



Town of Berwyn Heights

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Minutes Worksession December 18, 2017

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor Pro-Tem (MPT) Jodie Kulpa-Eddy, Councilmembers (CMs) Patricia Dennison, Christopher Rasmussen, and Gerald Shields. Mayor Cheryl Jewitt had an excused absence. Also present were Town Administrator (TA) Jessica Cowles, Clerk Kerstin Harper, Lindsey & Associates Partner Bob Diss, University of Maryland Community & Outreach Manager Andrew Fellows, and Green Team Chair Amanda Dewey.

1. Action Items

There were none.

2. Discussion Items

FY 2017 Audit: TA Cowles welcomed Bob Diss of Lindsey & Associates, the Town's long-time auditing firm. Mr. Diss gave an overview of the audit report. The audit gives the Town a clean opinion that its financial statements fairly represent the financial position of the Town, and that the Town's financial position is healthy. At the outset, the audit notes an accounting error from a prior period that led to a restating of the Public Safety Reserve Fund's beginning fund balance from \$107,500 to \$63,200. The financial statements themselves show an increase in the Town's equity of \$532,000 and \$724,000, respectively, with the former taking into account fixed assets, depreciation and long-term debt. The equity increase is mostly due to Town departments having spent less than their budgets and one-time payments received from the Greenbelt Station development.

In response to questions, it was clarified that the Town's capital assets rose by \$1.3 million since FY 2010 because the Town extended its network of sidewalks, made road improvements, and purchased 2 trash trucks. Greenbelt Station receipts of \$200,000 were reported under miscellaneous revenues. The Town continues to be debt-free, with the only exception of \$1,090,000 in long-term liabilities (i.e., pension trust fund, paid leave).

The Council also discussed a letter accompanying the audit. It notes that the Town has no one on staff with the technical expertise to prepare financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles; however, Mr. Diss stated this circumstance is shared by most small municipalities and is of no material consequence. The letter further states that bank reconciliations throughout the year were not made in a timely manner. Bank reconciliations will henceforth be done monthly.

Route 193 Technical Assistance Panel: TA Cowles explained that Berwyn Heights partnered with the Cities of Greenbelt and College Park to apply for an Urban Land Institute technical assistance grant from

the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (COG) for improving the Route 193 corridor. COG selected the Route 193 project for the \$10,000 grant, which pays for half of the \$20,000 cost of a technical assistance panel (TAP). The remaining cost would be shared between the applicant municipalities. Since then, TA Cowles has worked with Greenbelt and College Park on a scope of work for the study, focusing on actionable recommendations to help implement the findings of a Route 193 Corridor Sector Plan adopted some 15 years ago.

The Council was provided a draft scope of work for the TAP and requested to give input on the study area, as well as a series of questions the TAP will be asked to address. The study area was originally comprised of an area along Route 193 between Kenilworth Avenue and Rhode Island Avenue, but may be extended to Route 1 per request by the City of College Park.

MPT Kulpa-Eddy noted that sector plans will no longer guide development after adoption of the new Prince George's County zoning ordinance. She also distributed copies of a Beltway Plaza test case that may be relevant to the TAP's work. It was developed as part of the zoning rewrite and conceptualizes how this mall would develop under the new zoning regulations. CM Rasmussen left the meeting due to a family matter at 7:30 pm. Continued discussion of this topic was postponed to the next worksession.

Sustainability projects with UMD: Andrew Fellows, University of Maryland (UMD) Community & Outreach Program Manager, was present to provide an update on the projects Berwyn Heights submitted for collaboration with the University. Mr. Fellows said the Town of Berwyn Heights is first among this year's applicants in providing an actionable project list. This may in part be attributable to the participation of the Berwyn Heights Green Team under the leadership of a UMD graduate student, Amanda Dewey, who was also present for the discussion.

Mr. Fellows said he has started to match Berwyn Heights' projects to UMD departments and academic offices. Potential partners include UMD's Partnership Active Learning for Sustainability (PALS), an experiential learning program for undergraduate students; architecture and engineering students interested in storm water mitigation projects; the College of Architecture - Planning & Preservation School for assistance with historic preservation efforts; the Department of Plant Science & Landscape Architecture for advising on the tree canopy and invasive species; and the College of Education for collaboration with BHES on environmental literacy education. Ms. Dewey said the Green Team is working with BHES teachers and students on maintaining the school gardens.

Mr. Fellows also shared ideas on the community engagement items on Berwyn Heights' project list. The most likely collaborators for improving volunteerism and community engagement are students of social science and public policy. Businesses along Route 193 might be approached directly about their interest in becoming active in the community. A high-tech company like Verizon might be engaged through a Smart Cities project that utilizes their communication and data processing expertise.

Mr. Fellows thanked the Council for committing \$6,000 towards the initiative. Tonight, he hopes to get the Council's approval for the list of projects discussed, so that he can formally present them to UMD faculty and students. MPT Kulpa-Eddy said she would like to postpone approval to the next worksession because two Councilmembers are absent tonight and may want some time to review the document.

Animal Ordinance revision: MPT Kulpa-Eddy said the Council plans to begin reviewing Ordinance 101 – Animals, last revised in 1993. The Council, as well as the Police and Code Departments have received comments from residents ranging from concerns about humane treatment of animals, to aggressive dogs, to disturbance from continuous barking. These concerns could be addressed with revisions to the

Ordinance. In addition, the Council will want to ensure there are no conflicts with a more recently enacted Noise Ordinance and a revised Clean Lot Ordinance, which contain provisions dealing with animals, as well as ensure the Town Ordinance conforms with the updated County code.

Ms. Dewey thanked the Council for taking up the Ordinance. She is one of the residents who has urged changes to the Ordinance because she has observed instances of inhumane treatment and animal cruelty while walking her dogs. Her principal concern is with the length of time and the objectionable circumstances in which some dogs are kept outside.

3. Minutes

On a motion by CM Shields and second by CM Dennison, the November 20 worksession minutes were approved 3 to 0. On a motion by CM Dennison and second by Shields, the December 4 meeting minutes were approved 3 to 0.

4. Announcements/ Department Reports/ Citizen Comments

MPT Kulpa-Eddy reported that Mayor Jewitt received several comments regarding the salting of roads during the recent snow event. She informs that Public Works salted intersections and some steep hills in Town, but not roads with lesser hills. Residents may report icy patches to Acting Public Works Director Cowles. Further, the leaf vacuum machine is back in service, but the truck that pulls the machine has broken down, resulting in further delays in loose leaf collection.

CM Shields received a comment thanking the Public Works Department for salting the streets, adding that the street in front of his house was also treated. He reported that he will judge holiday decorations until January 7 with winners to be announced at the January Town meeting, and has distributed the draft Town organizations policy to the organizations to receive their input.

Amanda Dewey, Quebec Place, thanked the Public Works crew for doing the hard work of collecting leaves. The Green Team has designated 2018 as the year of recycling to help improve residents' recycling practices. A trip to the Prince George's recycling facility is planned. She has observed litter accumulating in certain places in Town, and hopes Public Works can find out if it is related to the manner in which refuse is placed at the curb, loaded into the trash trucks, or some other reason. CM Shields suggested it may be wind-blown trash, a problem that continues to be an issue at Lake Artemesia.

5. Town Council Schedule

The Council reviewed the schedule of events and activities. The Four Cities meeting was confirmed for January 25. No changes were made.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk