

Council of the Town of La Plata
Charles County Government Building, La Plata, Maryland
Joint work session with County Commissioners of Charles County
January 31, 2007, 4:00 PM

Present: Town of La Plata

Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilmen R. Wayne Winkler, C. Keith Back, and Paretta D. Mudd; Joseph W. Norris, Acting Town Manager; Michelle D. Miner, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department

Charles County

Commissioner President Wayne Cooper, Commissioners Edith J. Patterson, Reuben B. Collins, II, Samuel N. Graves, Jr. and Gary V. Hodge; Roy Hancock, Interim County Administrator; Denise Ferguson, Clerk

Minutes:

The quarterly joint work session of the Town Council and County Commissioners convened at 4:18 PM, to discuss topics of mutual concern.

Town Police/County Sheriff Update

Staffing: Mayor Ambrogio provided an update regarding staffing levels of the La Plata Police Department.

Retreat: The Town Council and County Commissioners agreed to defer to Chief Gittings and Sheriff Coffey to decide if a retreat is needed, and what topics would be included for discussion if a retreat is scheduled.

Sewer Overflows

Corrective action plan/timetable: Mayor Ambrogio provided an update on the steps taken by the Town, which include appointing knowledge- and experience-based persons to a Water and Sewer Advisory Committee and contracting with a professional firm. The areas of major concern are the wastewater treatment plant, the collection system leading to the plant, and inflow and infiltration. Mayor Ambrogio advised that the Town is committed to correcting the problems. Mr. Norris described some of the actions the Town is taking, including plans to replace certain smaller diameter sewer mains with larger sewer mains, install a new 18" sewer main to relieve some of the problems at Centennial Street, upgrade an existing 8" sewer main at the wastewater treatment plant to correct a bottleneck situation, and the purchase of sewer flow meters to identify locations of inflow and infiltration within the wastewater collection system. During discussion, it was noted that the Town is researching the availability of grants to help fund the projects.

Transportation Study Update

Chuck Beall, Acting Director, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, and Jason Groth, Program Manager-Adequate Public Facilities Program, Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, provided an update on the Transportation Study, noting that the contract was awarded to The RBA Group. It was further noted that the Town and County had met with RBA and would continue holding monthly meetings, and that a draft is expected by late summer.

During discussion, Commissioner Hodge noted that many Town residents had expressed to him their concern regarding the bypass not including La Plata, stopping north of the Town rather than including it, and the impact that would have on the business community and identity of the Town. Commissioner Hodge noted his belief that the County's advocacy efforts should reflect the Town's position and asked what the Town's point of view was on the whether the bypass should or should not include the Town of La Plata. Mayor Ambrogio noted that this would require further discussion by the Town Council. In response to Commissioner Cooper, Ms. Ferguson advised that she was working on scheduling a joint meeting of the State Highway Administration, Southern Maryland Delegation, County Commissioners and planning staff, and Town of La Plata officials to discuss the proposed bypass.

Town vision for growth in La Plata

In response to Mayor Ambrogio, Commissioner President Cooper explained that this item was on the agenda due to a question regarding the number of subdivisions and when they are starting, and to help the Commissioners understand what's happening in La Plata. Mayor Ambrogio briefly described the three large tracts of land which, when fully developed, will produce approximately 3200 dwellings. He noted that they were designated Traditional Neighborhood Development, which requires the developers to meet specific criteria meant to produce first class developments. During discussion, Commissioner Graves asked if the Town was working with the school system regarding the availability of school seats. Councilman Back described the Town's school seat allocation policy, noting that the Town has 100 school seats per year, which are allocated on a per dwelling basis, applying a school seat generation rate formula. He noted that the Town's policy requires that a four-way agreement must be reached between the County, Town, Board of Education and the developer in order to exceed the school seat allocation that a development has been granted.

Commissioner Patterson asked if the Town was including work force and affordable housing in its vision for growth. Mayor Ambrogio noted the existence of the work force housing that Mote Management built in the Phoenix Run community and noted the Town had written a letter of support for a church-affiliated project for work force housing proposed on Washington Avenue. Mayor Ambrogio further noted that the Town encourages developers but has not mandated they provide such housing. Commissioner Collins suggested that the Towns be invited to participate in the County's Housing Summit, to review policy for the establishment of work force and affordable housing.

Talbot Street – easement

Mr. Norris noted that the Town has met with County staff regarding obtaining an easement on Talbot Street, and asked if the County would consider waiving the fees. Mr. Beall acknowledged that a letter from the Town had been forwarded by the Commissioners for review by Planning and Growth Management, and further noted that the easement request is under review and will be brought to the Commissioners at an upcoming land acquisition session.

There being no further discussion, the meeting concluded at 5:34 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk

The next meeting of the Town Council and County Commissioners will be held at 4:00 PM, April 17, 2007, at the La Plata Town Hall.