

Mayor and Council Meeting
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
June 11, 2002, 7:00 PM

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

Guests: (See attached roster)

Pursuant to the requirement of Maryland Annotated Code, State Government Article Section 10-509(c)(2), this statement is included in these minutes:

A closed session of the Mayor and Council was held at 8:15 PM, Tuesday, May 28, 2002, in the Town Hall Conference Room.

Present: Mayor Eckman, Councilmen Winkler, Fritz, Ambrogio and Hale; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier

On a motion made by Councilman Hale, seconded by Councilman Ambrogio, and by unanimous consent of the members present, the session was closed. The authority under which the session was closed was Maryland Annotated Code, State Government Article, Section 10-508(a)(3). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the acquisition of real property for a public purpose and matters directly related thereto, in regard to Talbot Street. The Mayor and Council agreed to delay discussion for one week, during which period the Town Manager will obtain information from CSX to determine if we will get the railroad crossing. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Minutes:

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

Approval of May minutes

Councilman Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 14 meeting. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Councilman Fritz made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 28 meeting. Councilman Hale seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Petitions, Communications and Appearances

Beverly Merritt - Lanham Moose Lodge Cadets

Beverly Merritt, Amanda Welch, Roxie Welch, Gunnar Welch and Laura Welch, Lanham Moose Lodge Cadets, presented a check in the amount of \$600.00 to Mayor Eckman for the La Plata Disaster Relief Fund. They explained that they raised the money by having a dance, which included musical entertainment by Encore4, a group of young men from Charles County: Terrence Bennett, Brian Merritt, Chris Picola and Austin Rick. This group of young men then provided a demonstration of the music they sang at the fund raiser and received a round of applause from those present. Mayor Eckman asked them to perform at the Town's July 4 event. As our event is from 11 AM to 1 PM, and they are already scheduled to be at Indian Head's event at 3 PM, they agreed to come to La Plata to be a part of the program.

Kurt Wolfgang

Mr. Wolfgang explained he was present at the request of his client, Lou Martin, owner of Indian Head Iron Works business at 111 N. Maple Ave., to express his concern about the rezoning of this property from Industrial to Central Business. Mr. Martin's business has been at that location for seven years and employs 8 to 10 people. He believes that Industrial zoning is important for his business in order to proceed with his plans to build a new building. He knows his business use would be grand fathered in but he wouldn't be able to build the new building under CB zoning. Mr. Martin asked that this property be excluded from the rezoning.

During the discussion which followed, the Mayor and Council noted that retaining Industrial zoning on that property would be spot zoning and is not allowed.

Legislation

Ordinance 02-14 2002 Comprehensive Rezoning Map (For Adoption) - For the purpose of adopting a new comprehensive rezoning map for the Town of La Plata; and all matters relating to said map.

Mr. Miller explained a correction to the map to indicate R-10 zoning rather than PL on the former Navy Housing property and noted that the Planning Commission recommended approval of the Comprehensive Rezoning Map with amendments to rezone to Central Business (from residential) the Sacred Heart Church and Louise Arehart house properties on St. Mary's Avenue, to provide for Central Business zoning on St. Mary's Avenue from Centennial Street down to and including Arehart-Echols Funeral Home.

The Mayor and Council briefly discussed Lou Martin's request to remain Industrial, noting that La Plata Farm Supply's request to remain Industrial was denied.

Councilman Hale offered a motion to adopt Ordinance 02-14 2002 Comprehensive Rezoning Map as presented. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion. In discussion before the vote, the Council discussed the issue raised regarding rezoning Indian Head Iron Works and La Plata Farm Supply from Industrial to Central Business. It was noted that the Town is building the new Talbot Street to facilitate an increase in the Central Business District in that area. It was further noted that a potential remedy could be to reexamine the uses allowed in Central Business, and possibly amending the Town Code to allow light fabrication in the Central Business zone. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ordinance 02-15 FY03 Budget (For Adoption) - For the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata Financial Plan/2002-2003 Budget; repealing and reenacting Chapter 101, dealing with all fees set by the Town of La Plata code of Ordinances (1998 Edition and Supplements); and setting the Town tax rate.

Mr. Miller provided copies of an amendment to Ordinance 02-15, increasing building permit fees and changing the method of calculation to be based on square feet rather than cubic feet of the building. Councilman Fritz offered a motion to approve the amendment to the budget regarding building permit fees. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Councilman Fritz offered a motion to adopt Ordinance 02-15 as amended. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Unfinished Business

Mayor Eckman presented Town Seals and gift certificates to The Crossing at Casey Jones to Paula Winkler and Cheryl McGuire, in appreciation of their many volunteer hours helping the Town's residents and business community recover from the devastation caused by the April 28th tornado.

Council Reports

Councilman Winkler reported that (1) work is progressing to ready the caboose for the July 4 dedication; (2) Gallery Jamel raffled a painting as a fund raiser for the disaster relief fund and raised \$640; and (3) tornado logo t-shirt sales began at last Friday's concert.

Councilman Hale reported on items from the Planning Commission's June 4 meeting: (1) recommended approval of the Comprehensive Rezoning Map with amendments; (2) approved Jamestowne Section 3, which includes the extension of Oriole to Rt. 301; and (3) looked at a presentation by Lorenzi, Dodds and Gunnill for their proposed building, Centennial Shops, on the site formerly occupied by Gardiner Equipment.

Councilman Fritz reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission would be meeting June 12 at the lake with some educators who would like to keep it a passive park. Councilman Fritz noted

that June 14 is Flag Day. He noted that the Town would place flags along Charles Street and asked citizens to fly their flags.

Mayor Eckman reported that the Vision Implementation team met with the Washington Architectural Foundation, from whom the Town hopes to get strong parking recommendations. The Town continues to work with the State regarding stormwater management and has an engineering firm working on a plan, which they hope to present at an upcoming meeting with MDE.

Mayor Eckman asked for and received the Council's approval to authorize the Town Manager to negotiate with two engineering firms to obtain price and proposal information to remedy the sewer back-up problem at Centennial St. and Rt. 301.

Mayor Eckman advised that the Town has obtained gap financing for business owners to build to the Town's Vision Plan, and noted that the Town is looking at a possible new parking lot in the downtown area.

Mayor Eckman announced that the Town has set July 28 as Community Appreciation Day and will be sending letters to all of the municipalities who helped us, asking that they send at least one of their vehicles and as many representatives as they wish to participate in a parade and thank you ceremony. This is to be an opportunity for all citizens to thank them for their help after the tornado.

Councilman Winkler remarked that the train station roof had been damaged in the tornado and gave credit to Wayne Wilkerson for making repairs to the roof.

New Business

Mr. Miller asked for a motion to cancel the June 25 meeting as the Mayor and Council will be attending the MML Convention in Ocean City. Councilman Winkler offered the motion to cancel the June 25 meeting. Councilman Hale seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

In response to questions from Councilman Fritz, Mr. Miller advised that (1) the redistricting ordinance is scheduled to be introduced in July, and that there are minor modifications to the districts; (2) June 25 is the last day for curbside debris pick-up by the State; commercial haulers will pay tipping fees at the landfill, but homeowners will not be charged and will be able to obtain special cards to use for later debris removal needs; and (3) the Town signed the contract for mosquito control.

Public Forum

In response to a question from Bob Jacobs regarding the pressure tests conducted after the water tower collapsed, Mayor Eckman advised that testing was done at Washington Ave. and Charles St. and compared to tests conducted ten years ago. He advised that the tests show there is

virtually no difference in water pressure results and no deterioration in pressure in the downtown. He further noted that the Town needs to get a computer model to look at the water pressure results caused by fewer users due to absence of the buildings demolished by the tornado. Mayor Eckman said that it doesn't look like the water tower will have to be put back up, but if one does need to be installed it will probably not be in the downtown. Mr. Miller noted that the Town is applying for funding and is looking at replacing the water tower on Radio Station Road with a stand pipe.

Don McGuire advised that the County will be conducting siren sound tests on Wednesday and that they expect to receive results in a week or so.

Paula Winkler provided an update on the tree replacement program, noting that nine organizations have approached her regarding giving funds for tree reforestation, landscape design and streetscapes in the downtown and residential areas, and that some in-kind help has been offered.

There being no further business, Councilman Hale made a motion to adjourn at 8:05 PM. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier