

Council of the Town of La Plata  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
Work Session  
June 7, 2005, 4:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Douglas R. Miller, Town Manager; Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Joseph W. Norris, Town Treasurer

Minutes:

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

### Matters of Council Discussion

#### Debt Ratios

*Description: The Treasurer will review his tabulations on debt ratios.*

Mr. Norris provided copies of the Treasurer's Report dated May 31, 2005 and gave a brief overview. Mr. Norris then provided copies of "Debt Ratios-General Fund" and gave a review of debt ratios.

#### Police Station Bids

*Description: The latest police station bid will be discussed. The best bid seems to be from Facchina Construction. The Council will have to decide if additional funding will be provided to complete this project.*

Mr. Miller provided copies of the "LPPD Station Budget" and a "Bid Abstract" (abstract prepared by PAS) and reviewed the bids, noting that Tuckman-Barbee had been the apparent low bidder but that after the bids were opened, they amended their bid due to an addition error on their part, and their bid was disqualified. Because of that, Mr. Miller said that Facchina is the apparent low bidder. Mr. Miller advised that the Town will need to increase the Town contribution amount by \$150,000, raising it from the FY 05-06 Fund Balance budgeted amount of \$650,000 to \$800,000. Mr. Miller also advised that if money is borrowed for the St. Mary's Avenue and Washington Avenue projects, there will be money available to shift to the police station project. Mr. Miller noted that this item would be up for action at the next regular meeting.

#### Skateboard Park

*Description: The Parks and Recreation Commission want to pursue a project where a skateboard facility will be built at Wills Park. There are some liability concerns that will be worked out with LGIT (Local Government Insurance Trust). Aside from those issues, the Commission would like guidance from the Council if this is a facility that they want and if Wills Park is the appropriate location.*

Tom O'Farrell, Chairman of the Parks and Recreation Commission, described the recommendation of the Commission to build a skateboard park at Wills Park, noting that it will need a space of about 6400 sq. ft, asphalt, equipment, and must be fenced. Mr. O'Farrell stated that their biggest concern is insurance, but noted that Tom Roland, of Charles County government, has lowered

costs by working with LGIT. Mr. O'Farrell said that the project will cost \$50,000, of which the Town would have to pay \$40,000, and that grants will be pursued. Mayor Ambrogio noted he would like the Parks and Recreation Commission to conduct an overall study of needed improvements for Wills Park.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to support the project and asked Mr. O'Farrell to continue working on the project.

#### St. Mary's Avenue Approach

*Description: The Council needs to agree in principle on the approach for financing the St. Mary's Avenue Streetscape project and possibly the Washington Avenue sidewalk project. The approach in the past was to pay for these projects as the Town could afford them. We may want to change that approach and borrow money to complete them.*

Mr. Miller recommended that the Town borrow money for both projects, at a cost to the Town of approximately \$120,000 per year for 20 years. Councilman Winkler and Councilman Newman noted it may be worthwhile to again ask Charles County to pay for half of the Washington Avenue sidewalk project. Councilman Winkler recommended that other projects be included, such as Oak Avenue widening and Kent Avenue sidewalk.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to borrow money for the St. Mary's Avenue and Washington Avenue projects, and to ask Charles County to pay for half of the Washington Avenue project.

#### FY 05-06 Paving

*Description: Over the past several fiscal years the Town has implemented two unofficial policies regarding road paving. The first was that we would dedicate all of our Highway User Revenue from the State, minus what was needed for street lighting, to road repaving. The second was that we would do this work late in the fiscal year. It may be advantageous to complete the paving slated for FY 05 and FY 06 in the summer of 2005.*

Mr. Miller provided copies of "FY 05-06 Paving Project" and advised that the amounts are very conservative. In response to Mayor Ambrogio's remark that Kent Avenue is not on the list, Mr. Miller advised that the Town could look at adding it. In response to Councilwoman Mudd's remark that Kent Square residents want more street lighting, Mr. Miller advised that the Town review the request, noting it would require a budget amendment to be included. Mr. Miller also noted that there may be unspent funds in the current fiscal year budget.

#### Morris Annexation Agreement Amendment

*Description: The Council will discuss whether or not the annexation agreement forbidding fast food restaurants will be amended.*

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to continue working towards an amendment to the annexation agreement, and to pursue inclusion of upgrades to the whole shopping center: landscaping, signage, clean-up and maintenance of the entire center.

SHA/Potomac Investment Group Annexation and Annexation Agreement

*Description: Initial provisions of an annexation agreement for the State Highway Administration/Potomac Investment Group Annexation will be discussed.*

Mr. Miller advised that SHA has budgeted for construction of a new salt barn, and also advised that the County wants the Town to require, as part of the annexation, that land be donated to the County for the deceleration lane on Washington Avenue for the County's Rosewick Road improvements project.

Councilman Newman spoke briefly of a discussion held with Mr. Mote regarding a land exchange between him and the Town: exchange the Town's current Town Shops property on Potomac Street and Dorchester Avenue for Mr. Mote's 1.6 acre parcel behind his business park/Washington Avenue frontage, for the purpose of relocating/rebuilding the Town Shops on the 1.6 acre parcel. Councilman Newman advised he is not in favor of relocating the Town Shops to the Tilghman Lake Park area.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to honor the County's request regarding donation of the land along Washington Avenue for the Rosewick Road project.

Mr. Mote stated he has a contract with the County for the land for the deceleration lane and asked that the Town not include their request in the annexation agreement.

Grasso Annexation Agreement

*Description: The Council will give direction if staff is to continue working on the Grasso Annexation Agreement.*

Mr. Miller conducted a straw poll of the Council's opinion on this annexation petition. Councilman Newman stated that the Town will have some architectural controls if the property is annexed, and that development will occur even if the property is not annexed. Councilwoman Mudd agreed with Councilman Newman. Councilman Back stated he is opposed to annexing, noting that he doesn't believe more homes will be built if not annexed than if it is annexed, and that the petition is constantly changing. Councilman Back also remarked that if the purpose of the annexation is to restore the historic home, the plans show aluminum siding and the addition should be built to look like the old part, and advised that a business plan is needed to determine how many new homes are actually required to generate funds to restore the historic home. Councilman Winkler agreed that more information is needed and also the opinion of all Clarks Run residents. Councilman Winkler stated he does not know if the property will pass perc testing for building if not annexed. Regarding the historic home, Councilman Winkler noted that the applicant has not come to the Historic District Commission to discuss historic designation status.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to direct staff to continue working on the Grasso Annexation Agreement.

Hawthorne Road Entrance

*Description: The proposed Target Store is requesting access onto Hawthorne Road. The Council will discuss if such access will be granted.*

During the discussion, mention was made regarding allowing it as a right turn in only or as a 1-way out only. Mr. Miller remarked that a structure would be needed to prevent illegal turns in, citing as examples the driveways for CVS and the Mobil and Exxon gas stations, where vehicles consistently disobey the “no left turn” and “entrance only” markings.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to deny access onto Hawthorne Drive and to communicate that to Target.

#### Mission Statement

*Description: The Mayor wishes to create a Mission Statement for the Town. He will discuss this project.*

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to Mayor Ambrogio’s request that they email to him their suggestions and key words for a brief Mission Statement of what the Town is about.

#### Farmer’s Market Produce Policy

*Description: The Farmers Market Master would like to amend the Farmers Market regulations to allow Farmers to sell some produce that they have not grown themselves. The Council will discuss this amendment.*

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to invite Joe Harrison, Market Master, to the next work session to discuss the requested amendment.

#### Draft Ordinance 05-11 - Dimensional requirements for two-family dwellings [Not discussed.]

*Description: A developer asked the Planning Commission to amend the zoning code to allow for an increase from 25% to 35% for maximum lot coverage. The Planning Commission is recommending approval of that increase, along with a couple of housekeeping items regarding lot size and width.*

#### Draft Resolution 05-7 – Schedule of Holidays [Not discussed.]

*Description: A list of the holidays traditionally approved by the Council, as provided for in the current Personnel Rules and Regulations. If Council concurs, we should introduce and adopt the resolution at the June 14 regular meeting, which is our only regular meeting in June (MML).*

#### Big Box Stores

*Description: Councilman Winkler wishes to discuss possible prohibitions and/or regulations for “big box” retail stores.*

Councilman Winkler would like the Council to consider creating this as a special exception.

Council consensus: The Town Council agreed to discuss this at the next work session.

#### Blue Knights Grant Request [Not discussed.]

*Description: The Blue Knights have requested financial assistance from the Town.*

ANS Athletic Fields [Not discussed.]

*Description: A possible partnership with ANS for the operation of athletic playing fields will be discussed.*

Matters of Information

Council Orientation: Scheduled for 3:30 PM before the next regular meeting on June 14.

MML Convention [Not discussed.]

Other business [None]

There being no other discussion, Councilman Winkler made a motion to adjourn at 6:04 PM. Councilman Newman seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Submitted by:

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Judith T. Frazier  
Town Clerk