

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
May 20, 2008, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd [*arrived at 7:04 PM*]; Councilman Vic E. Newman; Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Treasurer

Minutes:

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

Matters of Council Discussion

Irrigation systems

Description: Discuss legislation requiring permits and inspection for new irrigation systems, and limiting potable water irrigation systems.

Mr. Mears led the discussion regarding the draft legislation to regulate irrigation systems and prohibit use of potable water in those systems. During discussion, it was noted that:

- Sprinklers are not included and are more water wasteful.
- Information will be provided on the Town's web site and to the plumbing/contractor community to inform of the Town's water conservation efforts.
- The Town has the authority to limit the usage of water, per § 186-2A. of the Town Code. [*...The town reserves the right to impose at any time such restrictions on the use of water as in its judgment may appear necessary.*]

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that Mr. Mears should finalize the legislation and have it reviewed by the Town Attorney prior to introduction by the Town Council.

Filling Swimming Pools

Description: Discussion of water and sewer rates for filling swimming pools.

Mr. Mears described the current administrative practice of allowing a credit on the sewer usage portion of their utility bill when a Town resident notifies the Town of an initial fill of a swimming pool. Due to the sensitive nature of water consumption/conservation issues, Mr. Mears recommended that the practice either be ceased or that a policy be developed to fairly administer the credit, which the Town Council would sanction.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that no credit should be allowed. Mr. Mears will advise Town staff to discontinue the practice.

Residential annexation request

Description: The Town has been asked to annex a residential property on Washington Avenue to help alleviate a failed water situation.

Mr. Mears described the request of a Washington Avenue resident whose well is failing, and who may be eligible for loan funding through the State to assist with annexation and connection-related expenses. During discussion, information was provided regarding the associated costs of annexation, water and sewer connections, future utility bills and real estate taxes. Mr. Mears noted that the property owner wants to be exempted from the requirement to connect to Town sewer, and further noted that the Town Code states that property owners must connect to the Town's sewer system.

Mr. Mears advised that some commitment from the Town regarding annexation is needed in order for the resident to apply for the loan, and he recommended that the Town send a letter indicating support of individual property residential annexations in the case of failing water or septic systems, when the petitioner commits to avail themselves of all Town services.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that Mr. Mears will write a letter to express the Town's support of individual property residential annexations in the case of failing water or septic systems, when the petitioner commits to avail themselves of all Town services.

Draft Personnel Policy Manual

Description: Discussion of the draft Personnel Policy Manual.

Council consensus: Following general review and discussion, the Town Council agreed to continue individual review of the draft Personnel Policy Manual and to share their comments for inclusion in the draft by email to the Town Manager and Town Council, prior to the June 10 work session. Review will continue at the June 10 work session.

Matters of Information

Mayor Ambrogio reported that the Southern Maryland Municipal Association would meet in Leonardtown on May 21; State Highway Administration U.S. 301 workshop would be held at Mattawoman Middle School on May 22; and the grand reopening/ribbon-cutting ceremony of the St. Charles Towne Center would be held June 6.

Mr. Mears reported that a sewer overflow occurred on the evening of Friday, May 16, at manhole 13 and on Willow Lane; that a sidewalk cave-in occurred in King's Grant, caused by stormwater problems, and that there are a couple of other areas in King's Grant where there are voids under sidewalk and pavement, and that the Town will be repairing some very large stormwater pipes. He noted that as the system ages, pipes deteriorate, causing voids and cave-ins.

Councilman Goldsmith noted that the Town needs a policy regarding repair and maintenance of stormwater systems and sidewalks.

Future Work Session Topics

- Recording all open meetings [Councilwoman Mudd]
- “Action items” list to keep track of Town Council’s requests to have items accomplished [Councilman Newman]

There being no other business, Mayor Ambrogio moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:51 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