



# 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

## Work Session December 4, 2023 | 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers

### Call to Order

Mayor Jodie Kulpa-Eddy called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. Present were Mayor Pro Tem Chris Brittan-Powell, Councilmember Shinita Hemby, Councilmember Faustino Menjivar and Councilmember Jason Papanikolas. Staff present were Town Manager Kyle Snyder and Town Clerk Melanie Friesen. Staff from Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) and their project partner Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) were present for the Walkable-Bikeable Berwyn Heights (WBBH) presentation. Residents of the Town of Berwyn Heights were present.

### Approval of the Agenda

MPT Brittan-Powell moved to approve the agenda. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### 1. Mayor

#### a. Announcements

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy expressed condolences to the residents and Council of the City of Greenbelt for the loss of Councilmember Ric Gordon. MPT Brittan-Powell thanked all who came out for the holiday events over the past weekend and wished all a happy holiday season. He also encouraged residents to get involved in the upcoming elections as judges and candidates as well as to be engaged with the upcoming budget season.

#### b. Calendar

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy shared that the PGCMA legislative dinner will be held soon and to let staff know if there is interest in attending. She noted that the employee holiday party will be on December 15<sup>th</sup> and encouraged Council to take time to join if they are available. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked if Council was available for a closed session at 6:30pm on December 18<sup>th</sup>. MPT Brittan-Powell disagreed that the purpose of the meeting should be closed and requested that it be discussed in open session at the Town Meeting. Council agreed that they would be available, and a closed session will be scheduled.

#### c. M-NCPPC WBBH PAMC Presentation

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy gave a background of the project to-date. Mr. Eric Tang of VHB introduced Mr. Connor Klein, the project manager from M-NCPPC. Mr. Klein thanked the Council, the Police Department, and residents including those from WBBH task

force for their input. Also present were Evan Tanenbaum from M-NCPPC and Heather Gade and Sammy Snyder from the VHB project team. Mr. Tang reviewed that the project had been narrowed down to 4 locations in Town, noting that while there was concern from residents that all the selected areas ran east/west, many of the types of treatments recommended for the identified intersections would be applicable to similar north/south intersections. The identified areas are 1) Ballew Ave; 2) Pontiac Ave intersections with 58<sup>th</sup> Ave, Cunningham Dr, and 60<sup>th</sup> Ave; 3) Berwyn Rd between Charlton and 60<sup>th</sup> Ave; and 4) intersection improvements at Quebec St/ 62<sup>nd</sup> Ave and Goucher Dr/Cunningham Dr.

Mr. Tang noted the idea is to have an action plan listing projects the Town can prioritize and implement as funding is available. He encouraged Council to mark up the draft action plan they have received for comment. The draft action plan also includes a toolkit which describes each of the recommended treatments. He noted Council has also received an addendum, which are photographs that show examples of each of the proposed treatments. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that many of the treatments focus on pedestrians and wanted to know if the solutions would also work for cyclists. Mr. Tang noted that particularly on Ballew Ave, the treatments are focused on cyclists. Mr. Tang reviewed the identified areas and the potential countermeasures in detail. Council had questions about specific treatments for each area and Mr. Tang addressed each concern. He also emphasized that it would be important to get input from residents prior to implementation. Mr. Tang also will be checking on the application of a couple of Council suggestions, such as use of mirrors on curves and to determine if doubling stop signs is more effective than flashing stop signs. Council discussed holding a Town Hall for resident and partner input prior to sending in comments on the draft action plan. Resident James Wilkinson, who was the chair of the WBBH taskforce, voiced his full support for any of the interventions that the Council is able to do. Resident Debby Steele-Snyder commented that she was also on the WBBH taskforce and noted she has difficulty seeing traffic when she travels northbound on Charlton towards Berwyn Road. She noted that it is a dangerous intersection and would suggest that restricting parking to only one side of the street could increase visibility. She also commented on the “sign clutter” on Pontiac Street, which leads to people ignoring signs.

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked who are the partners that need to be invited to a Town Hall. Mr. Klein replied it would need to be partners like the police and fire departments, as well as public school transportation, public transportation, and Public Works, as well as himself. He also noted that M-NCPPC would primarily be interested in input from partners.

Resident Dave Wolfinger noted that he agrees with Ms. Steele-Snyder on the sign clutter. During his ride-along with the police, a driver ran a stop sign with the squad car right at the intersection and the violator stated that they didn't see the stop sign. He also said that he doesn't know if the excuse is valid as there is pretty much a stop sign at every corner. He mentioned he doesn't see a lot of bicyclists in Town and that every change in favor of bikes takes makes it more difficult for drivers. Mr. Tang replied that it is about building a culture of safety and inclusivity for those who do not have or may not want to drive cars as well as reinforcing safer road use behavior by all vehicles. Mr. Wolfinger reiterated that he just doesn't see the bike traffic in Town to justify such changes and that most homes in Berwyn Heights have multiple vehicles. He also asked how Ballew became a major bike route. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy responded that it was part of the East Coast Greenway bike trail system.

Resident Paul Mulholland on Nevada St commented that blinking stop signs would increase their visibility at night, and enforcement would be easier if they were blinking. He also noted the visibility issues in his area and would like to see interventions to slow traffic and increase safety for pedestrians and vehicles.

CM Menjivar asked about increasing safety of the crossing at Indian Creek Trail and Berwyn Rd.

There was discussion about scheduling a Town Hall, which will be discussed in greater detail at the December 18 Worksession.

**d. Review Stormwater Engineer Proposals**

TM Snyder reviewed that during the last worksession the Council had some questions they wanted to have clarified by the responding firms. He noted that LIDC added a townwide survey, which increased their price by about \$16,000. He noted that LIDC indicated they chose the two systems in their proposal as those that have the highest chance of success and grant funding opportunities. TM Snyder reported completing a reference check for CPJ, receiving positive feedback and noting that many nearby municipalities have used them and that they have worked with municipalities to obtain grants. CM Menjivar asked about which stormwater drainage study would be used. TM Snyder noted that all the firms would use existing studies as a starting place and would do additional work as needed. Finally, TM Snyder noted that RK&K has been used by the City of College Park and has positive feedback as well. TM Snyder noted that only LIDC provided a total for their project where CPJ and RK&K provided billable hourly rates.

CM Papanikolas asked for clarification on the goal of the discussion and Mayor Kulpa-Eddy expressed a desire to come to a consensus on which firm to hire, to then vote on a resolution at the Town Meeting. She stated a preference for CPJ because of their ability to complete the scope of the work, having done work in Town on previous projects, and providing the lowest price. MPT Brittan-Powell stated that he believed the Mayor to not be taking into consideration the type of solutions that the firms might present to Council. He shared his belief that both CPJ and RK&K will present the Town with more “grey” solutions rather than “green” solutions and that LIDC is green focused and that certain staff at LIDC know the Town issues well. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy responded that while the firms may present solution options, it is ultimately up to the Council to decide which “green” and “grey” solutions will be implemented. CM Hemby asked why hourly prices were not listed for some of the personnel types across the three firms. TM Snyder explained that not all firms listed the same employees in their price sheets, but that does not mean the firm does not have the capacity to complete the work. CM Hemby asked MPT Brittan-Powell to explain his preference for LIDC. MPT Brittan-Powell reiterated that LIDC will be focused on “green” solutions and that the other firms will be focused on “grey” or concrete and pipe solutions. CM Hemby stated that she believes that the solution may need to be a “grey” solution and would be uncomfortable with solutions that are solely focused on “green” solutions. CM Menjivar stated that all the firms are capable of doing the work but expressed comfort with RK&K, having worked with them before. Council discussed having the firms come to present on the 18<sup>th</sup> of December to answer any remaining questions. CM Papanikolas stated that all the firms will present solutions but ultimately the Council would be making the decisions as to which solutions are implemented. He also stated that all the firms are able to do the work and a presentation will not change that and

ultimately the decision will need to be made on price. The majority of the Council concluded to move forward with a resolution to hire CPJ as the stormwater engineering firm at the December Town Meeting.

**e. Resident Comments**

There were no resident comments.

**2. Public Safety:**

Mayor Kulpa-Eddy thanked the BHVFD for delivering Santa to the tree lighting party.

**a. Students Walking to BHES and GMS**

TM Snyder reviewed that in the light of the recent tragedies in Riverdale there is concern about students walking to Greenbelt Middle and Berwyn Heights Elementary Schools. He noted that the focus is on BHES as the crossing guard for GMS is on Greenbelt Road and that it seems to be a higher priority to dispatch guards to that crossing, likely due to the heavy traffic on the roadway. BHPD officers have been dispatched to BHES to assist in crossing guard duty 22 times since September with all but 4 of those times working at the rear access to the school. He noted that the County is actively recruiting crossing guards and will have that information shared in the E-Newsletter. He also noted State Delegate Anne Healey has introduced a bill to allow for stop sign cameras and other vehicle monitoring devices and that the Town has submitted a letter of support for the bill. CM Papanikolas noted that even the school staff has had to help at times with crossing guard duties and noted that the parking lot of the school is an issue as well. He encouraged parents and guardians to be responsible drivers in the parking lot of the school. CM Hemby shared her support for Delegate Healey's bill as well.

**3. Public Works**

CM Menjivar noted that leaf collection is going on heavily this month. TM Snyder noted that after December 15<sup>th</sup>, residents would need to bag their loose leaves for pick-up.

**4. Administration.**

There was no Administration report.

**a. Budget Calendar Review**

TM Snyder reviewed the draft budget calendar for FY2025, noting that the Council will see the first draft of the budget during the second worksession in March. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy asked about the Constant Yield Tax Rate Hearing and requested that the Public Safety Taxing District Budget be added to the calendar. MPT Brittan-Powell asked about the tax rate and when the Council will be able to present their wish lists. TM Snyder noted that the February 5 Worksession would be the opportunity to discuss Council priorities and that the Town would receive tax rate information from the State in mid-February.

**5. Code Compliance**

There was no Code Compliance report.

**a. Ordinance 101 Amendments**

TM Snyder noted that there were no changes to what the Council had discussed last Worksession, but that the Council can now see the redlined version. Mayor Kulpa-Eddy requested a format check and to include language about the ability to appeal. The

Council will introduce the amended ordinance at the December Town Meeting.

## **6. Parks, Recreation, Education, and Civic Affairs**

There was no PRECA report.

### **a. BHHC: Condition of Sportland**

TM Snyder reviewed that a couple of historic properties in Town have had alternations made, possibly without correct permits. The Town notified the County's Historic Preservation Commission and their DPIE inspector has taken the lead in investigating the issue. The Town is deferring to the County on these properties. CM Papanikolas wondered if there was any kind of disclosure made during the sale of a historic-designated property. TM Snyder stated that a "stop work" order had been issued for the property on Natasha, but that the property on Ruatan has permits, however, they are trying to determine if they are the right ones. There was discussion on the desired outcome as well and grant funding opportunities for historic properties. Resident Debbie Steele-Snyder noted there is a preference to have the properties restored and that there is documentation on those properties. She will try to determine if there is a disclosure in the sale of a historic property. She thanked the Town for the quick response to their concerns.

## **7. Adjournment**

TM Snyder issued a correction on loose leaf collection, noting that regular North/South leaf collection ends on December 15<sup>th</sup>, with Town-wide pick up taking place as time allows until January 5<sup>th</sup> which will be the final pick-up of the season. After that, leaves must be bagged and will be picked up on regular yard waste collection days.

CM Papanikolas moved to adjourn. CM Hemby seconded. With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 9:28PM.