

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
June 12, 2007, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Joseph W. Norris, Acting Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Minutes:

Mayor Ambrogio called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Sewer update

Description: Bill Eckman will present updated information on the sewer project.

Mr. Eckman provided a PowerPoint presentation (and a hand-out covering the points contained in the presentation) regarding the sewer project, including information about financing the project through major facility fees.

Grasso annexation agreement

Description: Grasso has responded to the Council's response regarding amending the annexation agreement, including the Council's \$150,000 donation request.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to accept the \$10,000, have the Town Attorney prepare an amendment to the annexation agreement with the best interests of the Town in mind, and that all additional expenses, including the Town Attorney fees, are to be paid by Grasso.

Discuss possible legislation regarding offensive flags

Description: Councilman Lucas wishes to discuss legislation to deal with offensive flags.

Councilman Lucas reported that a resident in Hawthorne Greene brought to his attention the offensive flag which was displayed by a homeowner in that community, pictures of which were shown to the Council. Following a brief discussion, which included acknowledgement of protection under the First Amendment of a property owner's right to display the offensive flag, it was noted that the Homeowners Association will need to handle this.

Civista donation

Description: Mayor Ambrogio wishes to discuss a donation to Civista's Capital Fund.

Mayor Ambrogio reported that Jim Simpson, Chairman of Civista's Capital Campaign, asked that the Town make a monetary contribution, and noted that Mr. Simpson is aware that the Town provides "in kind" contributions. During discussion, it was noted that other companies donate money and that the County Commissioners donated \$1,000,000. Councilwoman Mudd

suggested that the Town donate \$10,000, which may be given over a 3-year period. Councilmen Newman and Lucas expressed disagreement with spending taxpayers' money in this manner. Councilman Goldsmith stated he felt there were pros and cons regarding the Town making a donation, and that if the donation is made, then the Town Council should be prepared to explain to Town residents that tax money was used in this manner, including putting an article in the Town Notes newsletter. Councilwoman Mudd stated she would make a motion at the June 19 meeting to make a donation to Civista.

Matters of Information

Reminder: June 19 is the next regular meeting.

Updates provided by Mr. Norris:

Meeting room cameras: Patti Bembe is working with Chris Comer of Comcast to procure the cameras.

Town gateway signs (Rosewick) – design proposal: Cathy Flerlage and Carol Rollins met with John May of SHA, looked at sites, and will bring a design proposal to the Town Council at a future meeting.

Privacy fence between Phoenix Run community and neighboring community – location of the fence/ownership of property: Mr. Norris stated that, based on review of the plat and tax map, it was his opinion that the fence is on an easement and open space owned by the Town and not on private lots; however, he noted that a survey would be needed to assure this. The Town Council agreed that the fence should be removed in its entirety and the nearby property be cleaned up as well as possible.

Chain link fence across pathway linking Phoenix Run to Anne Arundel Avenue – ownership of pathway: Mr. Norris advised that, based on review of the tax map, the Town owns the open space property in question. The Town Council agreed that the pathway be opened up, but that this should be presented to the Beautification Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission to review and recommend a plan to beautify the pathway.

Results of early warning devices/sirens test conducted on June 7

Mr. Norris provided copies of a memorandum from Patti Bembe, dated June 11, 2007, which detailed the results of the operational test conducted June 7. During discussion, Councilman Newman asked that future publicity describe what the signals are and what they mean.

Future Work Session Topics

- Finalize parks in lieu fee issue
- GP Homes – Heritage Green update (July 10)
- Checks and balances to assure optimum operation of WWTP

- Energy credit policy – encourage conservation
- Use of gray water at homeowner level (requires change to plumbing code)
- Summer help program
- Resolve Town Hall landscaping; grass vs. artificial grass
- Staff to check on all parks, open/close parks

There being no other business, Mayor Ambrogio moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 PM. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion and it carried. Following a short break, the Council moved into closed session.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk