

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Manager-Council Meeting
February 24, 2004, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor William F. Eckman, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman Thomas W. Fritz, Councilman Gene Ambrogio, Councilman Roy G. Hale; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Town staff:

Minutes:

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

Petitions, Communications and Appearances (none)

Legislation (none)

Unfinished Business (none)

New Business

Appropriation for Christmas decorations

After a brief discussion, Councilman Hale made a motion to approve an appropriation of \$3,000 to purchase additional Christmas decorations. Councilman Fritz seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

In response to Councilman Hale's request for status of the project to replace the star, Councilman Winkler advised that the last time he spoke to Mrs. Baldus she still hoped to put the star back near its previous location. He further noted that there had apparently been some objections by neighboring property owners. The Council agreed that the Town should send letters to the neighboring property owners asking them to register their objection within a certain time period.

Councilman Hale reported that Joe Harrison's wife, Ruby, was not doing well, and that Thursday, February 26, is their 60th wedding anniversary and Ruby's birthday. The Council agreed that flowers should be sent on Wednesday in honor of their anniversary.

Councilman Winkler reported on the status of two homes on Oak Avenue which still need major repairs to tornado damage: Jack Warren advised he is getting ready to start work again on his house; 109 Oak Avenue was sold to Rainbow Construction.

Mayor Eckman reported that SMECO advised him today that it would cost \$51,000 to move the electric pole on La Grange Avenue. He noted that Michelle Miner is checking to see if money is available from Community Legacy funding.

In response to Paula Winkler's question, Mr. Miller advised that a property trade was done recently and that may indicate that Howard Libby is preparing to complete the repairs to the old Bowling's building.

Mayor Eckman reported that Reverend Trigg, Christ Episcopal Church, will be sending letters to the Council regarding their celebration of the 100th anniversary of moving the church by oxcart from Port Tobacco to La Plata. This event will occur during the Celebrate La Plata days. Councilman Hale remarked that the Celebrate La Plata planning committee will meet on Thursday, February 26, at 9:00 AM.

Work Session

Kitty's Clock

Description: The former Town Historian, Kitty Newcomb, bequeathed an outdoor clock to the Town. Where will we want to place that clock?

Mr. Miller advised that decisions were needed as to where the clock should be placed, which group should coordinate with Mr. Newcomb to choose the clock, and whether the Town would fund the difference, if any, between the amount bequeathed and the cost of the clock. Mr. Miller suggested that the Beautification Commission be the group to coordinate with Mr. Newcomb.

Council Consensus: The Council agreed that Mr. Miller should obtain more information regarding the amount bequeathed.

Status - Council's Critical 11

Council Consensus:

3. Water Tank Replacement: Mr. Miller will obtain a schedule.
4. Town Hall Relocation: The groundbreaking ceremony will be included as part of the Celebrate La Plata events. Mr. Miller advised that the Town goes to settlement with Civista on the current Town Hall and property at 11:00 AM, February 25.
9. APFO: The Council will meet with the Board of Education on February 25, at 4:00 PM, and will meet with the Town Attorney on February 26.
10. Residential Design Review Standards: The Council agreed that the Vision implementation team should be reactivated and agreed to ask for the County's involvement, including the possible use of their new standards as a model.
11. Traffic Study: The Council agreed that the developers of Heritage Green should pay for the Heritage Green portion of the traffic study.

Washington Avenue Sidewalk

Description: The grant program that we hoped would fund 50% of the Washington Avenue Sidewalk project is not applicable for this project. Provided that there are

no significant stormwater issues brought about by the 2002 revised MDE regulations, the projected budget is \$325,000. However, the current design does not reflect the newer La Plata requirements where sidewalks are to be 5' in width rather than the former 4'. Also, we now require a 5' planting strip. Do we continue with this project, and, if so, do we design to the old standards or the new standards?

Council Consensus: The Council agreed to proceed with obtaining rights-of-way on the east side of Washington Avenue.

Kellerco Contract

Description: Dick Keller has provided a scope of work for the traffic study involving Heritage Green. Is that scope of work acceptable? Who will pay for the different components of the study?

Council Consensus: The Council agreed that the developers of Heritage Green should pay for the Heritage Green portion of the traffic study.

Disposal of Well #4

Description: The Town owns a small well house near the current Chamber of Commerce building. The American Legion would like to have that property to add onto theirs.

Council Consensus: The Council agreed to proceed to dispose of the well house lot as surplus property.

Code Enforcement Officer

Description: If the expectation of service is that the new sign regulations will be aggressively enforced, the Town will shift resources to this effort. There is a possibility that the businesses will voluntarily comply with the new regulations once they receive the new sign brochure, but after some recent experiences with certain businesses, there is little hope for that. The cleanest manner to enforce the sign regulations is the hire a part-time Code Enforcement Officer to work with the businesses.

Council Consensus: The Council agreed that Mr. Miller should speak to Middle Department Inspection Agency (MDIA) regarding whether or not they would contract with the Town for this service, with this information provided in one week, after which the Council will decide whether to contract with MDIA or hire a part-time Code Enforcement Officer.

There being no further business, Councilman Hale made a motion to adjourn at 8:16 PM. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk