

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular Meeting – 7:00 PM
January 22, 2008

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman James Goldsmith, Councilman Scot D. Lucas, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Town Staff: Joseph W. Norris, Treasurer; Cassin B. Gittings, Chief, La Plata Police Department; Danielle Mandley, Accounting Administrative Assistant

Minutes:

Mayor Ambrogio called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, and asked Bill Wyman to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of December minutes

Councilman Newman moved to approve the minutes of the December 11 special meeting, December 11 closed session, December 11 work session, and December 18 regular meeting. Councilman Goldsmith seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Treasurer's Report

Mayor Ambrogio acknowledged receipt of the Treasurer's report dated December 31, 2007.

Petitions, Communications, Appearances, and Public Forum

La Plata Police Department monthly report – Chief Gittings

Chief Gittings reported on projects completed and actions taken by the La Plata Police Department during the last year.

Presentation of Town Seal to Bola Kuti, Choice Professional Resources

Mayor Ambrogio presented a Town Seal to Bola Kuti, President of Choice Professional Resources, congratulating her on the occasion of the 20th Year Anniversary of Choice Professional Resources conducting business in the Town.

Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation to Christmas Decorations Contest winners

Councilwoman Mudd and Danielle Mandley, Town staff liaison to the Beautification Commission, presented certificates of appreciation to those present of the people who won the 2007 Christmas Decorations Display contest in the residential and commercial categories:

Residential - Traditional
1st Place

Harry and Teresa Dugan
623 Clarks Run Road

Honorable Mentions

- Charlotte Hill
134 Dulles Street
- Melissa Walter
207 Persimmon Court

Residential - Whimsical
1st Place

Ina Connatser
510 Scarlet Oak Road

Honorable Mentions

- William Yeckley
115 Mallard Lane
- Lois Turner
325 Jennie Run Drive

Commercial 1st Place

Optical Shoppe of La Plata
403 Charles Street

Commercial Honorable Mention

Joson Fine Jewelry & Home Boutique
113B La Grange Avenue

Public Forum

Reginald Kearney, 102 Discovery Court/Jamestowne, spoke in opposition to the traffic signal and development proposed at Oriole Lane and Route 301.

Jean O'Neill, 229 Williamsburg Circle/Hawthorne Greene, spoke in opposition to the traffic signal and big box store proposed at Oriole Lane and Route 301.

Justin McCright, 212 Williamsburg Circle, spoke in opposition to the traffic signal proposed at Oriole Lane and Route 301, and provided copies of photographs depicting traffic density between traffic signals on Route 301 in Waldorf and in La Plata, noting that the traffic was of higher density in Waldorf.

Lila Bredbenner, 210 Williamsburg Circle/Jamestowne, spoke in opposition to the traffic signal and big box store proposed at Oriole Lane and Route 301.

Thomas F. Mudd, P.O. Box 310, La Plata, identified himself as an attorney with Mudd, Mudd and Fitzgerald and brother to several of the property owners in the proposed The Shops at Oriole development. Mr. Mudd encouraged the Town Council to make a decision based on concern for safety issues rather than because they don't want a big box store.

Don Stedham, who identified himself as being with Regency Centers/developer of The Shops at Oriole project, asked the Town Council to reconsider sending the letter to the State Highway Administration regarding not allowing the traffic signal, based on not having all of the information about the development. He asked that the Town Council allow more time for the developer to finish studies and bring information back to the Town Council in order that they may make a more well-informed decision. He suggested that the information could be provided at the March meeting.

Tim Berres, 22 Pocahontas Court/Jamestowne, spoke in opposition to the traffic signal and big box store proposed at Oriole Lane and Route 301. Mr. Berres asked if the Town Council had stated about two or three years ago that they did not want more traffic signals on Route 301; asked that consideration be given to closing Oriole Lane where the barrier wall is proposed to be placed; and asked that the Town Council research fire and emergency services response times.

Mike Runfola, 113 Morris Drive, asked the Town Council to not ignore their constituents and to do as they are asking on this issue.

Brian Clark, 103 Godspeed Court/Jamestowne, spoke in opposition to the traffic signal and big box store proposed at Oriole Lane and Route 301, and asked that research be done on how many accidents are caused by stop and go traffic due to traffic signals.

John Kirscht, 102 Godspeed Court, advised he was against the additional traffic that will occur in the neighborhood.

Legislation

Councilman Newman provided a brief description of the purpose of Ordinance 08-1, Ordinance 08-2 and Resolution 08-1.

Ordinance 08-1 Appointments to Town Boards and Commissions (For Introduction) – For the purpose of amending the Code of the Town of La Plata to alter the procedure followed to appoint members and chairmen of certain Town Boards and Commissions; to alter the terms of Council members on certain Town Boards and Commissions; providing that the provisions of this Ordinance are severable; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Ordinance 08-2 Appointments to Board of Appeals (For Introduction) – For the purpose of amending the Code of the Town of La Plata to alter the procedure followed to appoint members of the Board of Appeals; providing that the provisions of this Ordinance are severable; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Mayor Ambrogio advised that hearings were scheduled on Ordinance 08-2, to be held on February 5, 2008 by the Planning Commission and on February 26, 2008 by the Town Council.

Emergency Ordinance 08-3 Cable Television Regulation – Application Fees and Other Reimbursements (For Introduction and Consideration of Adoption) – For the purpose of providing for an application fee to be paid upon the filing of certain applications related to cable television franchises sought from or granted by the Town of La Plata; providing for applicants to reimburse the Town for certain costs and expenses relating to the consideration of such applications; and all matters generally relating thereto.

Mr. Mears provided a brief description of Emergency Ordinance 08-3.

Councilman Goldsmith moved to adopt Emergency Ordinance 08-3. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Resolution 08-1 Charter Amendment – Appointments to Board of Supervisors of Elections (For Introduction) – For the purpose of amending the Charter of the Town of La Plata to alter the procedure followed to appoint members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections; and all matters generally relating to the appointment of members of the Board of Supervisors of Elections.

Unfinished Business (none)

New Business

Letter to SHA regarding not allowing traffic signal on Rt. 301

Councilman Newman moved to direct the Town Manager to prepare and sign a letter directed to the State Highway Administration advising that the Town believes that additional traffic signals on Route 301 would be detrimental at this time and that the Town requests the State Highway Administration to disapprove the traffic signal requested at Route 301 and Oriole Lane. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion. Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken: Councilmen Lucas, Mudd and Newman voted aye; Mayor Ambrogio and Councilman Goldsmith voted nay. The motion passed by majority vote.

Commission Reports

Councilman Goldsmith reported on topics discussed at the Planning Commission's January 2 meeting.

Councilman Lucas advised that there were no Design Review Board meetings in January, and reported on the social held by the La Plata Business Association on January 9, at Hunt Ford.

Councilwoman Mudd advised that the Beautification Commission will meet on January 28.

Councilman Newman advised that there was no Parks and Recreation Commission meeting in January. Councilman Newman read a list of short term priority items that the Parks and Recreation Commission wants to present to the Town Council.

Mayor Ambrogio announced that the Charles County Blue Ribbon Commission on Diversity and Intergroup Relations will hold a public hearing on January 23. Mayor Ambrogio also announced that the Town's Citizen Surveys have been mailed out and encouraged those who receive one to send back their responses.

Motion for Closed Session

Mayor Ambrogio 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 Goldsmith seconded the motion. Roll call vote: Mayor Ambrogio and Councilmen Goldsmith, Lucas, Mudd and Newman voted aye. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

Other business

There being no further business, Mayor Ambrogio moved to adjourn at 8:02 PM. Councilman Lucas seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote. Following a short break, the Council moved into closed session.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk