

Council of the Town of La Plata
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Work Session
Thursday, June 29, 2006, 6:00 PM

Present: Mayor Gene Ambrogio, Councilman R. Wayne Winkler, Councilman C. Keith Back, Councilwoman Paretta D. Mudd, Councilman Vic E. Newman; Michelle D. Miner, Interim Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk; Frederick C. Sussman, Town Attorney

Minutes:

Mayor Ambrogio called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

Matters of Council Discussion

Ordinance 06-10 Regulation of Smoking and Tobacco Products – For the purpose of defining certain terms; regulating the placement of tobacco products, prohibiting smoking and carrying of lighted tobacco products in certain places; allowing certain persons voluntarily to prohibit smoking or carrying lighted tobacco products in certain places where not otherwise prohibited; providing for the enforcement of these restrictions and penalties for violations; and all matters generally related thereto.

Description: This ordinance is on the agenda of the July 18 business meeting for adoption. Discussion will include whether a hearing will be scheduled on this ordinance.

Councilman Back explained two proposed amendments to the ordinance, dealing with reducing the distance from a public entrance from 50' to 20', within which area smoking is prohibited. Councilwoman Mudd asked that the ordinance also be amended to allow smoking on a public street or way.

There being no voiced objection, Jim DiMisa, President of the La Plata Business Association, discussed concerns expressed by business owners, including their concern for the safety of store personnel having to ask someone to extinguish or leave; they question why the Town wishes to exceed the County ordinance; and noting there will be a litter issue. Councilman Back advised that the intention of the section requiring store personnel to act is meant to refer to the inside of the establishment; and asked the Town Attorney to prepare an amendment to address that concern. Councilman Back advised that the Town's ordinance exceeds the County's in two places: the Town ordinance includes bars and the County ordinance includes only establishments with more than 20 employees. He further noted that the County is drafting amendments to their ordinance.

There being no voiced objection, Gary Echols, of Arehart-Echols Funeral Home, also expressed concern regarding the ordinance and encouraged the Town to proceed slowly.

It was noted that an educational campaign will be helpful in dealing with some of the issues and concerns expressed.

Town Council consensus: The Council agreed that no public hearing will be scheduled, that the public will be able to speak during Public Forum; that they will vote on Ordinance 06-10 at the July 18 meeting unless there are major concerns which need to be addressed; and that the Town Attorney will prepare the amendments and forward them to Ms. Miner, who will distribute them to the business community.

There being no other discussion, Councilman Winkler moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:11 PM. Councilman Newman seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk