
Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, August 7, 2012, at 7:01 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Works

1. Consideration of Approval and Authorization for the City Manager to Execute a Contract to Construct the Abernathy/Johnson Ferry Underground Detention Project Subject to Validation and Approval by the Legal and Finance Departments

Stormwater Manager Celia Klardie stated this item includes the process and procurement for the Abernathy/Johnson Ferry Underground Detention Project. About two years ago, staff became aware that GDOT's expansion of Abernathy Road would increase the impervious area that is draining to some of the city's stormwater infrastructure. Staff also had existing capacity concerns about the infrastructure. Staff was able to determine that a detention facility could address the increase in the water runoff. The drainage basins were analyzed for optimal placement of the facility. It was determined the best place for the facility would be the southside of Abernathy Road, north of Johnson Ferry Road and the Burdette Drive intersection. The required volume was determined to reduce the water flows below what they were before the Abernathy Road project began. Staff looked at water quality to treat for the additional hydrocarbons associated with the impervious area. Staff also looked at the Master Plan for the Abernathy Linear Park project. It was determined this area was proposed as a sculpture garden. For this reason, the detention facility will be located underground, so the area can still be utilized as a sculpture garden. She presented a site location for the detention facility. The facility will be an underground vault and located in the same area where the sculpture garden proposed by the Art Center will be located.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked if the sculpture garden is the same as the playable art.

Stormwater Manager Klardie responded no. The engineering information was transferred into construction and bidding documents to solicit installation pricing. The project was advertised beginning June 15, 2012, and a pre-bid meeting was held on June 26, 2012, for all interested bidders. Three contractors submitted bids on July 10, 2012. The low bidder was Johnson Landscapes Incorporated in the amount of \$369,171.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked why there was such a large difference between the bid amounts.

Stormwater Manager Klardie stated Johnson Landscapes was also the low bidder for the next phase of Abernathy Linear Park project, which may have resulted in economies of scale.

Mayor Galambos asked if the proposed project is within the budget.

Stormwater Manager Klardie responded yes. The funds were carried over from last year's funds. Staff hoped to have this project encumbered before this fiscal year started.

Mayor Galambos asked if the detention facility will be located underground.

Stormwater Manager Klardie responded yes.

Councilmember John Paulson stated that underground detention facilities are now being used more often. There are no open ponds, no safety hazards, no mosquitos or ducks with this type of facility.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked if the upkeep cost is cheaper or similar to the traditional detention facilities.

Stormwater Manager Klardie stated the cost is similar. Staff felt that the underground facility is the best for this area. Staff looked at other options, such as infiltration, and those options were not well received by GDOT. Infiltration would allow water to go underneath the road bed and could cause additional wear on the roadway from freeze and thaw cycles.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated Mr. Nadolski, a Sandy Springs resident, is still not completely satisfied with the results of the proposed detention facility. He asked to have Mr. Nadolski's comments summarized and for an explanation why staff is still moving forward with the proposed plan.

Stormwater Manager Klardie stated Mr. Nadolski has concerns about the additional area that is draining near his property. Since 1993, the various roadway improvement projects have added an additional three acres that drain toward his property. This project is the City's responsibility and to protect the downstream structures by reducing the water flows. This is the best effort the City can make to address the issue.

Councilmember Collins stated even though there has been a redirection of water, the net result will be less downstream flow to the neighborhoods.

Stormwater Manager Klardie responded correct.

Councilmember Karen Meizen McEnery asked what direction the water flows.

Stormwater Manager Klardie stated the water flows in a southwest direction.

Councilmember Meizen McEnery asked if the water flows down River Valley Road.

Stormwater Manager Klardie stated the water flow has several culvert crossings, which include Burdette Drive, Scott Valley Road, Colebridge Road, and Underwood Drive.

Councilmember Collins stated the water flows from those neighborhoods towards the Epstein School and then goes into Colewood Creek.

Councilmember Fries asked if Johnson Landscapes has dealt with underground detention facilities before.

Stormwater Manager Klardie responded yes, especially the vault type that is proposed for this project.

Mayor Galambos asked when the project will begin.

Stormwater Manager Klardie stated this item will be brought back to Council at the August 21st City Council regular meeting for award of the contract.

There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to the next City Council regular meeting.

Community Development

1. Economic Development Plan

Jim Comerford, Chairman of the Economic Development Advisory Committee, stated he appreciates the leadership of the City's government in constituting this citizens advisory committee. This document is a roadmap for the City's economic development. He thanked Mayor, Council, and City staff for the commitment towards broad and innovative economic development efforts. The purpose of the plan is to communicate the City's vision of economic development and create a framework to guide the actions of the Committee, Council, City government, and the business community as a whole. The plan is also to provide structure for oversight implementation management of the City's economic development program. The vision is reflective of the belief of the Committee and the City government. The interconnectivity between economic development and sustaining and furthering neighborhoods will provide an attractive quality of life for safety and enjoyment. The preservation and creation of neighborhoods and having interconnectivity between a vibrant economy and healthy neighborhoods will attract businesses, resulting in a diverse economic base including large, small, and international businesses. The goals create a focus for community activities in the context of efforts for creating a City center. The plan also includes projection of the City in communicating an image that will serve to further the growth of the City and preserve and protect the neighborhoods. There are eight subcommittees that are directly tied to the various goals set for the economic development plan. The Committee welcomes involvement of all members of the Council. In the context of commercial/retention development, the City has more Fortune 500 company headquarters per capita compared to any municipality in the United States. The City has a vibrant small business sector that can be strengthened to include more growth. Small business/retention and development are a major goal. The housing development/redevelopment goal will focus on how to create livable, attractive, and safe neighborhoods that can serve the individual and family needs of the citizens. The City Center development will be in collaboration with Goody/Clancy. In regards to international development, the City has a great global economy and has an opportunity to project Sandy Springs as one of the leading cities in the U.S. for attracting more international business. The communications/branding goal will be accomplished in working with City staff in crafting and developing the strategy for communications. The research subcommittee will be focused on the basic economic development piece that is essential to making good decisions for the subcommittees and providing information to the elected officials. The finance subcommittee will help the Council and City determine the best means of financing the financial tools that will be necessary to implement the City's strategy.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery thanked Mr. Comerford and the Committee members. It is a great initiative of the Mayor to focus on why every community needs a balanced and successful business community. She asked what the authority of the economic development plan is as a document and if the plan will supplant the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

Assistant City Attorney Cecil McLendon stated the economic development plan cannot supplant the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Adopting a Comprehensive Land Use Plan involves strict rules and includes public involvement. For this plan to have any bearing on zoning decisions, the economic development plan would have to go through the comprehensive planning process. This document is more of a city policy and not a land use policy that would be applied to land use decisions.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she appreciated the references in the economic development plan that address a positive contribution to the quality of life for citizens. The committee members are a group of professionals in the real estate arena.

Mr. Comerford stated the Committee members are not professionals in the real estate arena. There are a total of seventeen members on the Committee and two of the members are real estate professionals.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated Robert Properties, Grubb & Ellis, KAM Asset Management, and Ackerman and Company are all real estate companies.

Mr. Comerford stated there are two commercial real estate agents among the seventeen members.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she is not referring to commercial real estate agents. She is referring to professionals in the real estate industry. These individuals are in different disciplines in commercial real estate that include lending, portfolio analysis, finance, and legal. The individuals understand they were chosen for this position because of their business expertise and because they are citizens of Sandy Springs. She asked if Mr. Comerford would be open to allowing neighborhood advocates as part of the subcommittees.

Mr. Comerford responded yes. The strategy in creating eight subcommittees is to provide for greater involvement. The members of the committee were constituted by the City Council. The Committee hopes to clearly communicate there is a distinct connectivity between a vibrant economic base and strong neighborhoods.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated she does not believe this plan involves businesses versus neighborhoods. The business community and neighbors should all work together on this plan. Every member of the economic development advisory committee is a resident of Sandy Springs and lives in a neighborhood. Their interest in neighborhoods is just as important as their interest in businesses. The economic development plan pays respect to the foundation of everything the City does, which is the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted for the entire community. What is good for businesses is good for residents and what is good for the residents is good for the businesses.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated many people live in the City, but do not work here. This committee was selected because of their expertise related to economic development. The individuals were not chosen because of their neighborhood advocacy. The neighborhood advocate or traditional neighborhood representatives were not asked or even considered because this is an economic development plan. One cannot expect the balance of the community, because they have not been a part of the plan. All should have a voice in something that will be a policy as part of the business community.

Mr. Comerford stated in terms of neighborhood involvement he will speak to the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee. He is not sure how Councilmember Meinzen McEnery would define traditional neighborhood advocates. He was previously on the Huntcliff Homeowner's Association Board for six years. The Vice Chairman of the Committee is on his homeowner's association board presently. He cannot speak to the other fifteen members of the committee.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated in two to three different plans one of the goals stated preservation and development of neighborhoods. She asked what the plan means by develop and create new neighborhoods.

Mr. Comerford stated as an example that the Huntcliff neighborhood was first developed in 1969. There are areas of this neighborhood that are beginning to show their age. The neighborhood took the initiative to improve the neighborhood club by redeveloping it.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated the words were develop and create, not redevelop.

Mr. Comerford stated there may be room for development of new neighborhoods within the City.

Councilmember Chip Collins asked if Councilmember Meinzen McEnery is opposed to more neighborhoods in Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny responded no. Along Roswell Road there are many apartment complexes. One of the most challenging things is to properly transition the large acreage apartments. One of the goals is to redevelop the functionally obsolete apartment complexes. The phrase that was used was "preserve and develop neighborhoods and create neighborhoods". She asked what the committee meant by this phrase.

Mr. Comerford stated the committee regards this document as a constitution and a roadmap. In the context of a roadmap, the committee is looking for ideas that will allow for and anticipate potential events. The committee hopes that this plan will last well beyond any of the committee members and through several generations of elected officials. The committee is trying to develop and communicate a strategy for the City that results in a vibrant economic community.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked if Mr. Comerford could notify Council of when the Committee holds meetings in order for members of Council to attend and listen at the meetings.

Mr. Comerford stated the Committee welcomes participation from any member of Council. Staff will notify Council when the meetings will occur.

Mayor Galambos thanked Director of Community Development Angela Parker and Communications Director Sharon Kraun for their assistance with the document.

There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to the next City Council regular meeting.

City Attorney

1. Consideration of a Donation for Lost Corner Park

Assistant City Attorney Cecil McLendon stated this item is the agreement from The Trust for Public Land (TPL) to donate property for the Lost Corner Park. When the City acquired the larger parcel of the Lost Corner property, the owner retained one acre parcel to the south of the intersection of Dalrymple Road and Brandon Mill Road. TPL now has possession of the property and TPL is prepared to donate the property to the City. The two acres would be subject to the identical restrictions on the larger parcels. The standard proration costs would be included at closing. TPL has asked the City to pay \$10,000 to offset their administrative costs regarding the transfer of the 2 one acre parcels.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked if the \$10,000 is for each property.

Assistant City Attorney McLendon stated the amount is for the entire transaction. TPL asked that the City incorporate two signs on the property. One sign would recognize TPL and the Sandy Springs Conservancy. There was also the suggestion that the Friends of Lost Corner would be included on the sign as well. The second sign would recognize the major donors to the park.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked if there has to be 100% agreement on the signs.

Assistant City Attorney McLendon stated all parties involved will have to work out an agreement.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated one of the title exceptions mentioned an existing cemetery. She asked where the cemetery is located.

Assistant City Attorney McLendon stated the cemetery is located on the southern border of the property adjacent to the neighborhood and is far away from where construction is being contemplated.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with this item.

Recreation and Parks

1. Update on the Sandy Springs Tennis Operations Contract RFP

Director Recreation and Parks Ronnie Young stated the timeline on the Lost Corner property is for the house stabilization, parking, entrance, trail development, and community garden to take place between now and Spring 2013. Staff is in the process of developing the contract for the entrance drive and the parking lot. The RFP will go out in the next few days for the stabilization of the house.

This item relates to the final RFP for a new contractor at the Sandy Springs Tennis Center. The evaluation will include a scoring panel. The panel will include three professional recreators with thirty plus years of experience in the operation of tennis complexes and programs within the State. Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole will be assisting with the scoring as well. Once the contractors are scored, the companies with the two highest scores will be brought in for a presentation. The item will then come back before Council in November to consider choosing a contractor for the tennis center. In the new agreement the contractor will accept responsibility for the utilities at the tennis center. The payment options include a flat rate or a percentage. This item should be finalized for the new vendor to begin operating the tennis center by January 1, 2013.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked when Council will be looking at recommendations to approve a contractor.

Director Recreation and Parks Young responded in November 2012.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated she remembers from Council's previous discussion that it would be important in the scoring process that the individuals understand the regulations regarding tennis tournaments.

Director Recreation and Parks Young stated the three professionals have all organized tennis leagues in the past. One of the professionals has completed a RFP for a tennis vendor within the last three years.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated Council does not want to be lobbied by anyone on this RFP.

City Manager John McDonough stated the necessary language should be included in the procurement. If there is any lobbying to Council, the appropriate response is to tell the individual to deal directly with the City's primary point of contact, which will be Director Recreation and Parks Young. There will be an opportunity to comment on the process when the item comes back before Council.

Councilmember John Paulson stated when the contract was considered three years ago, the evaluation team kept changing. He would like the same group to continue throughout the evaluation.

There was a consensus of Council to continue with the contract RFP process.

City Manager John McDonough stated traditionally the public comment part of a regular meeting has been at the end of the agenda. Some individuals are required to sit through the whole meeting, especially the second meeting of the month, and wait for hours for the opportunity to comment. Perhaps Council would consider, for the first meeting of the month, holding public comment at the beginning of the meeting. The second meeting of the month would have the public comment at the end of the meeting, as it is now.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated she understands why the first meeting should have public comment at the beginning. She asked if the public comment time should be a maximum of ten minutes total.

Mayor Eva Galambos responded no. Public comment time is determined by how many public comment cards are received.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated if public comment is at the beginning of the meeting, a limit needs to be placed on the public comment. There was a suggestion of twenty minutes total and five minutes per person.

Mayor Galambos asked how many minutes maximum each person is allowed to speak.

City Clerk Michael Casey stated each individual has a maximum of five minutes to speak.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated if there are more than four people who wish to speak at the beginning of the meeting, the rest of the people can speak at the end of the meeting.

Councilmember Fries suggested limiting the individual speaking time to three minutes with a total of eighteen minutes allotted.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with allowing public comment at the beginning of the first City Council meeting each month. The individual speaker time will be limited to three minutes per person with a total of eighteen minutes allotted. Public comment at the end of meetings will also be limited to three (3) minutes per individual.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Date Approved: August 21, 2012



Eva Galambos, Mayor



Michael Casey, City Clerk