

Mayor and Council Meeting  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
August 27, 2002, 7:00 PM

Present: Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman Thomas W. Fritz, Councilman Gene Ambrogio, Councilman Roy G. Hale; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier

Guests: (See attached roster)

Minutes:

In the absence of Mayor Eckman, Councilman Hale officiated and called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### Petitions, Communications and Appearances

#### Charles County Commissioners

Charles County Commissioners President Murray Levy and Commissioners Wm. Daniel Mayer, Al Smith, Robert Fuller and James Jarboe presented to the Town Council a check in the amount of \$150,000 to be used in restoring the downtown area. They complimented the Town for having done a "superb job" thus far. The Town Council thanked the Commissioners.

### Legislation

Ordinance 02-16 - Historic District Commission (For Introduction) - For the purpose of adding a new Chapter 11, consisting of Sections 11-1 through 11-8, inclusive, to the Code of the Town of La Plata (1998 Edition and Supplements); to establish an Historic District Commission for the Town of La Plata; to specify the composition and terms of the office of members of the Commission; to specify the powers and duties of the Commission; and all matters generally related to the establishment and operation of an Historic District Commission for the Town of La Plata.

Mr. Miller provided a brief explanation of this ordinance. He noted that no public hearing was required and it could be adopted at the next meeting.

Ordinance 02-17 Historic District (For Introduction) - For the purpose of requiring a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic District Commission before any permit shall be issued in any designated Town of La Plata historic area; providing that decisions of the Historic District Commission may be appealed to the Board of Appeals; creating a new Article VII setting forth the authority, purpose, designation procedure, guidelines, application and review procedure, appeal process and enforcement provisions granted to the Historic District Commission; and matters generally relating to the Historic District Commission.

Mr. Miller provided a brief explanation of this ordinance. He advised that public hearings would be held by the Planning Commission at their October meeting and by the Mayor and Council at their first

meeting in October. Councilman Winkler complimented Paula Winkler, Jack Warren, Cheryl McGuire and Patti Bembe for the work they had done on establishing an Historic District.

Resolution 02-5 Community Legacy Program (For Adoption) - For the purpose of approving the designation of a Community Legacy Area and application and receipt of financing for a Community Legacy Project in the Town of La Plata to be financed either directly by the Department of Housing and Community Development (the "Department") of the State of Maryland or through other departments or agencies of the State of Maryland and all matters relating to said Community Legacy Program.

Mr. Miller briefly explained that Julia Koster of the Governor's Office of Smart Growth has offered to help write grants and that this resolution is needed prior to the September 8 deadline.

Councilman Fritz offered a motion to adopt Resolution 02-5. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

#### Unfinished Business

##### Council Reports

Councilman Fritz reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission will meet next month. He also reported that the first meeting of the Reforestation Committee would be held in the Town Hall on Wednesday, August 28, at 4:00 PM.

Councilman Winkler reported on disbursements from the \$478,000+ that has been donated to the Charles County Disaster Relief Fund, noting that of the 120-130 families helped to date, approximately 90% have La Plata addresses. He also noted that those who need stump grinding and stump removal services from the County should call Cathy Evans (301-645-0509) prior to the September 14 deadline. Councilman Winkler also reported that office space at Potomac Square has been leased for the people hired by Southern Maryland Works, and should be staffed by September 15.

Councilman Hale asked Mr. Miller for a status report on assistance provided by the State of Maryland. Mr. Miller responded that the Office of Smart Growth is working on our stormwater management regulations, the Department of Business and Economic Development provided a grant in the amount of \$600,000, and the Department of Transportation is working on a \$15 million upgrade project for Charles Street.

Councilman Ambrogio reported on topics pertaining to Ward 3:

1) A new stop sign has been installed on Kalmia Court in Kent Square to discourage speeding. The Town and SMECO reviewed the streetlights and determined they're the most watts possible. The Town is looking at cutting back trees and/or adding more streetlights.

2) Regarding the comments made at the McPhee annexation hearing that the intersection of St. Mary's Avenue and Glen Albin Road is dangerous and about the speeding on St. Mary's Avenue, the Town is looking to get help from SHA consultants to address these issues.

3) Councilman Ambrogio asked Paula Winkler to report on the issue regarding extending the sidewalk on St. Mary's Avenue, as requested in a petition presented at a previous meeting by Pat Howe on behalf of Sacred Heart Church parishioners. Ms. Winkler reported that the Streetscape Task Force will present a plan to the Town Council in September or October. If it is determined to be affordable and is adopted, the plan proposes to upgrade the sidewalk, curb and landscaping down to a connection with the existing sidewalk at Charleston Terrace subdivision. The plan will also include a proposal for streetscaping La Grange Avenue and Oak Avenue.

Councilman Ambrogio reminded everyone to call Town Hall to report items that need to be remedied that they notice as they travel around the town, noting he has received a good response from the Town's Public Works Department to requests he's passed along to the Town Manager.

In response to Councilman Winkler, Mr. Miller advised he would speak to Mr. Facchina regarding the gravel on Centennial Street.

#### Public Forum

Chris Thompson, 122 Kalmia Court, spoke about the issues reported earlier by Councilman Ambrogio, noting that the new stop sign installed in front of his house has not deterred speeding, and that the street lighting needs to be improved. He suggested blocking the rear access to Cedar Court to make it one-way only. Mr. Thompson mentioned there had been two drive-by shootings and vandalism in this neighborhood. He acknowledged the grant received by the Charles County Sheriff's Office (CCSO) for a "COPS" program in the neighborhood and noted he has seen CCSO patrol officers. He asked why he very rarely sees patrol officers from the La Plata Police Department. Chief Gittings responded that due to the "COPS" program grant, the CCSO patrol officers will be seen more in that neighborhood. He further advised that the La Plata Police Department does routine patrols there.

Councilman Ambrogio asked Mr. Miller about the possibility of installing a barrier at Kalmia Court and Cedar Court, similar to that in place in Hickory Ridge which allows for access only by emergency vehicles. Mr. Miller remarked that the Town always prefers two entrances for subdivisions for emergency access purposes and that this type of barrier could be used if that is the policy of the Mayor and Council.

Regarding the street lighting issue, Councilman Hale remarked that the Town Council should look at the situation and discuss it. Councilman Winkler remarked that, if the Town can install really nice streetlights on Centennial Street where no one lives, we should be able to install the same nice streetlights where people do live.

Chief Gittings reported that three thousand trees are being stored on the lot behind the police station, and that they are slated to be used for reforestation. They are being watered on a regular basis but need to be planted as soon as possible. Chief Gittings also reported that the police department received a \$5300 grant to purchase a laser radar unit and his officers are being certified to use the unit. He further noted that the department has received \$28,000 in grant money for equipment purchases in recent years. In response to Councilman Winkler's question regarding availability of participating in the community speed watch program, Chief Gittings remarked that residents who wish to participate would receive four hours of training. Participants take no enforcement action. They report vehicle tag information to the

police department, who then send letters to the registered owners regarding the activity observed.

Bob Jacobs asked for a status report on the McPhee annexation petition. Councilman Hale and Mr. Miller responded that the Mayor and Council have not voted on this petition, that they would discuss it at their next work session, and could vote on this at the next business meeting. Councilman Winkler commented that two adjacent property owners could be coming to the Town for annexation if the McPhee property is annexed, and noted he believes the Town should be diligent about obtaining information regarding the number and size of dwelling units due to his concern about the Town's ability to provide water and sewer services.

John Wilhelm, Queen Victoria Street, asked if the Mayor and Council would hear any more public input on the McPhee annexation petition. Councilman Hale advised there would not be any other public input beyond that given at the public hearings held by the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council. Councilman Ambrogio encouraged allowing Dr. Wilhelm to offer his comments. Dr. Wilhelm expressed his concern that the Town already has enough work to do since the tornado, and noted he was not sure we need this annexation. Don McGuire asked the Town to remember to consider public safety needs (fire and rescue services) when you add to the Town. In response to Councilman Winkler, Mr. McGuire acknowledged it would be very beneficial to have a representative of the fire and rescue services at a work session to discuss an annexation petition. Paula Winkler asked the Town to consider the amount of land already in Town rather than annexing any more, particularly in the northwest area. Councilman Hale advised that the Town looks at each petition very carefully, and noted that each annexation must stand on its own merits.

In response to Councilman Hale's question, Mr. McGuire briefly described the sequence of events in the operation of the emergency warning siren.

There being no further business, Councilman Fritz made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 PM. Councilman Ambrogio seconded the motion and it carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier