

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
March 7, 2006, 4:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman R. Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer

Minutes:

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Noise Regulations

Description: Councilman Winkler wishes to discuss adoption of noise regulations.

Councilman Winkler discussed a need to specify decibel levels in the Town's noise ordinance, and to obtain a decibel meter to measure and enforce. He noted that the County specifies decibel levels in their ordinance. Councilman Winkler offered to work on reviewing the County's and Town's ordinances and provide proposed amending language.

Council consensus: The Town Council accepted Councilman Winkler's offer.

Apartment MFF

Description: The Town Manager will seek permission to assess Major Facility Fees on apartments, using actual water consumption.

Mr. Miller advised that the Town currently uses .63 EDUs as the basis for apartments and asked the Town Council to authorize him to base the Major Facility Fees on actual water use.

Council consensus: The Town Council directed Mr. Miller to obtain a wider range of use statistics for consideration by the Council.

TND School Seat Generation Rates

Description: The developers of Steeplechase have asked that the Town use school seat generation rates similar to Montgomery County TNDs.

Mr. Miller advised that Jerry Lenhart is asking the Town to use Montgomery County historical generation rates as the Town's generation rates for the next two years. The Town's ordinance provides for a review of the rates every two years. Mr. Miller would need the Town Council's agreement to use those generation rates.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed they needed to see a wider range of TND school seat generation rates before considering any change to the Town's generation rates.

Chairs – Community Room

Description: The Council will decide what grade of chairs will be placed in the Community Room at the Police Station.

Mr. Miller advised that the chairs have been ordered, and that best judgment was used in choosing them.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to tour the Police Station after it was furnished, and to time the grand opening to coincide with Celebrate La Plata Day.

Text Amendment – Town Code Chapter 13 – Council

Description: The Council has indicated interest in amending the amount of time a speaker may address the Council at meetings. A draft ordinance has been prepared for further discussion. The draft ordinance reflects the proposal to provide for a time limit of three minutes (unless further time is granted by the Council.)

Councilman Winkler read excerpts of the “ground rules” that the County Commissioners announce at their meetings, noting they set a 3-minute time limit and require speakers to register to speak on sign-in sheets they provide.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to introduce the ordinance at the March 14 Town Council meeting.

Text Amendment – Town Charter – Article VII Registration, Nominations and Elections

*Description: The Council and Town Staff have indicated a need to amend the Town Charter regarding Elections. A draft Resolution has been prepared **for discussion purposes only**. The Resolution deals with time of holding the primary election, certificates of nominations, and number of candidates. The voter identification issue is not included in the Resolution as that requirement is in the Town Code and may be handled by ordinance. A review of the draft Resolution by the Town Attorney will be necessary, as will any ordinance prepared to address the voter identification issue.*

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to include removing staggered terms and to include campaign finance provisions. Mr. Miller and Ms. Miner will discuss the draft with the Town Attorney in an upcoming meeting.

Draft ordinance – surplus property exchange agreement

Description: The Town Attorney has prepared a draft ordinance regarding the surplus property exchange agreement.

Mr. Miller explained the location of the properties and a brief history of the Town's proposed use of the Town's parcel as a potential site for a new wastewater treatment plant. The new plant was expected to cost \$6.9 million but bids came in at \$9 or \$10 million.

Joint meeting with the County Commissioners

Mr. Miller reminded the Town Council they would be meeting with the County Commissioners on April 25, at 4:00 PM, in the Town Hall. He asked that the Council email agenda topics to him or to Ms. Miner.

Sick Leave Bank

Description: The Town Manager will seek permission to adopt a policy similar to Charles County that allows employees to contribute some of their sick leave into a bank that can be used by other employees who are deficient of sick leave.

The Council had for review copies of Charles County's policy and Civista's policy. Mr. Miller advised that if the Town Council agreed, an interim policy could be created and included in the Personnel Regulations being prepared by Ms. Bembe when she returns to work.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to consider the County policy and check on the FMLA method of determining a "qualifying event."

Interview scheduled - Town Manager candidate

Mr. Miller advised that the Town Council is scheduled to interview a Town Manager candidate on March 8, at 6:00 PM. Following a brief discussion regarding the need to determine what questions the Council will ask those interviewed, the Town Council agreed to briefly discuss this during the special meeting which is scheduled that evening in order to call a closed session for the interview. Mr. Miller will not participate in the interviews. Ms. Miner will participate in the interviews.

Council Concerns, Issues and Questions

- Councilman Winkler asked the Town Council for permission to get price quotes for storm doors and storm windows for the Train Station, noting that the electric bill is very high even though the thermostat is set at 55 deg. in the winter and at 80 deg. in the summer when the building is not occupied.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed that Councilman Winkler should get price quotes.

- Councilman Winkler advised he spoke to Charles County government employee, Steve Staples, regarding the Washington Avenue sidewalk project, and noted that some of the preliminary work (easements) could be started now. Councilman Winkler offered to begin working on this. During the brief discussion which followed, it was noted that the new requirement of 5' wide sidewalks would put some of the sidewalk on private property, but that the previous requirement of 4' would allow the sidewalk to be in the County's right-of-way as much as possible.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to discuss this at the March 21 work session.

Update – storm water management devices

Mr. Miller provided an update on the State's requirement that the Town must take over storm water management ponds, and must inventory and inspect as to maintenance needs every storm water device in the Town. Mr. Miller noted that the Town will inspect and maintain residential storm water management devices but not those in commercial zones. Councilman Winkler advised he believes fences should be provided for safety reasons, especially around the storm water management pond in Jamestowne Subdivision.

Other business

- In response to Councilwoman Mudd, Mr. Miller advised that information regarding the status of the St. Mary's Avenue bid is in her mailbox; and agreed with her that the promotion of Michelle Miner to Assistant Town Manager was done under the authority of the Town Manager, and that funding is authorized by the Town Council.
- Councilwoman Mudd reported that the Kent Avenue Corridor Partnership will meet in the new police station community room on March 16, at 7:00 PM, to discuss plans for the Kent Avenue community's Easter event to be held on April 8, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM.
- Mayor Ambrogio lead a brief discussion regarding the proposed Walgreen's at the current site of the Roy Rogers Restaurant, and asked the Town Council to authorize Mr. Miller to speak to a representative of the developer, Phillips-Edison, and ask them to relocate the store to another site in the Town. Mayor Ambrogio felt it should not be located next to the existing CVS store.

Council consensus: The Town Council did not reach consensus to authorize Mr. Miller to speak to a representative of the developer.

There being no other discussion, Councilman Winkler moved to adjourn at 5:46 PM. Councilman Back seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk