

TOWN NOTES

News from La Plata Town Hall



MAYOR'S CORNER

HAPPY NEW YEAR! I hope you and your family had a wonderful holiday and are off to a great 2018. The New Year is shaping up to be a very busy year already. We are hiring a new manager, working on a new budget and zoning ordinance, welcoming new businesses and offering new opportunities for you to become involved in our fantastic community.

NEW MANAGER: As many of you may have heard, our Town Manager, Dan Mears, has accepted a position as the Assistant City Manager of Bowie. I would like to personally and publicly thank Dan for the 10 years of hard work and dedication he has given our Town. His knowledge of our municipal and local government has been exceptional. While here, he did an outstanding job of supervising the day-to-day operations of the Town, presenting and monitoring a solid budget, and perhaps most importantly, working with a new council for the past 8 months to bring us up to speed on the zoning ordinance, annexations, and Town code. La Plata's loss is Bowie's gain. Best of Luck, Dan, as you move toward the next chapter life brings your way.

NEW BUDGET AND ZONING CODE: Council and Staff are very busy preparing the budget for the next fiscal year which begins on July 1. We are looking at and considering many different components including the needs and expectations of the residents; capital improvements; traffic and transportation issues; Town services; safety concerns, and impending growth. We are almost done

Continued on page 2

2017 Holiday Decorations Contest

The La Plata Beautification Commission visited all the residences who were signed up on the list and businesses around Town and the winners are...

Commercial:

- 1st Place Commercial - Davis Florist
- 2nd Place Commercial - Optical Shoppe
- Honorable Mention - The Loft Salon

Residential:

- 1st Place Whimsical - Yeckley Family, Quailwood, 115 Mallard Lane
- 2nd Place Whimsical - William Mayhew, Jamestowne, 12 Pocahontas Court
- 1st Place Traditional - Dugan Family, Clarks Run, 623 Clarks Run Road
- 2nd Place Traditional - Annette Briscoe, 308 Goose Creek



Certificates of Appreciation to:

- La Plata Volunteer Fire Department
- La Plata Police Department

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Breakfast



On Monday, January 15 members of the La Plata Police Department along with Mayor Jeannine James attended the 23rd Annual Dr. Martin Luther King Day Prayer Breakfast at North Point High School. As we were reminded that morning, "The time is always right to do the right thing."

L to R: Mayor Jeannine James, Captain Christopher Becker, Chief Carl Schinner, and Lieutenant Michael Payne.



TownofLaPlata



LaPlataPD

COUNCIL COLUMN

Councilwoman Paddy Mudd, Ward IV

Your Council has been hard at work through the holidays and freezing weather that we have experienced so far this winter. As we begin the 2019 budget process we welcome your input. Also, we have reconstituted our Historic Preservation Commission – a project I feel is very needed not only to protect our Town's history but to promote and teach it to all. The Commission will have 8 members – 2 of whom do not have to be Town residents. Please consider giving some of your time and talents to our Town. My particular interest is repairing and opening our historic Train Station to visitors including school groups once again. We also own the Fire Museum building (which needs lots of attention) with the Star Memorial Garden just off St. Mary's Ave. Let's open these and join with private home and business owners in Town to chronicle and preserve our rich history since our Town's incorporation in 1888. We also have many items in storage that I believe should be on display. An application is online for all our boards and commissions. Also, I would love to have you contact me personally regarding your interest in participating in our Historic Preservation Commission.

A warm goodbye and good luck to our manager Dan Mears. I have enjoyed working closely with you for 6 of your 10 years in La Plata. So glad you and your family will continue to live here as you pursue your career in a larger municipality.

MAYOR'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

updating the zoning code ordinance. When it is completed we will present it to the public for comments.

NEW BUSINESSES: In the past 6 months we have had many businesses open in our great little Town. Some of the great businesses now calling La Plata home include: Jersey Mike's Subs; Gun Monkeys; Vintage Redux; Sprint; Catherine Foundation of MD; Peake Net Broadband; Cricket; and AR Workshop La Plata. And that's just to name a few!!! Sadly, we said good-bye to a few fabulous local businesses. We thank the owners for giving our residents the privilege of dining and shopping in their establishment. You will be missed.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES: A new year gives us an excuse to reset, shake our bad habits, shift our perspectives, and perhaps an opportunity to become more involved in our Community. Your Council and Town Staff are working hard to make La Plata a premier place to DINE, SHOP and LIVE. Becoming involved in your Town can be very beneficial not only for your mind and your body but it also builds a stronger sense of connection, solidarity, and community. There are many ways you can get involved in the Town of La Plata.

1. Participate in Local Events: Every year, more and more events are popping up in Town. Whether it's Rocktoberfest, Celebrate La Plata, the Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering, the Friday Night Concert Series, or the number of charity walks, there is an event for everyone. Check them out.

2. Volunteer Your Time: There are many ways you can volunteer your time. For example, you might volunteer to serve on one of our Town's committees. We are looking to fill the newly formed Historic Preservation Committee as well as the Main Street Program. Preserving the Town's history as

well as beautifying our Main Street is one of our top goals in 2018. If you are interested in finding out more about serving on either Board, give Town Hall a call.

3. Shop Locally: Buy from local vendors. Whether it is from the Farmer's Market, local music store, hair salon, boutique, or jewelry store, it's comforting to know shopping locally can have a significant impact on the local economy.

4. Become More Involved in Your Neighborhood: Many of us are so busy with work, family, and other activities that we may not really know our neighbors. A great way to meet those in your community is to host a block party, cook out, fun run, or anything that brings the neighbors together. It can be as informal or as formal as you want. We will even help by offering the Town of La Plata Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant. This grant is designed to provide an opportunity for Town of La Plata residents to strengthen their neighborhoods through producing special events. All you have to do is apply. There will be 5 grants awarded up to \$500 each. Deadline to submit application is March 9, 2018.

Our Council continues to meet with residents, local government, business owners, and investors to talk about collaborating with one another to build a healthier, more vibrant community. **TOGETHER WE ARE MUCH STRONGER!**

I truly believe we live in an amazing Town. It is up to all of us to work together and I strongly encourage you to become more involved with our revitalization efforts. Please feel free to call my office at (301) 934-8421 or send me an e-mail at jjames@townofaplata.org. Your opinion matters.

Here's to a prosperous, happy, and successful 2018!

Code Corner

Spring Cleaning - Keep Your Home Beautiful and Code Compliant

Proper maintenance of your home helps extend its life, improves the quality of your residence, and adds value to your neighborhood. Property maintenance is part of the Town code. In the Town Code - Sections 117 and 152, and in the International Property Maintenance Code - Sections 301 through 308 there is a good overview of the maintenance requirements for your home's exterior and interior structure. Here is a spring cleaning "Top Ten List", to help get your home looking great!

1. Siding – Mold and mildew, loose or missing panels, peeling paint
2. Windows – Broken glass, missing screens, missing caulking and peeling paint.
3. Doors – Peeling paint, loose weather strips, loose hardware.
4. Painting – Exterior and interior walls and trim.
5. Gutters – Clean-out and re-attach as needed. Flexible down spout extensions help keep water away from the foundation.
6. Decks and Porches – Remove leaves and debris, repair or replace decking boards as needed, don't forget to check the deck supports and attachments to the house for any structural defects. Cleaning and re-sealing a deck can add years to its life.
7. Power Washing – This is a quick and easy method to clean your home's exterior, gutters and deck.
8. Storage – Don't forget to take care of your shed and any other outbuildings.
9. Outside Electrical Outlets – Do they have covers, are they working and do they have Ground Fault Protection (GFI)? GFI outlets are designed to protect you from receiving a shock injury.
10. Sump Pumps – Be sure to check your sump pump for proper operation. If it is an older model, consider replacing it, BEFORE it fails during a storm.

These are just a few items to help get your home ready for the spring. Please be sure to follow safe practices while cleaning and working around the house. Consider a licensed contractor for big projects. If you have any questions about the code, please contact Aaron Mosrie, Asst. Manager of Inspections at (301) 934-8421 ext. 2301.

Toys for Tots

With the assistance of Town staff, the CSM's Engineering Club, and members of the LPPD a SUV full of new toys were dropped off at the Waldorf Jaycees. The US Marine Corps Reserves and the Waldorf Jaycees worked to make sure every Charles County child had a gift to open this holiday season.

Thank you to all those who contributed a new gift this holiday season to the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots Program.



Shop Small Saturday

During Shop Small Saturday held on November 25, 2017, the LPPD along with its partners at the La Plata Business Association hosted a Find the Holiday Super Villain Scavenger Hunt. Young detectives from around the area came to La Plata to be deputized and then headed out on an adventure to locate one of the villains who could be found hanging around inside a local business. Because of our young sleuths help, La Plata remains a safe place to live, work, shop, and visit.



Municipal Government Works Month (November)



Since 1993, Maryland's cities and towns have celebrated Municipal Government Works (MGW) Month each November in an effort to promote citizens' awareness of and interest in the government in their communities. During the November 26, 2017 business meeting the Council proclaimed November Municipal Government Works month.

Zoning Code Update

The Planning Commission at their December 2017 meeting made recommendations on the draft zoning code update to the Town Council. Planning staff and the Planning Commission have held several work sessions to create this comprehensive code update.

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 Town Council has begun the process of reviewing the draft code and two public hearings will be scheduled for future meeting dates. Please check the Town's Zoning Code Update webpage at bit.ly/ToLP_ZoningUpdate for specific dates of these meetings, and links to view the Zoning Code Update and proposed changes to the Zoning Map. You may also sign up for meeting notifications at <https://laplata.civicweb.net/Portal/Subscribe.aspx>.

If you are interested in receiving updates, or have any questions regarding the Zoning Code update please contact the Planning Department by phone at (301) 934-8421 or by email at JHarrington@townoflaplata.org.

Agenda Notifications

The Town has implemented an agenda management system. This system allows you to sign up to receive an email when an agenda is published, with a link to that agenda or notice. You can access this feature and view past, current and future agendas from the Town web site at www.townoflaplata.org. On the home page under Quick Links select Meeting Agendas, this link will take you to the Town's Civic Web site. You can then scroll to Subscribe to Email Notices, select those that interest you, enter your email and subscribe.

If you have any questions please contact the Town Clerk, Danielle Mandley via phone at (301) 934-8421 or email at dmandley@townoflaplata.org.

TOWN OF LA PLATA OFFICIALS

Mayor: Jeannine E. James
Council:

Matthew Simpson Ward 1
Brent Finagin Ward 2
Emily Mudd Hendricks Ward 3
Paddy Mudd 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 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

Household hazardous waste collection occurs on the first Saturday of each month from 9 am to 3 pm from April through December in the parking lot of the Department of Public Works



CHARLES COUNTY
HOUSEHOLD
HAZARDOUS WASTE
COLLECTION

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, oil-based paint, cleaning supplies, pool chemicals, fluorescent lights, mercury thermometers, and other poisons found in the home. Please keep the materials in their original containers whenever possible, and bring them to the collection site in cardboard boxes to ease unloading.

Unacceptable materials include bio-medical waste (sharps, needles, anything with bodily fluids), latex paint, prescription drugs, and ammunition. Used motor oil, anti-freeze, propane tanks, and batteries are accepted on a regular basis at various collection sites. Latex paint is not considered hazardous waste and can be placed in your household trash as long as it is solidified. This can be accomplished by adding kitty litter, shredded paper, paint hardener, or sawdust to aid in drying it out.

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:

Monday, February 19, 2018
Friday, March 30, 2018

Trash will be picked up on:

Tuesday, February 20, 2018
Thursday, March 29, 2018

Yard Waste Pick Up

Monday, February 19, 2018
Friday, March 30, 2018

No Pick Up
No Pick Up

Recycling Collection:

Wednesday, February 21, 2018 as scheduled

BUILDING PERMITS ISSUED

Commercial Building permits issued 11/7/2017-1/3/2018

Tenant improvement – 200 Kent Avenue
Sagepoint – The Heritage Foundation – 1014 Washington Avenue
KFC restaurant remodel – 6665 Crain Highway
Sagepoint 2 vestibules – 10200 La Plata Road
Sagepoint – The Heritage 60 room convalescent home – 1014 Washington Avenue

Commercial Occupancy permits issued 11/7/2017-1/3/2018

Office
113 Howard Street
Sprint
105 Drury Drive
Boutique/DIY Workshop
317 Charles Street
Dance Studio
9375 Chesapeake Street
Cricket
50 Drury Drive

FEBRUARY 2018

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

					1	2	3
						Ground Hog Day Yard Waste Pick Up	
4	5	6	7	8		9	10
	Special Pick Up (please call by 2/2 at 4:00 p.m.)	Planning Commission Meeting; 7:00 p.m.				Beautification Commission Meeting; 10:00 a.m. Yard Waste Pick Up	
11	12	13		14	15	16	17
	Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m. Yard Waste Pick Up	Crime Watch Council Meeting; 7:00 p.m.	Valentine's Day Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting; 7:30 a.m. Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 a.m.			Yard Waste Pick Up	
18		19	20	21	22	23	24
	Presidents Day Town Hall Closed No Trash Pick Up; Pick Up 2/20 No Mayor and Council Work Session	Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m. Trash Pick Up for 2/19		Recycling Pick Up as normal		Yard Waste Pick Up	
25	26	27	28				
	Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Yard Waste Pick Up						

MARCH 2018

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

					1	2	3
						Yard Waste Pick Up	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
	Yard Waste Pick Up Special Pick Up (please call by 3/2 at 4:00 p.m.)	Planning Commission Meeting; 7:00 p.m.			Yard Waste Pick Up		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
Daylight Savings Begins	Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m. Yard Waste Pick Up		Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting; 7:00 a.m. Design Review Board Meeting; 9:00 a.m.		Yard Waste Pick Up	 St. Patrick's Day	
18	19	 20	21	22	23	24	
	Mayor and Council Work Session; 7:00 p.m. Yard Waste Pick Up	Spring Begins			Yard Waste Pick Up		
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	
	Mayor and Council Business Meeting; 7:00 p.m. Yard Waste Pick Up				No Yard Waste Pick Up Trash Pick Up 3/29		

LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

La Plata Community,

In June 2007, I began my tenure as the Town Manager for the Town of La Plata. Moving from the St. Louis region to live in and work for La Plata has been an extremely rewarding experience. For more than ten years, I have had the pleasure of being part of an exceptional team of talented and dedicated public servants. I am thankful for my mentors, colleagues, and co-workers as well as the many strong professional and personal partnerships developed in the community.

I have had the honor to come to work each day, attend Town events, and represent the Town of La Plata. I consider myself lucky to have had so many wonderful opportunities along with the support to work on innovative and challenging projects. I am most proud of working with the Town staff with the support of the Town Council to invest in technology, implement efficiencies, and improve the services provided by the Town across all its service areas.

The functioning of the Town government has changed quite a bit over the past decade. The work of department heads and staff to implement those improvements in service had not only allowed the Town to get through the recession without the need to raise property taxes, but also prepare the government to handle future increases in service demand. I am very proud of the work La Plata employees do in service to the community. This work combined with the numerous hours put in by dozens of citizen volunteers builds this great community.

Being part of the Town of La Plata team has been a privilege. Although I will begin a new professional chapter, my family and I will continue to call La Plata home and look forward to remaining involved in the community. Recently, I notified the Town Council and staff that I would be accepting a position with the City of Bowie. Over the coming weeks, I will work to ensure that there is a smooth management transition. The La Plata community can expect the same excellent service delivery from committed staff members in months and years to come. It is truly the Town's employees who are the keys to La Plata's success in providing superior municipal services.

In addition to the Town staff, I would like to thank the current and past members of the Town Council for believing in my abilities and allowing me to serve our town as Town Manager. I will fondly remember my time working in La Plata and carry the lessons with me as I begin the next stage in my public administration career.

Daniel Mears
Town Manager

NEW EMPLOYEES



In November **Michael Jurkovic** joined the Town of La Plata as the new Planning Technician. He graduated from Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio on May 7, 2017, with a Bachelor of Science in City and Regional Planning. Born and raised in Ohio he is always happy to talk about his home state, especially Cleveland's sports teams. Michael is excited to serve the Town of La Plata, and to live in the cultural center that is the Washington Metropolitan Area.



Matthew Hancock joined the Public Works Team as Technician I in December 2017. He was born and raised in Charles County. He is a graduate of La Plata High School. In his spare time Matthew enjoys working on cars.

From the Desk of the Chief



On January 12, 2018, the La Plata Police Department (LPPD) took a big step in its pursuit of national accreditation through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA).

Nine individuals from allied law enforcement agencies with expertise in policy development and compliance conducted a mock assessment to compare LPPD's written directives and proofs of compliance with law enforcement's best practices as prescribed by CALEA. The mock assessors came from the Charles, Montgomery, and St. Mary's County Sheriff's Offices, as well as the Anne Arundel, Montgomery, Greenbelt, and University of Maryland-Baltimore County Police Departments.

The mock assessment was in preparation for the LPPD's March 26–28, 2018, onsite assessment by members of CALEA. During the formal onsite, two CALEA assessors will review LPPD's policies and its documented compliance; interview key community and governmental leaders; participate in a static display of the agency's equipment; oversee a phone-in session; and, hold a public hearing to determine the agency's compliance with the Commission's 189 applicable standards.

As Chief, providing a quality service to every member of the La Plata community is paramount. This is why the LPPD is opening its doors to a CALEA assessment team. We want our written directives and proofs of compliance to be scrutinized by an outside entity. We look forward to the assessment team's visit and hearing any recommendations they have to make for the agency.

For more information about law enforcement accreditation, please visit the Commission's website at www.calea.org.

See you on the road,
Carl Schinner

Town Hall Closed

The Town Hall will be closed on the following days:

Monday, February 19, 2018
Friday, March 30, 2018

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.

WEBSITE POLL



December Website Poll Results

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

Have you ever had mail lost or stolen?

Yes – 75%

No – 25%

Today the United States Postal Service and package shipping companies are making it easier than ever to keep track of your deliveries and mail. In order to help ensure you get what you expect, when you can choose, select the options for delivery to your home that provide a tracking number. That number can be used to see where your package is in the delivery process through apps and websites of the different delivery services. Being aware of when your important package arrives can help limit the amount of time it is sitting out, and susceptible to theft. Packages may be left in the mailbox, at the garage, a side door, or the front entrance to your home. Be certain to check each potential space, especially if it is not where you typically enter your home. The less time a package sits out, the less chance it has to be taken. Also, consider getting a rural mailbox. That style with the extra large capacity will mean smaller packages can be placed in the box, instead of sitting out in view of passersby.

The USPS offers a service of tracking on all first class mail called Informed Delivery. The postal service captures an image of every letter sized piece of mail that goes through its sorting facilities. That information is accessible to its customers to better track their mail. Informed Delivery provides eligible residential consumers with a digital preview of their household's incoming mail scheduled to arrive soon. Users can view greyscale images of the exterior, address side of incoming letter-sized mailpieces via email or an online dashboard.



The service helps you know what mail the USPS had, and was to deliver that day. If the notification shows four pieces of mail, and you only had two of them in your mailbox, you know a problem happened either with the delivery, or mail being taken from your mailbox. Find out more about the free Informed Delivery service at <https://informeddelivery.usps.com>.

Most importantly, if you believe you have had mail stolen or lost, contact the La Plata Police Department and the local post office branch.

2018 COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Adopted December 19, 2017 – All meetings are scheduled for 7:00 PM, unless otherwise stated. Additional meetings may be scheduled as needed.

JANUARY – Alternate Schedule

Work Sessions Monday, January 8, 2018
Monday, January 22, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, January 29, 2018

FEBRUARY – Alternate Schedule

Work Sessions Monday, February 12, 2018
Tuesday, February 20, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, February 26, 2018

MARCH

Work Sessions Monday, March 12, 2018
Monday, March 19, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, March 26, 2018

APRIL

Work Sessions Monday, April 9, 2018
Monday, April 16, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, April 23, 2018

MAY – Alternate Schedule

Work Sessions Monday, May 7, 2018
Monday, May 14, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, May 21, 2018

JUNE – Alternate Schedule

MML Conference June 10 to June 13, 2018
Work Session Monday, June 18, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, June 25, 2018

JULY

Work Sessions Monday, July 9, 2018
Monday, July 16, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, July 23, 2018

AUGUST

Work Sessions Monday, August 13, 2018
Monday, August 20, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, August 27, 2018

SEPTEMBER

Work Sessions Monday, September 10, 2018
Monday, September 17, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, September 24, 2018

OCTOBER

Work Sessions Monday, October 8, 2018
Monday, October 15, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, October 22, 2018

NOVEMBER

Work Sessions Monday, November 12, 2018
Monday, November 19, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, November 26, 2018

DECEMBER – Alternate Schedule

Work Session Monday, December 10, 2018
Business Meeting Monday, December 17, 2018

Work Sessions are the second and third Monday of each month and Business Meetings are the fourth Monday of each month, unless rescheduled or cancelled. Special Meetings and Closed Sessions may be scheduled as needed. When a meeting would fall on a scheduled holiday an alternate schedule has been adopted.

Agendas are published online and can be viewed on the Town's Civic Web portal at <https://laplata.civicweb.net/Portal/>, and are subject to change. Printed copies are available upon request, by contacting the Town Clerk, Danielle Mandley via phone as listed below or email at dmandley@townoflaplata.org.

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.

Lighting Replacement

In a previous efficiency corner article it was discussed about the SMECO service to conduct a lighting audit of Town facilities. The audit recommended changes to the Town's lighting and controls to provide a more energy efficient solution, while meeting lighting needs. The recommendation showed what replacements to make, how much would of the cost would be borne by SMECO, and how much by the Town. With the Town's investment compared against the energy savings, the Town saw a payback ranging from 1.25 to 2.36 years depending on the Town facility. With such a quick return on investment, the Town undertook all the recommended lighting upgrades.

The Town had a total investment of \$20,995.77. The money spent in the new efficient lighting systems will all be recouped by the lower electricity costs by fall of 2019. After that point, the Town will continue to see regular savings in the cost of electricity at Town facilities.

Combining the recent savings with the design features of utilizing daylight in Town Hall, geothermal heating and cooling at Town Hall, prior investments in energy efficient motors and pumps at utility locations, among other savings, La Plata continues its commitment to finding efficiencies in its operations to save both energy and fiscal resources.

For residents, there is a lot of information from SMECO available, and programs to assist in becoming more energy efficient. You can find the information on SMECO's website at <https://www.smecco.coop/save-energy-and-money>.

Some of the opportunities for residents include rebates on appliances, rebates for heating and cooling, and savings on lighting. By reducing our demand for energy, it can help reduce costs for everyone in the utility. Lower energy demand means less energy that has to be purchased at times of peak demand, which often has peak pricing which can be passed to all consumers. Please do your part to find ways to make your home and business more energy efficient.

PRIOR EVENTS

Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering

The Town rang in the start of the holiday season on Sunday, December 3rd at the Olde Tyme Holiday Gathering. Holiday music was performed by La Plata High School String Ensemble, WJ Mitchell Elementary School 5th Grade Chorus, and Southern Mix Barbershop Chorus. Children enjoyed the activities in the tent – story time by the Charles County Library, holiday balloons by the Balloon Nerd and many festive characters from Gracie's Guys and Gals Show Troupe. Many enjoyed a horse drawn carriage ride by Suttler Post Farm along La Grange Ave. The event was topped off with a very special visitor delivered by the La Plata Volunteer Fire Department to greet all the children – Santa Claus! Thank you to all who attended and volunteered at the event!



Breakfast with Santa

There were many smiling and happy faces at Breakfast with Santa on Saturday December 9th at Town Hall. Special thanks to Joann Worden and the La Plata Key Club students for volunteering at the event.



TO DO LIST



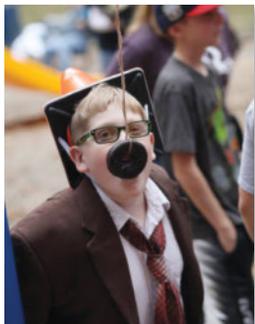
- Attend a Town Council meeting, consult the pull out calendar for dates and time
- Submit a Special Event Mini-Grant application
- Be in the know, sign up to be on the Town's Constant Contact email list
- Say hello to a La Plata Public Works employee
- Call the police for suspected illegal activity
- Set up your utility bill for automatic payment
- Contact Town Hall for a 95, 65, or 35 gallon wheeled recycling container
- Receive Electronic Meeting Agendas
- Help a neighbor in need
- Sign up to be on the Town's Constant Contact email list
- Make your home more water efficient
- Pick up your pet's waste when walking them on a leash
- Visit <http://www.townoflaplata.org> for more information on all of these

PRIOR EVENTS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

Photos from Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant Awardees

Funds were awarded from the Town of La Plata's Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant for these events.

Clarks Run Halloween Bash, Saturday October 28



Community Christmas Tree Decorating Villages of Steeplechase, Friday December 1



Holiday Gathering in Hawthorne Greene, Saturday December 2



Conservation Corner – Backyard Garden

Spring is almost upon us and now is a great time to consider starting a garden. Not only would starting a garden be a great activity for you and your family, but it is a great way to help the environment as well. Gardening is a common practice throughout history, it has only been more recently that people have tended to go to stores to purchase their fruits and vegetables.

While many of us don't have enough space for a garden to supply all of our food needs, our backyards are a terrific place to supplement our groceries by growing some of our own food. Not only is this rewarding, it can serve to help save us money as well.

You don't need a lot of space to start a garden, but it should be in a location that gets an appropriate amount of sun for the crop you will be planting. You can use your garden as an opportunity to remove turf, which relatively requires a lot of water compared to other plants. Instead of planting a large variety of plants you can work with your neighbors to each plant a different crop, and share in the harvest. Often, when tomatoes, or zucchini, or peppers come in, they grow faster than a family can consume their fresh pick. Sharing with neighbors is a great way to ensure your bounty does not go to waste.

Be certain to pick fruits and vegetables that grow well in this climate and do not require significant amounts of water, or fertilizer. Your garden may be attractive to rabbits, deer, and other wildlife. Keep this in mind as you start your garden and be certain to protect your new plants, if you do not want to share them with nature.

Consider your plants well, and choose items you like, are easy to grow, and will supplement your groceries. Local food does not need to be transported as far, and cuts down on the amount of food miles that imported food causes. To supplement your garden, be sure to visit the La Plata Farmer's Market in season to take advantage of local fruits and vegetables. When shopping in the grocery store, choose fruits and vegetables that are in season to avoid food that has been transported long distances. The closer to home your food comes from; the better it will be for our whole environment.

Also, if you are considering adding trees to your property, try fruit or nut bearing trees. You will get the double benefit of the tree and a convenient source of food as well.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Apply for the Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant Today

Is your neighborhood interested in organizing an event like a block party or cook out to bring your community together? If so, then help is here. Town of La Plata Neighborhood Event Mini-Grant is designed to provide an opportunity for Town of La Plata residents to strengthen their neighborhoods through producing special events.

The Town of La Plata invites neighborhood associations and communities to submit the neighborhood grant application for review. There will be 5 grants awarded up to \$500 each. Deadline to submit application is March 9, 2018. Grant applications are available for download at www.townofaplata.org or email Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator at cwilson@townofaplata.org or (301) 934-8421.

Upcoming Events

The 2018 Special Events Calendar Coming Soon! Information will be posted on the Town's website in early March. Stay up to date on what is going on in the Town of La Plata by signing up for our weekly email and liking the Town of La Plata's face book page. If you would like to receive email notifications about upcoming Town of La Plata news and events please send your email to Special Events Coordinator Colleen Wilson at cwilson@townofaplata.org.

Ice Cream with the Easter Bunny

Monday, April 2nd:
11 AM to 1 PM

Hop on in for ice cream with the Easter Bunny! Stop by the La Plata Town Hall on the Monday after Easter, April 2nd from 11 AM to 1 PM. Bring the kids for sweet treat, crafts and visit with the Easter Bunny.



Celebrate La Plata

Saturday April 28th: 12 PM to 4 PM

The Town of La Plata will come together for a day of family fun at the annual Spring Festival, Celebrate La Plata on Saturday, April 28th. Enjoy a day of activities for children of all ages at Celebrate La Plata; face painting, displays, entertainment, refreshments for sale from local favorites, and ever entertaining Bed Races!



On your mark, get set, GO!

It's time to start training for the Town of La Plata Bed Races. Bed Races take place on Saturday, April 28th at 3 pm as part of the Celebrate La Plata event. Your team will race on La Grange Avenue as the crowd cheers you on.

It's easy to participate – no registration fee and the Town has beds that can be used for the races.

Get your creative juices flowing and make your own team bed! Each team must have four participants that are 16 years or older. Don't miss out on the chance to come dressed in team t-shirts or costumes to promote your business or organization. The annual bed race is a great way to do some marketing while having a lot of fun. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams and best team attire.

Registration deadline is April 13. For more information or to register for the Bed Races, contact Colleen Wilson at (301) 934-8421 or cwilson@townofaplata.org. Participation form is available on the Town's website www.townofaplata.org.

Fill out the interest form below to receive more information.

Your Name: _____

Teammate 1: _____

Teammate 2: _____

Teammate 3: _____

Contact email: _____

Contact number: _____

We are interested in racing our own bed. We are interested in using a Town bed.

(Town beds will be shared among teams so only decorations that can be quickly and easy removed will be allowed.)

Please return the form to: Town of La Plata
Colleen Wilson, Special Events Coordinator
PO Box 2268
La Plata, MD 20646

Or email the information to cwilson@townofaplata.org.



TOWN OF LA PLATA

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