

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Special Meeting and Work Session
May 23, 2006, 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman R. Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Michelle D. Miner, Interim Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer

Minutes:

Special Meeting

Mayor Ambrogio called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Motion to open minutes of the November 22, 2005 closed meeting

Mayor Ambrogio moved to open the minutes of the November 22, 2005 closed meeting. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Legislation

Ordinance 06-8 Town of La Plata FY2006-2007 Financial Plan/Budget (For Adoption) – For the purpose of adopting the Town of La Plata FY2006-2007 Financial Plan/Budget; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Councilman Back moved to adopt Ordinance 06-8. Councilwoman Mudd seconded the motion. In discussion before the vote, Councilman Newman remarked that the facilitated budget work sessions had been useful and should be done each year. Councilman Back praised Mr. Norris' work on the budget. Vote on the motion: the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Ordinance 06-9 Fee Schedule (For Adoption) – For the purpose of adopting the Fee Schedule, dealing with fees set by the Town of La Plata; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Mayor Ambrogio moved to adopt Ordinance 06-9. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion. In discussion before the vote, Councilman Winkler asked Mr. Norris about the fee increases and was advised the increases were based on a combination of the cost of living and the Town's cost of living. Vote on the motion: the motion passed by unanimous vote.

New Business

List of Approved Banks

Mr. Norris explained he believed that the Town should have all local banks on the list, noting that the certificate of deposit market has become more competitive. He further explained that the two banks he is asking be added to the list meet VeriBank qualifications, which he checks quarterly. In response to a question from Councilman Newman, Mr. Norris advised he deals locally for practicality purposes.

Mayor Ambrogio moved to approve the List of Approved Banks, to which Tri-County Community Bank and Maryland Bank and Trust Co. have been added. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Motion to conduct Closed Session

Councilman Back moved to conduct a closed session, pursuant to *Annotated Code of Maryland* Section 10-508(a)(1)(i) – Discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom it has jurisdiction. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mayor Ambrogio and Councilmen Winkler, Back, Mudd and Newman voted aye. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

There being no other discussion, Mayor Ambrogio moved to adjourn the special meeting at 6:09 PM. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Work Session

Matters of Council Discussion

Sidewalk construction

Description: Concern has been expressed that sidewalks are not being constructed to the width required per Town Code, and that discussion should be held regarding the need to require developers to put in sidewalks that are Code compliant at the time of development.

Councilman Winkler explained that he noticed that there are different widths of sidewalks in Agricopia and in some areas there are no sidewalks. When he discussed this with Town staff, he was informed that sidewalks are built to the regulations in effect at the time of subdivision of the property. Councilman Winkler advised he believes the Town needs to change the Code to reflect that sidewalks be built to current regulations. During this discussion, it was also noted that there is a need to check with SHA regarding repairs and handicap ramps on sidewalks along Rt. 6.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to change the Code to require 5' sidewalks with 5' planting strip for all development. The Council directed Ms. Miner to contact SHA regarding repairs and handicap ramps on sidewalks along Rt. 6.

Old Town Utility District major facility fee exemption

Description: The Town Treasurer wishes to discuss this exemption with the Council.

Mr. Norris advised he brought this to the Council to be sure they were aware of this exemption, and noted that the Town is losing thousands of dollars in revenue which will be needed in the future. He gave as an example the hotel built on Rt. 301, whose major facility fee would have been \$169,000. Mr. Norris noted he asked Mr. Miller why the exemption was provided, and that Mr. Miller said the prevailing reason was to attract restaurants to the downtown. He asked if the Council wished to retain this exemption.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to abolish the exemption.

Treasurer's report dated April 30, 2006

Description: The Town Treasurer wishes to discuss this with the Council.

Mr. Norris briefly discussed the report and advised he would be bringing back to the Council more information on the police department building construction budget and asking for a budget amendment of \$250,000. He noted that the Council is aware of \$169,000, and that the balance is due to change orders, SMECO moving lines and bringing electricity into the building, which was not part of Facchina's scope of work. He also noted he would be asking for a budget amendment of \$10,000 as he needs authorization to spend that amount on the Town Clock.

Councilman Newman asked if Heather Court could be added to the pavement overlay project for Quince Court, noting that Mr. Schroeder told him that 20% of the cost is getting the equipment to the site. Mr. Norris advised there is approximately \$35,000 available.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to include Heather Court and added Cottonwood Drive, with the stipulation that all of the overlay work can be done for under \$35,000.

Long term disability insurance

Description: The Town Treasurer will present information regarding providing long term disability insurance for all Town employees.

Mr. Norris went over the information in the hand-out provided to each Council member. He noted he would need a budget amendment if the Council approves providing the long term disability insurance, which will cost the Town \$1,026 per month and will be provided at no cost to Town employees.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to provide long term disability insurance to all Town employees and directed that a letter be prepared to all Town employees making them aware of this new benefit beginning July 1, 2006.

Relocation of La Plata Farmers' Market

Description: Charles County Government has given 6 months notice to the Farmers' Market to relocate from the County parking lot, due to the Talbot Street construction project. Joe Harrison, Farmers' Market Master, suggests that the Market be moved to Maple Avenue.

Ms. Miner explained that Mr. Harrison wishes to move as soon as possible and has suggested the area parallel to the railroad tracks on N. Maple Avenue.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to move the Farmers' Market to the N. Maple Avenue location and notify the nearby businesses about the relocation of the Market to that area. Councilman Winkler and Ms. Miner will prepare a list of the businesses and Councilman Winkler will visit each business. The move will occur after each business person is informed. Target date of the move is Saturday, June 3.

Matters of Information

Location of the Town clock

Ms. Miner advised that the clock is ready to be installed and asked the Council to advise where they wish it to be placed. Paula Winkler, Beautification Commission chairman, reported that John Newcomb recommends installing it at the Town Hall. Ms. Winkler advised she would not recommend installing it in the circle due to the danger of trucks running over the circle and hitting the clock. Ms. Winkler recommended it be installed on the west side of the Town Hall and noted the two-faced clock should be positioned to face east-west. Ms. Winkler advised she would speak to Phil Mueller, of Facchina, regarding the installation, and also noted that she would assure the clock will be visible within the landscaping on the property.

Council consensus: The Council agreed to have the clock installed near the Veterans Memorial monument, inside the sidewalk.

- Councilwoman Mudd stated she believed fence should be installed around the grass line in back of the police department, noting that neighboring properties have a 6' black wrought iron fence. She is concerned that this area will become a major cut-through from the Green Turtle.

Town Council consensus: The Council agreed that Chief Gittings should come to a work session, and should bring a drawing of the area.

- Councilwoman Mudd advised that street lights on La Grange and Maple Avenues need to be repaired, noting you can lean on one on La Grange and it moves, and that two on Maple Avenue are on all of the time.
- Councilwoman Mudd advised that she has received complaints that trash collects in the bushes planted along La Grange Avenue near Dr. Ferrero's office, and that there is no parking for his office like there is for his neighbors.
- Councilwoman Mudd stated that it seems some projects and items of concern are not being taken care of.
- Councilman Winkler reported that James Richmond, Charles County Board of Education, spoke at this morning's meeting of the La Plata Business Association. Councilman Winkler noted that Charles County needs affordable housing for teachers and police and suggested that the Town work with the State and the county to provide more affordable housing. He also noted

that Mark Rose should be asked about available grants. Ms. Miner noted that the state has a “Work where you live” program.

- Councilman Newman recommended that “drop dead dates” be attached to items such as those Councilwoman Mudd brought up. Mayor Ambrogio asked that a list of pending items and ordinances be given to Ms. Miner to be brought to the Council. Ordinances to be included deal with the topics of Farmers Market, Noise, and Manner of address – time limit.

Future Work Session Topics

Mayor Ambrogio asked that a topic be included regarding water restrictions on new developments - not allowing irrigation systems. Ms. Miner advised that a representative from Earth Data will be at the June 6 work session and will discuss the water appropriation permit for the new well.

Ms. Winkler advised that Department of Natural Resources will be issuing a ban on automatic sprinkler systems as a waste of water. She noted that if the appropriate plants are planted, additional water is not needed after the first year when the plants are established.

There being no other discussion, Councilman Winkler moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 PM. Councilman Back seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote. After a five minute break, the Council moved into closed session at 7:32 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk