



Town of Berwyn Heights

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

Minutes Worksession September 18, 2017

Executive Session (6:00 – 7:00 p.m.)

Personnel Matter

Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Cheryl Jewitt, Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs), Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. Action Items

Refuse and recycling bins purchase: TA Cowles provided additional information about Toter refuse and recycling bins that Councilmembers had requested during the previous discussion of the matter:

- Unit price per bin may increase up to \$1.00 per unit, if less than 1,100 bins are ordered;
- Latches for lids cost \$3.00 per unit, or \$6,600 for 1,100 bins;
- 16 gallon bins are not available;
- Bins must be square and have a “lip” to be lifted with an automatic lift.

The Council discussed the cost aspects of switching to *Toter* recycling and refuse bins. The following concerns were raised:

- spending between \$50,000 to \$100,000 for new bins mid-year, which would require a budget amendment, versus planning for the expense during the budget cycle;
- whether the bin upgrade furthers the strategic plan;
- what the overall cost of the Town’s recycling program is;
- how the cost of in-house recycling would compare to using a recycling contractor;
- what the cost/ benefit of adding lid latches is;
- whether providing refuse bins would prevent animals from getting at the, or whether the rat problem is more effectively addressed by enforcement of refuse regulations;
- whether switching to automatic lifts would slow the collection process and lead to once-a-week pickup;
- whether residents should be charged for recycling bins through a one-time increase of the recycling fee or a fee charged when a bin is requested.

The Council agreed to send out an English/ Spanish postcard educating residents on refuse disposal regulations set forth in Ordinance 117 – Refuse Collection. After the educational efforts, the Public Works

and Code Departments will be asked to enforce these rules by recording trash disposal violations, leaving notices, and not picking up of refuse that violates the disposal regulations. It was further agreed that residents be asked about recycling preferences in a citizen survey.

2. Discussion Items

Community survey: CM Shields explained an updated version of the citizen survey he put together and could be pared down to refuse and recycling questions. The Council discussed which questions should be asked in the survey and agreed to the following:

1. “What would make you recycle more?” followed by a menu of options; and
2. “The Town is considering purchasing quality recycling bins on wheels with an attached lid, which cost up to \$50 per bin. Would you be willing to pay for them through a one-time increase in the recycling fee?” followed by “Yes” and “No” check boxes.

The survey would be published in both English and Spanish in the Bulletin, on the website and social media, and would be handed out during special events. Responses are due by October 27, 2017.

Councilmembers explained their position on the acquisition of new bins. Mayor Jewitt said that she would like to get both new trash and recycling bins with wheels and an attached lid as soon as possible, but ask people to pay for them. At this time, she is opposed to equipping trucks with automatic lifts. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said she agrees with getting recycling bins but would address litter and rat problems through education and enforcement. Neighboring municipalities do not provide refuse bins, which may place Berwyn Heights at risk of having them stolen. The Town would then have to replace them on an ongoing basis. CM Shields said that he is currently opposed to adding lifts to the trucks and would support getting both recycling and refuse bins on wheels. However, he sees a need to be very up front about charging a \$50 fee for the bins because most residents would probably not expect to pay that much. CM Rasmussen expressed interest in a cost estimate of the Town’s recycling and refuse collection program.

Legislative Dinner date: The Council was requested to set a date for the annual legislative dinner to which the Town invites its State, County and School Board representatives to discuss the next legislative session and any legislative items for which the Town may need their assistance.

Mayor Jewitt said, based on last year’s experience, she is not sure if the expense for the dinner is justified, unless there is something specific the Town wants to pursue. She believes she could have learned what was discussed last year by speaking with individual legislators one on one. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said that the Council learned about the possibility of financing emergency generators at a legislative dinner but conceded that it would be more productive if there were specific concerns to be addressed. For example, she would like to find out why WSSC cannot set separate rates for commercial and residential customers. After further discussion, the Council set November 28 as the date for the legislative dinner.

3. Minutes

There were none.

4. Announcements, Department Reports, Citizen Comments

Mayor Jewitt reported that the U.S. Air Force celebrated its 70th anniversary over the weekend; that Washington D.C. is attempting to solve its rat problems by allowing feral cats to roam, and that Berwyn Heights’ Comcast Channel 71 has experienced technical difficulties, which have been fixed. Lastly, she read a citizen comment in favor of the Humvee acquisition.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that her “Councilmember” slide was missing on the BHTV slide show. She also said she would still like to have information about the cost of a tow package for the Humvee when the

Council makes a decision on the acquisition. Further, Prince George's County will host a series of "snow summits" to coordinate response to winter snow storms with municipalities, and the Maryland Department of Transportation will hold a series of meetings across the state about SHA capital projects, at which the Town could bring attention to needed street improvements.

CM Rasmussen said he would like an update from TA Cowles on how the amended Clean Lot Ordinance is working with regard to invasive species, accessory structures and debris. He noted that the grass on the school property along Quebec Street is overgrown and should be brought to PGCPS' attention. TA Cowles said that the Town has talked with the school about it on several occasions. CM Rasmussen also received a comment about revoking a rental license for a nuisance rental property, and suggested the Council establish some parameters for doing so. MPT Kulpa-Eddy asked for clarification on how Code Supervisor Glass defines "vacant property," because she believes there are more vacant properties than the number he mentioned at the last Town meeting.

CM Shields announced upcoming events and reported that he received a comment in favor of the Humvee acquisition and a suggestion to get an NW/EP volunteer certified and insured to drive the Humvee to tow the emergency trailer.

5. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the calendar. No changes were made.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk