



Town of Berwyn Heights

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MAYOR
Jodie Kulpa-Eddy
COUNCIL MEMBERS
Christopher Brittan-Powell (Mayor Pro Tem)
Shinita Hemby
Faustino Menjivar
Jason W. Papanikolas

Town Meeting Minutes Town Council Chamber June 8, 2022 | 7:00 p.m.

Call to order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Present were Mayor Pro Tempore Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Jason Papanikolas and Councilmember Faustino Menjivar. Also present were Town Manager Laura Allen, Town Clerk Melanie Friesen, and residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights.

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Announcements

Executive Session Report Out Executive Session (personnel matter) held under General Provisions Article § 3-305(b) (1) to discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of an appointee, employee, or official over whom this public body has jurisdiction; or any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals. (3) To consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto and (7) To consult with counsel to obtain legal advice
5:05-6:30 pm in Town Council chambers, motioned by MPT Brittan-Powell and seconded by CM Hemby. The motion passed unanimously. Attendees at the closed session were all of the sitting Council, Town Attorney Suellen Ferguson, and TM Allen for item 3 only. No action was taken during the closed session.

MPT Brittan-Powell thanked all those who serve the community through volunteerism. He congratulated the many graduates in Berwyn Heights.

2. Approval of Agenda

CM Papanikolas moved to approve the agenda. MPT Brittan-Powell seconded. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

3. Consent

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked TM Allen for some clarification on the consent process. MPT Brittan-Powell moved to approve the consent agenda. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Mayor & Councilmember Reports

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reported that she had attended the PGCMA meeting on May 19 and that due to fundraising constraints over the last year they are planning on a conservative budget for Fiscal Year 2023. The meeting included a Mental Health Roundtable featuring local non-profits, where it

was announced the 9-8-8 crisis call center should be ready by July of 2022. She also attended the Mayor's Association Meeting of Prince George's County on May 26. Lastly, she attended the County Council hearing on the Police Accountability Board on June 6. She then provided updates on the Maryland Primary elections. Resident Susan Jones asked if the Berwyn Heights Elementary School will be a polling location. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy did not have the final list of polling locations. She also shared a storm preparedness announcement from Pepco.

MPT Brittan-Powell thanked staff for working with a challenging AV situation during the June 6th meeting, and thanked residents for hanging in there. He is looking forward to working with staff on the Bulletin. He also shared that the University of Maryland School of Public Health presentation on June 6 added clarity and is looking forward to exploring the relationship.

CM Hemby shared that Memorial Day weekend was eventful with calls regarding Code Compliance. She has visited the vacant properties in Town and has met with Code Compliance Director Goodwin and Town Manager Allen about what is going well and what needs to be changed, including how to best contact residents, and a welcome packet. She had calls about what appeared to be a contractor dumping yard waste in the street. She spoke to him and followed up and ensured that the waste was cleaned up.

CM Menjivar met with TM Allem and Director Pudner. He would like to meet with them regularly. He shared about trash complaints on the 8500 block of Cunningham.

CM Papanikolas shared that he has spent his first month working on PRECA getting to know the different groups. He was able to attend the meetings for the Green Team, BHHC, and the Rec Council, missing the NW/EP Committee meeting due to a prior commitment.

5. Committee Reports

a. Education Advisory Committee

CM Papanikolas said that he will be working with BHES to purchase the equipment in late June that was included in the budget amendment that the Council passed.

b. Green Team

CM Papanikolas shared that at their last meeting, the Green Team was planning for the year ahead and that there were many new volunteers signed up on Berwyn Heights Day. He continued that the Ivy Management demonstration with Director Pudner was successful. They are looking at changing the Town-wide Clean Up, looking to set up an "adopt a block" program instead.

c. Historical Committee

Debby Steele-Snyder shared about the Historical Committee's participation in Berwyn Heights Day. She stated that the June meeting will be cancelled, making the next meeting in July and that they won't be meeting in August, but that they do plan to participate in National Night Out. They are planning one wine and cheese event, highlighting that the Historical Committee is one of the main providers of adult-focused events in Berwyn Heights. She reviewed past events. Ms. Steele-Snyder also shared about attending the Small Museum Association. She reported that it was informative, interesting, and overwhelming. She advocated for Council support of State level funding for small museums.

d. Neighborhood Watch/ Emergency Preparedness

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that the NW/EP planned to clean out the old trailer on June 19th in order to go through all the boxes. The new trailer is smaller and will not be able to accommodate all of the current inventory.

