

Council of the Town of La Plata
Charles County Government Building, La Plata, Maryland
Joint meeting with County Commissioners
November 18, 2008, 4:00 PM

Present: Town of La Plata

Mayor Roy G. Hale, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas; Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Robert W. Oliphant, Treasurer; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department

Charles County

Commissioner President Wayne Cooper, Commissioners Edith J. Patterson, Reuben B. Collins, II, Samuel N. Graves, Jr. and Gary V. Hodge; Paul W. Comfort, County Administrator; Joyce Schmidt, Chief of Staff; Denise Ferguson, Clerk to the Commissioners; Department of Planning and Growth Management: Melvin C. Beall, Jr., Director; Jason Groth, Program Manager-Adequate Public Facilities Program; Sheriff Rex Coffey, Charles County Sheriff's Office

Minutes:

The meeting convened at 4:02 PM

Update: La Plata Police Department/Charles County Sheriff's Office

Chief Gittings and Sheriff Coffey agreed that the two departments continue to work well together. Chief Gittings also acknowledged that the La Plata Police Department receives the full cooperation and support from the Charles County Department of Emergency Services.

Fire and EMS needs/growth in the Town of La Plata

Commissioner Graves advised he requested this item be placed on the agenda prior to learning that the Town and representatives of the fire department meet on a regular basis.

Steve Shahan, Chief, La Plata Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. (LPVFD), provided insight as to the status of fire protection in the Town, including information regarding the department's equipment, members, officers, number of drivers, number of calls responded to and success rate, and response time. Chief Shahan noted that the LPVFD is working with the Town to improve the ISSO rating from Class 4 to Class 3. In response to Commissioner Cooper's question regarding whether there are adequate facilities to provide service to Heritage Green, Chief Shahan advised that the issue of the railroad crossing is still a problem but that the LPVFD will still provide adequate service to Heritage Green, and pointed out that the LPVFD is located in the center of the growth area.

Update on the proposed number of dwelling units per year – Heritage Green and Stagecoach Crossing

Mr. Mears advised that start dates for these developments, and the number of dwellings built, are dependent on when the economy improves. First housing starts could be in 2011.

Status update: Traffic Study

Jason Groth reported that the consultant advised him this morning that the final product for La Plata is due in mid-January. They are completing the safety audit of traffic problem areas in the Town and the bike/pedestrian analysis.

A brief discussion was held regarding pending installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Rosewick Road and Washington Avenue, which is expected to begin soon, and the need to determine how to inform/encourage the public to use Rosewick Road/St. Charles Parkway. It was also noted that the County is just starting to look at synchronization of traffic signals and will include Rosewick Road.

Councilman Goldsmith led a brief discussion regarding the County allowing a bike/pedestrian path by increasing the pavement width of Washington Avenue rather than requiring acceleration/deceleration lanes for a proposed subdivision of property located at Washington Avenue and E. Hawthorne Drive. He noted that he provided a copy of the subdivision plan to Commissioner Graves. In response to Commissioner Graves, Mr. Beall noted that the County has standards for road improvements, and that when you deviate from them there could be an increase in liability or maintenance costs. Mr. Beall advised he would need to consult with legal counsel to determine if there are any existing precedents. He further advised that the County sometimes allows a bike trail to be adjacent to a roadway but that a pedestrian pathway cannot be co-located with a bike trail. Commissioner Cooper reminded all present that it had been agreed to wait for results of the traffic study before deciding the sidewalk issue.

Next Meeting: Spring, 2009 Joint Meeting with County Commissioners and Towns of Indian Head and La Plata - Proposed Date/location

It was agreed that the next meeting would be hosted by the Town of La Plata, held in May, 2009, and that the Town of Indian Head would be invited to attend. [*The date of the meeting will be determined at a later date.*]

There being no further discussion, the joint meeting concluded at 4:42 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk