

Town Notes

News from La Plata Town Hall

February – March 2006

MAYOR'S CORNER



The La Plata Town Council and Staff are excited about the many events planned for the coming year. We need your help to make these celebrations successful. The Council and Staff would like to form a committee of interested people to help with the planning and execution of these affairs. Please consider participating as much as possible by volunteering your assistance and suggestions. If you are interested, please contact Michelle Miner, Director of Community Development, at 301-934-8421 ext. 126. Some of the events we have planned are the Celebrate La Plata Day, the Memorial Day Observance, and the Independence Day Celebration. The Friday night summer concert series begins May 26 and ends September 1. Late last year the Town successfully hosted the first Movies on the Green, so we hope to host several more movie nights this year from September 8 to October 13. During October, we hope to sponsor a new event for Halloween fun. In November, the Town plans to observe Veteran's Day with a parade; in December La Plata will once again host a Holiday Gathering and Breakfast with Santa.

A special Thank You to all the men and women who volunteered their time and expertise to decorate our town for Christmas. La Plata looked festive and beautiful because of their efforts.

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.

MEET THE TOWN STAFF Eddie Dixon



Eddie began his career with the Town as a trash collector and his current position is meter reader. He was born and raised in Charles County, and attended Lackey High School. He has been married to his wife Debbie for two years and they have a beautiful 6-month old daughter, Grayce. Eddie's hobbies are hunting and fishing.

Town Hall Closed

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

President's Day Monday, February 20

Town of La Plata Officials

Mayor: Gene Ambrogio

Council:

Wayne Winkler.....Ward 1

C. Keith Back.....Ward 2

Paddy MuddWard 3

Vic E. Newman.....Ward 4

Town Manager: Douglas R. Miller

Assistant Town Manager:

Patricia L. Bembe

Town Clerk: Judith T. Frazier

Treasurer: Joseph W. Norris

Director of Community Development:

Michelle D. Miner

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



Council Column

FROM WARD 1

Councilman Wayne Winkler

We are starting a new year with great expectations for Ward 1. Hopefully, we'll see a sidewalk on Washington Avenue. We have applied for a loan and should be able to get started some time in the summer. Also, off of Washington Avenue the County has started working on connecting Washington Avenue to Route 301 by building Talbot Street. The County Government is supposed to build a new District Court building off of Washington Avenue and a new Government Services building where the soccer field is on Route 6.

Somerset Construction should be starting phase 2 of Hawthorne Greene, which will have senior apartments and single family housing. Behind the Town Hall, Somerset is building townhouses and condos. It seems like a lot of building is going on and it is. This is called infill. Hopefully, we will not be annexing any more residential land into La Plata for quite a while, so developers are building on existing land that was annexed some time ago. North of Safeway there is a piece of land, where an old motel used to be, that Phillips Edison, owner of Safeway property, purchased and they will be building a small shopping center with about 8 stores. That's all the construction/destruction I know about for our ward.

FROM WARD 2

Councilman Keith Back

The Town Council and Planning Commission, along with other Boards and Commissions within the Town, have the difficult job of either recommending or approving actions that affect how La Plata will look and feel for many years to come. There has been a lot of debate recently about how our Town should grow and where we should concentrate our efforts. Statements have been made both in public meetings and in the press that the Town is not looking at the big picture when making decisions.

I just want to let the citizens of La Plata know that your Town Council is concerned about all of the issues that have been brought to our attention. We have had numerous discussions and are mov-

ing out to find the solution to many of these problems, including how to resolve: the long term capacity for our water and sewer systems, the number of dwelling units that should be built each year, traffic congestion and parking in the Central Business District, the size of the police department, and many other issues that must be addressed as the Town grows. We are continuing to meet with the County Commissioners to discuss issues that are joint Town and County issues such as water, police, schools, etc.

One of the major issues currently being discussed by the Town Council is how to meet the need for retail and restaurant space for the growing population of our Town. In the next decade, La Plata will see a growth in the number of homes especially within three large developments that have been approved and are in the final planning phases. This will create a demand for retail space that cannot be met in only the Central Business District. By the time the Town completes the development of residential homes currently planned, there will be a need to have retail facilities located in both the northern and southern sections of the Town. This will allow people to get the required services without having to drive through the center of an already congested area.

We are not an isolated community. In the near future the St Charles Parkway will be completed down to La Plata. This will create another path for County residents to the north of town to come to La Plata. If all of our future commercial growth is concentrated in the southern portion of the Route 301 corridor, this traffic will be added to the already congested intersections along Route 301.

We need to look at how we can support commercial growth that is balanced throughout our Town and that can meet the needs not just for today, but for the population of La Plata in the next decade.

Once again I want to encourage people to come out to the public hearings that are held at both the Town Council meetings and the Planning Commission meetings. I continue to have people come up to me and ask why a decision was made and why the Council has not listened to what people want. If you want the Town to encourage certain types of businesses to locate here, let us know. There are a limited number of people who come regularly and speak up at these meetings. The majority of the comments received by the Town Council are from people who oppose a certain action being considered. We want to hear from people who have opinions on both sides of an issue. If you want to have your voice heard and have

an influence on the decisions that are made about critical issues regarding growth and the types of development brought into the Town, you must let the Planning Commission and Town Council know about your concerns.

FROM WARD 3

Councilwoman Paddy Mudd

Those of you who did not attend the Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering missed a very special evening! Michelle Miner and the staff did a superb job and a great time was had by all. Ditto on the Breakfast with Santa. These are the kind of activities that bind us together as a small town and help us unite to get through the bad times, i.e. the tornado.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain my position on the very complex and controversial annexation issues that we face.

I did not realize before I was elected that the Town had annexed the very large areas soon to become Stagecoach Crossing (1200 homes) and Heritage Green (3200 homes), as well as several smaller residentially zoned parcels in the 1990's. We have recently rezoned from mixed use development to traditional neighborhood development these areas to provide for more green space and more of a small town atmosphere. So - we are obligated to issue building permits to these developers based on school seat availability, etc. (In 2005 we issued 132 building permits). The Town will grow from a population of 8,500 to 25,000 in the next 20-25 years. I believe strongly that we should stop at that by not annexing any more residential property. (This being said - there are a few enclaves that were not included in the large annexations that I do believe should be brought into the Town.) We have to provide the infrastructure and services, as well as the tax base, for this additional population. **Planning has to be done now!**

Rosewick Limited Partnership has proposed an upscale center anchored by Giant and Lowes with smaller shops and restaurants on 73 acres to be annexed to the north of Town. There is a light at Rosewick Road and 301. This is not to be a "301" shopping center. There is no residential zoning in the plan. Rosewick Limited Partnership will help with our water and sewer problems in several ways. (I am not and will not attempt to become an expert in this area, but I believe that our staff has consulted the best available people on these problems.)

The southeast part of St. Charles is building rapidly and the plan for many years has been for St. Charles Parkway to

connect to Rosewick Road at Radio Station Road. These eastern residents of St. Charles would come to this Lowes and Giant and return home without coming through downtown La Plata. The proposal to build a "big box" store and strip mall at 301 and Glen Alban as well as Oriole Drive at the Pepsi plant would mean two more lights as well as the one proposed for Stagecoach Road — three more lights within the Town of La Plata. And we don't want this to become Waldorf!!!

FROM WARD 4

Councilman Vic E. Newman

FY07 Budget Process Begins

During the last Council work session, members of the Council began getting ready for the next Town Budget process. One of the first steps was to reinstitute the Finance Committee. Several members of the Council volunteered. This is a lengthy process and will cover several months.

During this time there will be opportunities for Town residents to express their concerns. The Budget Process begins as stated:

- Starting mid-January key members of your Town Government (i.e. Town Treasurer, Police Chief, Director of Public Works, Director of Community Development, and Assistant Town Manager) will meet with the Town Manager and Town Treasurer to discuss the budget cycle and budget calendar.
- Council begins sessions on setting goals and priorities for FY07
- Town Manager and Town Treasurer firm up revenue estimates and discuss Council goals and priorities.
- Town Government discusses their budget needs with the Town Council.
- For the next couple months the Town Council begins to hold budget work sessions. The Finance Committee and/or finance meetings are held.

- FY07 Budget is introduced. PUBLIC HEARINGS BEGIN (tentatively April 11th).
- Town Council discusses public comments and adjustments are made to budget, if appropriate.
- Some time in the beginning of May 2006, Budget is adopted.

This is an excellent opportunity to be part of the decision making process. The Council and Town Government need your participation - it is your tax dollars at work. Dates will be published on your Town website. www.townoflaplata.org

This will be a busy and interesting year for your Town. Please come out and take part in the various Town meetings published on the Town website. BE A VOICE!

Wishing all a Happy New Year!

American Community Survey (ACS)

[This information is from a press release issued by the Public Information Office of the U.S. Census Bureau on January 10, 2006, and is provided to let Town residents know they may be part of this survey. According to the Census Bureau, they select a random sample from their file of housing unit addresses. An address has about 1 chance in 480 of being selected in any month, and no address will be selected more often than once every 5 years.]

The days of having to wait a decade for updated census figures about a changing America will soon be behind us, thanks to a new survey the U.S. Census Bureau began mailing in January to 250,000 addresses a month across the nation.

The ACS is more timely and relevant than the decennial census long form it replaces, providing decision-makers, communities and businesses with current information about their changing populations every year, rather than once a decade. Information provided by the ACS includes topics ranging from housing values and educational attainment to commute times and language spoken at home.

"We believe the American Community Survey is the future - not only for the Census Bureau, but also for local leaders, businesses and growing communities," said Census Bureau Director Louis Kincannon. "For the first time, small communities will have time-

ly and accurate information that will help leaders make better decisions about where to build and locate roads, schools and hospitals. Likewise, businesses will be better able to identify likely markets for their products and services," Kincannon continued. The survey is an improved way to allocate states' shares of more than \$200 billion a year in federal and state funding currently allotted based on five-year old census long form data.

Each year, the Census Bureau will mail the mandatory survey to a rolling, random sample of about 3 million households throughout the country and Puerto Rico. Roughly 2.5 percent of the population - about 1 in 40 addresses - will participate in the survey each year. By comparison, 1 in 6 addresses received the Census 2000 long form.

In development and testing since 1996, the ACS currently produces data for areas with populations of 250,000 or more. This week's mail-out of questionnaires expands the survey from 1,239 counties to all of the nation's 3,141 counties, as well as Puerto Rico, American Indian reservations, Alaska native villages and Hawaiian homelands.

The Census Bureau will release data for areas with populations of 65,000 or more annually beginning in summer 2006. For smaller areas, it will take three to five years, depending on their population size, to accumulate a large enough sample to produce data. Once those data

are collected, though, the Census Bureau will release tabulations based on rolling three-year averages annually for areas with populations between 20,000 and 65,000, and rolling five-year averages annually for areas as small as census tracts.

Addresses selected for the ACS will receive a letter from the Census Bureau Director asking them to respond promptly to the survey. Attempts at follow-up interviews of a sample of nonresponders will be made first by phone and then by personal visit.

As with the answers to other census questionnaires, federal law guarantees the confidentiality of ACS responses. Every person with access to the answers takes an oath to protect their confidentiality. Violating this law is a federal crime with maximum penalties of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The ACS eliminates the need for a census long form in 2010. The census short form will continue to produce the official count of the nation's population every 10 years, fulfilling the constitutionally mandated function of determining congressional apportionment. The permanent staff, professional interviewers and mapping updates needed for the survey will contribute to more complete and accurate results for both the ACS and the 2010 Census.

Visit the Census Bureau Web site at <http://www.census.gov> if you would like more information.

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. *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.*

Clearing Snow from Sidewalks

Let it snow, Let it snow, Let it snow - With the fun and beauty of a nice winter snowfall there also come responsibilities of property owners to clear snow from sidewalks. In accordance with Town Code Section 170-16 *Maintenance of sidewalks by property owner*, it is the obligation of the owner of property abutting a sidewalk in a public right-of-way to remove the snow from the side-

walk within forty-eight (48) hours after the snow has fallen. This Code section also provides that any owner of property abutting a sidewalk in a public right-of-way who fails to remove snow from the abutting sidewalk within forty-eight (48) hours after the snow has fallen shall, upon conviction, be guilty of a misdemeanor and shall be subject to a penalty.

Building Permits Required

Are you planning to build a deck or a swimming pool? Do you want to put a shed in the backyard to hold your new lawnmower and gardening tools? Yes, spring is just around the corner and there may be several building projects on your "to do" list. Please remember to obtain a building permit application from Town Hall and submit the necessary paperwork at least two weeks before you are ready to begin your project. In addition, you may need to obtain approval from your homeowners' association before a building permit can be issued. Upon review and approval of your application, you will be notified by Town staff that your permit is ready.

Permits are issued at the reception counter in Town Hall, Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Please plan ahead and remember that it may take the Town staff two weeks to complete the review of your application. Contact Town Hall at 301-934-8421 for more information.

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

(There are no changes to the trash collection schedule for February and March 2006.)

And a Good Time Was Had By All...



Grayce Dixon, 6 months old, enjoying her first visit with Santa.

Breakfast with Santa

On Saturday, December 10, the Town hosted nearly 125 children at the 14th annual Breakfast with Santa. Children feasted on a variety of donuts and assorted juices, as well as during a visit with Santa where they were given a candy cane and gift certificate. Fun was had by all.

Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering

The extremely cold weather didn't dampen the spirits of La Plata on December 4. The Town ushered in the Christmas season by hosting an Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering. The Sunday afternoon event began at 3:30 with a puppet show "Pigs at the Pole", a choir performance by the Lackey High School Chamber Choir, a hand bell performance by Christ Church Bell Choir, and a musical/dance performance by



Lackey High School Chamber Choir entertaining guests at the Town's Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering.

Gracies Guys and Dolls. There were holiday Christmas craft stations, miniature train rides and a petting farm. The Charles County Rescue Squad brought out their reindeer and sleigh for a perfect picture-taking spot. The Town Christmas Tree was lit by former Mayor William Eckman. The grand finale was the arrival of Santa Clause via fire truck courtesy of the La Plata Volunteer

Fire Department. Santa visited and had his picture taken with every child.

Holiday Decorations

Special thanks to the Beautification Commission for the lovely holiday decorations that adorned the Town Hall inside and out. Chairperson Paula Winkler was even seen in a cherry picker putting lights on the outside Christmas Tree.

FEBRUARY 2006

La Plata Town Notes

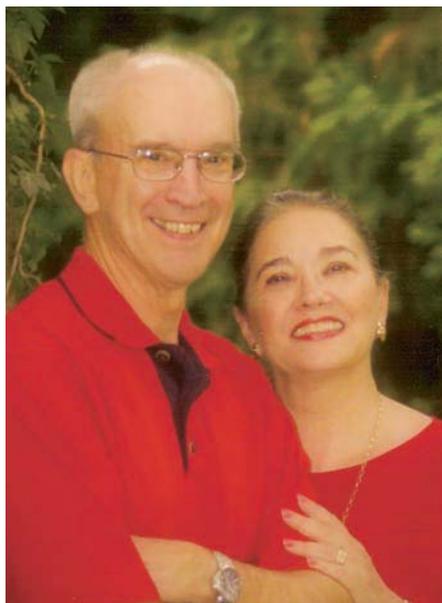
| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|-----------|--|---|--|---|--|-----------|
| |  | | 1 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:00 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 2/3 to schedule) | 7 4:00 p.m., Town Council meeting 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission Meeting | 8 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting (Rescheduled from 2/20.) | 14 7:00 p.m., Town Council meeting | 15 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board work session | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 PRESIDENTS' DAY TOWN HALL CLOSED (No change to trash schedule.) | 21 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting | |  |  | |

MARCH 2006

La Plata Town Notes

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--|--|---|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|  | | | 1 9:00 a.m., Design Review Board meeting 7:00 p.m., Crime Watch Council meeting | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 Special trash pickup day (Call by 4:00 p.m. Fri., 3/3 to schedule) | 7 4:00 p.m., Town Council meeting 7:00 p.m., Planning Commission meeting | 8 5:00 p.m., Parks and Recreation Commission meeting | 9 | 10 | 11 |
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| 19 | 20 4:00 p.m., Beautification Commission meeting | 21 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| 26 | 27 | 28 6:00 p.m., Town Council meeting | 29 | 30 | 31 | |

La Plata Citizen Profile



Dr. and Mrs. Henry Burke

Dr. Henry Burke is a local physician who retired at the end of 2005 after 35 years of practice in La Plata. Dr. Burke was born in Charleston, West Virginia and attended Wheeling Jesuit University. He graduated from Georgetown University Medical School. After 6 years of serving in the United States Air Force, Dr. Burke opened his practice in La Plata in 1970 on Howard Street and moved to La Grange Avenue in 1998. He served on the Board of Trustees of the College of Southern Maryland and Civista Medical Center, as well as various other committees in the health care field. He and his wife Eleanor (Itsy) have 6 children and 11 grandchildren. Thank you, Dr. Henry Burke, for caring about people and helping them to live healthier lives. The Town of La Plata salutes and cele-

brates the many accomplishments of an outstanding doctor and man of integrity. His professional presence will be missed but we wish him a happy, healthy retirement.

Please let the Mayor and Council know if you know someone in the Town's residential or business community who should be recognized for their outstanding achievement, volunteer service, community involvement or contribution to the community, no matter how great or small. Provide a brief description of the person and why they should be profiled in Town Notes. Send your information (and a digital image if you have one), to the Mayor and Council: e-mail to jfrazier@townoflaplata.org, or regular mail to Town Notes- La Plata Citizen Profile, P.O. Box 2268, La Plata, MD 20646-2268.

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 email to jfrazier@townoflaplata.org, or send a typed copy to: Judy Frazier, La Plata Town Hall, P.O. Box 2268, La Plata, MD 20646-2268

Town of La Plata

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