

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Special Meeting and Work Session
October 24, 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; Carol L. Rollins, Development Coordinator; Cheryl McGuire, Chairman, Design Review Board

Minutes:

Special Meeting

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

Discussion and possible appropriation of funds

Landscaping of Town Hall property and repairs of bioretention pond on Town Hall property

During discussion, Councilman Newman questioned the use of Compro instead of good topsoil and was assured by Paula Winkler, Chairman of the Beautification Commission, that the use of Compro was appropriate at this site. Ms. Winkler advised that the work can be done after the November 5 Salute to Veterans event and that it is not too late in the season. In response to Councilwoman Mudd's question regarding the need for a maintenance contract, Ms. Miner advised that it will need to be put out to bid.

Mayor Ambrogio moved to appropriate \$17,472.50 for landscaping and repairs, with the stipulation that Denison till. Councilman Back seconded the motion. The motion passed by majority vote: Mayor Ambrogio and Councilmen Winkler, Back and Mudd voted aye; Councilman Newman voted nay.

Paving projects in Town, based on bids received on 10/20/06

Mr. Norris recommended that the bid be awarded to All-Pro Asphalt, in the amount of \$224,800, for overlay of the following streets in the Phoenix Run area: Dorchester Avenue, Goose Creek Drive, Jennie Run Drive, Cedar Court, Holly Drive, Sycamore Lane, Laurel Lane, Caroline Drive and Potomac Street. He noted that this list of streets represents the first of those to be repaved during this fiscal year. During discussion, Councilwoman Mudd asked about paving the parking areas and was advised by Mr. Norris that those are private property.

Councilman Winkler moved to award the bid to All-Pro Asphalt in the amount of \$224,800. Councilman Back seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion passed by majority vote: Mayor Ambrogio and Councilmen Winkler, Back and Newman voted aye; Councilwoman Mudd voted nay.

FY 06 Budget expenditure transfers

Mr. Norris explained that the auditor recommended certain budget expenditure transfers for FY 06 for the purpose of bringing expenditures in line with budget allocations.

Mayor Ambrogio moved to reallocate budget appropriations as follows: \$46,000 from Recreation – Parks (Operating Expense) to Miscellaneous – Insurance; and \$66,000 from Recreation – Parks (Capital Outlay) to Debt Service. Councilman Back seconded the motion. Following discussion, the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Acknowledge receipt of Treasurer's Reports dated August 31, 2006 and September 30, 2006

Mayor Ambrogio acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's Reports dated August 31, 2006 and September 30, 2006.

There being no other discussion, Councilman Winkler moved to adjourn the special meeting at 6:35 PM. Councilman Back seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Work session

Matters of Council Discussion

Kent Avenue Corridor Partnership

Description: The Council will discuss renewed efforts regarding this community. Chief Gittings, Sheriff Davis, Captain Wyant, and Sandy Washington will be present.

Chief Gittings, Captain Wyant and Sandy Washington discussed with the Town Council the renewed efforts regarding the Kent Avenue communities and the need to continue those efforts. The Town Council expressed their continued support.

During discussion, the Town Council agreed with Councilwoman Mudd's request that all Town parks signs be changed from stating specific times of opening and closing to "Closed from dusk to dawn."

Councilwoman Mudd reiterated her belief that a community center is needed, and that the Public Works "top shop" building and property would serve that purpose as it is within walking distance for children and adults residing in the community. Councilwoman Mudd also remarked that grant funding could be sought for such a project. Councilwoman Mudd encouraged the Council to consider this use of the property when Public Works moves from their current site.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to change all Town parks signs to read, "Closed from dusk to dawn", and to conduct further discussion regarding the use of the Public Works property for a community center.

McDonald's Corporation signage issues [Not discussed – McDonald's representatives did not attend.]

Description: Representatives of McDonald's will discuss signage issues and the Town's sign ordinance: Omo Esdamada, Constance Julius, Robert Dragar, Cindy Green, and Paul VanSickle.

Temporary banners

The Town Council agreed to add this item to the agenda to allow Butch Hunt, representative of the La Plata Business Association (LPBA), to discuss the issues regarding temporary banners. Mr. Hunt advised that the LPBA would like the Town to amend the regulations to allow for banners to be up for 90 days, apply for a permit online and have no fee for the permit. During discussion, Ms. Rollins explained the current regulations for banners. Councilman Winkler suggested that the Town Council should discuss this further and have Code Enforcement staff present during the discussion. Councilman Newman suggested that staff make a field contact to help an applicant fill out the application. Councilman Back stated he believes 90 days is too long for a banner to remain on display, and noted that he believes a good compromise is needed between what businesses need and what the Town needs.

Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that further discussion is needed, with Code Enforcement staff present and with input from the Design Review Board.

Town of La Plata Transportation Study

Description: The Council will continue discussion regarding the results of the RFP solicitation for a Town of La Plata Transportation Study. Any action on the RFP would be taken at the November 14 regular meeting.

During discussion, Mr. Norris advised the money was available but that a budget amendment would be needed.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to act on this at the November 14 regular meeting.

La Grange Avenue parking spaces

Description: Further discussion on the request of Dr. Ferrero and other interested parties regarding additional parking spaces on La Grange Avenue.

Following discussion, the Town Council agreed that Councilman Winkler will speak to the owner of the Carrico house property regarding coordinating storm water management and the possibility of a shared parking arrangement. They further agreed that Mayor Ambrogio will speak to Dr. Ferrero to provide an update, and that the Town Council will discuss this further at a later date.

Facilitated budget sessions

Description: The Council will discuss contracting with Jo Anne Ellison to facilitate the budget process again.

Council consensus: The Town Council directed staff to make arrangements for facilitated sessions to begin in January.

Water and Sewer Advisory Commission

Description: The Council will discuss creation of the Water and Sewer Advisory Commission.

Ms. Miner reported that Mr. Eckman asked that this be removed from the agenda in order that he may prepare and provide to the Council a list of the candidates and their qualifications.

Town Notes redesign

Description: The Council will review and discuss two proposed redesigns of the Town newsletter, presented by Linemark Printing, the publisher of the newsletter.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed they wanted a redesign of the banner on the newsletter, with photographs of the Town Hall, Police Department and Train Station and Caboose. The Town Hall is to be in the center, with the Police Department on the left and the Train Station and Caboose on the right.

DRAFT Ordinance 06-27 Commissioners Composition Revision

Description: Mayor Ambrogio will discuss with the Council this draft legislation which proposes to alter the composition of membership on the Town's Beautification Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission by eliminating a member of the Town Council from the membership of each Commission and substituting another appointee.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed not to change the composition of the Beautification Commission or the Parks and Recreation Commission, and that Councilwoman Mudd will still be on the Beautification Commission and Councilman Newman will still be on the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Wine and Cheese reception for Commission members

Description: The Council will discuss and set a date for the next Wine and Cheese reception. It was held on Tuesday, January 31 this year. In 2007, there is a 5th Tuesday, January 30.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to have the Wine and Cheese reception on January 30, 2007.

Matters of Information

Mr. Norris reported that the audit is nearly complete. Noting that even though it was a "clean audit", Mr. Norris encouraged the Town Council to invite the auditor to speak to the Town Council and answer any questions they may have regarding the audit.

Councilman Newman discussed the need for a picnic table at the Train Station, noting that people like to go there and eat lunch. Ms. Miner reported that a picnic table has been ordered and that it is similar to those at all of the Town parks. The Town Council agreed that a picnic table should be placed at the Train Station property.

Councilman Winkler suggested that the Town needs to have a marketing plan and written information to use as handouts and displays at various venues, such as the county fair and at MML functions. Mayor Ambrogio agreed and suggested that this be included in the facilitated budget meetings. Councilman Winkler advised he would contact Chris Ripley, a marketing specialist. Councilman Newman suggested that the Town's web site needs to be made easier to use and have links to various community items, such as developments and schools.

Councilwoman Mudd lead a brief discussion regarding changes to the Town Council's meeting schedule, including eliminating the 4:00 PM work session on the first Tuesday of each month, and changing from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM the work sessions on the third and fourth Tuesdays of each month. The Town Council agreed to change the meeting schedule, beginning in November.

Councilman Winkler reported that the Clock Dedication Ceremony was well attended and that staff had done a wonderful job on the event. Councilwoman Mudd praised Gayle Curry for her work and for the event program she prepared for those who attended.

Councilwoman Mudd and Jim Goldsmith held a brief discussion regarding the paving of parking areas in the Phoenix Run community. Mr. Goldsmith advised he was waiting for price information from Mr. Schroeder, after which he will draft a letter that the Town is to send to property owners in the community.

There being no voiced objection, the meeting adjourned at 8:07 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk