

Mayor and Council Meeting
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
July 9, 2002, 7:00 PM

Present: Mayor William F. Eckman, Councilman Wayne Winkler, Councilman Gene Ambrogio;
Patricia L. Bembe, Assistant Town Manager; Judith T. Frazier

Guests: (See attached roster)

Minutes:

Mayor Eckman called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Mayor Eckman spoke about former Mayor Ray Tilghman, who died July 8, noting he had served as a Town Councilman from 1963 to 1967 and as Mayor from 1967 to 1973; as County Commissioner President for four years, and served on the Charles County Economic Development Commission. He remarked that Mr. Tilghman had been instrumental in the major annexation of the former Army Radio Receiving Station property, part of which was deeded to the Town as a water impoundment source and named in his honor, "Tilghman Lake." Following a moment of silence in Mr. Tilghman's honor, Mayor Eckman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of June minutes

Councilman Ambrogio made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 11 meeting. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Petitions, Communications and Appearances

Lock Wills, Chairman, CEO and President, The Wills Group, Inc.

Mayor Eckman thanked Mr. Wills for providing a delivery truck to pump fuel directly to the many trucks used during the tornado recovery efforts.

Mr. Wills remarked that people in his industry from all over the country called to offer help and that the Maryland Petroleum Industry had raised \$54,290, which he and other representatives of his industry presented to the Town of La Plata, Charles County, and the American Red Cross, to be used in whatever way is needed for the rebuilding efforts.

Legislation

Resolution 02-2 Schedule of Holidays - For the purpose of adopting the schedule of holidays to be observed by the employees of the Town of La Plata for FY 2002-2003.

Councilman Ambrogio offered a motion to adopt Resolution 02-2 Schedule of Holidays. Councilman Winkler seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Unfinished Business

Council Reports

Councilman Winkler reported that approximately 700 people attended the July 4 caboose dedication ceremony, and noted that work on the caboose is 90% complete. Mayor Eckman and Councilman Winkler remarked that Pender Drive in Ward I has been paved.

Councilman Ambrogio reported that the Beautification Commission discussed reforestation at the June meeting and asked Joe Harrison to comment. Mr. Harrison remarked that the State Forester has 3000 trees available for us, which he will store for the Town. Mayor Eckman remarked that another 2500 trees are to be donated from Soil Conservation but will need to be stored and watered two to three times a week. Storage site and watering issues are to be discussed with the Town Manager.

La Plata Appreciation Day - July 28, 2002

Mayor Eckman advised that all of the municipalities have been invited to attend and be in the parade, the La Plata Police Department was inviting the other police agencies, and the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department and Charles County Rescue Squad were invited and asked to invite the other fire departments and rescue squads to attend and be in the parade. Mayor Eckman asked that everyone in La Plata come to the parade and ceremony to thank everyone who came to help La Plata after the tornado.

Tornado Rebuilding Status Report

Mayor Eckman reported that the State has waived the requirement of reducing impervious surfaces by 20% as long as rebuilding doesn't substantially increase impervious surfaces. He also advised that the Town received a grant to hire an architect, who will be meeting with business owners, and that the Town hired a consultant on economic development. It is hoped that we will see buildings going up in the next two to three months.

Mayor Eckman explained that there may be some tax incentives for the houses on Oak Avenue and Wicomico Street if the Town can get an Historic District established. An ordinance is being prepared for review by the Historic Preservation Committee, the Town Council and Town Attorney. Following review of the ordinance, a public hearing will be scheduled. It is hoped that the ordinance will be in place in six weeks. Tom O'Farrell asked Mayor Eckman to make a special effort to notify the 11 property owners on Oak Avenue and Wicomico Street about the public hearing on this ordinance. Mayor Eckman asked Mr. O'Farrell to give Ms. Bembe the address information he has for these 11 property owners.

Mr. O'Farrell also asked that the Town identify where on his property they want the storm water to go as his property must be graded again due to the heavy trucks crossing his yard. Mayor Eckman asked Ms. Bembe to note the need for the Town Manager to arrange to have all of the properties along Oak Avenue looked at for this purpose.

New Business

Oath of Office - Joseph W. Norris

Mayor Eckman administered the taking of the Oath of Office by Joseph W. Norris, Treasurer for the Town of La Plata.

Public Forum

Joe Plemons, member of Christ Church and Chairman of the Christ Church School Board, gave Mayor Eckman a copy of a booklet of photographs of the tornado damage, produced by John Goff of Christ Church. Mr. Plemons also gave Councilman Winkler a copy of the book to be put in the Train Station Museum, and a Power Point cd version. Mayor Eckman and Councilman Winkler thanked Mr. Plemons.

Tom O'Farrell remarked that it had been suggested to him that some sort of museum be created to display photos, documents and the like, and asked if the Train Station Museum might be a place for such a display. Councilman Winkler responded that he had given some thought to putting photographs of the 1926 tornado on one wall and the 2002 tornado on another wall. If it is decided that people in La Plata might be comfortable with this being done, he could advertise for items and stories to share and possibly have it set up by August.

Bob Jacobs asked if it would be possible to store the donated trees at the Town's lake and ask the fire department to water them. Mayor Eckman reminded that the fire department members are volunteers and this would consume many hours of work per week. He noted that the Town will be working on a solution.

In response to a question from an audience member, Mayor Eckman advised that he is only aware of about three people who are not going to rebuild, and that the State said that 15 are not coming back. Mayor Eckman estimates that possibly 50 are building back more than they had.

There being no further business, Councilman Winkler made a motion to adjourn at 7:52 PM. Councilman Ambrogio seconded the motion and it carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith T. Frazier