

Town Notes

News from La Plata Town Hall

June – July 2006

MAYOR'S CORNER



The State of the Town

[Presented by Mayor Gene Ambrogio at the May 9, 2006 business meeting.]

Since May 2005, the La Plata Town Council, Town staff and numerous volunteers have worked on many committees, discussed various projects, attended frequent meetings and put in countless hours resulting in many accomplishments. I would like

to briefly state some of the achievements and mention some goals for the coming year.

Tonight we will be hearing from the Charles Street Task Force which was commissioned by the Town Council to look at ways to improve pedestrian safety, traffic flow and parking along Rt. 6. The task force was comprised of business owners, residents, representatives from the State Highway Administration and town staff. The Town Council is grateful for its efforts on behalf of La Plata's citizens.

To address sidewalk disrepair, the Town Council took the initiative and budgeted funds to deal with sidewalks which needed the greatest attention. This program has worked so well that it will be funded again in the next FY budget. The Council has also obtained the necessary

funding to complete St. Mary's Avenue streetscape. We plan to vote to award the contract for this project tonight.

The Town is fiscally healthy. We now have a "rainy" day fund reserved for disaster type situations. In addition, we have a good fund balance available for unexpected needs. Our debt ratios are within suggested guidelines for our assessable base and income. The Council has adopted a vehicle replacement account to soften the impact of purchasing vehicles. Also, our infrastructure improvement continues as several residential streets were resurfaced, and the Council will continue to appropriate money to improve our roads.

An important attribute of this Council is that we are receptive and sincere, meeting with the County Commissioners on a regular basis to discuss issues such as schools, residential and commercial development, traffic flow, and water. To improve our communication within Town Hall we have installed a new telephone system with greater capacity. This system also incorporates our new police department with the use of fiber optics instead of paying for telephone company circuits. Town Hall now has a true PC network with an 80gig mirrored hard drive system and an automatic backup of all files. Newcomers will now receive a post card welcoming them to Town. Included on the card is important infor-

Mayor's Corner *continued on page 2*

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following day in observance of the holiday listed:

Independence Day Tuesday, July 4

If you have a water or sewer emergency after hours, call 301-934-8421 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

Town of La Plata Officials

Mayor: Gene Ambrogio

Council:

Wayne Winkler.....Ward 1

C. Keith Back.....Ward 2

Paddy Mudd.....Ward 3

Vic E. Newman.....Ward 4

Interim Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Assistant Town Manager:

Patricia L Bembe

Town Clerk: Judith T. Frazier

Treasurer: Joseph W. Norris

Project Manager: Steven F. Schroeder

Director of Planning and Zoning:

Catherine N. Flerlage

Director of Public Works:

Stephen A. Murphy

Police Chief: Cassin B. Gittings

305 Queen Anne Street, La Plata, Maryland 20646

Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m.

Telephone: 301-934-8421 / 301-870-3377

La Plata Police Department: 301-934-1500

Email: dmiller@townoflaplata.org

Website: www.townoflaplata.org

Mayor's Corner *continued from p1*

mation regarding their ward representative, hours of Town Hall operation and contact information.

The Town Council decided to secure additional land for growth by acquiring the property adjacent to Town Hall. We also exchanged property with a developer in order to acquire room to expand the waste water treatment plant. The Town has invested in upgrading residential water meters whereby the readings can be obtained by radio frequency. This new process will enable the Public Works crew to devote less time to reading meters and more time to maintaining the Town infrastructure.

The new police station will have a reinforced shelter which comprises our Emergency Operations Center. At present, the Town enjoys a relatively low crime rate. In consideration of our projected growth, the Council has appropriated funds to hire 2 new police officers and has raised the salary of our officers to be competitive with surrounding jurisdictions. We have accomplished this without increasing taxes. In addition, the Council has concurred with our Police Chief to institute the community policing model whereby you will see a greater police presence in our business and residential areas.

Businesses have shown a great deal of interest in La Plata. It is easy to observe all of the new stores and businesses which have opened here during this past year.

Our Planning Department and Design Review Board have spent many hours reviewing plans, signs and design concepts. In addition, the Town now employs a code enforcer whose responsibility is to ensure that the Town's codes are followed.

A clean town which is free of litter and trash reflects directly on the people who live and work in our community. The Town Council recognizes a need for periodic street cleaning. Therefore, regular sweeping of our streets by a contractor will begin with the new fiscal year. In addition, almost all of the main Town streets are now adopted by various groups in our Adopt-a-Road program. The people of the Town are grateful for the dedication of these groups in keeping the streets free of unsightly trash.

Many people enjoy the concerts offered at the Town Hall and we are pleased to be able to offer this entertainment to the public. To further enjoy the outdoors, the Council plans to present movies under the stars and to have "Screen on the Green" presentations later this year.

This past year has been a challenge for all as there has been a new Mayor, two new Council members, the resignation of the Town Manager of 18 years and the absence of our Assistant Town Manager for medical reasons. By working together to overcome obstacles and differences, we will continue to grow stronger and build a better La Plata.

Memorial Day Ceremony

Monday, May 29, 11:00 a.m.

The Town will host the annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Town Hall. There will be guest speakers, a wreath laying ceremony, and musical entertainment by the Port Tobacco Players Encore Kids. Refreshments will be provided following the ceremony.

Testing of early warning devices/sirens

On Saturday June 10th the Town will be conducting a test of the early warning devices/sirens located throughout the community. The test will include tones and verbal warnings for severe weather events and other potential hazardous situations.

Currently the Town has early warning devices located at King's Grant, Clarks Run, next to Archbishop Neale School at the Town's wastewater treatment plant, in front of the Charles County Courthouse, and across the street from the La Plata firehouse on Shining Willow Way.

The test will start at approximately 10:00 a.m., and may continue for up to 30 minutes.

MEET THE TOWN STAFF

John Alton Swann



Alton will celebrate 25 years of service to the Town of La Plata on July 20. Alton began his career with the Town as a Helper on a trash truck, and after six months was promoted to his current position of trash truck Driver. Born in Bel Alton, Maryland, Alton still lives in Bel Alton. He is a member of St. Ignatius Church at Chapel Point, where he volunteers and helps with the grounds maintenance. In his spare time, he likes to do yard work. Alton has worked with many administrations, lots of residents, and several Town Managers over the past 25 years. Asked if he was thinking of retiring any time soon, Alton responded that "Work is my life. As long as I am healthy I'll be working." Congratulations, Alton, on 25 years of service – and many more years to come!

Council Column

FROM WARD 1

Councilman Wayne Winkler

Hi everyone and welcome to spring/summer. I just returned from Myrtle Beach, to visit my son, daughter in law, and grandchildren. Expected to come home with a suntan but think I have frostbite. Rained and was cold the whole time. Stuffed a ham and took it down as they grew up with stuffed hams and really miss them. At some time I have to teach them how to make one.

In June the Town Council will be voting on the Faison annexation. This is a large tract of land to the north of La Plata where the Faison Corporation wants to build a Lowe's, Giant Food store, plus several smaller stores. I will recuse myself because I have stock in a local hardware store but I do have mixed emotions about this development and annexations in general. With the price of gas and the time it takes to go to north Waldorf I look forward to Lowe's. On the other hand I don't want to see La Plata growing any more. Some growth is good and I don't know where I stand with this growth. Commercial growth helps keep the taxes down as they don't need the services that residential growth does.

I fully don't expect to see any more residential annexations in the future for probably the next 10 years, or maybe never. There is this thought that La Plata should build out at 25,000 people, and with Edelen Station, GP Homes, Steeplechase, and Stagecoach Crossing that should do it. I do expect to see some commercial growth along Rosewick Road in the future. That is where we planned our growth area and, to me, it makes sense with St. Charles Parkway connecting to Rosewick Road in 2007. Hopefully, the traffic will stay north of La Plata.

Some future development is: Texas Steak House is looking at property near Wal Mart. I ate at one on the way south and, to me, it's just another hamburger joint. We are getting a Walgreen's where Roy Roger's is. Like we need another drug store. We are getting another Dash-In where the Shell gas station is on Rt. 301. Whoopee. We might end up with a Ruby Tuesday's where the Texaco is on 301. So much excitement. Seems to me we are becoming the fast food king and drug store king of Maryland. The sad part is that we can't stop it. If the property is zoned properly we can't say what can, or cannot, go there.

Hope some of this makes sense. If you have any questions then give me a call on 301-934-0025 or email me at winklerw@comcast.net.

FROM WARD 2

From Councilman Keith Back

There are two items I would like to mention in this issue of the Town Notes. One is about communications with your Town Council and the other is about an ordinance that will be coming before the Council in the near future.

I would like to start sending out information about issues and upcoming events in the Town to concerned citizens within Ward 2. If you would like to receive this type of information as an email, please send me your email address so that you can be added to the distribution list. You can send this information to me at thebacks@comcast.net.

The Charles County Commissioners recently passed a partial ban on smoking in public places. While this was a good start to address a serious problem, it stopped short of banning smoking in all areas where people work and get together. A Town of La Plata ordinance will be introduced in the near future also addressing this problem. Details of the Town's proposed smoking ban have not been completed, but the intention is to protect all citizens from exposure to secondhand smoke in the restau-

rants, bars, public meeting areas and work places within the Town.

In the debate over the County's version of the smoking ban, there was a clear majority of the public that supported the ban. Opponents of this type of legislation say that the government cannot take away their right to smoke. That is not the intention of this regulation. The intent is not to tell people they cannot smoke, but only to limit it to areas where it does not expose others to the harmful effects of secondhand smoke. It will not prohibit their rights to smoke if they want to smoke at home, in an open outdoor area away from the entrance of a building, in their car or in any area away from others.

Don't forget to come out to the summer concert series at the Town Hall, and I want to wish everyone a safe and enjoyable summer season.

FROM WARD 3

From Councilwoman Paddy Mudd

Many things are happening in La Plata. We have many new businesses already here and coming soon: the long-awaited opening of La Tolteca in the very near future, with Target, and the Dunkin Donuts and Baskin Robbins to follow; the relocation of Roy Rogers and the new Rosewick Crossing shopping area to come. Don't misunderstand me – I want to keep our small town atmosphere as much as possible – but we have to provide the services to keep our residents here to shop, play, and hopefully to work in the near future. Please understand that several years ago – long before the present Council was elected – property was annexed for Heritage Green, Stagecoach Crossing and Steeplechase, adding 10-15,000 people to our present population of 9,000. Building permits will be issued according to school seat availability over the next 20 years. I truly believe that we should **stop residential annexation now** except for a few small enclaves that were lost in the large annexations. We need to encourage small businesses downtown – a bookstore, gift and card shops and restaurants to pro-

Council Column *continued from p3*

mote our walking downtown. I would love to see a Trader Joes health/gourmet market here. I also differ with many, but would like to see a more eclectic feel in addition to the colonial red brick buildings we now have. I believe we can stay true to our Vision Plan with more diversity and innovation in style.

We will accept a bid for the St. Mary's Avenue streetscape before this is published and work will begin next month. Come into the Town Hall to see the Mattawoman Creek Art Center exhibit in the foyer. Come out to the first 2006 Concert on the Green on May 26th!

Stop in and visit the new Newcomb House Gallery – another great addition to our Town - which will be open on Friday evenings for the concerts.

FROM WARD 4

From Councilman Vic E. Newman,

Budget process comes to a close

I would like to thank the residents who participated in the Budget Process. It has taken several months and I believe the services you will receive during the next fiscal year will show that the Council accomplished what it could for the Town and its residents while maintaining fiscal responsibility. The Council will adopt the Budget on May 23rd.

Builder shows how to care for La Plata and its residents

Harry Lapas, President of GP Homes, and Employees donated \$11,700 to the Memorial Garden (Tornado Victims) to be constructed next to the Charles County Fire Museum. I and other members of the Council would like to also thank the La Plata Community Garden Club, who began this effort almost three years ago, as well as the Parks and Recreation Commission, and the La Plata Beautification Commission.

Please have a wonderful and safe summer.

STREET SMART – Think of the Impact You Can Make

Information provided by Maryland Department of Transportation—State Highway Administration

For Drivers	For Pedestrians
Stop for pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections— —it's the law.	Cross the street at marked crosswalks and intersections whenever possible.
Do not block crosswalks when stopping at intersections.	Stop and look every time before crossing streets, even when you have the right-of-way, and especially at intersections with “right turn on red.”
Slow down and obey the posted speed limit.	Before crossing, look left, right, then left again, and over your shoulder for turning vehicles.
Take extra care around schools, playgrounds and neighborhoods.	Begin crossing the street on “Walk” signals—never on a solid or flashing “Don't Walk.”
Always look out for pedestrians, especially before turning at a green light or making a “right turn on red.”	Use pedestrian pushbuttons to activate/extend the walk signal.
Obey speed limits, signs, signals and markings—and never run red lights.	Use sidewalks. If there are none, walk facing traffic so you see vehicles, and drivers see you.
Be careful when passing stopped vehicles. They might be stopping for pedestrians.	Make eye contact with drivers so they see you. Never assume they do.
Allow 3 feet when passing bicyclists.	Stay visible after dark and in bad weather with light-colored or retroreflective clothing.
Share the road. It's your responsibility to look out for others.	
Each year in Maryland, more than 100 pedestrians are killed and nearly 3,000 are injured.	

**Crashes Are No Accident;
You Hold The Key.**

JUNE 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
					1	2 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Infinity</i>	3 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market
4	5 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 6/2 to schedule)	6 4:00 p.m., Town Council meeting 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting	7 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	8	9 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Smith Tucker Band</i>	10 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	
11	12	13 4:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	14 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	15	16 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>United States Navy Band "Sea Chanters"</i>	17 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.	
18	19 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting	20 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	21 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session	22	23 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>25th Hour Band</i>	24 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.	
25	26	27 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	28 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	29	30 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Ray Owen</i>		

La Plata Town Notes

JULY 2006

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.
2	3 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 6/30 to schedule)	4 INDEPENDENCE DAY – TOWN HALL CLOSED (Tuesday's trash will be picked up on Wednesday, July 5.) 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., 4th of July Celebration	5 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting [rescheduled from July 4] 7:30 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting	6	7 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>United States Navy Band "Commodores"</i>	8 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.
9	10	11 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	12 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting	13	14 7:00 p.m., Concert – (band not yet confirmed)	15 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.
16	17 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting	18 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	19 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session	20	21 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>United States Navy Band "The Cruisers" and "Southern Mix" barbershop quartet</i>	22 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.
23/30	24/31	25 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting	26 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Farmers' Market	27	28 7:00 p.m., Concert – <i>Special Blend Band</i>	29 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farmers' Market.

La Plata Town Notes

La Plata Town Services

Special Trash Pickup

Bulk items are picked up the first Monday of each month, or the following Monday if the first one is a holiday. Large amounts of loose material (such as brush) should be bundled or bagged in such a manner that the weight is less than 50 lbs. The Town reserves the right not to pick up items too heavy to safely handle. General construction cleanup and hazardous materials are not eligible. Items must be at curbside by 7:30 a.m. on pickup day. Call Town Hall before pickup day to be placed on the list. Minimum fee: \$10.00 for 5 minutes loading time; each additional minute is \$1.00. A fee of \$5.00, or the current Landfill disposal fee, shall be charged for each tire collected. NOTE: Effective July 1, 2006, the fee for this service will increase to \$11.00 for 5 minutes loading time (fee for each additional minute remains \$1.00) and \$6.00 or the current Landfill disposal fee for each tire.

Billing for special trash pickup is included on your quarterly utility bill.

Yard Waste Pickup

Containers of yard waste ONLY - leaves, grass and shrub clippings, brush or branches - may be put out on your regular trash day for pickup that day or the next day. The containers must be marked "Yard Waste." Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50 lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 inches in diameter or more than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed - if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

La Plata Farmers' Market

Remember to visit the Farmers' Market for fresh produce, flowers and handcrafted items. The Market is located in the back rows of the parking lot behind the Charles County Courthouse, and is open on Wednesdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and on Saturdays, from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection

The Charles County Sanitary Landfill accepts household hazardous waste products the first Saturday of each month during April through December, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Upcoming collection dates are: June 3, July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4 and December 2. The landfill is on Billingsley Road East, between Piney Church Road and Rt. 5. Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, expired prescription medicines and other poisons that are around your house. They advise that you should keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring the items to the collection site in cardboard boxes for ease in unloading. If you need more information, please call the Charles County Dept. of Public Facilities at 301-932-3599 or 301-870-2778, or the Landfill information service at 301-932-5656.



Reminder from Public Works about Yard Waste Pickup

Yard waste needs to be put in paper bags or a trash can marked with a yellow "yard waste" sticker (stickers available at Town Hall.) Yard waste will be picked up on the day of your regular trash pick up, or as soon as possible after that day. Every attempt is made to pick up yard waste at least by the day after regular trash pick up. Yard waste is picked up by a separate truck - not the trash truck that picks up your household garbage. Public Works cannot accept yard waste that is placed in plastic bags.

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

Due to Charles County Sanitary Landfill being closed on certain holidays, the following adjustment is necessary to the Town's refuse collection schedule:

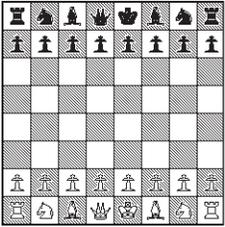
If your regular trash collection day is:	Trash will be picked up on:
Independence Day	
Tuesday, July 4	Wednesday, July 5

St. Mary's Avenue Streetscape Construction Update

At their May 9, 2006 business meeting, the Town Council awarded the St. Mary's Avenue Streetscape improvement project to Civil Construction, Inc. The scope of work includes construction of curb, gutter and sidewalk, and road reconstruction. Work is expected to begin June 1. Work hours are Monday through Friday, from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Please be alert for periodic lane closures during this improvement project on St. Mary's Avenue.

Community Announcement



La Plata Chess Club

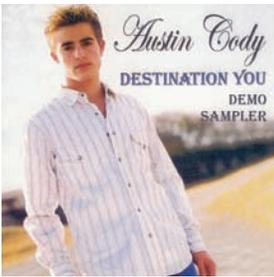
The La Plata Chess Club announces its first sessions to be held on **Saturday, May 20, 2006, at 1:00 p.m., and on Saturday, June 10, 2006, at 11:00 a.m.,** both at The Town Mouse Market & Café, located in Colonial Station at 6390 Crain Highway, Suite 105, in La Plata, Maryland. La Plata Chess Club's goal is to pro-

mote the love of chess in all ages, with an emphasis on providing an alternative creative outlet for the scholastic chess clubs of La Plata, Maryland. Whether you are a youngster learning chess or an old hand, please feel free to drop in. Check out our web page www.geocities.com/laplatachessclub or email Bill Olmsted at LaPlataChessClub@yahoo.com for more information.

2006 Summer Concert Series

The Summer Concert Series will kick off on Friday, May 26, featuring Nashville's newest recording artist, "Austin Cody and the Crossroad Connection." Concerts begin at 7:00 p.m. on the west lawn of the Town Hall. All concerts are free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets or lawn chairs. Parking is limited at the Town Hall but there is ample parking a very short distance away at Sacred Heart Church. An after-hours recorded message will advise of concert cancellations due to threatening weather: call (301) 934-8421.

Please do not bring pets or alcoholic beverages to the concerts.



May 26	<i>Austin Cody and the Crossroad Connection</i>
June 2	<i>Infinity</i>
June 9	<i>Smith Tucker Band</i>
June 16	<i>United States Navy Band "Sea Chanters"</i>
June 23	<i>25th Hour Band</i>
*June 30	<i>Ray Owen</i>
July 7	<i>United States Navy Band "Commodores"</i>
July 14	<i>(band not yet confirmed)</i>
July 21	<i>United States Navy Band "The Cruisers", followed by "Southern Mix" barbershop quartet</i>
July 28	<i>Special Blend Band</i>



*New to the concert line-up this year, Mr. Ray Owen, of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Many of you may have seen him in past years at the Charles County Fair. Ray whips up a veritable feast of classic American songs and stirs in a healthy helping of humor for family audiences and all ages to enjoy. When he serves it up from center stage, he pulls you into a world of fun.

And a Good Time Was Had By All...



Avery O'Farrell, grandson of Tom and Jane O'Farrell

Sundaes with the Easter Bunny

Although the weather was rainy and dreary outside all was sunny and happy inside the Town Hall on April 17 for Sundaes with the Easter Bunny. Children of all ages enjoyed making their own ice cream sundaes and having their picture taken with the Easter Bunny.

"Celebrate La Plata"

On Saturday, April 29, the Town celebrated the annual "Celebrate La Plata" event on and around the grounds of the Town Hall. The day was full of fun and excitement for everyone, with a variety of performances on the west lawn stage, food vendors, children's activities, and an enormous display by the Charles County Emergency Services Department.



4th of July Celebration



On Tuesday, July 4, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., the Town is hosting a 4th of July Celebration at the La Plata Train Station, 101 Kent Avenue. There will be musical entertainment by Solid Brass, performing from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., children's activities, petting zoo, and museum tours, and free hot dogs, lemonade, and ice cream. For more information contact Michelle Miner at 301-934-8421.



Town Notes is a publication of the Town of La Plata. If you would like to submit a Community Announcement item (subject to Town approval and space availability), please send it by e-mail to jfrazier@townoflaplata.org

Town of La Plata

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