

Council of the Town of La Plata  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
Work Session  
September 16, 2008, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor Roy G. Hale, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd; Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Treasurer; Robert F. Stahl, Jr., Director of Operations

Minutes:

Mayor Hale called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

### Matters of Council Discussion

#### Ordinance 08-11 New Irrigation System Installation

*Description: Discussion of concerns expressed at the June 17 meeting and by others.*

During discussion, the Town Council agreed on the need to emphasize the importance of water conservation and that the key issue is the use of potable water by irrigation systems. It was acknowledged that irrigation systems are more efficient than lawn sprinklers, and that irrigation systems include safeguards of controls to time water use. Concern was expressed that the Town Council does not wish to punish current residents for the water use of future residents. The Town Council generally agreed that they support requiring permits for installation of irrigation systems. Donna Harrigan, of Automatic Rain Lawn Sprinklers, agreed with the need to get permits and pointed out that it was important to install a backflow device to protect the Town's water system. The Town Council further agreed that there is a need to educate residents about water conservation, including when to water, the types of turfs to plants, and the use of native plants in landscaping, noting that once native plants are established they don't have the water needs of non-native plants. It was suggested that the issue of water conservation be included as a component of the Vision Plan.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council agreed to have the new Green Building Committee review the new irrigation system installation ordinance and make a recommendation to the Town Council. Further, the Town Council agreed to include Ordinance 08-11 on the September 23 agenda for action to defer consideration until the November 25 meeting.

#### Parks and Recreation Commission recommendations

*Description: Discussion of recommendations from the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding upgrades/enhancements to Town parks.*

The Town Council reviewed and discussed the list of recommendations to enhance and improve parks in the Town, which was compiled by the Parks and Recreation Commission following their July 29 tour of Town parks. Mr. Mears and Mr. Stahl provided information regarding items on the list (1) which have been accomplished by or are in the process of being completed by Public Works staff, (2) for which application has been made for grant funds to accomplish, and (3) which will be accomplished this fiscal year. It was noted that some items are on hold in order to avoid future conflict with park master planning. During discussion, the Town Council expressed support of the recommendations made by the Parks and Recreation Commission and in the process that Town staff is conducting to accomplish the recommendations. Further, the Town Council generally agreed regarding

partnering with Charles County to link Tilghman Park with Laurel Springs Park, and to keep discussions of this at the Town-County staff level for the time being.

#### Meeting with Beautification Commission members

*Description: The Beautification Commission members wish to discuss signage in the Town, landscaping around signs and in other places.*

Helen Lucas, chairman of the Beautification Commission, and Councilwoman Mudd, ex officio member of the Beautification Commission, lead the discussion regarding the Commission's recommendation for landscaping/permanent plantings at the Town Hall. A plant list and price quote of \$10,999 from Longwood Gardens was provided for the Town Council's review.

Council consensus: Following discussion, the Town Council approved an expenditure for the landscaping at Town Hall of up to \$11,000, but requested that two additional quotes be obtained.

#### Matters of Information

- No information has been received from Faison regarding installation of geothermal system.
- Issue of requiring LEED certification being obtained vs. allowing just the paperwork showing compliance being reviewed/approved by the Town: more benefit to the community is gained when actual LEED certification is obtained.
- Soft openings: Giant – September 18; IHOP – September 21.
- Town staff to check on tall grass issue on the property in front of the Town's well on Washington Ave.

#### Future Work Session Topics

- Issue of developers' bonds being released before the work is complete – include opportunity for community comment prior to release of the bonds.
- Conversion of Public Works building into a community building.
- Discuss with LifeStyles, Inc. the services they provide and how they could help the Town with a community center.
- Policy questions for next Citizen Survey (October 14)
- Possible alternate site for Farmers Market

There being no other business, Councilman Goldsmith moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 PM. Councilwoman Mudd seconded the motion and it carried. Following a short break, the Council moved into closed session.

Submitted by:

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Judith T. Frazier  
Town Clerk