e. Recreation Council

On behalf of the Rec Council, Susan Jones thanked everyone for the success of Berwyn Heights Day. She shared especial thanks to MPT Brittan-Powell for making the pancake breakfast. The Rec Council has a lot of tee shirts leftover and if you'd like one, please email Susan Jones. Ms. Jones also gave information on the Town-Wide Yard and Craft Sale that will be on June 18th. She encouraged residents to donate any left overs that they have from the yard sale to charity. The opening concert at Lake Artemisia will be on June 23 from 6-8pm. On July 21st, Mike Hummel and the Mexican dance troupe from Berwyn Heights Day will perform. On August 18th the Seth Kibel band will play. September and October will be on Saturdays in the afternoon. The rain location will be in the Town Center. On July 14th from 6-8 pm will be the Town Social in the breezeway between Town Hall and the Senior Center. The Rec Council will have a table at National Night Out. She closed by saying that there may not be a meeting in August.

6. Old Business

a. Resident Assistance Program – Presentation

TM Allen gave a presentation on how to access the ARPA residential relief program on the Town website. She spoke on how to access the application through the “Community” tab on the website, what documentation needs to be provided and the steps that the Town has begun to provide the application in Spanish, possibly using the group CASA to provide a translation and assistance with applying. Resident Claudia Barragan responded that she believes that using CASA is unacceptable, expressing that she had concerns that third party non-profits would use the information for the benefit of that non-profit. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked what the alternatives are to using these non-profits. Ms. Barragan stated that it could be a community-led process and when asked if the Town could reach out to her, she agreed. She continued that the Town should prioritize hiring staff that speaks Spanish, but in the short-term using the Language Line assistance service through the County could work. She stated that there are several issues with the application, including that the description does not include the amount of money allocated to the program and that the language is inaccessible to non-native English speakers. TM Allen shared that the information on the amount allocated is part of the budget and has been provided. Ms. Barragan clarified how she would like to see the details added to the program description. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he would, as the Administration liaison, be following this.

b. Greenbelt Road Corridor Comment Letter

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reviewed that this was the letter originally presented to the Council on June 6th. She shared that the original letter was available, showing the tracked changes. She continued that she wanted to make it clear that the Town supports immediate relief as well as requesting the engineering and design take the impact on Berwyn Heights into consideration. She shared that the deadline for submissions had been moved from June 9 to June 15th. CM Hemby moved to approve the Greenbelt Comment Letter to move forward. CM Papanikolas seconded. During discussion, CM Papanikolas shared that there are some grammatical changes he would like to see and MPT Brittan-Powell added that he would like the letter to close with a tone of appreciation. CM Hemby modified her motion to approve the letter as amended. CM Papanikolas seconded. After no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously. MPT Brittan-Powell shared that Greenbelt is willing to share a summary document of the project to-date as there is a new Council. He also would like to see a second person from Council appointed to the taskforce, since there is an opening for two representatives from Berwyn Heights and he is the only current member.

7. New Business

a. 4 Cities topics and presentation ideas

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that Berwyn Heights will be hosting the Four Cities Meeting in July of 2022, which means that the Town is responsible for bringing in presenters for the meeting. She continued that historically they have had a representative from the Prince George's County Public School Board, but given the current climate of that board, they may not have anyone available. CM Papanikolas suggested seeing if someone from the PGCPs Capital Improvements board was available. MPT Brittan-Powell suggested a presentation on the running of stop signs. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy added a suggestion of having a presentation on the new Police Accountability Board. Resident Claudia Barragan suggested several possible presentations on COVID recovery, possibly from the PG County Health Department, including the adverse impacts on black and brown residents' health, both physical and mental, the economic recovery and how social distancing has changed us. CM Hemby suggested that a presentation on the crime aspect of COVID, including increased neighborhood crime and mass shootings, and what people can do to keep themselves safe. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy reminded everyone that the Council is trying to keep it to one presentation at the meeting, and that people will be contacted to find out who is available on the date of the meeting.

8. Resident & Community Comments

The Town phone line was not functioning. CM Papanikolas shared his cell number. Resident Mike Attick called to ask about the presenters and wanting to know when the meetings were supposed to take place. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy responded that these were for the Four Cities meeting on July 28. MPT Brittan-Powell shared a letter submitted by an anonymous employee of the Town of Berwyn Heights discussing the stressors of being a front line/direct services provider and the impacts. The letter requested more mental health services for employees of the Town. TM Allen responded with information about the health insurance provided by the Town and that the mental health offerings have been expanded as well as more information on accessing the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

9. Adjournment

CM Papanikolas moved to adjourn the meeting. CM Menjivar seconded. After no discussion, the motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 8:35pm.