



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Worksession Minutes February 22, 2016

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Chris Rasmussen, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, Maria Robles and Lynn White. MPT Rasmussen arrived 20 minutes late. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Chief of Police Kenneth Antolik, Code Supervisor Freddie Glass, and Clerk Kerstin Harper.

1. Mayor

Announcements: Happy Birthday to Mayor Kulpa-Eddy's mother and a Happy Sweet Sixteen to CM Robles daughter Jasmine.

Calendar: The date for a Wine Tasting event was added for April 22, 6:00 p.m. Education Advisory Committee meetings will be added for the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Minutes: On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM Robles, the January 19 worksession minutes were approved 4 to 0. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by CM White, the February 1 worksession minutes were approved 5 to 0. The February 10 Town meeting minutes were distributed.

Department reports: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reported that she and TA Cowles attended an interesting meeting with M-NCPPC Zoning Rewrite Project Manager Chad Williams and Project Specialist Brittany Drakeford on February 18 about Module 1 of the Prince George's County Zoning Regulations comprehensive update. Module 1 establishes new zoning categories and permitted land uses for each zone. Mr. Williams explained what changes the new zones might bring for Berwyn Heights. A notable proposal is that multi-family housing will be allowed in industrial zones. However, properties along Ballew Avenue would likely not be suitable as there is insufficient set back from the road. Existing businesses that no longer fit the new zones, such as PG Scrap, would be grandfathered in. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy plans to draft a letter to convey Berwyn Heights' comments on Module 1.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy also reported that a couple of armed robberies took place along Greenbelt Road recently. BHPD has since increased its presence there to discourage this type of crime in the future.

MPT Rasmussen said that the Administration Department completed the FY 2016 audit and received 2 proposals for the Urban Forest Initiative. He is reviewing them and will be ready to make recommendations at one of the upcoming worksessions. TA Cowles added that the

emergency generators have been installed. The contractor still had to make the final connections and run tests.

CM Robles reported that the condemned home on 58th Avenue will be demolished after all. The owners wanted to rehabilitate the property but decided otherwise due to the high cost of renovations. They remain in communication with the Town's Code Department and DPIE to inform them of their plans for rebuilding the house. For the other condemned property on Cunningham Drive, all utilities have been disconnected and a contractor selected to carry out the demolition. DPIE still has to issue permits for the demolition before it can proceed, probably sometime in spring. CM Dennison announced that Game Night will be held on March 5.

Citizen comments: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy received a comment on a planned pilot program for a stop sign camera, which Chief Antolik is looking into, and a comment on the expenses for the snow storm that have been submitted for reimbursement through FEMA.

Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness FY 2017 budget: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that NW/EP Chair Mike Attick had planned to attend, but is unable to present the budget tonight. She said that the Committee is discussing the replacement of the trailer, in which most of the emergency supplies are currently stored. Planning for the replacement will in part depend on how much money is in the NW/EP trailer reserve.

Department reports, additional: MPT Rasmussen noted that he attended the showing of the final Four Cities promotional video. He agrees with Delegate Alonzo Washington, who was in the audience and suggested that a 3 minute version would get more people to view it on the internet. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said she believes there is no money left to make a short clip. However, all four cities were given a couple of hours of raw footage which they can use to make their own video.

Nothing was discussed under **2. Public Safety.**

3. Public Works

DPW FY 2017 budget request: Mayor Kulpa-Eddy welcomed Public Works Acting Director Hall for the budget presentation. Mr. Hall thanked TA Cowles for helping him put the budget packet together as he started working for the Town only fairly recently. He said that the Public Works Department is responsible for collecting all types of refuse, maintenance of public property, cleaning up after storms (including snow removals), abatement of code violations and helping to ensure enforcement of certain Ordinances. He has 5 full time and 1 part time staff to carry out the Department's responsibilities. For the most part, staffing is adequate but additional training needs to occur. He has a budget to hire temporary labor when needed. Among the goals for next year are training, teambuilding and raising accountability of DPW staff. He is also helping recruit a permanent director.

Acting Director Hall said the proposed FY 2017 budget does not differ much from the FY 2016 budget, with the exception of the *traffic signs* line item. He would like to replace most of the Town's stop signs, which do not meet current standards for height and reflectivity. He would also like to reduce the number of sign posts by combining different signs on one post. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy suggested looking into getting street signs that help identify Berwyn Heights as a distinct community.

TA Cowles said, apart from an increase in the signage budget, additional money is requested in the *part-time labor* appropriation to fund a position that combines the administrative assistant position with responsibilities that support the Town's recreation programs, such as

event planning and marketing. Combined, these two line items reflect the 5% increase option in the DPW budget.

In response to questions, TA Cowles said that the proposed fuel budget of \$43,000 is based on a \$3.00 per gallon 5 year estimate. Although fuel prices are very low now, it is hard to predict how long they will remain low as this is a volatile market. In addition, a couple of new larger trucks may result in an increase of fuel consumption, making this line item difficult to project. Acting Director Hall said he would expect some savings to result from having two large 27 cubic feet trash trucks, because they do not have to go to the landfill as often. Beyond that, once weekly trash collection would be a source of additional savings. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that the Council has discussed this issue before but it would require a lot more preparation to switch to once a week collection. However, she would encourage continued discussion of this option.

Asked if there was a need to increase the street repair budget, Acting Director Hall said that he has ordered a pallet of asphalt and had his crew repair some of the worst potholes last week. He will also speak with WSSC's project manager to ask that WSSC make repairs to their bad temporary patches. Comprehensive street repairs will be funded from the capital projects budget and is not shown in the DPW budget.

In response to questions, TA Cowles said that the DPW fleet of vehicles is relatively new and in great shape. She is working with the Director on "right-sizing" the fleet and identifying vehicles for surplussing. Regarding the mosquito spraying program, it is no longer the Town's responsibility but that of the Maryland Department of Agriculture, which manages a state-wide integrated pest management program. Spraying trucks will be sent out based on mosquito surveys and number of citizen requests. Residents can also apply for an exemption from mosquito spraying.

4. Administration

FY 2015 audit: TA Cowles said the audit of last year's budget was a challenge because there were a number of capital projects that carried over into this year's budget and because there was a transition in the Treasurer's position leading to several people making entries on the budget tracking spreadsheets. In addition to the audit report, the Council was given a one-page summary of the actual FY 2015 budget, which gives an overview of revenues and expenses in the main budget categories. TA Cowles highlighted noteworthy developments in the budget summary, noting that more money than estimated went into the reserves. Restricted reserves add up to \$1.5 million, while the unrestricted surplus stands at \$985,000. She also gave a brief explanation of the Public Safety Taxing district budget, which shows a surplus of \$9,100 and an ending fund balance of \$54,300.

Nothing was discussed under **5. Code Compliance.**

6. Parks and Recreation

PRECA FY 2017 budget request: CM Dennison presented the Parks & Recreation budget, which is proposed to be flat. The only change is a new expenditure of \$4,500 for a pilot program that provides free UMD Shuttle service to residents. The expense has been absorbed in the Department's budget by realigning budgeted expenditures to actual costs.

TA Cowles explained that several neighboring communities are paying the University of Maryland an annual fee of \$4,500 to \$6,000 based on their population to enable their residents to ride the shuttle for free. It would be helpful to have some data on how many Berwyn Heights residents would use the service to help the Council decide if this is a worthwhile expense. She thinks that a survey would not give reliable data and that a pilot program would be the better way to find out if there is a demand.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said she would like to know if anyone wants use the service before spending the money. There are other areas of the PRECA budget that may require more funding, such as Berwyn Heights Day, where employees may have to step in for fewer volunteers. An alternative might be to purchase the \$150 annual passes from the University if only a few residents express interest. She suggested checking with Greenbelt or College Park about their ridership, as well as confirming the overall route of the shuttle bus that comes through town. The Council agreed to place an announcement into the Bulletin describing the service and requesting feedback on whether residents would use it.

HUR resolution (added item)

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy said that MML asked municipalities to pass a resolution to request the General Assembly to reinstate regular funding for Highway User Revenues. It is important for the Town to know if they can rely on this revenue so that they can budget for the major street repairs that will have to occur when the WSSC water main replacement project is finished. She asked that adoption of such a resolution be placed on the March agenda if there are no objections.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Kerstin Harper, Town Clerk