

Mayor and Council Meeting  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
November 26, 2002, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor William F. Eckman, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman Thomas W. Fritz, Councilman Gene Ambrogio; Councilman Roy G. Hale; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Guests: (See attached roster)

Minutes:

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

Mayor Eckman announced the death this morning of Bill Phipps, who had retired almost two years ago from full-time work in the Town's Public Works Department and returned to work part-time as our building and grounds maintenance person for Town Hall, the police station, and Wills Park community building, and also worked at all of the Town events. Mayor Eckman asked all to rise for a moment of silence in memory of Bill Phipps.

#### Treasurer's Report

Mayor Eckman acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's Reports dated September 30, 2002 (presented at the October 22 meeting) and dated October 31, 2002 (presented at the November 19 work session.)

#### Petitions, Communications and Appearances

##### Presentation to Harlan F. Lang

Mayor Eckman presented a Town Seal to Mr. Lang, expressing the Town's appreciation for his volunteer fund raising for the La Plata Disaster Relief Fund. Mr. Lang presented a check in the amount of \$200.00, noting this brings his grand total to \$6500.00 fund raising for the La Plata and the Charles County relief funds.

#### Legislation (none)

#### Unfinished Business

##### Council Reports

Councilman Hale reported that Ray Becmer, chairman of the Planning Commission, would be resigning effective December 4, 2002.

Councilman Fritz reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission would be meeting on December 4 regarding the new park and hope to bring meaningful possibilities to the Town Council. He also noted that when the Parks and Recreation Commission has drafted what they hope to have in Agricopia, they would forward it to the Town Manager so it could be sent to the developer.

Councilman Ambrogio reported that the Beautification Commission met November 18 and asked Joe Harrison to comment. Mr. Harrison reported the Beautification Commission finalized plans for their Christmas events: tree lighting ceremony on December 8, (Parks and Recreation Commission) Breakfast with Santa on December 14, outdoor Christmas decorations contest judging on December 23. He also noted that the new Christmas lights had been installed on the tree we use on Civista's property which borders our front yard. Mr. Harrison suggested that the Leyland cypress planted in the front yard, which should be about 20' tall in four to six years, be used as the Town's Christmas tree.

Councilman Ambrogio reported that the Town Council held a morning work session on November 19, and discussed seven issues regarding forming an environmental task force for the Meadows neighborhood: (1) Rental property licensing ordinance enforcement will begin in January; (2) Homeowners Associations - Kent Square has an HOA; it is hoped the Meadows will be able to form an active HOA; (3) Olde Colony Apartments activity/intention to refurbish; (4) Still working with SMECO on lighting issues; (5) Law enforcement cooperative effort between La Plata Police Department and Charles County Sheriff's Office; (6) Home ownership program information provided by Lem Carpenter and Pat King of Charles County Community Services; and (7) Captain Wyant of CCSO advised they should receive results in March from the surveys sent to neighborhood residents.

Councilman Ambrogio noted that the Town should respond to what the neighborhood residents want at the Caroline Drive park: more lighting, no activities, and clear the vegetation so it is just open space.

Councilman Winkler reported on two topics: (1) The Historic District Commission held a public hearing on the historic district landmarks designation ordinance and recommended it be approved. The Commission will be approaching the Town Council to ask that the Town provide something similar to the State's tax credits or at least a plaque to be placed on the building noting its historic district status. (2) Chris Jakubiak is working on promoting businesses in La Plata. Southern Maryland Works is working to identify businesses damaged by the tornado that have returned, have gone out of business, and new businesses. Councilman Winkler remarked that this would be a good time to reactivate the La Plata Business District Commission.

Mayor Eckman reported on his tour of the Facchina building, noting it is an impressive building, and described some of the businesses anticipated to be tenants: a steakhouse and a hair dresser on the first floor, Facchina's corporate offices on the top floors. He noted that four of the

temporary office trailers are gone. In response to Mayor Eckman, Councilman Hale remarked that the Planning Commission has seen preliminary drawings of Mr. Facchina's office condominium buildings planned for that site.

Mayor Eckman reported that the Design Review Board work is going well and that the Vision Implementation Team has finished reviewing the design review guidelines, which will be introduced at the December 10 meeting. Hearings are scheduled for January for the Planning Commission and the Mayor and Council.

At Mayor Eckman's request, Paula Winkler provided a brief update on the streetscape project. Ms. Winkler noted that there was a good turn-out at the last public open house and an enthusiastic response. The Streetscape Task Force will meet again before presenting their final report to the Mayor and Council. In response to Councilman Hale, Ms. Winkler acknowledged that the task force is aware of the letter from Christ Church and are having the engineer look at their concerns. The task force plans to meet with Christ Church Council regarding their concerns. Mayor Eckman remarked that he noticed that small trees had been planted in front of the courthouse and he asked County Commissioners President Murray Levy if they planned to replace the large evergreens they had used as Christmas trees every year. Mr. Levy advised that the County is waiting for the final report on the streetscape project and will cooperate with the proposal.

In response to Mayor Eckman's question, Joe Harrison advised that SMECO has the wiring in place to put the Christmas lights up on the electric poles, which Bobbie Baldus said would be done this Sunday.

Councilman Fritz confirmed meeting dates for December: Town Council meetings on December 10 at 7:00 PM, December 13 at 7:00 AM to 12:00 noon. Town Council meetings scheduled for December 3, December 24 and December 31 have been cancelled. Vision Implementation Team will be meeting December 10, 9:00 AM to 12:00 noon.

### New Business

#### Open House - December 30, 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Mayor Eckman announced and invited all to the Holiday Open House at Town Hall on Monday, December 30, from 4:00 PM to 7:00 PM.

Mayor Eckman led a brief discussion regarding having an event this spring to mark the first anniversary of the tornado, noting that many people are aiming to return to their buildings by April 28. The Council agreed that planning should begin now.

Public Forum

Chief Gittings reported on several items: (1) Sheriff Davis is allocating \$5000 for three street lights on Caroline Drive in the Meadows (two at Jennie Run Drive and one at the park); (2) More trees were delivered to the lot behind the police station; (3) Charles County Chamber of Commerce awarded the annual law enforcement award to the La Plata Police Department for the work they did during the tornado.

Mike Hanks, President of Quailwood Homeowners Association, received an update on the reforestation plan. Paula Winkler advised planting would begin on December 2 in the Morgans Ridge area and will take 30 to 50 days to clear. Ms. Winkler noted they will begin replacing trees behind the Wastewater Treatment Plant by the end of the year or in January.

Councilman Fritz invited other homeowners associations to visit King's Grant to see how working with the State's grant fund programs helps with landscaping. He noted that the planting material is provided gratis, with the labor provided by the homeowners association.

Paula Winkler suggested that, in conjunction with the April 28 anniversary event, a memorial tree be planted on Town property to represent the Town's rebirth. She suggested using the National Tree, a form of White Oak.

Councilman Winkler spoke about Bill Phipps, who was always doing work around the Town Hall and helping with special events, and to whom we could no longer say thank you. Councilman Winkler thanked the Town Clerk for the work she does for the Town Council.

There being no further business, Councilman Hale made a motion to adjourn at 7:46 PM. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier  
Town Clerk