

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular Meeting
November 25, 2003, 7:00 PM

Present: Councilman Roy G. Hale, mayor pro tem, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman Thomas W. Fritz, Councilman Gene Ambrogio; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager, Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Town staff: Chief Cassin B. Gittings

Guests: (see roster)

Minutes:

Due to the absence of Mayor Eckman, Councilman Hale acted as mayor pro tem. Councilman Hale called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Treasurer's Report

Councilman Hale acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's Report dated October 31, 2003.

Petitions, Communications and Appearances (none)

Legislation

Ordinance 03-8 Property Tax Credits – Business Improvement Incentive Tax Credit (For Introduction) – For the purpose of creating a new Chapter 45 to provide for a real property tax credit to the owner(s) of any renovated or rehabilitated business property located within the Town of La Plata whose business property assessed value increases as a result of the renovation or rehabilitation of said real property; setting forth the purpose, scope, limitation and calculation of the tax credit; defining certain terms; and all matters generally related to the provision of a business improvement incentive tax credit.

Ms. Bembe provided a brief explanation of this ordinance, noting the Town has been working with the County to provide this incentive tax credit.

Ordinance 03-14 Sale of La Plata Town Hall and land as surplus property and authorizing the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of La Plata to execute contract of sale (For Adoption) – For the purpose of selling as surplus property the La Plata Town Hall and land addressed as 5 Garrett Avenue and 7 Garrett Avenue, and authorizing the Chief Executive Officer of the Town of La Plata to execute and deliver on behalf of the Town of La Plata the contract of sale of said property; and all matters relating to said surplus property and contract of sale.

Ms. Bembe provided a brief explanation of this ordinance, noting it satisfies the requirement that the Town declare the Town Hall and property as surplus, and authorizes the Chief Executive Officer to execute the contract of sale. Ms. Bembe advised that there was an amendment to designate this as an emergency ordinance.

Councilman Winkler made a motion to adopt Amendment No. 1 to Ordinance 03-14, to designate Ordinance 03-14 as an emergency ordinance. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Councilman Fritz made a motion to adopt Ordinance 03-14 as amended. Councilman Ambrogio seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Emergency Ordinance 03-15 La Plata Streetscape Memorandum of Understanding (For Adoption) – For the purpose of approving a certain Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Town of La Plata relating to the design and construction of certain roads, water and sewer lines and aerial utility structures in the Town; providing that the work to be undertaken pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding is not subject to certain Town procurement procedures; authorizing the Town Manager to negotiate and execute the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Town; providing that this Emergency Ordinance shall take effect on a certain date; and all matters generally related to the Memorandum of Understanding between the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Town of La Plata.

Ms. Bembe provided a brief explanation of this ordinance, noting it deals with the work to be conducted for the streetscape project.

Councilman Fritz made a motion to adopt Emergency Ordinance 03-15. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion. In discussion prior to the vote, Ms. Bembe confirmed for Councilman Winkler that the Town is working on obtaining the necessary rights-of-way. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Unfinished Business

La Plata Streetscape Appropriation

Councilman Ambrogio made a motion to appropriate \$250,000 from fund balance for the streetscape project for La Grange Avenue, Maple Avenue and Centennial Street Extension. Councilman Fritz asked that the motion be amended to appropriate a maximum of \$250,000 from the general fund balance for the streetscape project for La Grange Avenue, Maple Avenue and Centennial Street Extension. Councilman Ambrogio agreed to amend his motion. Councilman Fritz seconded the amended motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Council reports

Councilman Fritz reported that work is progressing to construct the pavilion and equipment at Tilghman Lake Park, and noted it is hoped it will be done before winter sets in.

Councilman Ambrogio reported on topics discussed at the Beautification Commission meeting held November 17: Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony is scheduled for 5:30 PM on December 7; Christmas Decorations judging is scheduled for 6:00 PM on December 22; and they welcomed a new member, Darlene Rose.

Councilman Winkler reported that the Historic District Commission met November 20 and listened to a presentation by the owner/developer of the Ellenwood property, which they wish to annex into the Town, subdivide into 31 lots and use some of the proceeds to repair the historic Ellenwood home which was damaged by the tornado. Councilman Winkler also reported that three warning sirens were ordered today, which will be installed in Clarks Run, Quailwood/Town wastewater treatment plant area, and King's Grant area. He advised they hope to install more in the future. Councilman Fritz asked that this topic be put on the next work session agenda.

Councilman Hale reported he agreed to meet next week with the Ellenwood developer due to its location bordering Ward IV.

New Business

Councilman Winkler noted that Ed McMahon's presentation at the MML conference in Cambridge included information on preserving community character and the importance of green space. Councilman Winkler advised that Mr. McMahon would come to the Town and make his presentation to the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, Vision Team and others. He would reduce his normal \$2000 fee to \$1000. Councilman Winkler encouraged the Council to support this. Councilman Hale remarked that the La Plata Business Association should be included. Councilman Fritz made a motion to authorize Town staff to arrange for Mr. McMahon to come to La Plata in January or February, and to spend up to \$1000. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Councilman Fritz noted that this would be Jay Friess' last meeting he would cover for the Maryland Independent as he was leaving. All members thanked Mr. Friess for his objectivity and fair and accurate reporting on the Town, and offered him their best wishes.

Chief Gittings reported that the La Plata Police Department had won the Maryland Chiefs Challenge for the third year in a row in the 10-19 sworn personnel category, with a 100% score, and noted that La Plata's seat belt compliance rate is 94%, up 3% from last year and 9-10% above the state average.

Public Forum

Paula Winkler advised that she and Cheryl McGuire met Saturday morning with Russell Watson, of Robin Hill Farm, and picked out ten 25' to 30' tall trees for the Oak Avenue tree planting project. She noted that all property owners have given their permission for planting on private property, and have agreed to take care of the trees. Ms. Winkler advised that the money for these trees came from donations from the Chaney Foundation, Building Industry Association and Maryland Mayors Association. Ms. Winkler also advised that five more maple trees donated

by Russell Watson had been delivered on Saturday. It was pointed out that the Town needs to arrange to have the special trees growing at the current Town Hall location moved to our new location, in particular the White oak which was given to the Town by the State of Maryland as a sapling from the Wye Oak.

There being no further business, Councilman Winkler made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 PM. Councilman Ambrogio seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk