



Town of Berwyn Heights

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

Minutes Worksession June 5, 2017

Executive Session (6:45 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

CM Dennison moved and MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded to go into executive session to discuss a real property matter. With the issue discussed, CM Dennison moved and MPT Kulpa-Eddy seconded to close the executive session.

Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, and Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison and Christopher Rasmussen. CM Gerald Shields had an excused absence. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief Kenneth Antolik, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness Co-Chairs Mike Attick and Merrill Weinrich.

1. **Announcements**

The Council held an executive session on a real estate matter prior to the regular meeting.

2. **Action Items**

There were none.

3. **Discussion Items**

Humvee acquisition: The Council discussed an opportunity to acquire a Humvee at no cost that is available through the US Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) from the Harford County Sheriff's Office. Chief Antolik gave a presentation on emergency situations in which a Humvee (High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle) would be useful. He said this type of four-wheel drive vehicle could be used in weather emergencies that occur in this area, such as floods, deep snow, and severe storms, as well as some man-made disasters, when regular patrol vehicles cannot get around. He believes it could be a good tool in the Town's emergency preparedness toolkit, but would not be for regular patrols. Mayor Jewitt noted she approved submitting an application for the vehicle, contingent on the Council's consent.

In discussion, MPT Kulpa-Eddy and CM Rasmussen made the following points opposing the acquisition:

- There is a cost in outfitting, maintaining, fueling and insuring the Humvee;
- An officer would have to be trained to drive it;
- BHPD already has an SUV for driving in severe weather;

- A Humvee has a diesel engine, which does not start up easily in freezing temperatures;
- A Humvee gives the impression of a militarized police force;
- Humvee purchase may raise expectation that it becomes a permanent part of the fleet;
- County Police and National Guard can handle these types of rescue missions.

Mayor Jewitt spoke in favor of the acquisition. She said the Humvee would improve the Town's disaster readiness and make the Town more self-sufficient when having to respond to emergencies. MPT Kulpa-Eddy requested that Chief Antolik provide a risk assessment justifying a Humvee and a cost estimate for insuring, maintaining and detailing the Humvee, based on what has been spent on BHPD's SUV. The Council agreed to postpone a vote on the Humvee acquisition until a risk assessment and a set-up and maintenance cost estimate are at hand.

Greenbelt Station Parkway MOU: TACowles explained that the Town has been working with the Greenbelt Station developers, Prince George's County, and the City of Greenbelt on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the maintenance of that portion of Greenbelt Station Parkway within the Town's corporate boundaries, i.e., between the bridge and Greenbelt Road. Through the MOU, the City of Greenbelt agrees to take on all responsibility for repair and maintenance of the roadway, as well as snow removal operations, recognizing that this would be a low priority for Berwyn Heights. Under the MOU, the Town has no responsibility for road maintenance on Greenbelt Station Parkway. TACowles recommended the Council approve the MOU so that the County can move forward with the signing process.

In response to questions, TACowles said that maintenance and repair of the bridge is Prince George's County's responsibility. Maintenance responsibilities may change, if the Parkway becomes a thoroughfare. Berwyn Heights retains responsibility for policing the part of the Parkway that is within Town boundaries. The Council agreed to consider adopting the MOU at the next Town meeting.

NW/EP trailer guidelines: Mayor Jewitt welcomed Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness (NW/EP) Committee co-chairs Mike Attick and Merrill Weinrich for a discussion of the draft guidelines for the emergency trailer, which is owned by the Town and maintained by the Committee. The Council asked the Committee to write the guidelines to gain a better understanding of how the trailer is used and what resources it offers.

TACowles proposed that the trailer guidelines become an appendix to the Town's emergency operations plan and then related her questions and comments on the draft guidelines:

- What are the number of people and length of time the trailer's supplies are intended to serve?
- How does NW/EP perform intelligence gathering and damage assessment activities?
- Are there residents who are trained medical personnel that can assist NW/EP?
- Trailer guidelines conflict with Washington Gas and WSSC regulations prohibiting shutting off gas and water lines.
- Access to, and use of trailer supplies by the Town's departments needs to be clarified.

Mr. Weinrich and Attick responded:

- Trailer supplies are intended to serve up to 125 people for up to 72 hours (3 days), assuming the Town Center is used as a shelter.
- Trailer and contents include food and water, blankets and cots, basic medical supplies, radios, chain saws and portable generators among other things.
- There currently are 5 NW/EP members and 23 CERT volunteers that could respond in an emergency. It is assumed other Town residents would volunteer to help.

- NW/EP assesses damage from an incident by sending out teams to 4 quadrants of the Town and has them report back to the incident command center.

Councilmembers made the following observations: The purpose of the trailer has changed over time, from ensuring the continued operation of Town government to aiding residents after an incident. The Town needs a clearer understanding of the assumptions on which trailer supplies are based. Examples of emergency trailer guidelines and supply lists might be available from other municipalities. The Town should define the scope of NW/EP's emergency response under advisement of the NW/EP Committee and budget accordingly. The Town's updated emergency operations plan being drafted by MPT Kulpa-Eddy and TACowles will help define the roles of the departments and NW/EP in emergency management.

FY 2017 budget amendments: TACowles said that no further changes are needed to the FY 2017 budget amendments since they were introduced at the May Town meeting. In response to MPT Kulpa-Eddy, TACowles said that the Town will only be reimbursed \$500, or the amount of the deductible, toward the replacement of the police vehicle that was totaled in a recent accident. She can ask the Town's attorney for advice on whether the Town should sue the party that was at fault.

4. Announcements

Mayor Jewitt announced that Prince George's County passed legislation permitting food truck hubs in designated locations; that Prince George's County police captured the suspects in the slaying of a New Carrollton man, whose body was discovered along the Nevada Street trail; and that she is working with Greenbelt Mayor Jordan to appeal SHA's decision not to commission a study for a sound barrier along Kenilworth Avenue. On behalf of CM Shields, she announced that Berwyn Heights is officially an MML Banner City. Lastly, Berwyn Heights Elementary School (BHES) principal Karen Singer will retire after 15 years of leading the school. Mayor Jewitt received citizen comments on bulk trash being set out at the curb too soon, about water from private properties being drained into the streets, and Greenbelt CART being designated an official City organization.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy announced that Governor Hogan signed the income tax overpayment forgiveness bill into law, which will release Berwyn Heights from having to pay back \$160,000 in income taxes it received because of an accounting error by the State. The FY 2018 Prince George's County budget contains funding for the Berwyn Heights storm water system improvement project, which was initiated after the flash flood of June 10, 2014. WSSC will hold public meetings on its rate structure, which it was ordered to change by the Public Service Commission (PSC) because it is unduly preferential to low-usage customers.

CM Rasmussen received a comment from a resident reporting tall grass in a neighbor's back yard. Code officers do not normally check back yards unless a violation is reported by a neighbor. Berwyn Heights may want to obtain information on how Greenbelt designates official Town groups for the purpose of devising its own policy on Town organizations. Last night's rock'n roll concert was enjoyable, although attendance could have been better. CM Dennison announced that Public Works is operating on a summer schedule, with trash pick-up starting at 6:30 a.m.

5. Minutes

On a motion by CM Rasmussen and second by CM Dennison, the May 1 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0 as corrected. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Rasmussen, the May 15 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0 as corrected. The May 10 Town meeting minutes were distributed.

6. **Department Reports/ Citizen Comments**

Mayor Jewitt reported that Officer Ramirez left the Town's employment and thanked her for her service. MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that she is working with the Administration Department on the storm water project and on updating the emergency operations plan for the Town. CM Rasmussen said he finds the County's solar panel permit fee of \$700 excessive.

Mike Attick, 62nd Avenue, commented on citizen comments time at Council meetings; a leak in the emergency trailer; Town emails not having recognizable information in the subject line; residents' options for changing a Town ordinance; availability of keys to the shed in which Town groups store belongings; and how to reach Berwyn Heights police officers after hours.

7. **Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the calendar. No changes were made.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk