

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular Meeting
October 12, 2004, 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 roster)

Minutes:

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

Approval of September minutes

Councilman Fritz made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2004 and September 28, 2004 regular meetings. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Petitions, Communications and Appearances

Harry Shasho – Commercial property in La Plata

Mr. Shasho advised he volunteered to help the La Plata Business Association determine how much commercial land is in the Town, and noted he believed the Town also needs to have this information. Mr. Shasho provided copies of his document, “Available Commercial Land Analysis, Town of La Plata”, and discussed the results of his survey. He summarized that for future growth (10-15 years), the Town should be looking at expansion now “to be able to control what is being developed at the current borders and to fulfill the needs of the expected 6,000+ population that is looking forward to moving to” the Town. Mr. Shasho further advised he represented the owners (Jennings) of the property subject of the “Faison” annexation petition. Councilman Winkler commented that the Town also looks at water, sewer and police needs when looking at annexation. Mayor Eckman thanked Mr. Shasho for his analysis.

Presentation to Nancy Gasparovic

Mayor Eckman read and presented a Town Seal to Nancy Gasparovic, Title Professionals, Ltd., in appreciation of the work she and her staff performed as part of the Town’s Streetscape Program for La Grange Avenue, Maple Avenue and Centennial Street.

Public hearing

Ordinance 04-10 Dimensional Requirements in Senior Living Communities – For the purpose of amending dimensional requirements in Senior Living Communities; and all matters generally relating to said dimensional requirements.

Mayor Eckman opened the hearing. Ms. Bembe entered into the record the Certification of Publication that the hearing notice was properly published in the September 24, 2004 edition of the Maryland Independent.

Mayor Eckman briefly described Ordinance 04-10.

Mayor Eckman asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak regarding Ordinance 04-10.

Blake Altman, 104 Quail Court, advised he had spoken at the hearing held by the Planning Commission, noting that they seemed to have objections to the “sole discretion” part of the ordinance and suggested it be modified. Mr. Altman asked that the Town Council wait for the Planning Commission’s recommendation and comments, and that the Town Council accept them. Councilman Hale confirmed that the Planning Commission has not yet made a recommendation and plans to discuss this at their next meeting. Mayor Eckman noted that the Council rarely enacts an ordinance at the same meeting that the public hearing is held, and that Ordinance 04-10 was not on this agenda for anything other than a public hearing.

There being no other speakers and no further discussion by the Council, Mayor Eckman closed the hearing.

Legislation

Ordinance 04-6 Traditional Neighborhood Development (For Adoption) – For the purpose of creating Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) as a floating zone within the Mixed Use District; specifying criteria and regulations for TND, defining certain terms; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Mayor Eckman asked for motions on Amendments 1 through 33 and Ordinance 04-6.

Councilman Winkler made a motion to adopt Amendments 1 through 33. Councilman Ambrogio seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Councilman Hale made a motion to adopt Ordinance 04-6 as amended. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Unfinished Business

Council reports

Councilman Winkler reported that the La Plata Business Association meets next Tuesday, and that a meeting of the Historic District Commission will be scheduled to discuss several properties in Town, especially the Lawlor building on Charles Street. He noted that they may also ask the Maryland Historic Trust for their help and recommendations.

Councilman Ambrogio reported on topics discussed at the October 6 meeting of the Kent Avenue Revitalization Committee, and at the October 11 meeting of the Beautification Commission.

He noted that the Beautification Commission would be putting up the Christmas tree in the new Town Hall on December 17, at 9:30 AM. Mayor Eckman commented that the Town would not be able to have a Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony this year as there is no tree at the new Town Hall.

Paula Winkler, chairman of the Beautification Commission, reported that they have a final landscape plan for the new Town Hall, La Grange Avenue, the new portion of Centennial Street, and Maple Avenue. She further reported that the landscape plan for St. Mary's Avenue has been drawn up, and they will be implementing part of the DNR grant funds to begin that project.

Councilman Fritz reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission would meet on October 13 and would be working with Mr. Miller on arrangements with Fifth Management for that park, which he noted would be discussed again at the next work session.

Councilman Hale reported on topics discussed at the October 5 meeting of the Planning Commission. He also noted that there had been an excellent turnout at the Pumpkin Jubilee, and announced that the Salute to Veterans Parade and Ceremony would be held on Sunday, November 7.

Mayor Eckman reported the Town has received the final plans for the upgrade to St. Mary's Avenue from Forest Lane to Charles Street. He also reported that the police station plans are in and may go out to bid in a week.

New Business

Proclamation – Trick or Treat Evening

Mayor Eckman read the Proclamation concerning Trick or Treat Evening in the Town of La Plata on October 31, 2004, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Gift to Civista

Mayor Eckman explained that the last time the Town purchased new police cars, one of the surplus vehicles was donated to Civista for use by their Security Department. He advised that the car was worn out and asked for a motion to donate to Civista the 1994 Chevrolet Caprice police vehicle deemed surplus due to purchase of new police vehicles. Councilman Hale made a motion to donate the 1994 Chevrolet Caprice surplus police vehicle to Civista for use by their Security Department. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Appointment of Design Review Board Vice Chair

On the recommendation of Cheryl McGuire, Chairman of the Design Review Board, Mayor Eckman recommended that Ron Litten be appointed Vice Chair of the Design Review Board. Councilman Fritz made a motion to approve the appointment. Councilman Ambrogio seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Public Forum

Councilman Winkler passed along complaints from a Town resident regarding wrecked and unregistered vehicles in certain areas of the Town. The complaints will be forwarded to Chief Gittings for action by the La Plata Police Department.

In response to Paula Winkler's request for a status report, Ms. Bembe advised that the State Highway Administration was working on the water ponding situation on E. Hawthorne Drive at its intersection with Crain Highway, and noted she would check with them again.

There being no further business, Councilman Hale made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 PM. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk