. The new policy must be in effect by June 1 per State law.

### 3. Discussion Items

***FY 2017 Budget amendment:*** TA Cowles reviewed the amendments to the FY 2017 budget, which must be introduced at the May 10 Town meeting. The budget amendments reconcile actual expenditures with appropriations. The following reconciliations are necessary:

- +\$2,000 “Metes and Bounds” Survey for Charter amendment on Town boundaries
- +\$20,000 Public works vehicle repairs
- +\$8,000 Animal Shelter contribution
- +\$8,000 Employee pay plan adjustments funded from closed HRA
- +19,000 Police vehicle replacement
- +31,000 Replacement of two Town Center air conditioning units

Despite overages in some line items, all departments are coming in under budget.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy said the Council first appropriated \$10,000 for an animal shelter feasibility study in FY 2015, but no funds were spent until this year when the Town received and paid a bill for \$8,000. The feasibility study is now underway and the County has budgeted \$7 million for a North County animal shelter in FY 2018.

***FY 2018 General Fund and PSTD budgets:*** TA Cowles provided additional information requested by the Council on the FY 2018 budget: 1) a list of studies and consultants used since FY 2015; and 2) a comparative spreadsheet of FY 2017 tax rates for Maryland’s counties and municipalities.

In response to questions, TA Cowles said that she has good data on the 7 studies that occurred since she was hired in 2014, but cannot speak knowledgeably to studies prior to that. She offered to look into any specific issue the Council thinks may have been studied. MPT Kulpa-Eddy added that the Council was frugal during the years of the economic recession, and did not spend much money on studies. The Council did appropriate \$30,000 for an economic development study starting in FY 2015, and re-appropriated the funds in subsequent fiscal years, but did not spend them.

Public Works Director Cox provided a memorandum on staffing in his department in response to questions raised by MPT Kulpa-Eddy. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said she was concerned about overages in the “temporary help” and salary line items because these may be an indicator that the staffing level is inadequate. Her concerns have been allayed by the information provided. Overages were due to vacancies in several positions, Town-wide pay rate adjustments and an overlap in director salaries.

**Neighborhood Watch/Emergency Preparedness:** Mayor Jewitt welcomed NW/EP chairs Mike Attick and Merrill Weinrich to discuss the standard operating procedures (SOP) for the emergency trailer drafted by the Committee, and other matters. Mike Attick said the NW/EP prefers to rename the SOP “standard operating guidelines,” (a less binding set of rules) and that the Town make any additional changes necessary. He then sought to clarify NW/EP members’ role in moving the trailer to the location where it is needed in an emergency. Currently, the trailer is towed by Public Works trucks, which may only be driven by Town employees, who are covered by the Town’s insurance.

Mayor Jewitt replied this is not likely to change, as the Town’s insurance covers only Town employees, but not civilian volunteers. She also expressed concerns about the small number of NW/EP volunteers available to respond in an emergency. These issues will be discussed in greater detail at the June 5 worksession. Mr. Attick also asked questions about the fluctuations in the trailer reserve, obtaining official IDs for NW/EP members, and a \$1,000 donation for Greenbelt’s Community Animal Response Team (CART).

#### **4. Minutes**

On a motion by CM Rasmussen and second by MPT Kulpa-Eddy, the April 3 worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0.

#### **5. Department Reports/ Citizen Comments**

Mayor Jewitt reported on an April 18 meeting with the Commercial District Management Authority (CDMA), which was attended by 4 Town business, 2 Councilmembers and staff. A good conversation ensued about communication and collaboration with the business community. The Public Safety Taxing District tax rates were approved. The Council attended an April 26 Four Cities meeting, at which Delegate Washington gave an update on his accomplishments, former College Park Mayor Andrew Fellows spoke about green initiatives, Greenbelt informed about a proposed cell tower at Eleanor Roosevelt High School, and the Four Cities members discussed the replacement of a jointly-owned street sweeper. Mayor Jewitt will meet with Greenbelt’s Mayor Emmet Jordan to discuss a joint letter asking SHA to conduct noise tests for a sound barrier along Kenilworth Avenue. Lastly, she received a couple of comments on relocating the police department.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she attended an April 25 PGCMA meeting in Upper Marlboro, at which County Executive Baker gave a presentation on his proposed budget and an update on the FBI headquarters relocation. A decision is on hold until a new GSA Administrator has been appointed. She also obtained information on the status of municipal tax differentials. At County Councilmember Glaros Town Hall on April 26, the topics of County Council legislative priorities, the PGC zoning rewrite, and County budget hearings were discussed. The Town Council received a comment asking that Town taxes not be raised.

CM Rasmussen asked whether the Town “citizens of the year” would be grand marshals in the Berwyn Heights Day parade. Mayor Jewitt will reach out to them. CM Shields reported on the PTA meeting he attended, at which the process for selecting a new principal was discussed. Dr. Singer, the current principal, is retiring. Prince George’s County Public Schools sent a letter to parents of students attending Berwyn Heights Elementary in April asking them to give input via an online survey by May 9. The survey asks parents to rate qualities they would like to see in the next principal and will be publicized on the Town website. Parents will not be able to sit on a panel selecting the new principal. The selection process is internal and no updates will be published until the School Board makes the

selection.

Mike Attick commented on possible shuttle service during Berwyn Heights Day, ATHA signage, OptoTraffic lookup fees, Greenbelt's use of recycling containers and potential problems with moving and lifting large recycling containers.

6. **Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the calendar for the upcoming month. The Town-wide Cleanup is scheduled for Saturday, May 13.

**Executive Session, continued (9:00 pm – 9:35 pm)**

On a motion by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and second by CM Shields, the Council resumed its executive session discussing a real property matter. With the matter discussed, MPT Kulpa-Eddy moved, and CM Shields seconded to end the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk