

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM
August 9, 2005

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Town staff: Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department; Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer; Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning and Zoning; B. Gayle Curry, Administrative Assistant

Minutes:

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

Approval of July minutes

Councilman Winkler made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 5, 2005 work session, July 5, 2005 closed session, July 12, 2005 regular meeting, and July 26, 2005 regular meeting. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Petitions, Communications and Appearances

Presentation by Tom O'Farrell, Chairman of Parks and Recreation Commission – skateboard facility proposal

Mr. O'Farrell presented information regarding the proposed skateboard facility at Wills Memorial Park. The Council was in receipt of written material regarding this proposal, provided by Michelle Miner and the Parks and Recreation Commission. Mr. O'Farrell advised that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommends Option #1, if the Town Council decides to proceed with the project. Mr. O'Farrell advised that Ms. Miner mailed letters to residents on the perimeter of Wills Park and that six or seven responded as opposed to the project.

Mayor Ambrogio invited public comment:

Benjamin Herd, 41 Kings Wharf Place, Waldorf, noted he is 29 years old, began skateboarding in 1983 and is still skateboarding. Mr. Herd stated that the Town will waste money on the ramps shown during the presentation, which he termed "inferior" and noted that the company doesn't use their own pre-fab ramps at their camp in Pennsylvania. [Mr. O'Farrell clarified that these ramps were shown only as an example and noted that the Town will have to go to bid for the final product.]

Michael Runfola, 113 Morris Drive, acknowledged that the initial cost is covered, but questioned the annual operating costs.

Vaughn Hubbard, 412 Linden Lane, spoke in support of the project and noted that the ramps seem too narrow.

Karen Poole, 4337 Castletower Court, White Plains, representing Waldorf Jaycees, advised that the Jaycees plan to contribute \$8,000 towards the skateboard park if the Town builds one.

James Abbott, 102 Centennial Street, stated the Town should ask where the best place is to locate the facility, noting that one in his former community in Washington State was near a police station. He recommended that the Town call other communities to ask about their skateboard parks and how they are doing since installation.

Don Falken, III, 2028 Alehouse Court, Waldorf, spoke in support of the project and noted that many children can't get rides to the White Plains skateboard park.

Endie Herd, 41 Kings Wharf Place, Waldorf, noted she had been a manager of a skateboard park and stated that unmanned skateboard parks are not a good idea. She suggested the Town contact Leesburg, Virginia, regarding their outdoor facility.

Norman Shelton, Clarks Run Subdivision, stated he was not against the skateboard park but felt many questions raised at this meeting needed to be answered: annual costs, should it be manned, does rental of Wills Park give exclusive use of the skateboard park, liability and cost, and requiring waivers. Mr. Shelton asked if there would be further discussions at meetings before the Town Council votes on the facility. Mayor Ambrogio and Mr. Miller explained that discussion will continue at a work session but appropriation of money to fund the project must be voted on at a business meeting.

Councilman Newman invited interested persons to email their comments to the Town Council. Councilman Back encouraged the children present, who may have been uncomfortable and chose not to speak during the meeting, to email their comments to the Town Council.

Legislation (none)

Unfinished Business (none)

New Business

Report and recommendation of Planning Commission regarding Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) request – Parcels 1, 2 and 3, Stagecoach Crossing

Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning and Zoning, presented the report of the Planning Commission and their recommendation that the Town Council approve the requested TND designation for Parcels 1, 2 and 3 of Stagecoach Crossing. Following a brief discussion, the Council agreed to schedule a public hearing to be held on this request on September 13.

New meeting schedule

Mayor Ambrogio briefly explained the proposed new meeting schedule to provide that the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays would be work sessions that begin at 4:00 PM, the 2nd Tuesday would be a regular meeting that begins at 7:00 PM, and the 4th Tuesday would be a work session that begins at 6:00 PM rather than a regular meeting.

Councilman Winkler made a motion to amend the meeting schedule to provide that the 4th Tuesday of each month is a work session that begins at 6:00 p.m. rather than a regular meeting. Councilman Back seconded the motion. In discussion before the vote, Councilman Winkler noted he would like to remain open-minded regarding the start times of the meetings in order to see what works best for the Council members who commute from work. Councilman Back noted that another work session at 6:00 PM works better for him than another one that begins at 4:00 PM, and pointed out it would be better for the general public as well. Councilwoman Mudd noted she preferred 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Vote on the motion: the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Building standards

Councilman Winkler provided copies of three documents regarding building standards, and read highlights from the documents: *The La Plata, MD Tornado: Issues Regarding the F-Scale*, written by Timothy P. Marshall/Haag Engineering Co.; *La Plata, Maryland Tornado: Lessons Learned from Charles County*, written by Robert M. Schwartz, Ph.D./Department of Geography-Ball State University; *Codes, Regulations and Standards for Construction in Charles County*, dated September 20, 2004, from Charles County Department of Planning and Growth Management, which served as a cover page to Charles County Bill No. 2003-14, an act concerning Charles County Building Code which became effective February 19, 2004. Councilman Winkler suggested that the Town adopt the stronger code adopted by Charles County, and that Town staff be asked to research same and speak to the County, in order to improve our building code. He also noted the County has adopted the 2003 version of the International Building Code while the Town is still using the 2000 version. Mayor Ambrogio asked Mr. Miller to research this.

Vision Team

Councilman Winkler suggested that the Vision Team be reactivated, noting that the Council approved \$25,000 in the current budget for this, and noted that the Town needs to develop design standards for residential and other districts. It was agreed that this would be discussed at the next work session.

Public Forum

Mike Runfola, 113 Morris Drive, referred to a letter to the editor in the July 31, 2005 edition of the Southern Maryland Extra, which was written in response to an earlier article regarding Southern Maryland's lack of water supply. Mr. Runfola asked how the Town planned

to address the impact that future growth will have on the water supply. Mr. Miller explained that the State of Maryland issues permits to extract water and they monitor the health of aquifers. He further noted that the Town will one day need other water sources. Mr. Runfola questioned the wisdom of continuing to allow development when it appears we can't sustain what we have now for more than ten to fifteen years. Mayor Ambrogio pointed out that the State will be analyzing our water extraction permit at the end of the year.

Motion for Closed Session

Councilwoman Mudd made a motion to conduct a closed session immediately following this meeting, pursuant to *Annotated Code of Maryland* Section 10-508(a)(1)(i) – Discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction; and Section 10-508(a)(3), to consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto. Councilman Back seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mayor Ambrogio and Councilmen Winkler, Back, Mudd and Newman voted aye. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

There being no further business, Councilman Winkler made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 PM. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk