

Town Notes

News from La Plata Town Hall

December 2006 – January 2007

MAYOR'S CORNER



As I sat on the reviewing stand with the Council and the Governor watching the participants as they marched by during our Salute to Veterans Parade and then listened to our guest speaker, U. S. Army Specialist Matthew Pennington, I couldn't help but thank God for the many blessings we have here in the United States and especially in our Town of La Plata. Our "problems" here pale in comparison to what is happening in war-torn countries, but as

elected officials we have the constitutional responsibility to do what is best for the citizens living and working in our Town of La Plata. It is the civic duty of the Mayor and Council to uphold the legislation which is enacted by the Council. It is ultimately the responsibility of the citizens to follow the laws passed by the Town government.

In this issue you will find a listing of many of the ordinances which have become law in La Plata since May 2006. Requiring indoor sprinklers for fire safety in newly constructed houses will protect our citizens. A healthier community is the objective of the new smoking ban. The Town also adopted the new International Codes which require builders to adhere to strict standards for buildings.

The Town Council appropriated money for the hiring of additional police officers. This will make it possible to increase the number of foot patrols, allowing our officers to be more visible in the community. A plan has been approved to

resurface the streets of Hickory Ridge and Phoenix Run before the end of this year. The Council will continue to assess the streets in Town in order to determine those that are in need of improvement. The annexation of "Rosewick Crossing" will bring more retail selections to the area by attracting businesses to La Plata. The Council has recognized a need to focus attention on our water and sewer system by forming a Water and Sewer Advisory Committee. This committee will recommend to the Council ways to improve our underground infrastructure and eventually increase the size of our wastewater treatment plant to accommodate the growth which is planned for La Plata.

As the winter season begins and we prepare for the holidays, let us all continue to work as a community to keep La Plata a strong and vibrant town. I would like to wish you and your families a wonderful holiday season – a blessed Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Water and Sewer Advisory Committee

Water and sewer are two of the most important services a Town can offer. Dealing with these issues is especially difficult in a Town like La Plata where the basic water and sewer systems are more than fifty years old, but the existing pipes have to carry enough fluids, the treatment plant has to have enough capacity, and the wells have to produce enough water

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Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days in observance of the holidays listed:

Christmas	Monday, December 25, 2006
New Year's Day	Monday, January 1, 2007
Martin Luther King Day	Monday, January 15, 2007

If you have a water or sewer emergency after hours, call 301-934-8421 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

Town of La Plata Officials

Mayor: Gene Ambrogio	Assistant Town Manager: Michelle D. Miner
Council:	Town Clerk: Judith T. Frazier
Wayne Winkler.....Ward 1	Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder
C. Keith Back.....Ward 2	Director of Planning and Zoning: Catherine N. Flerlage
Paddy Mudd.....Ward 3	Director of Public Works: Stephen A. Murphy
Vic E. Newman.....Ward 4	Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings
Acting Town Manager: Joseph W. Norris	
Assistant Town Manager: Patricia L. Bembe	

305 Queen Anne Street, La Plata, Maryland 20646
Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.
Telephone: 301-934-8421/-/301-870-3377
La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500
Email: mminer@townoflaplata.org
Website: www.townoflaplata.org

Council Column



FROM WARD 1

Councilman Wayne Winkler

A lot has happened since I last wrote. New buildings, roads being resurfaced, St. Mary's Avenue finally being finished. A new water tower is being built at Tilghman Lake. Let me tell you about some of the new buildings. The Council approved the annexation that will bring Lowe's and Giant into La Plata. Down at the shopping center where the old Safeway store was, the existing Texaco Station will become a Popeye's. The property that is north of the shopping center where the new Safeway store is will house: Mo's Southwest Grille, Fed Ex/Kinko's, Subway, 3 Brothers Pizza, La Plata Cleaners, and Petco. The Design Review Board approved plans for the new Wilhelm Dentist office on Route 6 - the existing building is to be demolished and a new building will be built. On Washington Avenue one of the old homes will be torn down and replaced with a mammoth Legal Office. The Echols family is planning to build two apartment buildings off of St. Mary's Avenue, and the building just seems to continue.

Other things going on: We had the clock dedication in memory of Kittie Newcomb and the clock really looks good between her house and the Town Hall. We had the scarecrow festival and it was a huge success. Our Salute to Veterans parade was the largest I can remember and the Governor attended. Our concert series went very well as always, and the movies on the green were well attended.

If you've driven down La Grange

Avenue you should have noticed most of the plants have been replaced with grass and it looks much cleaner and nicer. At Town Hall the dead trees have been removed and will be replaced and the storm water management pond will be repaired. Thanks to the hard work of Public Works and the Beautification Commission.

Hope everyone has a happy and safe Thanksgiving and Christmas, and you get a lot of neat gifts. And remember "In God We Trust."



U.S. Army Specialist Matthew Pennington and Councilman Keith Back in the Salute to Veterans Parade on Sunday, November 5th. Spec. Pennington was the guest speaker at the ceremony following the parade.

FROM WARD 2

Councilman Keith Back

Another winter and Holiday season is upon us. I want to wish all of the residents of our Town and the hard working Town staff a safe and happy season. I always look forward to the Christmas holiday. It is a time for family and friends and reflecting back on all of the blessings we enjoy. Take time during your busy holiday season to enjoy the small things in life that in the long run mean the most to us. Enjoy time off with your family, a card from an old friend or a quiet moment with a relative that you have not seen for a while. If you have the opportunity, please take time to thank those who are serving our country in the armed forces, police or emergency services. They deserve our thanks every day but especially during the holidays when many must be away from their families to keep us safe.

There have been a lot of things

going on in La Plata in 2006 and many more things to come in 2007. The Town Council is taking action on many infrastructure improvements to our roads, parks, water and sewer. There are now many new opportunities for families to shop and dine within La Plata with more to open in the next few years. I know that my family has enjoyed the variety of places to eat without having to drive to other parts of the area. Please continue to support our local businesses so that La Plata continues to be seen as a viable place for new businesses to open.

I look forward to a wonderful holiday season here in La Plata and I wish you and your family all the best for the coming New Year.

FROM WARD 3

Councilwoman Paddy Mudd

The Kent Avenue Community Partnership had a great clean up day on Saturday, November 4th. There were lots of hands for the clean-up - and pizza and a prize for all who helped. Another clean-up day and an Easter egg hunt are planned for Saturday, March 31st - we will also have a rain date - we don't want a repeat of this year's rain!

The Salute to Veterans event was a huge success - many, many thanks to the entire town staff and police department. A special thanks to Michelle Miner, Gayle Curry and Joe Norris!

St. Mary's Avenue has been completed. The 18 inches of paving that were added have made it safer and it also remains the residential street it is meant to be. I am pleased with the results and have heard lots of compliments on the final product. The Green Turtle is open and busy. It is a very attractive building - and the food and drinks are excellent.

Come out to our Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering on Sunday, December 3rd - there will be fun, food and activities for all ages. Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Legislation Recently Enacted by the Town Council

(Full text copies of legislation are available at the Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street, or on the Town's web page at www.townoflaplata.org under "Legislation".)

- **Ordinance 06-5: Property Exchange Agreement** - Approves a certain Agreement of Property Exchange with Hawthorne Green, LLC; determines that certain property owned by the Town and described in the Agreement of Property Exchange is no longer needed for public use and authorizes the conveyance of such property pursuant to such Agreement of Property Exchange.
 - **Ordinance 06-7: Town of La Plata FY2006-2007 Tax Rate** - Adopts the Town of La Plata FY2006-2007 Tax Rate.
 - **Ordinance 06-8: Town of La Plata FY2006-2007 Financial Plan/Budget** - Adopts the Town of La Plata FY2006-2007 Financial Plan/Budget.
 - **Ordinance 06-9: Fee Schedule** - Adopts the Fee Schedule, dealing with fees set by the Town of La Plata.
 - **Ordinance 06-10 Amended: Regulation of Smoking and Tobacco Products** - Defines certain terms; regulates the placement of tobacco products, prohibits smoking and carrying of lighted tobacco products in certain places; allows certain persons voluntarily to prohibit smoking or carrying lighted tobacco products in certain places where not otherwise prohibited; provides for the enforcement of these restrictions and penalties for violations.
 - **Ordinance 06-11: International Building Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-12: International Residential Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-13: International Electrical Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-14: International Mechanical Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-15: International Energy Conservation Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-16: International Fuel Gas Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-17: International Existing Building Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-18: International Fire Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-19: International Plumbing Code 2003**
 - **Ordinance 06-20: International Property Maintenance Code 2003**
- Ordinances 06-11 through 06-20 adopt the 2003 International Codes as listed in the titles, with certain modifications, and also provide for the administration and enforcement of those codes and specify penalties for violations.
- **Ordinance 06-21: Major Facilities Fees in the Old Town Utility District** - Revises the exemption to the application of the Town's Major Facilities Fee on properties located in the Old Town Utility District; provides for the use of monies currently in the Town's Major Facilities Fund and revenues to be contributed to the fund on and after a certain date.
 - **Ordinance 06-23: Amendment to Town of La Plata Infrastructure Bonds, 2006 Series A** - Amends the list of projects, as contained in Emergency Ordinance 06-1, to be financed in whole or in part by the issuance and sale of "The Town of La Plata, Maryland Infrastructure Bonds, 2006 Series A".
 - **Ordinance 06-24: Election Laws Revision** - Revises the Town's election laws to eliminate a requirement that voters provide certain types of identification at the polls before being allowed to vote in Town elections and by allowing persons to cast a provisional ballot in certain circumstances.
 - **Ordinance 06-25: Elections - Certificate of Nomination** - Alters to conform with the Town Charter the date by which a candidate for election to Town office must file a certificate of nomination; provides a date by which the Board of Supervisors of Elections shall make available forms and other materials necessary for candidates to file certificates of nomination for election to Town office.
 - **Ordinance 06-26: Automatic Fire Sprinkler Systems – One- and Two-Family Dwellings** - Requires installation of certain automatic fire sprinkler systems in certain new one- and two-family dwellings.
 - **Resolution 06-2: Charter Amendment – Elections** - Amends the Town Charter to alter the dates upon which certificates of nominations must be filed and when Town primary elections are conducted; clarifies the composition and altering the process for appointment of the Town's Board of Supervisors of Elections; alters the circumstances when a primary election must be conducted; reassigns certain electoral process duties and responsibilities formerly assigned to the Clerk-Treasurer; eliminates staggered terms of office for members of the Town Council commencing in 2009 and provides a certain term of office for members of the Council elected in 2007; provides that members of the Town Council from each Councilmanic ward shall be elected by the qualified voters of the entire Town; alters the process for filling vacancies in the offices of Mayor and members of the Town Council; alters the process for appeals from certain decisions of the Board of Supervisors of Elections and Town Council; alters the time for conducting a referendum election following the filing a recall petition; authorizes the Town Council to enact ordinances to regulate campaign finance and reporting for Town elections; makes certain clarifying and stylistic changes; repeals certain obsolete provisions.
 - **Resolution 06-3: Amendment to authorization to execute documents in connection with the "EPA Appropriations Act Fiscal 2003, Town of La Plata, Maryland" Grant** - Amends the name of the person authorized to execute documents on behalf of the Town of La Plata in connection with the "EPA Appropriations Act Fiscal 2003, Town of La Plata, Maryland" Grant.
 - **Resolution 06-4: Rosewick Limited Partnership Annexation – 74.6032 Acres** - Authorizes the annexation of 74.6032 acres, more or less, of land into the corporate limits of the Town of La Plata by amending the corporate limits of the Town; establishing certain terms, conditions and circumstances applicable to such land and to the owners thereof; providing for the zoning of such land upon annexation.
 - **Resolution 06-5: Surplus Radio Equipment** - Determines that certain radio equipment owned by the Town is no longer needed for public use and authorizes the conveyance of such surplus radio equipment.
 - **Resolution 06-6: Schedule of Holidays FY06-07** - Adopts the schedule of holidays to be observed by the employees of the Town of La Plata for FY 2006-2007.
 - **Resolution 06-7: Participation in the Alternate Contributory Pension Selection Plan** - Elects to participate in the Alternate Contributory Pension Selection Plan of the Maryland State Retirement Plan; agrees to pay additional employer contributions required by this Plan; agrees that participation in the Plan is effective July 1, 2006.
 - **Resolution 06-8: Authorizing acquisition of certain property owned by Henry J. Stehr and Anita S. Gibson by eminent domain for the purposes of construction of Heritage Green Parkway** - Authorizes the acquisition of certain property owned by Henry J. Stehr and Anita S. Gibson by eminent domain for the purposes of the construction of Heritage Green Parkway; determines that acquisition of such property for the construction of Heritage Green Parkway is for a public purpose.
 - **Resolution 06-9: Affirmation of Traditional Neighborhood Development Designation for Parcel 1, Parcel 2 and Parcel 3 of Stagecoach Crossing** - Affirmed the granting of Traditional Neighborhood Development designation for Parcel 1, Parcel 2 and Parcel 3 of Stagecoach Crossing.

La Plata Town Services

Special Trash Pickup

Bulk items are picked up the first Monday of each month, or the following Monday if the first one is a holiday. Large amounts of loose material (such as brush) should be bundled or bagged in such a manner that the weight is less than 50 lbs. The Town reserves the right not to pick up items too heavy to safely handle. General construction cleanup and hazardous materials are not eligible. Items must be at curbside by 7:30 a.m. on pickup day. Call Town Hall before pickup day to be placed on the list. Minimum fee: \$11.00 for 5 minutes loading time; each additional minute is \$1.00. A fee of \$6.00, or the current Landfill disposal fee, shall be charged for each tire collected. *Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.*

Snow Plowing on Town Streets

The Town has an emergency snow removal plan to clear Town streets. If it snows enough that Town snow plowing crews must be called out, we ask that you park in your driveway. Clearing the streets of snow is made easier if you park in your driveway rather than on the side of the street. Please only park on the side of the street as a last recourse, and only if your street is not one on which parking is prohibited during snow emergencies. Your patience and cooperation with our snow plowing crews will be very much appreciated.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Charles County Sanitary Landfill accepts household hazardous waste products the first Saturday of each month during April through December, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The last collection day for this year is December 2. The

landfill is on Billingsley Road East, between Piney Church Road and Rt. 5. Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, anti-freeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, expired prescription medicines and other poisons that are around your house. They advise that you should keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring the items to the collection site in cardboard boxes for ease in unloading. *If you need more information, please call the Charles County Dept. of Public Facilities at 301-932-3599 or 301-870-2778, or the Landfill information service at 301-932-5656.*

Yard Waste Pickup

Containers of yard waste ONLY - leaves, grass and shrub clippings, brush or branches - may be put out on your regular trash day for pickup that day **or the next day**. The containers must be marked "Yard Waste." Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50 lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 inches in diameter or more than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed - if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

Due to Charles County Sanitary Landfill being closed on certain holidays, the following adjustment is necessary to the Town's refuse collection schedule:

If your regular trash collection day is: Christmas Monday, December 25, 2006

Trash will be picked up on: Tuesday, December 26, 2006

If your regular trash collection day is: New Year's Day Monday, January 1, 2007

Trash will be picked up on: Tuesday, January 2, 2007

ENDOWED RUSSELL GORDON CROFT TUITION SCHOLARSHIPS

Gordon Croft, from Port Tobacco and a graduate of La Plata High School and Johns Hopkins, has endowed these scholarships for Charles County students. Endowed Russell Gordon Croft tuition scholarships are for students in need of financial aid and who are from southern Charles County (south of Route 225 and Route 6).

College	Scholarship*	Contact
• Johns Hopkins University (Homewood Campus)	\$25,000/year	410-516-8028
• Randolph Macon Women's College	\$10,000/year	434-947-8127
• Washington & Lee University	\$10,000/year	540-458-8738
• University of Maryland College Park	\$4,000/year	301-405-7764
• Dartmouth College	\$6,000/year	603-646-2451
• College of Southern Maryland	\$5,000/year	301-934-7635
• University of Maryland College Park	\$5,000/year	301-405-7764

* Rotates every 4 years. Some of the scholarships are underutilized.



La Plata Business Association

The Center for Children Selected for Another 3-year Federal Grant

The Center for Children, the largest mental health facility in Southern Maryland, has recently been awarded another 3-year federal grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), in conjunction with the Administration for Children and Families and the Family and Youth Services Bureau to mentor the children of prisoners (MCP). This is the second 3-year MCP grant that the Center has received from DHHS. This grant began on October 1, 2006 and will continue through September 30, 2009. "There are so many youth that are overlooked and under served," said Vanessa Tisdale, Program Coordinator. "This is yet another opportunity for the Center to continue to provide the needed support to these youth and their families."

When the Center for Children's mentoring program began in 1998, the service area was limited to Charles County and matched over 50 youth with mentors. Since receiving funding, the Center has been able to expand its services to Southern Prince Georges County, thus developing more mentor opportunities for youth. Now, in an effort to reach a wider population of youth, this new funding gives the Center an opportunity to expand its service area to Calvert and St. Mary's counties.

"It is always great affirmation of the excellent work done by a program when you are selected for funding once again

in an open competition, especially a federal grant competition such as this where you are competing among applicants across the country," said Catherine Meyers, Executive Director of the Center for Children.

The Center for Children will continue to collaborate with the Department of Juvenile Justice, the Charles County and Prince George's County DSS and the Board of Education in order to provide mentoring services, leadership development, educational and cultural outings for youth.

Vanessa Tisdale encourages the local community to reach out: "It is an urgent need! We are an important piece of the puzzle for families and youth who find themselves in this situation. If we can extend a helping hand to just save one child from being another statistic in poverty, the juvenile correction system or being shifted from one placement facility to another, we have done a lot." If you consider yourself an excellent role model and you have at least 1 hour a week to provide support to a youth age 4-18, you could be just what is needed in a child's life. For more information on how to become a mentor, to refer a mentee, or for general information on the program, contact Vanessa Tisdale at 301-609-9887.

The Center for Children is a private, non-profit organization that provides comprehensive mental health services to children and their families. With offices in La Plata and Leonardtown, Maryland, the Center for Children serves clients from Charles, St. Mary's, Calvert, and lower Prince George's counties. For more information on programs available, please call 301-609-9887.

"SCREEN ON THE GREEN"

We are accepting suggestions for movies to be shown during the Town of La Plata's 2007 "Screen on the Green." Due to copyright laws and licensing regulations, Disney Studio-produced movies are not permitted to be viewed outdoors. Therefore, please do not recommend these movies. We would like to reach a variety of movie-goers so please choose movies with a broad audience appeal. We will include dates and the movies selected in the April-May 2007 newsletter. Please call 301-934-8421 ext. 126 with your suggestion.

Invitation to Apply for Future Vacancies on the Town's Boards and Commissions

If you are interested in becoming a member of one of our boards or commissions, please call the Town Hall for an application.

- ◆ **Beautification Commission:** Promotes the beautification of the Town by surveying all public and private properties, provides active leadership in beautification activities and makes recommendations to the Town Council where needed.
- ◆ **Board of Appeals:** Hears and makes decisions on applications for variances, special exceptions, and appeals.
- ◆ **Board of Supervisors of Elections:** Conducts all municipal elections; serves as the Town of La Plata Elected Officials Ethics Commission for matters regarding ethics provisions that pertain to any elected official of the Town.
- ◆ **Crime Watch Council:** Consists of members from each neighborhood in the Town; responsible for promotion of crime prevention activities.
- ◆ **Design Review Board:** Reviews drawings and plans for development permits for consistency with the La Plata plans and La Plata community design guidelines.
- ◆ **Historic District Commission:** Reviews reports and surveys to identify historical sites, structures and districts in the Town; makes recommendations to the Council that are used to establish regulations and determine which properties should be included.
- ◆ **Parks and Recreation Commission:** Develops immediate and long-range plans for recreational programs and activities and provision of an adequate park system to meet the needs of all ages; provides advice to the Council on all activities in the field of recreation; performs other services involving recreational facilities, activities, programs, services or special events.
- ◆ **Planning Commission:** Develops a Comprehensive Plan for the Town every five to ten years, reviews all subdivision plats and major construction in the Town, and makes recommendations to the Town Council on requests for zoning amendments.

DECEMBER 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 3:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., Old Tyme Holiday Gathering and Tree Lighting	4 Special trash pick-up day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 12/1 to schedule.)	5 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	6 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	7	8	9 Breakfast with Santa
10 3:00 p.m., Holiday Celebration at La Plata Train Station and Caboose	11	12 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	13 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	14`	15	16
17	18 6:00 p.m., Christmas Decorations Contest	19 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	20 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session	21	22	23
24/31	25 CHRISTMAS DAY - TOWN HALL CLOSED (Monday's trash will be picked up on Tuesday, Dec. 26.)	26 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting <i>Curbside Christmas tree pickup begins</i>	27	28	29	30

La Plata Town Notes

JANUARY 2007

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 NEW YEAR'S DAY - TOWN HALL CLOSED (Monday's trash will be picked up on Tuesday, Jan. 2.)	2 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	3 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board Meeting 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	4	5	6
7	8 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 1/5 to schedule)	9 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	10 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	11	12 <i>Curbside Christmas tree pickup ends</i>	13
14	15 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY - TOWN HALL CLOSED (No change to trash schedule.)	16 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	17 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session	18	19	20
21	22	23 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

La Plata Town Notes

Community Announcements

Concert at Christ Church

112 E. Charles Street
Sunday, December 10, 2006, 3:00 p.m.
Songs for the Nativity

Julie Keim, Soprano; Eric Sabatino, Harp; Gary Davison, Organ and Piano

The program will offer songs reflecting on the Nativity of Christ, drawn primarily from Ms. Keim's newest CD, A Child My Choice.

La Plata Blue Knights

La Plata Blue Knights (LPBK) is a non-profit Youth Organization that works to serve over 500 La Plata families and provides a positive sports program for many, many children in our community. We are renovating and enlarging the concession stand at Milton Somers Middle School. As a fundraising effort, we are making available to all La Plata residents, former and current LPBK parents and players, Somers alumni and current students and staff, and La Plata Businesses an opportunity to order an engraved brick with their name or business. The bricks are \$100 each and the first 200 will be used to cover the front of the new concession stand. We have also worked with the Longaberger Company to create a limited edition Town of La Plata and La Plata Blue Knights basket. They are beautiful and available at \$80. Contact: Andrea "Andy" Sanford, Fundraising Coordinator, at 301-392-5775.

Message from the La Plata Police Department

The La Plata Police Department has just completed a busy year. In March the Department moved to a new Headquarters building on La Grange Avenue. Many of you remember it as the "old Post Office." The building has been completely refurbished and is now a professional law enforcement facility. Additionally, the Department received a grant from the Maryland Emergency Management Agency in excess of \$415,000 that was used to harden the interior against weather-related incidents. The hardened area can withstand winds up to 175 mph. Some of this space will be used as an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). When not being used as the EOC, the facility is open to community organizations and other groups for their meetings. Those interested in reserving the room should contact the Police Department (301-934-1500).

As the Town of La Plata has grown so has the need for police services. Since the La Plata Police Department is the first responder in the Town we are a "24/7" organization. The Department handles approximately 500 calls for service a month. This does not include special events, patrol checks (those areas that need frequent patrols), special enforcement details or traffic enforcement. The Mayor and Council recognized this increased need and authorized the addition of three officers. The additional officers have been hired. One officer is currently in the police academy, the other two are scheduled for mandated in-service training and will be "on the street" before the end of the year.

In this day and age of bigger is better, "small" anything is considered to be inferior. While the Town of La Plata Police Department is not large in numbers it is large in quality. The officers of the Department are highly trained professionals. They are dedicated and loyal employees whose goal is to ensure a safe environment for the citizens of La Plata.

Upcoming Events

Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering and Christmas Tree Lighting
Sunday, December 3, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.
La Plata Town Hall

The Town Council will be hosting the 2nd annual Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering on Sunday, December 3, beginning at 3:00 p.m. at the Town Hall. There will be entertainment inside and outside: holiday story-telling at 3:30 p.m. and at 4:30 p.m. by Emily Ferren of the Charles County Library, children's holiday crafts to make, light refreshments, choirs, holiday carols performed by Southern Mix Barbershop Chorus from 3:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m., Magic and Illusion show by "Speed n Thro" (come see them make it snow inside from 4:00 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.), petting zoo, miniature train rides and arrival of Santa Claus by fire truck, followed by visits with Santa Claus.

Breakfast with Santa
Saturday, December 9
La Plata Town Hall

Children 10 years old and under are invited to have Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, December 9, at the La Plata Town Hall. Donuts and juice will be served, and Santa will have a small gift for each child. Each child is asked to bring at least one Christmas card. Handmade cards are encouraged, and children may bring as many cards as they wish. The cards are taken to the residents of the nursing homes in La Plata.

Reservations are required and spaces are limited to 25 per time slot. Please choose one of the following time slots: 7:15 a.m. - 8:00 a.m., 8:15 a.m. - 9:00 a.m., 9:15 a.m. - 10:00 a.m., 10:15 a.m. - 11:00 a.m., and 11:15 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Call Town Hall by noon on Friday, December 8, so Santa's helpers will know when you'll be here.

Holiday Celebration at the La Plata Train Station and Caboose
Sunday, December 10, 3:00 p.m.
La Plata Train Station, 101 Kent Avenue

The Historical Society of Charles County is sponsoring a Christmas sing-along at the La Plata Train Station and Caboose on Sunday, December 10, at 3:00 p.m. Santa Claus will be available for pictures in the caboose and light refreshments will be served. Please come and see the new displays and trains, as well as period Christmas decorations designed by the La Plata Community Garden Club.

Christmas Decorations Contest
Monday, December 18
lights on by 6:00 p.m.

The Town's Beautification Commission will again be the judges in our annual Christmas Decorations Contest. All businesses will be considered, but individual homes must register to have their outdoor decorations judged in this contest. Call Gayle Curry at the Town Hall (301-934-8421 or 301-870-3377) by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15 if you want your outdoor Christmas decorations to be judged. You may also register a neighbor's home that you believe should be in the contest. Please have your lights on by 6:00 p.m. in anticipation of the Beautification Commission judges.

Christmas Tree Disposal

The Town will pick up Christmas trees Tuesday, December 26, 2006, through Friday, January 12, 2007. Pickup will be on your regular trash day or the day after - just put your tree out with your trash cans on your regular trash day. The trees are taken to the County's composting facility at the County Landfill to be ground into mulch. *They require that you do not leave the tree in a plastic bag if you use one to remove the tree from your home, and that you remove all lights, decorations and the tree stand.*

Charles County has drop-off sites for Christmas trees, the closest one being on Radio Station Road, across from the entrance to Laurel Springs Park. They will be open 24 hours a day starting Tuesday, December 26, through Saturday, January 13.

Election Laws Revisions

The Town Council recently adopted revisions to the Town's election laws, including eliminating the requirement that voters provide identification at the polls, and providing for casting a provisional ballot in certain circumstances and substantially similar to the system for casting provisional ballots in Charles County elections. While this article briefly describes the revisions to the Town's election laws, full text copies of Resolution 06-2, Ordinance 06-24 and Ordinance 06-25 are available at the Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street, or on the Town's web page at www.townoflaplata.org under "Legislation".

Primary elections will be held on the third Monday in March (rather than in April) only if more than two (rather than three) persons from each councilmanic ward have filed as candidates for the office of Councilman or for the office of Mayor. Certificates of nomination must be filed by the first Monday in March (rather than in April.)

Beginning with the 2009 Town general election, the Mayor and Councilmen will no longer serve staggered terms and all qualified voters of the Town will be able to vote for candidates for all of the five Council seats: the Mayor and four Councilmen. In order to accomplish this revision, at the 2007 general election (and primary election, if one is necessary) the candidates for Councilmen from Wards 1 and 2 will be elected to 2-year terms by the qualified voters from their individual councilmanic wards. At the 2009 general election, candidates for Mayor and Councilmen from Wards 1, 2, 3 and 4 will be elected to 4-year terms, by all qualified voters of the Town.

Water and Sewer (Cont. from page 1)

to serve the new developments that have taken place in recent years and to accommodate the expected growth over the next decade.

These are the most regulated and controlled services the Town provides, and they are highly technical as well. La Plata is fortunate in that it has a number of residents who have years of experience and specialized training in this field. To take advantage of their expertise, the Mayor and Council have appointed a water and sewer advisory committee to advise the Planning Commission on water and sewer requirements before they approve subdivision plats or site plans for commercial and industrial buildings. They will also oversee the creation of comprehensive water and sewer plans and recommend capital improvements to the Mayor and Council.

The members of this committee need to have experience and training in the construction and operation of public water and sewer systems. Anyone with these qualifications who is interested in serving in this capacity should submit their resume to the Mayor and Council at the Town Hall to be considered for appointment to this important committee.

Town Notes is a publication of the Town of La Plata. If you would like to submit a Community Announcement item (subject to Town approval and space availability), please send it by e-mail to jfrazier@townoflaplata.org

Town of La Plata

305 Queen Anne Street
P. O. Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646-2268

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