

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, September 11, 2012, at 7:52 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Consideration for City Staff to Explore the Possibility to Create a Mountain Bike Trail Park East of Morgan Falls Rd

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated staff thought a mountain bike trail would be a good idea for the area along Morgan Falls Road. Vehicles would be parked near the entrance of the trail at Colquitt Road. Georgia Power has an easement on this property and is willing to work with the City. She asked for a consensus of Council to allow staff to communicate with the various property owners to see if the trail would be feasible.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated resident Tom Worthington is in attendance at this meeting. Mr. Worthington's property is on the Roswell Road side. It is great there is no curb cut on Roswell Road. The mountain bike trail is a good idea. A question she would like answered at a later time is what the cost of maintaining or protecting the trail would be. There is a stream crossing nearby that would need to be protected as well.

Councilmember Fries stated the bike trail would probably be located over the stream.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked who will build the trail.

Councilmember Fries stated there are organizations that will be more than happy to construct the trail. The bike trail can be constructed at a minimal cost since a parking lot is not needed. There should be an entrance to the trail and the closing time requirements will be similar to the other City parks.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if there is anticipation of acquiring an additional easement from the property owners for free.

Councilmember Fries responded yes. Georgia Power stated they will work with the City. Regarding maintenance, there are no trees, so there is no worry about limbs falling on the trail.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated before Sandy Springs became a City, an alternative discussed for this area was a wildlife meadow. The bike trail is a great idea.

Tom Worthington, resident of Sandy Springs, stated since his property sits on Roswell Road, he is concerned how the trail would impact the road frontage. He also has security concerns for the nearby businesses.

Councilmember Fries stated the bike trail would only be open during daylight hours. She suggested a security camera at the entrance of the trail.

There was a consensus of Council to have staff explore the possibility of creating a trail.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

City Manager's Office

1. Update on Gas South Municipal Alliance Program

City Manager John McDonough stated this is an agreement that the City entered into a little over a year ago. Staff needs guidance from Council on how to proceed and whether or not they wish to renew the agreement.

Assistant City Manager Eden Freeman stated over the last year Gas South sent out four direct mail pieces. There was one in September 2011, November 2011, February 2012, and one in June 2012. Gas South has also presented the program at various Chamber events and exhibits. As a result of the marketing, there were 671 residential customers and 1 commercial customer that signed up through the City's Municipal Alliance Program. As a result of that, the City has received \$12,775 through the program. The August 2012 funds have not yet been received, but will be an additional \$766. The total for the entire agreement period is approximately \$13,500. When Gas South originally presented the idea, it was projected the City could receive over \$300,000 over the course of five years. She does not believe the amount received will reach that figure.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling stated during the second year, if Gas South has encumbered people that already signed on before the agreement was signed, the City would receive some of that money.

Assistant City Manager Freeman responded yes. The City will receive a lesser amount for the current number of people signed up per month.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery asked about the benefit to the person that signs up for a reduced rate.

Assistant City Manager Freeman stated customers will receive a \$.02 per therm discount off of Gas South's lowest rate.

Councilmember Fries stated Gas South's rates are not always the lowest rate. Not only is Gas South offering a discount, but if a particular amount of therms are used, the customer will not be required to pay the base fee on the bill. Quite a few homes in Sandy Springs will receive this discount.

Councilmember Sterling stated the impact is not only for customers. Gas South has sponsored community events and is a good corporate citizen.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated she has received multiple calls from people questioning this program. People have a hard time understanding the relationship the City has with this private corporation that the City appears to be favoring over similar providers. She does not think the relationship gives the City a good reputation.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she would like Gas South to give the taxpayers a \$.01 discount off their bills and the City logo could be removed from the advertising. She does not like the City logo being distributed on Gas South's letterhead.

Councilmember Sterling stated removing the City logo defeats the purpose of the program. The City is not choosing this company over another. No other company came to the City with this type of idea.

Councilmember Fries asked about the number of complaints the City has received. The other nearby jurisdictions that are participating in this program seem to be doing fine.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated the City of Roswell has a different program.

Councilmember Sterling stated the only difference is the City of Roswell wants it written in the contract that Roswell can enter into another agreement with a different company.

Mayor Galambos asked approximately how many complaints has the City received.

Assistant City Manager Freeman stated she has seen ten to fifteen emails. Communications Director Sharon Kraun has taken a majority of the calls.

Councilmember Sterling asked if there are under fifty complaints.

Councilmember Fries stated approximately six hundred citizens have taken advantage of the program and there have been under 100 complaints.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated if the economic benefit to the City and constituents is not substantial, then it is not worth involving the City with a private enterprise. He is opposed to this program.

Councilmember Fries stated if the program is discontinued, how would Council feel when a large number of citizens call Council to complain that their gas bill has increased.

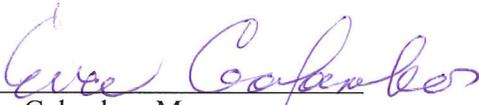
Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked how much money the bike race received from the \$13,000.

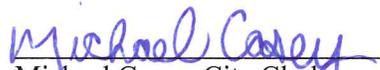
Councilmember Fries stated the City received the entire \$13,000 in revenues and then Gas South made a donation of \$5,000 to the festival, \$5,000 to the bike race, and a donation to the Chamber. Gas South wants to be active in the community.

There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to a future Regular City Council meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

Date Approved: September 18, 2012


Eva Galambos, Mayor


Michael Casey, City Clerk