

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
August 12, 2008, 7:00 PM

Present: Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Treasurer; Robert F. Stahl, Jr., Director of Operations; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department

Minutes:

Councilman Lucas acted as mayor pro tem and called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Port Tobacco River Watershed Restoration Action Strategy (WRAS)

Description: Karen Wiggen, Senior Planner-Environmental Programs, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, will provide a PowerPoint presentation. [Note: Ms. Wiggen provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Planning Commission at their May 2, 2007 meeting. Following a brief discussion, a motion was adopted to recommend to the Town Council that they adopt the WRAS.]

Mr. Stahl provided a brief description of the background on WRAS, noting that the Town Planning Commission recommended its approval at their May 2, 2007 meeting and that grant applicants recently approached the Town to partner in a restoration project.

Following Ms. Wiggen's PowerPoint presentation, Ms. Wiggen, Dave Gardiner, of the Port Tobacco River Conservancy, and Mr. Stahl answered questions posed by the Town Council. Information provided included:

- Grants as a possible funding resource to hook-up Walnut Hill homes to Town sewer.
- Bacteria testing and test sites (conducted by Port Tobacco River Conservancy).
- Options for Darley Drive include (1) connecting to the Town sewer system and (2) nitrogen and bacteria removal devices/retrofits for septic system tanks.
- Stormwater and stream buffer retrofits
- Grant requested of \$3.7 million, of which \$700,000-\$800,000 will be for Town projects, with the remaining for County projects, the largest of which (about \$1 million) would be to connect the Darley Drive homes to the sewer system.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to adopt the WRAS at their August 26 regular meeting.

Parking fines

Description: Discussion of recommended increases to parking violation fines (Town Code § 181-3.A.)

Chief Gittings was present to discuss recommended increases to parking violation fines, which included increasing fines currently set at \$15.00 to \$30.00, and increasing fines for parking in a fire lane from \$25.00 to \$75.00 and for illegally parking in a space restricted for the use of handicapped persons from \$50.00 to \$100.00. Chief Gittings provided parking violations fines information from Annapolis, Berwyn Heights and Greenbelt.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to increase fines currently set at \$15.00 to \$50.00, and increasing fines for parking in a fire lane from \$25.00 to \$150.00 and for illegally parking in a space restricted for the use of handicapped persons from \$50.00 to \$250.00. The Town Council further agreed to introduce an ordinance regarding the increases at the August 26 regular meeting.

La Plata Community Foundation

Description: Discussion of Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, and ordinance related to the formation of the Foundation – to make grants to organizations and community groups.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to modifications to the Articles of Incorporation: (1) add “Volunteer support organizations” to the list in item C.4 on page 2 [within the topic entitled “*THIRD: The purposes for which the Corporation is formed are: ...*”]; and (2) provide for only five directors on the Board of Directors [page 2, within the topic entitled “*SIXTH: The control and management, and all powers of the Corporation are vested in ...*”], one to be a Town Council representative and one to be a La Plata Business Association representative, and directed Town Staff to provide more information to the Town Council regarding the makeup of the other three members.

Matters of Information

Vacancy in Office of Mayor due to August 1, 2008 resignation of Mayor Ambrogio

The Town Council discussed the options available for filling the vacancy in the office of Mayor, which include (1) leave the office vacant until the next election; (2) Council elect a current Council member and then fill the Council vacancy; and (3) Council elect a person not currently on the Council.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council generally agreed they were not in favor of leaving the office vacant until the next election and agreed to bring their ideas and suggestions for discussion at the next work session.

In response to questions from the Council, Ms. Miner provided the following information:

- Still working on sidewalk maintenance criteria.
- Starbucks construction beginning.

- Will send Code Enforcement to Wal-Mart regarding need for clean-up behind the building. The Council asked that central Town also be looked at for possible need to look at Code for enforcement, and that a report be provided at a future work session.

Irrigation system ordinance

This ordinance is on the August 26 regular meeting agenda for adoption. Following a brief discussion, the Town Council agreed they were not ready to vote on this ordinance and would move to defer action to the September 23 meeting.

Future Work Session Topics (None)

There being no other business, Councilman Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 PM. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it carried. Following a short break, the Council moved into Closed Session.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk