

TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

On Saturday, April 29th, from noon to 4 p.m., we will hold our annual Celebrate La Plata Day at Town Hall. Each year this is an important event whereby we can all come together to celebrate the town in which we live, work, and play. This year has a special meaning in that it is the 15th anniversary of the devastating tornado that destroyed so much of our downtown and surrounding area. We have built the town back to a state better than existed prior to the tornado with many new commercial buildings, new businesses, and new residential properties. We will commemorate the work that went into rebuilding La Plata by dedicating a sculpture that will be placed at Town Hall for current and future generations to see and understand the remarkable accomplishment this build-back achieved in such a short period of time.

As recent as last February, the Town of La Plata experienced another tornado. Fortunately, the effect of this tornado was minor but it brings to mind that the words tornado and La Plata appear way too often in the same sentence. This implies that we must always remain vigilant and while hoping for the best of times be prepared for the worst of times. Nevertheless, we are situated, structurally and financially, in a strong position to face, as always, an uncertain future.

In May the Town will hold an election and for the first time in five election cycles

Continued on page 2

Bicycle Registration

La Plata Police Department Community Policing Initiative: Acting Sergeant Ricky Fields and Explorer Ty'jon Johnson assisted over 30 residents in Agricopia to register their bicycles. Citizens from multiple generations came out in an effort to help LPPD prevent bicycle theft. A big thank you to those who came out and registered their bikes today, and to our hosts Ms. Zanko and Joseph!

If your neighborhood would like to host a bicycle registration event please contact the La Plata Police Department at (301) 934-1500, Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 4:30.



Child Safety Seat Inspections

La Plata Police Department Traffic Safety Message: Is your child's safety seats installed properly? Why guess? Properly installed child safety seats save lives. Make an appointment with one of the La Plata Police Department's certified child safety seat installers to ensure your child's safety seat is installed properly. Ensuring the safety of our youngest citizens is important to the men and women at LPPD.

The Department also has a few safety seats provided on a grant for individuals who are in need of a seat for their child and cannot afford one.

To make an appointment to have your safety seat inspected or to inquire about a grant funded seat please call (301) 934-1500, between 8:30 and 4:30 weekdays.



TownofLaPlata



LaPlataPD

COUNCIL COLUMN

Councilman Wayne Winkler, Ward I

Here we are starting a new year for the newsletter and so many good projects were taken care of last year by the La Plata Town Staff. If you've been by Wills Park you noticed that we have new indoor bathrooms and they now can be accessed from the outside. What this means is that if children are using the outside playground equipment they no longer need to use a port-a-pottie, they can go inside. At Tilghman lake, it was drained down and all the debris was cleaned out and the lake has refilled and now looks a 100% nicer. A new floating dock will be installed this year. Also, new exercise equipment was installed along the walking trail.

Our roads: With the monies we receive from the State we could resurface many of them and they look great. Hopefully, we will receive full Highway User Revenue funding from the State gas tax this year and do many more.

Computerization: Last year the Town Staff had electronic tracking systems installed at public works so when a problem arises a work order is filled out and the problem is tracked until fixed. A similar tracking system was installed for use by the Planning Department so they can track new projects from start to finish and make sure everything was accomplished on time and correctly.

Last subject, voting: Our Town elections will take place on May 2nd, 2017. The voting hours were extended by the Town Council so that, hopefully, more people will turn out. Hours will be from 7:00 am until 8:00 pm. In La Plata there are over 9,000 residents yet four years ago fewer than 500 people voted. Please take time to come to the Town Hall and vote.

Hope everyone has a great summer and, so far, winter has been warm and wonderful.

Councilman Joseph Norris, Ward IV

Welcome to spring. It is always uplifting to enjoy the new growth of spring. As I write this we have been blessed with a mild winter for which I am grateful. I am concerned with our lack of moisture and the drought we are experiencing.

To those of you who have the time and interest please consider volunteering for one of our citizen boards or commissions. By filling out an application now we will be ready to call on you as soon as there is an opening. We have **Beautification, Design Review Board, Board Of Appeals, Parks and Recreation, Planning Commission, Supervisors Of Elections, and Ethics**. Please go to our website www.townofaplata.org. Learn more about each committee and then fill out an application and send it in.

Just a reminder that yard waste pick up days are most **Mondays and Fridays**. Remember to put your grass clippings in biodegradable bags as the county landfill will not take plastic bags for yard waste. Better yet, start a compost pile if practical.

May I encourage you to take advantage of our recycling program if you don't currently recycle. Also, we accept batteries from your various devices for recycling at town hall. Drop them off during regular business hours.

Please remember: **The Town of La Plata Elections** will take place on May 2. The expanded hours for voting are 7 A.M. TO 8 P.M. We have a full slate of candidates so please come and vote for your choice. If it is difficult for you to get out or you may be out

of town then request an absentee ballot.

Remember to use the town website (www.townofaplata.org) for up to date information on happenings in La Plata.

As always if you have any questions, comments or issues, I may be reached at (301) 934-9230 or by email at jnorris@townofaplata.org. Thank you for allowing me to serve.

MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

I will not be a candidate for the Town Council. Having served almost 19 years as mayor and councilman for Ward Four, the decision not to run again was not an easy decision. Serving your community is a very worthwhile and meaningful experience, that can be both rewarding and challenging, but the desire to serve and be a part of something that is truly important and beneficial to many lives only grows stronger with each passing year. As with most things in life you reach a point when it is time to step aside. In May it will be my time to do so.

I truly appreciate the opportunity that the citizens of La Plata provided to me to serve on the Town Council. I fully understand that some citizens did not always agree with every vote I cast or every issue decided, but I always attempted to move the Town forward for the benefit of the majority of our citizens. For most, this would be a worthy cause and a worthy objective.

I trust you will come out on Election Day, May 2nd, to vote in the La Plata elections. The poll hours have been extended with the polls opening at 7 a.m. and remaining open until 8 p.m. This is an important election and will set the course for the Town for the next four years. I commend all the candidates for their willingness to serve and the least we can do is show up and cast our vote. You have a right and obligation to choose your elected representatives but this right is forfeited if you do not vote.

My wife and I love La Plata and have no desire to relocate. We have gained many friends and neighbors, over the years, and that is irreplaceable. While this is my last column for this newsletter, I wish the next author of this column maximum success and a deep appreciation for the trust and confidence that has been bestowed upon you.

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Friday, April 14, 2017

Monday, May 29, 2017 (Memorial Day)

If you have a **water or sewer emergency** after hours, call (301) 932-3870 and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert the appropriate department to respond to you.

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

Commercial Building permits issued
1/1/2017 – 2/28/2017

Texas Roadhouse – Temporary construction trailer

Safeway – 40 Shining Willow Way – Garden Center

Safeway – 40 Shining Willow Way – Interior alteration

Commercial Occupancy permits issued
1/1/2017 – 2/28/2017

Dash-In – 6305 Crain Highway
Sonic – 6685 Crain Highway

LA PLATA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Retirement of Captain William "Bill" Brooks



The men and women of the La Plata Police Department Salute and Congratulate Captain William "Bill" Brooks on his retirement from the La Plata Police Department: Bill has served the citizens of La Plata since October 1993. Prior to working for the La Plata Police Department, Bill began his law enforcement career with the Prince George's County (MD) Police Department as a cadet in 1972.

Bill has attended numerous specialized training courses to include Internal Affairs, Criminal Investigations and Interrogations, Background Investigations, and Records Management. Bill served as the Town's liaison to the La Plata Crime Watch Council.

During his career, Bill has won numerous awards to include Officer of the Year in 1998 for his work with Crime Watch and is listed in Who's Who Honors.

Bill was born in Washington, DC and grew up in Clinton, Maryland. He has been a resident of Charles County for the past 22 years. When not working, Bill enjoys seeing this great country from the ground up in his RV. Bill and his wife have been longtime members of the Good Sam Club and plan to do a lot of camping in the future.

Congratulations, Bill on your well earned retirement!

From the Desk of the Police Chief

Results of Police Department Surveys

Throughout the year, the La Plata Police Department (LPPD) routinely sends out surveys to citizens who have had interactions with LPPD officers. The surveys are sent to victims of crimes and individuals stopped for routine traffic infractions. Ninety-five (95%) percent of those who had actual interaction with an LPPD officer rated the overall performance of the La Plata Police Department as good or very good, with 5% rating the agency as average. Ninety-three (93%) percent had a positive opinion of the LPPD officers after having interaction with him/her, 5% had a neutral opinion and 2% had a negative opinion. The surveys found that 82.5% of those who had encounters with LPPD officers had a positive opinion of the agency, with 17.5% stating they had a neutral opinion.

Ensuring La Plata residents, business owners and their patrons, as well as those visiting the town are safe is a core value of the police department. From time-to-time, our residents, business owners and visitors do have encounters with our dedicated men and women in blue. We want each encounter to be professional and positive, even if you may be going a little over the speed limit. The information from the surveys we received come from those who have actual encounters with LPPD officers. As you can tell our report card is pretty good, but there is room for a little improvement.

Citizen surveys are just one of the 483 standards the La Plata Police Department is attempting to meet in its quest for accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). CALEA standards are regarded as the benchmarks for law enforcement's best practices. The men and women of LPPD are working hard to embrace CALEA's best practices in an effort to provide nothing less than outstanding service to those we serve on a daily basis.

See you on the road!

Chief Carl Schinner

National Night Out Mini-Grant



National Night Out (NNO) brings residents, law enforcement agencies, community groups, and businesses together to celebrate crime prevention awareness while sending a message that crime will not be tolerated in our community. Each year, on the first Tuesday in August, people across America gather in their own communities to take a stand against crime. Town of La Plata National Night Out Mini-Grant is designed to provide an opportunity for Town of La Plata residents to strengthen their neighborhoods through producing a National Night Out celebration for their community. National Night Out is scheduled for Tuesday, August 1, 2017.

The Town of La Plata invites neighborhood associations and communities to submit the National Night Out Mini-Grant application for review. Eligible grants will be awarded up to \$200. Deadline to submit application is June 16, 2017. Grant applications are available for download from the Town's website or email Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator at cwilson@townoflaplata.org or (301) 934-8421.

TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Roy G. Hale

Council:

Wayne Winkler Ward 1

C. Keith Back Ward 2

Lynn D. Gilroy Ward 3

Joseph W. Norris Ward 4

Town Manager:

Daniel J. Mears

Treasurer: Robert W. Oliphant

Assistant Town Manager:

Michelle D. Miner

Town Clerk: Danielle Mandley

Police Chief, Carl H. Schinner

Director of Planning,

Jeremy D. Hurlbutt

Director of Operations: Robert F. Stahl, Jr.

Director of Public Works:

Jeffrey S. Garner

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: mminer@townoflaplata.org

Website: www.townoflaplata.org

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

Yard Waste Pick Up

Residential yard waste pick ups will only take place on Monday and Fridays. Containers of yard waste ONLY – leaves, grass and shrub clippings, brush or branches may be put out on Mondays and Fridays. The containers must be marked “Yard Waste.” Brush or branches must be bundled, weigh no more than 50lbs. per bundle, and the branches may not be larger than 4 feet long. *Plastic bags are not allowed – if you bag yard waste you must use paper bags.*

You must contact the Town if you are interested in a wheeled recycling container. Due to a limited budget, wheeled recycling containers are only being ordered to meet demand. Thank you for your interest.

Water Meter Customer Portal

Water customers can access information about their water use online.

To access the customer portal please call Town Hall at (301) 934-8421. Town staff will help you set up your account and have the system issue a user name and password. Visit the Water Section of the Town’s website www.townoflaplata.org for more details.

Water or Sewer After Hours Emergency

If you have a water or sewer emergency, call (301) 932-3870 for Public Works and follow the instructions given to report your emergency. The automated response system will alert staff to respond to you.

Household Hazardous Waste Collection



CHARLES COUNTY
**HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE
COLLECTION**

Household hazardous waste collection resumes on Saturday, April 1, 2017, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Department of Public Works building, located at 10430 Audie Lane, off of Radio Station Road

in La Plata. Household hazardous waste collection is a contracted service and items cannot be accepted when the contractor is not on site.

Items accepted free of charge include pesticides, herbicides, fertilizer, gasoline, motor oil, antifreeze, paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, batteries, and other poisons that are around your house. Please keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring them to the collection site in cardboard boxes to ease unloading.

For more information, call the Charles County Department of Public Facilities, Environmental Resources Division at (301) 932-3599.

Trash Collection Schedule Adjustment

If your regular trash collection day is:

Friday, April 14, 2017
Monday, May 29, 2017

Trash will be picked up on:

Thursday, April 13, 2017
Tuesday, May 30, 2017

Yard Waste Pick Up Schedule Adjustment

Friday, April 14, 2017
Monday, May 29, 2017

No Pick Up
No Pick Up

Recycling Pick Up

Wednesday, May 31, 2017

Pick Up as scheduled

Special Pick Up

Monday, April 3, 2017
Monday, May 1, 2017

Elections



LA PLATA TOWN ELECTIONS

Tuesday, May 2
7:00 am to 8:00 pm
La Plata Town Hall,
305 Queen Anne Street

APRIL 2017

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

						 1 Hazardous Waste Day Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
2	3 Yard Waste Pick Up Special Pick Up (please call by 3/31 at 4:00 to be put on list)	4 Planning Commission Meeting; 7:00 p.m.	 5 Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	6	7 Yard Waste Pick Up	 8 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
9	10 Yard Waste Pick Up	11 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m.	 12 Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting; 10:00 a.m. Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 a.m. Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	13 Trash Pick Up for 4/14	14 Town Hall Closed No Trash Pick Up; Pick Up 4/13 No Yard Waste Pick Up	 15 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 16 Easter	17 Yard Waste Pick Up	18 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m.	 19 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	20	21 Yard Waste Pick Up	 22 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
23/30	24 Yard Waste Pick Up	25 Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 p.m.	 26 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	27	28 Yard Waste Pick Up	 29 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Celebrate La Plata; noon to 4:00 p.m.

MAY 2017

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Yard Waste Pick Up Special Pick Up (please call by 4/28 to be put on list)	 2 Town Election; 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.	3 Crime Watch Council; 7:00 p.m.	4	5	 6 Siren testing; 10:00 a.m. Hazardous Waste collection Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
7	8 Yard Waste Pick Up	9 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m.	 10 Parks and Recreation Meeting; 10:00 a.m. Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	11	 12 Yard Waste Pick Up Beautification Commission Meeting; 10:00 a.m.	 13 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
 14 Mother's Day	15 Yard Waste Pick Up	16 Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m.	 17 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	18	19 Yard Waste Pick Up	 20 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
21	22 Yard Waste Pick Up	23 Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 p.m.	 24 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.	25	26 Yard Waste Pick Up Summer Concert; "Drivin' Muzzy Band;" 7:00 p.m.	 27 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
28 Memorial Day; Town Hall closed No yard waste Pick Up No trash Pick Up (Pick Up 5/30)	 29 Trash Pick Up from 5/29	30	 31 Farmers Market; 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Recycling Pick Up as normal			

PLANNING COMMISSION NEWS

Draft Zoning Code Now Available

The Town of La Plata Zoning Code will be updated comprehensively for the first time since it was codified in 1979. Zoning was first adopted in La Plata on September 7, 1962. There have been incremental changes and updates to the zoning code, and in recent years the Planning Commission and Town staff began the process of comprehensively updating Chapter 191 - Zoning. A review schedule was created to guide staff and the Planning Commission toward identifying and addressing items that needed to be changed. The Planning Commission, has had several work sessions to review, modify or propose the repeal of most of the articles located in the Zoning Code. As a result of these changes other Chapters, including; Resource Protection Standards (currently Floodplain Management), Subdivision and Land Development, Streets and Sidewalks, and Water and Sewers will need to be updated as well. Joint work sessions between the Town Council and Planning Commission will begin in April. Residents, businesses, the development community, and other interested parties are encouraged to provide comments on the draft throughout the process.

Major themes for the update include the following:

1. Reorganize and Reformat the Code:
2. Clarification of Procedures and Roles:
3. Provide a code that is clear, approachable, and easy to use
4. Implement the Comprehensive Plan

The draft Zoning Code can be found on the Town Zoning Code update webpage at bit.ly/ToLPZoningUpdate.

If you are interested in receiving updates or if you would like to participate in the Zoning Code update process please contact the Planning Department by phone at (301) 934-8811 or by email at jharrington@townofaplata.org.

Town of La Plata Comprehensive Plan Review Begins in April

The Planning Commission for the Town of La Plata and the Planning Department have begun the process of updating the Town's Comprehensive Plan, as is required by the Maryland Department of Planning. As part of this process, the Planning Department will be exploring various methods of public outreach in order to solicit the input of the community. Public input is crucial for the Comprehensive Plan update.

At the present time Town staff is in the beginning stages of updating the Comprehensive Plan and will ensure that the public is kept up-to-speed on the progress that is made. We ask that the residents and stakeholders within the Town keep themselves updated with this publication as we will be posting further information in the future about the Comprehensive Plan update.

For the most up to date information and more information about the June kick-off meeting please check the Town's Comprehensive Plan update webpage bit.ly/ToLP-CompUpdate

If you are interested in receiving updates or if you would like to participate in the Comprehensive Plan review and update process please contact the Planning Department by phone at (301) 934-8811 or by email at skoons@townofaplata.org.

Home Video Security Camera Mini-Grant



Throughout the year the Town of La Plata provides mini-grants to improve the quality of life in La Plata. These mini-grants have included funding to sponsor National Night Out, Community Beautification, and Block Parties. Recently the Town, in partnership with the La Plata Police Department, offered mini-grants for local residents to purchase home video surveillance cameras. The only caveat is if a mini-grant awardee's home video surveillance cameras captured an image involving an incident being investigated by local law enforcement, the images will be shared with a detective.

Our residents' response to the home video surveillance mini-grants was outstanding! The Department received more than thirty applications. The applications are now being reviewed and the awardees will be notified shortly. Since the response to the home video surveillance mini-grants exceeded the available funding, the La Plata Police Department will work with the Town Council in an effort to provide another round of mini-grant funding in the FY 17/18 budget.

TESTING OF EARLY WARNING DEVICES/SIRENS



The Town of La Plata will test early warning devices/sirens on **May 6, 2017 at 10:00 a.m.** Testing is done twice per year in early May and early December. The testing lasts about a half hour. The tests consist of both siren alerts and audible notifications. The tests are conducted in conjunction with the Charles County 911 Communications Center, which controls and operates the system for the Town.

The devices are installed at the following locations:

- On Charles Street in front of the Charles County Courthouse
- On Curley Hall Road at the Town's Wastewater Treatment Plant (near Quailwood Subdivision)
- In Clarks Run Subdivision
- In King's Grant Subdivision

- On Shining Willow Way next to the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department
- Emergency Management Officials remind you that in the event of a real emergency to stay tuned to local radio stations for more information, to have emergency supplies on hand - including a radio which can be operated during a power outage, and to know where the safe haven is in your home. It is everyone's responsibility to plan for an emergency.

WEBSITE POLL

Visit the Town of La Plata's website at <http://www.townoflaplata.org> to participate in an online poll. See the 'Snap Poll' on the left side of the web page to participate in the poll and see the results to date. The current question is:

What is your favorite event at Town Hall?

- Ice Cream with the Easter Bunny
- Celebrate La Plata
- Memorial Day Ceremony
- Friday Night Summer Concert Series
- 4th of July Watermelon Bash
- Kids Summer Shows
- La Plata Fall Festival
- Harvest Halloween Party
- Veterans' Parade
- Old Tyme Holiday Gathering
- Breakfast with Santa

February Website Poll Results

Below are the website 'Snap Poll' results from the last issue. The question and results are:

How were you affected when the Tornado struck La Plata on April 28, 2002?

	2012	2017
I was directly impacted.....	30%	39%
A member of my family was directly impacted.....	7%	11%
I have friends that were directly impacted	7%	7%
I lived nearby, but the tornado did not affect me or my family.....	20%	16%
I didn't live in the area.....	37%	24%

On November 9, 1926 a tornado estimated as an F3 on the Fujita scale had a devastating impact on the town. Sixteen people lost their lives, including thirteen elementary school students, when their school was destroyed. Dozens more children were injured, and families were burdened to bring their injured children to Washington to access a hospital. One of the transformative things to come from the tragedy was the creation of Physician's Memorial Hospital, La Plata's first hospital, located on Garrett Avenue. Out of a devastating tragedy, the community came together, and addressed a significant need for the growing community.

Seventy-six years later, another large tornado struck La Plata on April 28, 2002. Registered as an F4, the tornado had fewer fatalities, however the property damage was extensive, traveling across La Plata through the heart of downtown. The lives lost were in Charles and Calvert County, attesting to the intensity and duration of the 2002 tornado. The degree of devastation to the community was near overwhelming, however citizens/residents of La Plata, neighbors, and help from across the State came to assist, helping La Plata to recover.

On February 25, 2017 an EF0 tornado skirted the north end of La Plata. It reached a peak intensity of EF1 a few miles north-east of La Plata. With some downed trees and minor property

damage, the February tornado was less damaging in La Plata than the March ice storm, however it provides a reminder to the community of the impact that weather can have on our lives.



La Plata has experienced significant tragedy in its history. Out of that tragedy, the people of La Plata have chosen to rebuild, to improve their Town, and to make La Plata a better place to live for themselves and future generations. As a small town, with a population still estimated at about 9,000 people, the community holds values that are very desirable. La Plata has also demonstrated a resiliency in its people. The Town has not withered from the tragedy it has faced, instead it has rebounded and come out stronger than before.

Ninety one years after many families lives were devastated, the individual memories of that event are gone. Residents today can know of that impact on the town through some written stories, and a few pictures. Fifteen years ago this month is still present in many La Plata residents memory. Lost life, destroyed homes, leveled businesses, debris scattered for miles, and unquantifiable challenges that span the community are still felt personally by many. For those living here, these fifteen years have not erased all of the effects of the tornado. Those lost are still gone, trees that once stood have not been completely replaced by new growth, and the familiar landscape of downtown and the surrounds show a significant number of rebuilt and new buildings. A few vacant properties remain, and a memory of what once stood is all that is there. Those that came through the tornado have a story to share, and it is often part of the conversation when meeting someone new. 'Where were you during the tornado?'

The answers to that question are a way for people to connect and establish common ground through a shared experience. Even if there was no direct damage to their home or business, people experienced the challenges of trying to get through Town, conduct business, and fulfill their everyday tasks. Many living in the community today are missing that common ground, and do not have a story to share. Absent the personal experience, the feelings of resiliency are part of La Plata's culture and being. It is a part of what makes La Plata a great community.

As the years continue to go by, and people move on and move in, the memory of April 28, 2002 will fade as part of the public consciousness. The Town's identity is not of the devastation from years past, however it will always be a component of what has made the community what it is today. Please take the fifteenth anniversary of the 2002 tornado as an opportunity to remember what La Plata was like, and take pride in what everyone in the community has done to make La Plata the great small town that it is today.

This month, please visit the La Plata Tornado Facebook page to post about your experience and memories. La Plata is a fantastic place, and it is that way because of the community of people that live and work here.

PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The past year has seen many continued improvements to La Plata's parks. Through recommendations from the Town's Parks Board and grants secured from the State of Maryland, La Plata has had significant investment in its parks for the benefit of La Plata residents.



Wills Park, on St. Mary's Avenue, had an addition to the community building completed this year. The addition replaced the restrooms, which were not handicap accessible, with new restroom facilities which are not only accessible to patrons with disabilities, but also accessible to general guests of the park. Like the restrooms added to Tilghman Lake Park a few years ago, these facilities allow park users a comfortable and clean place to use the restroom.

In addition to the restrooms, the front façade was improved with a new accessible entrance and some façade improvements. The Wills Park community building is available for rent by residents for birthday parties, meetings, and other events.

Tilghman Lake Park is located 10598 Boxer Elder Road off of Radio Station Road. With 61 acres of nature to explore, Tilghman Lake Park is the largest park in the Town limits. This past fall the Town completed a lake rehabilitation project which involved draining the lake, making bank stabilization improvements, and removing material that had silted in the lake over decades.

The Town of La Plata again received funding for Tilghman Lake project through the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Community Parks and Playgrounds Program. Earlier in the year the Park Board had exercise stations installed around the lake utilizing the same source of grant funds. The Town is currently soliciting proposals to replace the dock, again using the State grant funds. This past year the Town has utilized about \$190,000 worth of State grant funding going towards improvements at Tilghman Lake. This follows the grant funding used to add two trails connecting Tilghman Lake Park to Kings Grant and Radio Station Road.

In the spring of 2013 the Town had a grand reopening of Tilghman Lake Park after hundreds of thousands of dollars in other grant funding had been secured to install a restroom facility and add parking to allow for the use of the previously constructed pavilion.

The large picnic pavilion is available for residents to rent for parties, family reunions, and other events. With a beautiful serene outdoor setting, and now an even more beautiful lake with an approachable bank, Tilghman Lake Park is a favorite for La Plata residents, and improved mostly through State grants. With planning, patience, and persistence, La Plata is saving money, improving services, and adding value to the recreation amenities of the community.



Efficiency Corner

Making La Plata More Efficient

With resources strained by challenges in the economy, it is vital that the Town explore ways to make its operations more efficient to save money, time, and add value to the services provided. Town staff is charged with finding new ways to improve services, and the Town regularly invests in technology or implements process changes to drive efficiencies.

Permit Tracking System

In 2016 the Planning Department implemented a computerized permit tracking system. The system allows the department to enter information on permit applications, and track the applications through approval, issuance, and inspections processes. The system also allows for projects requiring multiple approvals and permits to be linked together, aiding staff in ensuring more complex projects are followed through to completion.

Projects coming through the review and implementation stages of development may be subject to requirements of an annexation agreement, special exception approval, or other development controls. By adding the original conditions of approval to a subdivision or other larger project, the staff can quickly access conditions associated with the sub-projects.

The software is web based and has integrated apps that inspectors can use in the field to make updates to the database or enter inspection information while in the field, improving their operational efficiency. The records of the system are also being linked to the permanent records in the Town's new records center. The system aids staff in reporting requirements for reporting permitting and development activity that is required by the State of Maryland.

The system will continue to improve efficiency over time as staff becomes more acquainted with the software, more data is entered in the system, and the remaining configuration is complete.

La Plata Garden Club

On Saturday, April 22, 2017 the La Plata Garden Club and the Crossroads of Hughesville Garden Club welcome Kent Russell, The Garden Guru for a presentation on Earth Day. The event is at 1:00 PM at the South Potomac Church, White Plains, MD. The cost is \$25.00 per person. Kent is a nationally recognized celebrity gardener and he will educate and entertain with his informative presentation. For tickets or further information contact Dianne Shisler at (301) 932-0251 or dshisler@verizon.net. Light refreshments will be served. Please mark your calendars and plan on attending.



UTILITY BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS

The Town offers its utility customers multiple ways to pay their quarterly bills.

- They can pay in person at Town Hall during normal business hours (9 am to 4 pm M-F). In-person payments can be made using cash, check, money-order, or credit card (VISA, Mastercard or Discover).
- Customers may make payments at Town Hall outside of normal business hours by placing their payment in an envelope and dropping it in the night deposit slot located in the lobby of the building. We recommend payments made via the night deposit box be in the form of a check or money order (cash is not recommended).
- Customers may also make their payments by mail. We recommend that all payments made by mail be in the form of a check or money order (cash is not recommended).
 - NOTE: If you use a "Bill Pay" service offered by a financial institution to make your payment, you need to be aware that payments made using these services ultimately come to the Town as paper checks generated by a third-party payment processing company. Your bank account will typically show the payment having been withdrawn from your account several days prior to us receiving the check. Despite the fact that the money is no longer in your account, we do not credit your payment to your account until we receive and process the check itself. If you use one of these services you need to make sure to schedule the payment enough in advance of the due date to assure that the check arrives on time, not merely that the money has been withdrawn from your account by the due date.
- Customers can also authorize the Town to automatically withdraw their payment from their bank account each quarter. To do this they must complete an "Automatic ACH Withdrawal Authorization" form, which is available on the Town's website and at the Town Hall. They must complete the form and return it, along with a copy of blank voided check to the Town. All of the authorized signers on the account must appear in person at the Town Hall

and present identification to Town staff. Once these conditions have been satisfied, the Town will set it up so the customer's payment will automatically be withdrawn from the account they designate, each quarter, typically 2 or 3 days before the due date.

- Customers may also pay their bill remotely (phone or on-line) using a credit card
 - If a customer wants to pay their bill by phone, they can call the Town Hall at (301) 934-8421 and inform the staff of their desire to pay their bill using a credit card. The staff will need standard information (name on the card, credit card billing address, card type, card number, security code, etc.). Once the clerk has all of the required information, they'll process the payment and provide the customer with an authorization code as their receipt.
 - To make a credit card payment on-line, the customer must first set-up an on-line account with the Town. It is a simple and straight forward process. Customers will need to connect to the Town's on-line services portal which can be accessed directly at www.municipalonlinepayments.com/laplatamd or from the link on the Town's website www.townoflaplata.org. Once the customer has set-up their account, they can initiate a credit card payment. If a customer chooses this option they have to initiate the payment each quarter, it will not happen automatically. There is a surcharge fee equal to 2.5% of the payment that is assessed when this method of payment is used.

All customers will still receive utility bills each quarter regardless of which payment method they choose to use.

Whether customers are interested in any of the utility payment options or not, they are still encouraged to check-out the portal and create an account because with an account they will have on-line access to their water utility usage history.

Please contact the Finance office at (301) 934-8421 if you have any questions.



Public Works crews working to open up a Town street from falling trees during the ice storm on March 14.

Beautification Grants



The Beautification Commission implemented the *Beautification Commission Grant Program* to encourage residents, Home Owners Associations, school projects, scout groups, civic organizations, businesses and other community members to help "beautify" our town. If you have a project idea that will improve the appearance, cleanliness or reduce current maintenance need visit the Town of La Plata a website for an application and further information. Grant applications must be received by May 5, 2017 and may be submitted to Danielle Mandley via fax (301) 934-5724, email dmandley@townoflaplata.org, by mail, or in person to 305 Queen Anne Street. Please call (301) 934-8421 if you have any questions.

TOWN ELECTION 2017

The General Election will be held on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Elections are held at La Plata Town Hall, 305 Queen Anne Street, La Plata, MD.

Eligibility to vote in Town Elections requires registration with the Board of Supervisors of Elections of Charles County or with the Board of Supervisors of Elections of the Town of La Plata supplemental registration. You must be registered to vote prior to Monday, April 3, 2017 for the General Election.

The Board of Supervisors of Elections of the Town of La Plata will make available applications for Absentee Ballot. Applications must be received not later than seven (7) days prior to the Election.

Forms and information sheets can be located at the bottom of the Town Elections page on the Town web site www.townoflaplata.org, or for pick up at Town Hall. Please contact Danielle Mandley, Town Clerk by email at dmandley@townoflaplata.org or phone at (301) 934-8421, if you have any questions or need additional information.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Town of La Plata 2017 Special Events Schedule is now available. You can pick up copies of the new Special Events brochure at Town Hall or local businesses around town. The brochure is also available for downloading from the Town website. Go to www.TownofLaPlata.org and click on Events.

Celebrate LA PLATA!

Saturday, April 29th
12 PM to 4 PM at La Plata Town
Free Family Fun!

Craft & Food Vendors
Moon bounce
Kids Art Activities
Face Painting

Visit the Family
Fitness Zone Sponsored by



Jump with Jill at 12:30 PM & 1:30 PM



Watch the La Plata Bed Race at 3 PM



Memorial Day Ceremony
Monday, May 29th
10 AM at La Plata Town Hall

Please join us to remember and honor the men and women who died while in the military service.



To remember and honor those who have served in the armed forces, the Town will have stars available for loved ones to write a message on. The stars will be displayed at the Memorial Day Ceremony on May 30th. Stars will be available in the Town Hall lobby from May 8th to May 24th. Town Hall is open from 9 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday and there will be a box in the lobby to place the stars. For more information please contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 or cwilson@townoflaplata.org.



Join us for the Friday Night Summer Concert Series. The weekly concerts take place from 7 pm to 9 pm on the lawn at La Plata Town Hall at 305 Queen Anne Street. Concert goers are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for sitting. Coolers are allowed, but no alcohol, please. Concessions are available from the Town's food trailer located in the back of the parking lot; an ice cream truck is stationed there for your enjoyment. A play area for children, the Kids' Zone, allows parents to enjoy the concert while keeping an eye on the little ones.

Check out the schedule for May and June! Complete concert schedules is available on the back page of the newsletter or visit the Events page on the Town's website.

Please note military concerts are usually about 1 hour to 1 hour 15 minutes due to their regulations.

If a concert has to be cancelled due to the weather we will post the information in the following locations:

- Town of La Plata website – on the home page and concert page
- Town of La Plata facebook page
- Call (301) 934-8421 for a recorded message, press #7 for special events
- Town of La Plata emails – to sign up please send your email address to cwilson@townoflaplata.org

Summer Fun at Town Hall

The Town of La Plata will host five kids' summer shows at Town Hall. The shows are geared towards preschool and elementary age children and are approximately 45 minutes long. The shows are free and open to the public. Shows will be held outdoors on the West lawn where the Friday night concerts take place (weather permitting - shows will not be moved indoors). Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets and lawn chairs for sitting. No concessions will be available, but you are welcome to bring drinks and snacks along.

2017 Schedule

Tuesday, June 20 at 10 AM	Blue Sky Puppets – Rufus
Tuesday, July 11 at 10 AM	Bright Star Theatre – Alice in Wonderland
Tuesday, July 25 at 10 AM	The Balloon Nerd Show
Tuesday, August 1 at 10 AM	Ryan Buckle and The Curiosity Crew
Tuesday, August 8 at 10 AM	Science Tellers – Tall Ships & Pirates Tales

More information about the performers listed on the Events page at www.townoflaplata.org.

TOWN OF LA PLATA

305 Queen Anne Street
P. O. Box 2268
La Plata, Maryland 20646-2268



Town Notes is a publication of the Town of La Plata.



Summer Concerts

Free family friendly concerts at Town Hall

**Friday Nights
May 26-
Sept 29**

Starting at 7 PM

For more information about the bands please visit the Summer Concert page at www.townoflaplata.org.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| MAY
Friday May 26th
Drivin Muzzy | AUGUST
Friday August 4th
257th Army Band |
| JUNE
Friday June 2nd
BackFin | Friday August 11th
U.S. Air Force Band Max Impact |
| Friday June 9th
No Last Call | Friday August 18th
Eric Scott Band |
| Friday June 16th
Three Days of Rain | Friday August 25th
Southern Maryland Concert Band |
| Friday June 23rd
U.S. Navy Band The Cruisers | SEPTEMBER
Friday September 1st
Community Groove |
| Friday June 30th
Pork Donut | Friday September 8th
Dr. Robert Band |
| JULY
Friday July 7th
Four of a Kind | Friday September 15th
SWILD |
| Friday July 14th
John Luskey Band | Friday September 22nd
Trilogy |
| Friday July 21st
U.S. Naval Academy Band Superintendent's Combo | Friday September 29th
U.S. Navy Band
The Commodores |
| Friday July 28th
The Muddy Crows | |

