

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
June 10, 2008, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Robert J. Stahl, Director of Operations

Minutes:

Mayor Ambrogio called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Budget transfers

Description: Discussion of budget transfers.

Ms. Miner provided a brief explanation of the budget transfers and advised that this would be on the June 17 agenda.

Audio recording of all public meetings of the Town Council

Description: Discuss having audio recordings of all public meetings of the Town Council.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to begin audio recording all public meetings of the Town Council, starting with the first work session in July.

Sidewalk maintenance

Description: Councilman Goldsmith wishes to discuss how the Town handles and pays for sidewalk repairs.

Mr. Stahl provided handouts of information from Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) (*Public Works Liability Series – Cracking Sidewalk Liability*; LGIT News, Winter 2006) and Town Code § 170-16 Maintenance of sidewalks by property owner, and read a portion of the LGIT information regarding rule of law in Maryland requiring "...local governments to keep their streets, sidewalks, and footways, and the areas contiguous to them, in a reasonably safe condition for travel...".

Councilman Goldsmith provided copies of a "Memo for the record" [*included as an attachment to the original minutes*] and led a discussion regarding the need to plan and prioritize criteria for repair and maintenance of sidewalks and stormwater management facilities. Discussion also included a question from a resident regarding the lack of a grate over a large storm water outflow. Mr. Stahl explained that inlets were provided with grates but placing a grate over the outflow end can cause clogging during storm events, which then causes flooding.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to the following: (1) Survey all sidewalks in Town and bring results to the Town Council; (2) Town Council to develop policy regarding sidewalk repair and maintenance; (3) Stormwater management facility repair and maintenance policy also needs to be developed and should be similar to that for sidewalk repair and maintenance; and (4) New construction – sidewalks: Review Town Code and consider provisions to provide flexibility to allow the Town Council to consider requiring sidewalk installation on a case by case basis, and create an in lieu of sidewalk fund.

Personnel manual

Description: Continue discussion of the draft personnel manual.

During discussion, Ms. Miner advised that since the last discussion at the May 20th work session, two additional policies (Section 14-15. Benevolent Donation of Accrued Leave; Article 25. Computers, Operating Systems and Internet Use) had been developed and added to the draft, and that changes requested by the Town Council had also been included. The Town Council requested the following additional modifications be included:

- Article 1. General Provisions – Include a provision that all Town employees will obey all laws while in Town vehicles, except police officers when using lights and sirens.
- Section 3-9. – Include a provision that the Town pays for DOT physicals.
- Section 12-2.(a), 2nd paragraph – Reword to reflect that every attempt should be made to establish that the employee cannot get time off.
- Section 16-5.(r) – the letter “r” is missing.
- Section 16-5.(t) and (v) – provide different terminology to replace the word “excessive.”

Council consensus: Following review and discussion, the Town Council agreed in the majority regarding including the additional policy, Section 14-15., agreed regarding including the additional policy, Article 25, and to including all of the modifications developed during this work session and listed above. The Town Council directed that the draft personnel manual be sent to the Town Attorney for review and then be brought back to the Town Council for discussion at a work session in July.

Matters of Information

Southern Maryland Rescue Teams fundraiser request

Ms. Miner led a brief discussion regarding a request from Jacqueline L. Schauer-Long to use the Town Hall to conduct a fundraiser event (“1 SMART Event”) for local animal rescues and shelters.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that Ms. Schauer-Long should be advised that the Town must decline the request to use the Town Hall for a fundraiser event, but that the Town supports the endeavor and invites her to come to the Friday evening concerts to give public service announcements regarding the fundraising efforts.

- Discussion to be held at Town staff meeting to develop a “top priorities” list for the Town Council.
- Reminder – special meeting/closed session scheduled for Saturday, June 28, 2:15 PM, to interview potential candidates for Town Treasurer.
- On June 6, the Town went to settlement on the purchase of the Alban Tractor property, \$1.75 million.
- The issue regarding traffic on Graves Avenue from the liquor store is to be brought to the Town Manager’s attention.
- Staff was asked to check on why there was no “all clear” message after the recent tornado siren activation.
- Councilman Goldsmith volunteered to emcee the June 13 concert in the Mayor’s absence.
- The Design Review Board will present a written recommendation to the Town Council that the Town Seal be painted on the Rosewick water tower, and that all other water towers in the Town be painted the same blue and have the Town Seal painted on them.
- The “old Town” informational sign, which is a priority of the Town Council, will be installed this year. The site may be along Charles Street, near the soccer field, but the Town must ask the County regarding this site. Suggested site – across the street on the Posey property.

There being no other business, Mayor Ambrogio moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:28 PM. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk