

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular meeting
March 2, 2004, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman C. Keith Back, Keith A. Hettel, Robert W. Thompson, Zakary A. Krebeck, Roy G. Hale – Commission members; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk (Due to the absence of Mr. Echols, Mr. Krebeck had voting rights.)

Town staff: Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager; Jeffry F. Guido, Director of Inspections

Guests: (see roster)

Minutes:

Chairman Back called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and read the agenda. Chairman Back asked Mr. Hale to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of February minutes

Mr. Hale made a motion to approve the minutes of the February regular meeting. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Public hearing: Ordinance 03-20 Central Business Transition District

Chairman Back called the hearing to order. Mr. Miller entered into the record the Certificate of Publication that the notice of the hearing was advertised in the February 13, 2004 edition of the Maryland Independent, and then briefly described the purpose of Ordinance 03-20. He noted there were some issues regarding parking requirements, the desirability of allowing some personal service establishments, and R-8 omission in another area of the Code. Mr. Miller suggested that the Planning Commission may wish to discuss under “Other business” the proposed areas to be zoned CBT.

Chairman Back asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak for or against Ordinance 03-20. No one wished to speak. Chairman Back closed the hearing.

Recommendation Ordinance 03-20

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Hettel made a motion to recommend that the Council adopt Ordinance 03-20, with consideration given to the parking, use, density and R-8 issues discussed by the Planning Commission. Mr. Krebeck seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Mr. Miller advised that the Council would hold a hearing on Ordinance 03-20 on March 9. If they approve the ordinance, hearings will be scheduled before the Planning Commission and the Council for the comprehensive rezoning process. In response to a question posed by the Commission, Mr. Miller advised that the intent of the Town regarding notifying property owners of the proposed rezoning of their properties will be more proactive than required by the law.

Other business

Mr. Miller displayed the map showing the existing CB district and proposed CBT zone areas, noting as reference points the tobacco barns, new Town Hall site, residence on Maple Avenue, funeral home and flower shop to the south. Currently not included are the Mudd, Newcomb, Middleton and N/F Gee residences in that area. To the north, the triangle of land adjacent to the Heritage Place Apartments (formerly Old Colony Apartments) is proposed to be CBT. Mr. Miller asked the Commission to advise him of other areas they may notice as they travel throughout the Town.

Mr. Miller displayed the elevations for the new Town Hall, noting that the building committee has been meeting weekly and that Mr. Thompson is a member of that committee. Mr. Miller also informed the Commission that the Town had gone to settlement with Civista, who now owns the current Town Hall and property, and that the Town has until May, 2005 to vacate the premises. He noted that Facchina Construction may have the new Town Hall ready for occupancy by Christmas of this year. Mr. Thompson pointed out that there will be a traffic circle on La Grange Avenue in front of the new Town Hall site and that utilities will be underground.

A status report on building and street construction projects in the Town was provided by Mr. Miller, Mr. Schroeder and Mr. Guido.

Mr. Miller advised that the Town received an annexation petition from Faison for property north of the Town.

Mr. Miller thanked the Commission for attending the retreat with the Town Council on February 21, and handed out copies of the draft of "Results of Joint Work Session of the Town Council and Planning Commission" prepared by Milton Herd.

Mr. Miller announced that Jeff Guido would be leaving the Town to return to private industry, and remarked that he had done a great job for the Town and had represented the Town very well.

In response to a question from Councilman Winkler, Mr. Miller explained that Howard Libby planned to build out on the east side of his building, and noted that it would be field-checked Wednesday. He noted there are egress issues and that parking has become an odd situation there due to tenant Workers Compensation Court requiring all those coming before them to arrive at the same time. Mr. Schroeder noted there were 63 cars in the parking lot Monday. Mr. Miller accepted Mr. Krebeck's offer of parking generator rates as a resource for the Town's use.

There being no other business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk