

La Plata Planning Commission  
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland  
Regular meeting  
Wednesday, August 6, 2008, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Rich Gilpin, Mark Rose, Debra W. Posey, James Goldsmith – Commission members; Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning and Zoning; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk (Due to the absence of Mr. Hettel and Mr. Echols, Ms. Posey had full voting rights.)

Town Staff: Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager

Minutes:

Chairman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and asked Mr. Goldsmith to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Flerlage acknowledged the presence of and welcomed members of Boy Scout Troops 417 and 832, who are working on earning the Citizenship in the Community badge.

#### Approval of July minutes

Mr. Rose moved to approve the minutes of the July meeting. Ms. Posey seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

#### McDonald's (existing – 6385 Crain Highway) – recommendation for special exception/fast food restaurant

*[A staff report dated August 6, 2008 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]*

Ms. Flerlage provided a brief review of the staff report, which included staff's comment that the Planning Commission could make a recommendation to the Board of Appeals that the special exception for a fast food restaurant be granted.

Stephen H. Scott, attorney for the applicant, Joe Peary, of Ben Dyer Associates, Inc., and Lee May, of McDonald's Corporation, were present to provide information regarding the special exception request and to answer any questions posed by the Planning Commission.

Following discussion, Mr. Goldsmith moved to recommend that the Board of Appeals grant the special exception. Mr. Rose seconded and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Comprehensive Plan/2008 update – Housing element

*[A staff report dated August 6, 2008 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]*

The Commission reviewed and discussed the Mission Statement and Housing Element as provided in the staff report, and complimented Ms. Flerlage for her work on this Element. No changes were suggested to the Mission Statement; however, the Commission agreed to the following amendments to the text of the Housing Element: [Note: Underlining has been added to all amendments; ~~strike-out~~ indicates text deleted; ALL CAPS indicates new text.]

- Housing Objectives and Policies – A “mission” type statement should be created for the Housing Element, summarizing the Town’s over-arching goal, before specific individual objectives and policies are detailed. Spring-boarding from the work of other municipalities, and with the community-conscious input of Michelle Miner, our “mission statement” could read: **“To promote and maintain the availability of a variety of housing choices to meet the needs of the present and future population of La Plata in a way that encourages socio-economic diversity while remaining compatible with the character of La Plata.”** Please consider this suggested wording, and prepare to share your thoughts/additions/ changes at the meeting. The following items comprise a list of suggested specific goals or policies:

\* \* \*

- Promote residential development constructed in accordance with STANDARDS SUCH AS the National Association of Home Builders Green Home Guidelines. Encourage/~~provide~~-FACILITATE incentives for home builders to achieve a minimum Bronze-level certification for housing product in La Plata. Implement a “Green Home” building program in La Plata, using the NAHB check list OR OTHER TOOLS to assess the environmental impact of a new building or subdivision, on the permit review level.
- DEVELOP METHODS FOR IMPLEMENTING NEW CODES AND STANDARDS IN OLDER COMMUNITIES.
- Housing Standards and Implementation – The following items are general recommendations that should be incorporated in some fashion as a means to maintain the “small town” residential feel of La Plata:

\* \* \*

- Create an inventory of surplus publicly-owned land suitable for development of affordable housing PARKS.
- Encourage preservation and maintenance of existing affordable housing through continued implementation of the rental inspection program, adherence to IBC 2006, AS UPDATED AND ADOPTED BY THE TOWN, standards for renovation work, and enforcement of the Town’s Property Maintenance Standards as described in Chapter 152 of the Code.

- Maintain the infrastructure in older existing neighborhoods and preserve structures unique to La Plata. WHERE CONDUCTIVE, revitalize older communities with the addition of sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, ~~and~~ plantings, AND MASS TRANSIT STOPS to preserve home values and promote neighborhood pride, AND MEET THE NEEDS OF THE RESIDENTS.

\* \* \*

The Commission agreed that future Comprehensive Plan Update discussions would be held in work sessions after the regular meetings.

There being no further business, Mr. Rose moved to adjourn at 8:24 PM. Mr. Goldsmith seconded the motion and it carried.

Submitted by:

---

Judith T. Frazier  
Town Clerk