

Mayor and Council Meeting
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
February 11, 2003, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor William F. Eckman, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman Thomas W. Fritz, Councilman Gene Ambrogio, Councilman Roy G. Hale; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Guests: (See attached roster)

Minutes:

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

Approval of January minutes

Councilman Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 7 special meeting. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

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

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

Petitions, Communications and Appearances

Mayor Eckman welcomed and acknowledged the presence in the audience of Jack Davis, former member of the Town Council.

Legislation (none)

Unfinished Business

Council Reports

Councilman Hale reported on topics discussed at the February 4 Planning Commission meeting. He also advised that there will be a meeting February 13 to continue work on planning an event to commemorate the first anniversary of the tornado.

Councilman Fritz reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission would be meeting on February 12 to discuss the status of the new park project.

Councilman Ambrogio reported that the next meeting of the Beautification Commission would be held March 17, and that the Kent Avenue Revitalization Committee would be meeting February 12.

Councilman Winkler reported on several topics: (1) The Steering Committee of the Downtown Marketing Project is holding a reception and meeting for downtown business people at the Town Hall on February 12, 8:00 AM, at which a presentation will be given by Mayor Eckman and by the consulting firm of Jakubiak & Associates, Inc., the theme of which is "Celebrate the Return of Place." (2) Mayor Eckman, Councilman Hale and he went to Leonardtown on February 10 to meet with their business association. (3) The Historic District Commission meets next week. (4) The Design Review Board's next regular meeting will be held February 12, at 9:00 AM. (5) The GFWC Shining Stars Juniette Club is holding a fashion show on February 20 to benefit the La Plata Disaster Relief Fund. Shirley Sellner will attend the Council's March 11 meeting to present their donation.

Mayor Eckman reported on several topics: (1) The state legislature is considering a bill to terminate the tax credit program. (2) The Design Review Board is meeting February 12 with architects and engineers to provide an overview of the new design review guidelines. April 15 is the deadline to apply to the Design Review Board for incentive financing. (3) Three crosswalks on Charles Street and Port Tobacco Road have been funded and construction will begin in March or April.

In response to Councilman Winkler's question on behalf of a resident in Quailwood, Mr. Miller explained that the streetscape sidewalk project on Rt. 6 extends to the area of Haldane Subdivision. There are significant stormwater management improvements needed from its terminus at Haldane down to Quailwood.

Mayor Eckman remarked that there is a question about whether funds will be available for the Neighborhood Conservation Program, but noted that La Plata's money is from special funding for disaster recovery. He noted that Governor Ehrlich's proposed budget will result in a loss of \$100,000 in highway user funds for La Plata and that Charles County stands to lose \$2 million.

Mayor Eckman asked Paula Winkler for a status report on the tree replanting group's projects. Ms. Winkler reported that Robin Hill Farm Nursery has donated trees to residents on Wicomico Street, Worcester Street and Hemlock Court. Ms. Winkler and Mark Rose will be meeting February 12 to develop a flyer to distribute to residents on those streets regarding a meeting at Town Hall on February 22, at 10:30 AM. The trees stored behind the police department are slated for planting this spring in the wetland areas behind ANS and the wastewater treatment plant.

New Business

Council meeting schedule

Mr. Miller reported that the Council's February 18, March 4 and March 18 work sessions have been cancelled. Work sessions have been scheduled on the following Thursdays: February 13, 4:00 to 6:00 PM; February 20, 7:00 to 9:00 AM; March 6, 7:00 to 9:00 AM; and March 20, 7:00 to 9:00 AM.

In response to Mayor Eckman's question about basketball courts on streets, Chief Gittings advised that the law does not allow playing in streets. Mayor Eckman remarked that there seems to be a proliferation of them in Town and that he had difficulty driving down Forest Lane recently due to the children playing at the one on that street. Chief Gittings advised he would look into it on Wednesday.

Public Forum

Jim Goldsmith, 805 Washington Avenue, advised he attended the February 4 Planning Commission meeting and was shocked to hear that the Town's major facility fee for restaurants is \$650 per chair. He encouraged the Council to consider another method of financing this if the Town wants a good restaurant in Town. Councilman Winkler remarked that he was also shocked and felt it was an awful burden on beginning businesses. Mayor Eckman remarked that the Town has a major facilities fee loan program which spreads out payment of the major facilities fee over a period of years.

There being no further business, Councilman Winkler made a motion to adjourn at 7:35 PM. Councilman Hale seconded the motion and it carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk