

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
August 16, 2005, 4:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer

Minutes:

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Session with the Town Treasurer/FY 05 Budget Amendments

Description: The Treasurer will discuss budget amendments and other current fiscal issues.

Mr. Norris provided copies of the Treasurer's Report dated July 31, 2005, and reviewed the report with the Council. Mr. Norris explained that at the August 23 regular meeting he would be asking the Council to approve FY 05 budget amendments, and to make those amendments effective June 30, 2005.

Skateboard Park

Description: The potential construction of a skateboard park will be discussed as well as the public comment that was received at the last Council meeting.

Tom O'Farrell, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, was present to continue discussion of the proposed skateboard park. Mr. O'Farrell advised he believes the two most important items are that the Town commit the necessary resources to this facility and to all Town parks regarding opening, closing and maintaining them; and that the Town Attorney speak to the LGIT attorney to determine if LGIT is willing to insure an unmanned, "Skate at your own risk" facility. Mr. O'Farrell further advised he believes a mixture of levels of difficulty facility is needed and that he will continue to educate himself on the different ramps and equipment at other parks.

Councilwoman Mudd pointed out that many of the public comment speakers at the August 9 meeting were not from La Plata, and that she wishes to hear from youth in La Plata regarding what they want at this facility. Councilman Winkler agreed with Councilwoman Mudd and also suggested we partner with Charles County to operate the facility. Mayor Ambrogio suggested we may need to hire a youth activities director and also suggested it may be time to create a commission of and for young people.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to continue research with the goal of providing a skateboard park.

Grasso Annexation

Description: The Grasso Annexation is ready to be voted on. Any last minute concerns will be discussed.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to amend the annexation agreement to reflect that the restoration of the manor house must be completed prior to the issuance of the twelfth building permit rather than the fifteenth building permit. The Town Council agreed this would be ready for action at the regular meeting on August 23, 2005.

Post Tornado Vision Plan

Description: A new Vision Team should be convened to discuss La Plata's Vision now that the tornado rebuilding is complete. There are three potential desired results: (1) determine how large La Plata is going to become, then plan for the infrastructure needed to support such a town; (2) determine what the core of La Plata is going to be since the Tornado rebuild shifted the emphasis of development to the south of Charles Street rather than the north side of Charles Street; (3) look at other areas where development guidelines are needed.

Councilman Winkler suggested the Town have Milt Herd return for the initial start-up phase and then perhaps hire a local facilitator. Councilwoman Mudd agreed. Councilman Winkler suggested that only Town residents and business owners be part of the Vision Team. Mr. Miller suggested that he meet with Councilman Winkler and Councilwoman Mudd to develop a list of Vision Team members, to include looking at the original list of members and developing a set of parameters for selecting members, such as by geography, interests, and business owners. Councilman Back agreed that the original list should be reviewed and that homeowners associations be contacted as well due to the number of people who have moved into La Plata since the original team was formed. Councilwoman Mudd also asked that renters be included.

Repealing the Historic District Commission

Description: The HDC has met on a very limited basis. The initial purpose of the HDC was to assist tornado victims who owned historic houses. There has been little or no activity with the HDC since.

During the discussion regarding whether there is still a need for the Historic District Commission, Mr. O'Farrell was acknowledged and advised he had applied for and received historic designation from the State, which was separate from and did not require action by the Historic District Commission. Mr. O'Farrell further advised he has applied for a tax credit, which he has not yet received, and noted he did not know if disbanding the Historic District Commission would affect approval of his application for a tax credit.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to proceed to disband the Historic District Commission, by ordinance, and to research the effect on Mr. O'Farrell's tax credit.

Kent Square Funding Request

Description: The Kent Square HOA would like the Town to pay for half of their community picnic. The request form was distributed earlier.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed not to provide funding for the Kent Square HOA community picnic.

Sidewalk Repair Policy

Description: The FY 06 Budget includes \$10,000 for sidewalk repair in connection with an inspection program. The Council must give guidance on how defective sidewalks will be dealt with; will they be repaired by the adjoining property owner as specified in the Town Code, or will the Town have them fixed?

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed that the Town will repair the defective sidewalks.

Ex-Officio on Design Review Board

Description: The Council will complete discussion regarding the inclusion of an ex-officio Council member on the DRB.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to change the Code, by ordinance, to provide for an ex-officio Council member on the Design Review Board, after which an appointment may be made.

Matters of Information

Councilwoman Mudd asked why former-Mayor Eckman and former-Councilman Hale had not been invited to Lt. Governor Steele's August 2 ribbon-cutting ceremony for the streetscape project. Mr. Miller advised that the Town provided an invitation list to the State that included both names.

Continuance of Executive Session regarding Commission Appointments [5:50 PM – 6:02 PM]

There being no other discussion, Councilman Back made a motion to adjourn at 6:02 PM. Councilman Winkler seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk