

**Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, June 5, 2012, at 6:43 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.**

## **STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Public Works**

#### 1. FY 2013 Sidewalk Program Project Scoring Presentation

**Director of Public Works Kevin Walter** stated this presentation is a review of the sidewalk program, current grading criteria, and the projects currently under consideration for FY2013. The second page of the presentation is a map of the history of the sidewalk program. The yellow areas are located around existing schools. Those areas were a high priority for the initial years of the sidewalk program in connecting people to the schools. To a large extent, that portion of the project has been completed. The purpose of the sidewalk program for the upcoming year is to fill gaps in between existing projects and the extension of sidewalk networks. Projects can be proposed from three different sources including citizens, Councilmembers, and staff. The potential sidewalk projects are scored using a point system. The maximum numbers of points a sidewalk can receive is sixty. The right of way availability, anticipated utility relocations, and constructability are criteria that relate to how buildable the sidewalk project is. Another criteria is evidence of pedestrian activity on inadequate walking paths.

**Councilmember Chip Collins** asked what types of nearby pedestrian destinations would be considered under the criteria.

Director of Public Works Walter stated connectivity to parks, schools, bus stops, and businesses.

**Councilmember John Paulson** asked if staff is looking for evidence of pedestrian paths.

Director of Public Works Walter responded yes.

Councilmember Collins stated sometimes there may be people that want to walk to a location, but do not feel safe walking without a sidewalk. For this reason, there may not be evidence of a pedestrian path.

Director of Public Works Walter stated there are several sidewalk projects that did not have pedestrian paths. Pedestrian paths are not main criteria. Paths are sometimes created where people should not be walking.

**Councilmember Dianne Fries** stated the suggestion for a sidewalk is not only what staff and citizens recommend, but Council as well.

Councilmember Collins stated the City has a policy for building sidewalks around schools. He asked to include in the policy building sidewalks around parks as well. He has heard requests from many constituents that they would like to be able to walk to the parks. He asked if the scoring would change if proximity to parks was added as a criterion.

**Mayor Eva Galambos** stated staff is already using proximity to parks as part of the criteria. People may want to walk to a park three miles away, but that is not likely to happen.

Director of Public Works Walter stated proximity relates to cost. The largest project the City has undertaken is about one mile in length. For a project to be on the list, it would have to be less than one mile long.

Councilmember Fries states she understands that projects should be less than one mile long, but three miles to a park is not that far.

Mayor Galambos stated no one would use the sidewalk.

Councilmember Fries responded yes, it would be a new running trail.

**Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny** stated sidewalks are not just used to get from point 'a' to point 'b'. Sidewalks are used in the whole process of recreation and health. People use the sidewalks on Mt. Paran Road and Mt. Vernon Road especially for exercise.

Mayor Galambos stated the exercise criteria could apply to any sidewalk.

Councilmember Collins stated the criteria is a way of extending the use of the parks the City is spending so much money on. He proposed Council adopt a specific criteria for Public Works staff to use in scoring the sidewalks for parks that is similar to the criteria for schools.

Director of Public Works Walter stated evidence of pedestrian activity and gap closure are ten points out of sixty. Staff does consider connecting projects and connectivity to parks as a criteria. Council could direct staff to specifically use the twenty points towards connectivity.

Mayor Galambos stated she is comfortable with staff using all the criteria.

Councilmember Paulson asked if the availability of right-of-way and right-of-way given to the City are factors considered for the criteria.

Director of Public Works Walter responded yes.

Mayor Galambos stated the City does not buy residential right-of-way anymore.

Councilmember Collins asked if he is the only Councilmember in favor of specifically having a policy that connects sidewalks to parks.

Mayor Galambos stated the criteria is evidence of pedestrian activity to a pedestrian destination. She asked how destination is defined.

Director of Public Works Walter stated destinations are defined as parks, places of business, schools, and connection between other locations.

Councilmember Collins stated the City is spending millions of dollars on parks. It makes sense to maximize the use of the parks by the residents within walking distance. One example is Brandon Mill Road, which is located between two parks.

Mayor Galambos asked what the distance is between the two parks.

Director of Public Works Walter responded over three miles.

Mayor Galambos stated that is not a walkable distance.

Councilmember Fries stated she disagrees.

Councilmember Collins stated it is walkable if an individual lives in between both parks.

Councilmember Fries stated she believes that people look for places to run. The City should connect the parks with sidewalks. Once City Hall is built downtown, there will be the need to connect City Hall with Abernathy Park and Heritage Sandy Springs.

Director of Public Works Walter stated the gap closure criteria is a general criteria of ten points. A portion of the ten points could be designated to the criteria of connection to parks.

**Councilmember Gabriel Sterling** stated he does not want to take away any points from the gap closure system.

Councilmember Paulson asked if a park or a shopping center is a more important pedestrian destination.

Councilmember Collins asked if a pedestrian is more likely to walk to a park or a shopping center.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she agrees with the sidewalks being constructed where people want to go. The City is spending money on streetscape sidewalks and this is addressing getting the people to the businesses. The residential areas are the most underserved with sidewalks.

Director of Public Works Walter referred to the presentation and the scoring list. There are several projects that have a score of 30 and several with a score of 25. The projects have been ranked in order of their cost.

Mayor Galambos asked how much money is in the budget for sidewalks.

Director of Public Works Walter stated for FY2013 about \$500,000. This amount of money would pay for three to four sidewalk projects. The projects that score 30 are all equal. Council could choose to rank the projects by priority instead of cost.

Councilmember Sterling stated he agrees with how the projects are currently listed.

Mayor Galambos asked if the money in the budget would complete the first three sidewalk projects on the list.

Director of Public Works Walter responded yes.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** asked if any residents have made contributions to the neighborhood sidewalk program and how the money is being spent.

Director of Public Works Walter responded no. A portion of the budget was reserved for the small gap fill projects of \$10,000 to \$20,000.

Councilmember Paulson asked if the other projects on the list will shift to the top of the list once the top three projects are completed.

Director of Public Works Walter responded yes.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with the first three sidewalk projects on the list.

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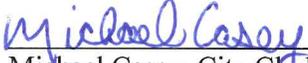
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There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Date Approved: June 19, 2012

  
Eva Galambos, Mayor

  
Michael Casey, City Clerk