

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular Meeting
February 10, 2004, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor William F. Eckman, 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, Town Clerk

Town staff: Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer; Chief Cassin B. Gittings, La Plata Police Department

Guests: (see roster)

Pursuant to the requirement of Annotated Code of Maryland State Government Article Section 10-509(c)(2), this statement is included in these minutes:

A closed session of the Council of the Town of La Plata was held at 4:08 PM, Friday, January 16, 2004, in the Town Hall main meeting room.

Present: Mayor Eckman, Councilmen Winkler, Fritz, Ambrogio and Hale; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department.

On a motion made by Councilman Fritz, seconded by Councilman Winkler, and by unanimous consent of the members present, the session was closed. The authority under which the session was closed was Annotated Code of Maryland State Government Article Section 10-508(a)(8): Consult with staff, consultants, or other individuals about pending or potential litigation. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss pending litigation. No action was taken. The meeting adjourned at 5:18 PM.

Pursuant to the requirement of Annotated Code of Maryland State Government Article Section 10-509(c)(2), this statement is included in these minutes:

A closed session of the Council of the Town of La Plata was held at 7:01 PM, Tuesday, January 20, 2004, in the Town Hall main meeting room.

Present: Mayor Eckman, Councilmen Winkler, Fritz, Ambrogio and Hale; and Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Frederick C. Sussman, Town Attorney; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department

On a motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman Winkler, and by unanimous consent of the members present, the session was closed. The authority under which the session was closed was Annotated Code of Maryland State Government Article Section 10-508(a)(7): Consult with legal counsel to obtain legal advice. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss pending litigation. No action was taken. The meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Minutes:

Mayor Eckman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of January minutes

Councilman Fritz made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 13, 2004 regular meeting, January 16, 2004 special meeting, January 16, 2004 closed meeting, January 20, 2004 special meeting, January 20, 2004 closed meeting, and January 20, 2004 Manager-Council meeting. Councilman Hale seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Mayor Eckman acknowledged the presence of a special guest, James Lancaster, a Boy Scout with Troop 1321, who is working on the communications badge.

Petitions, Communications and Appearances

Darlene Fairfax, La Plata Business Association (LPBA)

Ms. Fairfax presented the marketing materials developed by the LPBA and described the distribution plan for the brochure. Mayor Eckman recommended that Ms. Fairfax and Mr. DiMisa contact Joe Lehan of Comcast to tape a presentation for Comcast's local programming. Councilman Fritz suggested they also contact Dave Jenkins to obtain a list of all the high tech firms in the area, to include in their distribution plan. The Council complimented the LPBA for the great job they did in producing this brochure, and thanked them for all of their efforts.

Phil Mueller, Facchina Group

As part of his presentation on the design of the new Town Hall, Mr. Mueller displayed a large version of the handouts provided to the Council of the north elevation, site plan, floor plan, and traffic circulation scheme, described the committee meetings process and staff input for the space requirements, and responded to questions from the Council. Mayor Eckman invited Council members to attend the next building committee meeting on Thursday if they have any further comments.

Dick Reckeweg, Port Tobacco Players (PTP)

Mr. Reckeweg advised that the Players awarded contracts for construction and renovation of the Port Tobacco Players Theatre in the amount of \$814,000, and asked the Town to consider helping them by abating the building permit fee of \$4,000.00.

Mayor Eckman recommended that the Town should support the Port Tobacco Players, noting they participate in Town events, including the upcoming May event, at no cost to the Town, and recommended the Town grant the abatement. Councilman Hale made a motion to abate the building permit fee for Port Tobacco Players. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion. In discussion prior to the vote, Councilman Ambrogio asked about tax abatement. It was noted that the PTP has applied for abatement to property taxes, and that they do not qualify for the tax credit related to the tornado rebuild program. Vote: motion passed by unanimous vote.

Legislation

Ordinance 03-20 Central Business Transition District and correction of omission of R-8 zoning district in list of districts and in buffer yard regulations and table (For Introduction) – For the purpose of creating Central Business Transition District (CBT), specifying criteria and regulations for CBT, and all matters generally relating thereto; and correcting the omission of R-8 zoning district in the list of districts and in the buffer yard regulations and table.

Mr. Miller provided a brief explanation of Ordinance 03-20, and advised the public hearings are scheduled for the March 2 Planning Commission meeting and March 9 Council meeting.

Unfinished Business

Train Station paving bid

Tom O'Farrell, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, presented the paving plan and answered questions posed by the Council. It was noted that the paving bid does not include landscaping. Mr. O'Farrell advised he has approached both the La Plata and Charles County garden clubs for help regarding landscaping.

Noting that Parks and Recreation funds are available for this project, Councilman Hale made a motion to approve the paving bid of \$12,167.00. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion. Following a brief discussion before the vote, the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Tilghman Lake Park

Mr. O'Farrell went over the "Vision for Tilghman Lake Park" handout, displayed the site map, and advised they hope to have the park open some time this summer.

Speaking as a resident of Oak Avenue, Mr. O'Farrell thanked the Council and Paula Winkler for the ten large Oak trees that were planted on Oak Avenue.

Council reports

Councilman Ambrogio reported that the Kent Avenue Revitalization Committee met last week and discussed details of the neighborhood clean-up day planned for March 27. Councilman Ambrogio remarked that the St. Mary's Avenue roadbed appears to be improved.

Councilman Fritz acknowledged Mr. O'Farrell's presentation on Parks and Recreation topics, and advised that their next meeting is on February 11 at 5:00 PM.

Councilman Hale reported that Port Tobacco Players will be providing a program on May 2 as part of the 3-day La Plata Days event. He noted that the rest of the event is still in the planning stage. Mr. O'Farrell noted that the Civista Run is being held on May 1, starting at 8:30 AM.

Mayor Eckman reported that progress is moving well on the new Town Hall project.

New Business

Mayor Eckman advised that motions were needed for closed sessions on February 13 and February 10.

Motion for closed session on 2-13-04

Councilman Ambrogio made a motion to conduct a closed session on February 13, 2004, at 4:00 p.m., pursuant to *Annotated Code of Maryland* Section 10-508(a)(1)(i) – Discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yeas: Mayor Eckman, Councilmen Fritz, Ambrogio and Hale. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Motion for closed session on 2-10-04

Councilman Hale made a motion to conduct a closed session immediately following this meeting, pursuant to *Annotated Code of Maryland* Section 10-508(a)(3), to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Yeas: Mayor Eckman, Councilmen Fritz, Ambrogio and Hale. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

Public Forum

Harlan Lang asked if there was a written procedure to follow when the crossing arms come down at the railroad crossing but there is no train approaching. He noted it had taken an hour for someone to arrive the last time this happened. Chief Gittings advised that Charles County Sheriff's Office notifies CSX, who responds according to their own timetable. Chief Gittings also advised that temporary measures are usually taken to raise the arms until the CSX repair crew arrives. Mayor Eckman advised Mr. Lang that the Town, county and state governments have no jurisdiction over the railroad tracks, but that an attempt will be made to be more attentive to future incidents.

There being no further business, Councilman Fritz made a motion to adjourn at 8:15 PM. Councilman Hale seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk