

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-08

A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BERLIN, SETTING FORTH THE TOWN OF BERLIN, MARYLAND'S COMMITMENT TO OBESITY PREVENTION AND DESIRE TO BE A DESIGNATED H.E.A.L. COMMUNITY.

WHEREAS, in January 2013, the Maryland Municipal League entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Institute for Public Health Innovation to work collaboratively on the HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Berlin (the "Town") has the ability to affect the health of its residents; and

WHEREAS, planning and constructing a built environment that encourages walking, biking, and other forms of physical activity can promote health; and

WHEREAS, high rates of costly chronic disease among both children and adults are correlated to environments with few or no options for healthy eating and active living; and

WHEREAS, more than half of Maryland's adults are overweight or obese and therefore at risk for many chronic conditions including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, arthritis, stroke, and, hypertension; and

WHEREAS, one in three youth in Maryland is overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, more children are being diagnosed with diseases linked to overweight and obesity previously seen only in adults, such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease; and

WHEREAS, the current generation of children are expected to have shorter lives than their parents due to the consequences of obesity; and

WHEREAS, obesity takes a tremendous toll on the health, productivity of all Marylanders;

WHEREAS, the annual cost to Maryland—in medical bills, workers compensation and lost productivity—for overweight, obesity, and physical inactivity exceeds \$3 billion;

WHEREAS, teens and adults who consume one or more sodas or sugar sweetened beverages per day are more likely to be overweight or obese;

WHEREAS, supporting the health of residents and the local workforce would decrease chronic disease and health care costs and increase productivity; and

WHEREAS, the Town has initiated programs and joined with several area organizations to promote healthy and active lifestyles, including:

- Implemented a committee of volunteer employees to address Workplace Wellness.
- Enhanced Town parks' facilities including creation of a low-impact walking trail, addition of fitness stations along the walking trail in Stephen Decatur Park, as well as complete replacement and upgrade of basketball courts and addition of horseshoe pits in Dr. William Henry Park;
- Built sidewalks along several Town streets which previously had no safe pedestrian walkways;

- Worked closely with the State Highway Administration to add and improve sidewalks along state controlled streets and roadways as well as the installation of a countdown crosswalk on Rt. 113 to increase bicycle and pedestrian safety when crossing;
- With community-wide participation, developed and began implementation of the 2016-2018 Strategic Plan which includes, as the number one priority, an increase in parks and recreation facilities;
- Supported the Lower Shore Land Trust in their development of a Walkable/Bikeable Berlin Plan;
- Entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Lower Shore Land Trust to support their applications for grant funds and to submit grant applications on their behalf where appropriate, including the 2015 Maryland Bikeways Program;
- Contracted with Worcester Youth and Family Counseling to provide a youth program, known as the “Berlin Youth Club”, which provides education and activities including healthy-eating and fitness;
- Provided materials to the Berlin Library for their Community Garden, which provides fresh vegetables to programs providing food to those in need;
- Passed an Ordinance permitting and regulating the keeping of chickens on residential properties;
- Hosted the Worcester County Health Department’s “Just Walk, Berlin” program in Stephen Decatur Park on annual basis since 2012.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Town of Berlin Council hereby recognized that obesity is a serious public health threat to the health and wellbeing of adults, children and families in Berlin and a commitment is needed to put healthy choices within reach of all residents. While individual lifestyle changes are necessary, individual effort alone is insufficient to combat obesity’s rising tide. Significant societal and environmental changes are needed to support individual efforts to make healthier choices. To that end, the Town of Berlin, Maryland adopts this Healthy Eating Active Living resolution:

Physical Activity, Active Transportation, and Land Use

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Berlin personnel responsible for the design and construction of parks, neighborhoods, streets, and business areas should make every effort to:

- Adhere to the Comprehensive Plan to:
 - Meet the stated goals and objectives that include bikeability and walkability; and
 - Strongly encourage new development to consider and incorporate bikeable and walkable connectivity to the rest of the Town and outlying areas.
- Design Streets/Roads to be safe for all users (motorists, bicycles, pedestrians, disabled) using the following strategies:
 - Work with the State Highway Administration paint bike lanes/shared use (“sharrows”) when re-paving/painting state controlled streets and roads;
 - Paint bike lanes/shared use (“sharrows”) when re-paving/painting municipally controlled streets;
 - Adopt a policy to stripe crosswalks when re-paving/painting roads; and
 - Create bike parking areas in our downtown and other areas including bike racks, “fix-it” kits and access to water sources for refilling water bottles.
- Use Development Tools, including Development Agreements, to:
 - Require developers to include usable space for physical activity and recreation.
- Work toward achieving the goals of Berlin’s 2016-2018 Strategic Plan, including:

- Develop new organized recreation program plans to provide residents with opportunities for physical activity;
- Work with the Worcester County Health Department to expand the “Just Walk, Berlin” Program;
- Create regularly scheduled fitness programs in the Town parks; and
- Lead by example through establishing a regular walk around the Town with elected and appointed officials.

Access to Affordable Nutritious Foods

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Town of Berlin personnel responsible for the design and construction of parks, neighborhoods, streets, and business areas should make every effort to:

- Attract/Promote Healthy Food Retail through merchant meetings, by offering guidelines and by providing “Berlin HEAL Program” participant decals for Corner/Grocery Stores using the following strategies:
 - Encourage food retail establishments to promote healthy food offerings;
 - Encourage food retail establishments to offer “shelf” tours, particularly to elementary and middle school age children and their parents/guardians, highlighting healthy food options for busy families; and
 - Encourage food retail establishments to buy and promote locally grown produce and meats.
- Attract/Promote Healthy Food Retail through merchant meetings, by offering guidelines and by providing “Berlin HEAL Program” participant decals for Restaurants using the following strategy:
 - Encourage menu labeling with nutrition facts; and
 - Encourage establishments to buy and promote locally grown produce and meats
- Develop/Promote Community Gardens, Urban Agriculture, and/or Urban Farming using the following strategies:
 - Work toward identifying an area(s) for community gardening plots, using town-owned land where feasible;
 - Identify a partner organization/agency to oversee a community gardening program; and
 - Increase the Town’s assistance with the Berlin Library’s community garden.
- Offer healthy snacks at Town sponsored events as appropriate, such as:
 - Fruit, pretzels, and bottled water during Free Movie Nights; and
 - Bottled water during Clean-Up Berlin Day.

Municipal Workplace Wellness

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in order to promote wellness within the Town of Berlin, and to set an example for other businesses, the Town of Berlin pledges to adopt and implement a workplace wellness policy that will:

- Provide promotion of available programs offered through Town-contracted health insurance or other organization(s) and encourage employee participation;
- Provide health screening in cooperation with the Worcester County Health Department, Atlantic General Hospital, or other organizations/agencies; and

- Encourage physical activity in the municipal workplace by allowing and encouraging walking meetings.

Implementation

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the head of each affected agency or department should report back to the Town Council annually regarding steps taken to implement the Resolution, additional steps planned, and any desired actions that would need to be taken by the Council.

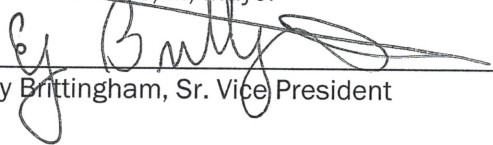
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Town Staff shall work with HEAL Cities & Towns Campaign Staff to explore HEAL policies and to identify those policies that are suitable for the Town of Berlin's unique local circumstances.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Staff will report back to this Council with recommendations not later than 120 days from the date of this Resolution.

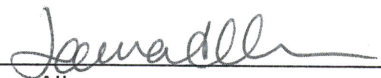
ADOPTED THIS 8th DAY OF June, 2015 BY THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF BERLIN BY AFFIRMATIVE VOTE OF 5 TO 0 OPPOSED WITH 0 ABSTAINING.



Wm. G. Williams, III, Mayor



Elroy Brittingham, Sr. Vice President

ATTEST: 

Laura Allen
Town Administrator