

La Plata Planning Commission  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
December 3, 2002, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Raymond J. Becmer, Walter T. Sollars, Jr., Garyton C. Echols, Jr., Keith A. Hettel, Roy G. Hale - Commission Members; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Guests: (See roster.)

Minutes:

Chairman Becmer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the agenda. Mr. Miller amended agenda item #7 to read "Quail's Run *final* plat." Chairman Becmer asked Mr. Hale to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Approval of November minutes

Mr. Hettel made a motion to approve the minutes of the November meeting. Mr. Hale seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

#### Public hearing: Ordinance 02-19 Historic District Landmark Designations

For the purpose of designating certain properties as historic district landmarks in the Town of La Plata; requiring the Historic District Commission to hold a public hearing prior to recommending historic district landmarks to the Mayor and Council; and all matters generally relating to said historic district designations.

Chairman Becmer called the hearing to order. Mr. Miller noted for the record that the notice of the hearing was properly advertised in the November 15, 2002 edition of the Maryland Independent newspaper, and provided a brief description of the ordinance, which includes eight properties to be designated as historic landmarks.

Chairman Becmer asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak. There were no speakers.

During the brief discussion which followed, Mr. Echols advised he could not support the ordinance and expressed concern that designating 600 Charles Street as an historic landmark would prevent any chance of correcting the dangerous situation at the intersection of Oak Avenue and Charles Street.

It was noted that the Mayor and Council would hold a hearing on this ordinance on December 10. Chairman Becmer advised that interested persons should submit written comments before that date. After determining that no one else wished to speak, Chairman Becmer closed the hearing.

#### Recommendation: Ordinance 02-19

Mr. Hale made a motion to recommend approval of this ordinance to the Mayor and Council. Mr. Sollars seconded the motion. Vote on the motion: Chairman Becmer, Mr. Sollars, Mr. Hettel and Mr. Hale voted aye; Mr. Echols voted nay. The motion passed by majority vote.

Recommendation to Board of Appeals regarding special exception for automobile filling station, including car wash and convenience store (La Plata Plaza, LLC and Safeway, Inc.)

Mr. Miller led the discussion regarding this special exception application, noting that staff was concerned about the high number of road trips but did not see anything within the application which would cause the Board to deny the application.

Following this discussion, Mr. Echols made a motion to recommend the Board approve the application with conditions: (1) A physical barrier be placed along the incoming drive aisle off Crain Highway so drivers cannot make a left turn into the first gas station entrance; (2) The parking spaces along the interior roadway be eliminated as vehicles backing out of them pose a hazard to pedestrians and vehicles; (3) Encourage the developer to utilize better architecture in keeping with the overall development in La Plata and with the all-brick Safeway store; and (4) Encourage Safeway to provide significant landscaping in keeping with the other service stations in La Plata. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Quail's Run final plat

Ken Crouse, of Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill, was present to address the issues raised at the October meeting: (1) Sidewalk has been added along Rt. 6; (2) A 4' asphalt walkway has been added along the fronts of the lots, is striped for bicycles and pedestrians, and will tie in to the sidewalk on Rt. 6; (3) A 20' sewer easement has been provided for future connection for Walnut Hill Road; (4) The house on lot 6 has been moved forward; (5) Mr. Sites has directed his attorney to prepare deed covenants to piggyback on those for Quailwood Subdivision.

A brief discussion was held regarding having the sewer line for Walnut Hill Road installed now. Mr. Miller noted that it would have to be determined if a gravity feed line or pump would be needed, and agreed that the Town could install the pipe for future connection.

Mr. Sollars made a motion to approve the Quail's Run final plat with the condition that the deed restrictions and covenants be submitted and approved before the final plat is recorded. Mr. Echols seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Other business

Regarding Chairman Becmer's resignation from the Planning Commission effective December 4, 2002, Mr. Miller noted it had been a pleasure to work with him over the past years. He noted that during Chairman Becmer's membership on the Commission, the Town adopted three Comprehensive Plans and approved a number of subdivisions and commercial developments. Mr. Miller further remarked that the Planning Commission had a reputation for being fair, honest and hard working under Chairman Becmer's leadership. Councilman Hale presented a Town Seal and 20-year gold service pin to Chairman Becmer.

Mr. Hettel provided a brief update on the Olde Colony Apartments situation, noting he had spoken with the new owner, Steve Mote, who advised he plans to completely remodel the buildings and enter into an agreement with the Board of Education to rent to teachers. Mr. Mote may also enter into the same type

of agreement with the Charles County Sheriff's Office. He wants professionals as occupants of his apartments.

In response to a question from Mr. Hale, Mr. Schroeder advised there has been no activity at the True Value site and no conversations with the owner of True Value.

Mr. Echols asked if the Town had received anything from Carl Baldus regarding the setback variance he needs for his building at the corner of Charles Street and Crain Highway. Mr. Miller advised that he is working on an ordinance to create a new Urban Highway zone, which he explained would be a hybrid of C-H Commercial Highway and C-B Central Business District.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier