Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, April 19, 2011, at 6:24 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Recreation & Parks

1. Fulton Tennis Services - Recommendation to Extend the Current Contract until December 31, 2012

City Manager John McDonough stated in order to meet continuity of operations, it is being recommended to extend the service contract with the current Tennis Center provider, with an end date of December 31, 2012.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked if this item has gone out for bid.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated it was decided to postpone putting this item out for bid until the contract for City services was completed.

Councilmember John Paulson asked if the Tennis Center is operating effectively under the current contract.

Director of Recreation and Parks Ronnie Young stated the Center is running absolutely well.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked when the RFP process will begin on a new contract for the Tennis Center.

City Manager McDonough stated the RFP process should start close to a year in advance, which would be in early 2012.

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

Community Development

1. Discussion Item - Main Street Alliance Report

Director of Community Development Blake Dettwiler stated staff has worked with the Main Street Alliance over the past six months in a collaborative effort to review and make recommendations to improve existing conditions influencing development and redevelopment in the Main Street Overlay District. Members of the Main Street Alliance are here to present the report. The four categories covered in the report will be Aesthetics and Sense of Place, Infrastructure and Traffic, Economics, and Regulatory Challenges.

Deputy Director of Community Development Chris Miller stated a baseline study for Sandy Springs was created, which profiled the demographics and occupancy rates in the Main Street area. A financial model was developed to analyze the implications of land use decisions upon the City's financial health. There have been ongoing outreach and coordination efforts with local businesses in the Main Street area and throughout the City. The Main Street Alliance will go through the higher level points of the report and allow time for questions and answers.

Lonnie Mimms, Main Street Alliance, welcomed new Councilmember Gabriel Sterling. The Main Street Alliance was formed over two years ago. All of the Main Street Alliance members are owners of property along the Roswell Road corridor between Abernathy Road and south of The Prado. Sandy Springs has great demographics, yet the downtown area has not thrived. The Main Street Alliance would like to revitalize downtown Sandy Springs. The traffic flow and parking make all the difference in the success of a property on a commercial and economic basis. The availability and the cost of parking are huge factors in any redevelopment. The Alliance would like to consider the downtown Sandy Springs area as more of a singular body, or one piece of land. The uses and zoning regulations should not be viewed for each tract by itself. A one acre tract would need its own curb-cut, parking ratio, and to meet numerous other requirements. When these regulations are placed on a small tract, it is almost impossible to redevelop the property for a higher and better economic use. There should be a residential component on Main Street to be able to have a viable walking community. The Target property site owned by the City is an awesome opportunity that must be maximized. The question is how the City can help the downtown area.

Cheri Morris, Main Street Alliance, stated she will be discussing infrastructure, traffic, aesthetics, and a sense of place. Downtown Sandy Springs is served by an aging, unplanned local road network. The area cannot handle the commuter traffic overload. It cannot adequately function to get the residents to the shops and offices in the downtown area. The downtown area does not promote walkability and does not have interparcel access. Until wholesale improvements are made to the area, incremental improvements by the private community fail, because that business fails. The Alliance feels that a Master Traffic Plan should identify roads that carry commuter traffic and roads that will not. The City should protect the downtown streets for the business community. A business cannot flourish if cars cannot get to it. A neighborhood cannot flourish if the traffic is so intense that it takes significant time to leave the neighborhood. The Alliance applauds the City on all they are doing to focus on better traffic flow on Roswell Road and asks for focus on the improvement of Abernathy Road and Johnson Ferry as well. Interparcel access is important as the City approves new redevelopment plans. If vehicles can move between parcels, there does not have to be as many curb cuts. The Main Street Alliance officially supports the widening of Hammond Drive up to Roswell Road. She expressed concern regarding the flow of traffic on Hammond Drive west of Roswell Road. The City should carefully monitor Revive I-285. Some of the plans show exit ramps northbound on Sandy Springs Circle. Sandy Springs Circle cannot handle commuter traffic coming off I-285. Innovative approaches to traffic calming should be looked at, such as on street parking on both sides of Sandy Springs Circle. It would serve the civic and cultural uses at that location and calm traffic. As for aesthetics and a sense of place, a great downtown is the heart and marketplace of the City it serves. Downtown Sandy Springs is visually cluttered and unattractive. The environment is in conflict with the kinds of businesses that the citizens want. Forty-nine percent of shopping that should happen within downtown Sandy Springs is being lost to Buckhead, Perimeter Mall, or another area. The trade area's average income is $127,000 per household. A shopper in downtown Sandy Springs makes $83,000 a year. The top third of the affluent individuals are not shopping in the downtown area. The average age in the trade area is thirty-six. The average age of the downtown shopper is forty-five. Sandy Springs is losing the younger more mobile and more affluent shoppers. The power lines in the downtown area should be moved behind the properties. The Roswell Road streetscape needs to be refined to put a landscaping strip between the pedestrians and the street. The downtown area will not be torn down and rebuilt with a different character. Most of the changes will be facade renovations; new store fronts, new signage, and new landscaping. If the City works the ordinance right, it can guide the redevelopment of the shopping centers to become more village-like. The City's existing design standards need to be examined to make sure they support the needed design work. The signage regulations need to be reviewed. Austin and Dallas, Texas, have wonderful, charming, attractive, and vibrant places. To be successful with this, the City needs to go first. The public improvements in the Roswell Road corridor have to be completed first. The municipal development will be a major catalyst in the downtown area. The development should have multiple uses and not just be a

City Hall. It should have a daytime life and a nighttime life. This will create a vibrant destination for downtown and the revenues from these other uses can offset the cost for City Hall. City Hall could link Roswell Road to Sandy Springs Circle and kick start the east west horizontal grid that has been discussed for years. The City Hall complex will hopefully be the cornerstone of a major town center. There are wonderful neighborhoods surrounding the downtown commercial core. The new vast sidewalk system is amazing in improving the connectivity. The new sidewalks allow residents to bike or walk between many different areas of the City. The crown jewel of the park system could be the green town center. This in turn will drive redevelopment on Sandy Springs Circle, Cliftwood, Hammond Drive, and the cross streets. If Roswell Road is the City's marketplace, then Sandy Springs Circle can be the heart of the City.

Kirk Demetrops, Main Street Alliance, stated six months ago he performed an economic analysis of the base prices on Roswell Road. Sandy Springs is in the middle of the GA400 corridor. There is no undeveloped land in Sandy Springs, particularly in the downtown area. North of the Chattahoochee River land sells for $200,000 - $500,000 an acre. In Buckhead and Midtown the land sells for $2 million an acre, so they build twenty story buildings. Twenty years ago Midtown had the same look as Sandy Springs, and then went from one story to twenty story buildings. The Alliance feels that our downtown area does not need to be a dense, urban, twenty story market. There are proven public private partnerships. A private developer can fund the parking deck or private decks can be built. The math needs to be looked at. If the gap can be bridged, things will start to happen. There are categories called living working neighborhood, living working community, and living working regional. The living working community is what downtown Sandy Springs could become. The whole downtown of Sandy Springs should be thought of as one parcel. The area could have twenty units per acre of residential property and 25,000 square feet of commercial. For residential property, the parking is a lot less and the traffic is dispersed. There has been resistance to high density residential in some communities. The street life it could bring to the area should be considered. There is also a rent gap. The average market rate is $15, when it needs to be $25. Tenants will only pay rent if they can sell their products or services. We need landlords and owners in Sandy Springs that will pay to improve the buildings. They are not doing that right now, because the businesses are not proven to be successful. Parking is very expensive when it comes to redeveloping a property. Hardly any use in downtown Sandy Springs will support new covered parking. This is another reason for shared parking.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked if there needs to be multiple parking locations on both sides of Roswell Road.

Mr. Demetrops stated parking within a quarter mile is an acceptable distance to walk. There should be parking available at the future City Hall location and near Hammond Drive and Roswell Road. Parking will not need to be on both sides of Roswell Road.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated two parking decks or ground parking would be good.

Mr. Demetrops stated he is a big proponent of mid-block crossings for Roswell Road. The streetscape is important as well.

Mayor Galambos stated it is fabulous the property owners and the City are talking to each other. There will not be any progress made on downtown improvement if we are not all working together. She is happy the Alliance has come up with valuable ideas. She feels that the cost should be shared between the City and the Main Street Alliance. There is an LCI requirement that half of the study be paid locally. She asked the Main Street Alliance to consider addressing the market study, which is a requirement in the LCI. The City has been asking for interparcel access for the past few years. The City cannot force inter-parcel access on the property owners. Inter-parcel access should be tried between the Sandy Springs Shopping Plaza and Marshall Plaza. She agrees with shared parking and having scattered parking lots.

The City helping to provide and subsidize the parking makes sense. She likes the idea of green space being shared. She is surprised the ordinance is being interpreted that mixed use has to take place on every parcel. The idea that each parcel has to have mixed use is not the intention of the ordinance. The whole downtown area should encompass various uses. If our ordinances need to be modernized, then the City should do it. A problem with the streetscape is acquiring the right-of-way. She understands the property owners are having issues with the lending agencies regarding this. Maybe the City staff and the property owners should go before the lenders to help the lenders understand we are trying to improve the value of the property. The City bought the Target property for $1 million per acre and it was bought at the top of the market. The economic analysis states the value of land in Sandy Springs is between $1.7 and $3.2 million per acre. She has a hard time understanding that, considering what the City paid for the Target property. To what extent were vacancies included in the analysis?

Mr. Demetrops stated he can go through many properties that he has looked at on Roswell Road. Pacific Life has over $3.5 million invested in their two acres at Hammond and Roswell Road. Five years ago, $1.5 million an acre was paid for this location. The economic analysis does factor in vacancy.

Mayor Galambos stated she was not aware that many commercial properties have been sold recently.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked what property has sold on Roswell Road within the last two years.

Mr. Mimms stated the Parkside property sold four or five years ago.

Mr. Demetrops stated that properties sell on an income basis, or the land value, or a combination of both. No transactions are happening, because the numbers do not make sense.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the problem is some of the cap rates are way out of line, because of what people want and what the market will support.

Mayor Galambos stated this is not a controversial issue, because the Alliance is not asking for higher density. The current density is suitable.

Mr. Demetrops stated the current density is suitable for the market, but not to make a transaction.

Mayor Galambos stated some subsidy for the parking will help alleviate some of the economic difficulties. She does not think the situation is as bad as it is being made out to be.

Ms. Morris stated you can fit about 10,000 square feet on an acre. A small shopping center that is turning in a rent rate of $16 is worth $1.8 million. That property owner will not spend money to redevelop, because then the owner would want to get up to a $25 rent rate. Downtown Sandy Springs cannot command a $25 rent rate, because Roswell Road does not function right, the environment is aesthetically displeasing and the area is visually cluttered.

Mr. Mimms stated there are owners that are not motivated to sell. There are not many potential transactions in the number range being discussed or many at the million dollar level. The Target property was a great purchase for the City, but the property is not located on Roswell Road, and that makes a difference from a retail perspective.

Councilmember DeJulio asked if there is a possibility that the current properties could locate parking at the back of the buildings, adding to the parking in the downtown area.

Mr. Mimms stated that is a possibility. In the Italian area of Boston, MA, the parking is designated for residents that live in the area. There is not a parking space within a quarter of a mile, yet there are about one hundred vibrant restaurants within that district. In the Atlanta area people prefer to park closer to the front door of businesses.

Mayor Galambos stated Canton Street in Roswell, GA, is a wonderful example of shared parking. This is a model Sandy Springs should look at.

Mr. Demetrops stated a full redevelopment in downtown Sandy Springs will not happen. The current property owners will not put money into redeveloping until the traffic, aesthetics, and the strategy for downtown have come together.

Mayor Galambos stated all of us want to work together on the strategy and do all that can be done.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated the widening of Hammond Drive might funnel commuters through the neighborhoods on the west side of Roswell Road. He asked if the widening of Hammond Drive can help downtown Sandy Springs. He thinks it would help commuters trying to get from the Perimeter area to Cobb County.

Ms. Morris stated she does not think that there are a lot of people coming up and down GA400 who want to come to downtown Sandy Springs. The widening of Hammond Drive will help the Perimeter area, but not the downtown area.

Mr. Demetrops stated daytime population is important to the success of a thriving retail district. He thinks the widening of Hammond Drive would make it easier for the nearby workers to go to the downtown area to eat lunch.

Mayor Galambos stated when she chooses between going to Home Depot or Lowes, she avoids going to Lowes, because she gets stuck in traffic. It is easier for her to take Peachtree Dunwoody Road to Home Depot.

Councilmember Collin stated he drives on Hammond Drive during non peak hours and hardly sees any cars. It may be a situation where you need to know when to be where.

Ms. Morris stated there is a huge population work base at Perimeter Center and it would be nice if they could be Sandy Springs shoppers and diners. Roads that will carry commuters should be identified and then the planning can be done around that.

Councilmember John Paulson stated there are a number of things in this report that the City is currently working on. The Target property has been acquired and there is activity regarding development of that whole area. The Hammond Drive widening, coupled with the Roswell Road bridge project, will ease traffic for that whole area. The issue of the zoning intent being confusing needs to be addressed. In regards to inter-parcel development, have any property owners had a meeting, put a plan together, and come to the City with a proposal?

Mr. Mimms stated he and Mr. Saperstein had agreed to inter-parcel access for their two properties. The problem is there is now a dumpster enclosure on Mr. Saperstein's property. The dumpster will have to be moved to make space for inter-parcel access.

Ms. Morris stated in the City of Woodstock the Mayor worked with the Health Department so the restaurants can have a trash holding area right outside the back door. There cannot be more than a certain

number of steps from a restaurant's kitchen door to a dumpster. The holding area consists of big Rubbermaid trashcans.

Mayor Galambos stated if property owners would come to the City for a disposition, she is sure the City would cooperate on this type of issue.

Councilmember Paulson stated there will be public parking at the City center when the area is complete. The City should consider putting other parking structures in the downtown area.

Mayor Galambos agreed the City should look at placing other parking areas in downtown. The parking at the Target site will be too far away for the businesses further south on Roswell Road.

Mr. Mimms stated he agrees. The green space is a local issue. The water quality issue is a national issue, which will be harder to address. Can the previously flood damaged homes and the property just purchased by the City be made into a pond or a retention facility at some point?

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated she originally wanted the trees off of the curb because as they grow they tear up the sidewalk. She likes the idea of narrowing the concrete at the curb and putting in bushes and smaller trees.

Mr. Mimms stated in the City of Roswell they are redoing the streetscape and creating a landscape strip.

Councilmember Fries stated she likes the idea of the landscape strip. These changes can be made easily without increasing the City's right-of-way by decreasing the amount of concrete.

Councilmember Sterling stated it needs to be determined if our ordinances require changes to allow for shared detention for the redevelopment. City staff could look at low lying areas where shared detention could be placed. The City could construct a water bank and the redevelopment community could buy parcels of it.

Mr. Mimms stated anything that is done is an improvement over the totally impervious area. Most of the shopping centers were built before there was any concept of retainage. Whenever the new flood plain map is published, it will reflect the existing conditions. There are a lot of national and state hurdles to overcome at this point.

Mayor Galambos stated there is consensus to have staff work with the Alliance and come back to Council with ideas. Council will then consider the ideas and work through them.

Ms. Morris stated when a new FEMA map is released, a bunch of properties will be in the flood plain that were not before. These properties are not able to be redeveloped. Anyone that wants to redevelop has to submit a letter for map revision to FEMA, which can be a multiyear process. It would be great if the City could take the lead and come up with a stormwater program, submit the letter of map revision, and get it approved, so the redevelopment projects could move forward.

Councilmember Sterling asked if there is a model where another city does this; owns the water bank and sells it off to the property owners for redevelopment purposes.

Ms. Morris stated the City of Columbus, GA, is doing a master stormwater rework and a letter of map revision with grant money.

Mayor Galambos asked if this is something Community Development staff can work on in conjunction with Public Works, so we can be ahead of the game.

Director of Community Development Dettwiler responded absolutely. There are so many opportunities in the report. The first step should be to look at short, intermediate, and long term goals, prioritize them, and then meet with the Main Street Alliance and Mayor and Council.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated she agrees with Sandy Springs Circle being the heart of Sandy Springs. According to a recent report, 82% of the jobs in Sandy Springs are filled by commuters. The Buckhead loop is an example of how commuters were moved out of Peachtree and Lenox. Would keeping the commuters off Roswell Road be beneficial to downtown Sandy Springs? If so, where could the commuters be routed? Is Sandy Springs Circle the best place to slow the traffic?

Ms. Morris stated she feels that the traffic should be on Roswell Road. The large shopping centers need the traffic, but the traffic needs to function well. If commuters get off I-285 and onto Sandy Springs Circle, there is nowhere for them to go.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated she is concerned about commuters coming west off Hammond Drive. Worth Avenue in Florida is an example of a darling shopping area and parking on the street. The traffic is on other streets. If a grid system is created for Sandy Springs, maybe some of the commuter traffic can be diverted from the downtown area. How do they envision the horizontal development working? Currently, the City's zoning has different limitations in regards to ten acres or more being mixed use. If the town center is considered as a single parcel, how would it be decided which parcel gets multi-family and which parcel gets green space?

Mr. Mimms stated the bigger picture is to have the whole region viewed from a retention standpoint. An allocation cannot be forced. There will be an economically natural driven force that will happen section by section. He would like to see residential property in this area that would address the people that are commuting. Once Abernathy Road is widened, it may reduce some of the traffic.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the previously flooded houses the City is buying were mentioned as a destination for water retention. What would be economical for the distance of water to travel? The distance from the downtown area to the properties that the City is purchasing is at least two miles.

Mr. Mimms stated it does not matter if it is within the same watershed. These are areas that are already being flooded. There was increased water runoff when Target was built and that is responsible for the flooding in some neighborhoods in that area. A low point across from the Target property could possibly have a retention area. Another low point is behind Parkside, off Abernathy Road and behind the Sandy Springs Village.

Director of Public Works Tom Black stated regional solutions have been discussed. As the Target property is redeveloped, there will an excessive requirement on detention there, because there is only a small pond near that location. Staff will attempt to place a pipe in this area prior to the intersection improvement. Once this property and the property across the street are redeveloped, there may be a conduit at this location. A regional detention pond could be placed here. The issue is how the water is going to get to this location.

Councilmember Sterling asked about the number of watersheds and sub basins in this area.

Director of Public Works Tom Black stated some of the watersheds do not make sense. The one located at the Target property is part of Marsh Creek. He then explained how the water is routed throughout the City. There are about four to five watershed basins.

Mayor Galambos stated the City and the Alliance want to work together on this issue.

Mr. Mimms thanked the Mayor, Council, and staff for working with the Alliance on solutions.

Police Department

1. Public Safety Radio Infrastructure Update

Police Chief Terry Sult stated this is an update about the public safety radio system and how fragile it is. His biggest safety concern is for the first responders, fire fighters, and police officers. This is the number one priority on his agenda. The current system the Sandy Springs Public Safety Department uses is an analog system that belongs to Fulton County. The system is over nineteen years old and ninety percent of the system is running on its original equipment with very few updates. There are frequent failures, there is constant maintenance, and there are no replacement parts. If a replacement part is needed, you have to go on eBay to search for it. This is one failure away from a completely dysfunctional system. Currently, there is no viable back up for the system. If the system goes down, it will be down. The firefighters and police officers would have to use telephones and cell phones. Today, the Fulton County System has about 6,000 users, and of that, 4,000 users are public safety. There are 2,000 non public safety users from Fulton County, which are administrative users. The North Fulton cities have about 2,000 of the Public Safety users. Currently, Sandy Springs pays $172 per radio to use the system. Fulton County receives about $315,000 in revenue to offset the overall maintenance cost of the system of about $760,000.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked if the $315,000 is the City of Sandy Springs cost.

Police Chief Sult stated the only people that pay the $315,000 fee are the municipalities. Up until this year, the older municipalities have not paid that fee. Sandy Springs has always paid the fee.

Councilmember Fries stated the City of Roswell was not paying.

Police Chief Sult stated the City of Roswell is now paying the fee.

Councilmember Gabriel Sterling asked about the City of Atlanta.

Police Chief Sult stated the City of Atlanta has their own system.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked about Union City.

Police Chief Sult stated Union City is not part of this system.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if any south Fulton city pays the fee.

Police Chief Sult stated he has only looked at the North Fulton area. All of the municipalities are being billed as of the last fiscal year, which has resulted in the $315,000 revenue for Fulton County. The number of system users can be determined by dividing $172 into $315,000.

Councilmember John Paulson stated that would be 1,700 users.

Police Chief Sult stated this number would more likely be for the North Fulton area, since there are 2,000 in this area. He is not sure who else is using the Fulton County system.

Councilmember Fries stated she would like clarification if the $315,000 is only for North Fulton.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio asked if ChatComm is on this system as well.

Police Chief Sult responded yes. This is the radio system that the police officers, fire fighters, and EMS are dispatched on.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the City has the most up to date E-911 system in the country, but we are using old dispatch equipment.

Police Chief Sult responded and we are using a fragile radio system. If you have done a ride along with an officer, you can hear when the officer can or cannot talk on the radio. It is worse with firefighters when they go into buildings.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated the safety issue is the firefighters cannot hear each other when they are in a burning building.

Police Chief Sult stated the safety issue with a police officer is when an officer stops a car, gets into a struggle with the driver and makes a call on the radio, but cannot get out because this is an inferior system. In 2009, there was a complete system failure. Cell phones were used to dispatch calls for service, because the system was down for one to two hours. When that happened in 2009, the North Fulton Fire and Police Chiefs came together and formed a committee under the oversight of the City Administrators and City Managers. The committee began looking for solutions to this problem by looking at the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI). The UASI is a department of Homeland Security Program developed after September 11, 2001, which looks at the larger municipalities in the country and their urban areas and provides security funding. When September 11, 2001, occurred, there were problems with interoperability, and this is why UASI was created. When Atlanta started UASI, it was originally Fulton County, Atlanta, and DeKalb County that formed the radio alliance in the UASI program together. Their approach to interoperability was a wide area network or a limited radio system that would be used only in disasters and only for command and control. The jurisdictions surrounding Atlanta, particularly DeKalb and Fulton County have the ability to intercommunicate, but only at the command level and on a limited basis. Radio testing was performed and the North Fulton Police Chiefs got together and looked to see how viable the system would be as an alternative to the current failing system. The system is viable and discussions began with UASI stating what the alternative would be. Estimates were received from vendors on the solution. A formal letter of intent was sent to UASI regarding interest in the system. By May 2010, there was an alternative plan to add three additional tower sites to the open system for the north area. The cost of towers would be approximately $5.4 million. Around this time Fulton County was concerned the North Fulton cities might move away from their system. Fulton County began negotiations with the UASI as well. Another option to the existing system is to add six simulcast sites that would partner with Cobb County. The estimated cost is $6 million to 10.2 million. The good part of this solution is governance control of the system would be under the North Fulton cities in partnership with Cobb County. There is also the Harris Corporation solution that is not a proven technology at this point. By June 2010, Fulton County presented a fourth option to the County Board of Commissioners. The North Fulton Chief's recommendation for three simulcast sites was consistent with the option that Fulton County recommended. The question is who will pay for it. In May 2010, a formal request was sent to UASI to use them as a back-up system, in case the Fulton County System failed again. The UASI's technical advisory group developed a number of talk groups, but the senior policy group never allowed the North Fulton cities to reprogram their radios.

Councilmember Sterling asked if UASI is a Federal group.

Police Chief Terry Sult stated UASI is a local group that was funded by the Federal government, which included Fulton and DeKalb County and the City of Atlanta. It has since been moved under the Atlanta Regional Commission, and under that is a senior policy group made up of Public Safety representatives. If Fulton County upgrades the UASI regional system, the advantages would be cost sharing potential based on MOU, lower asset ownership, countywide integration, and equal channel availability. These would be the same advantages if the North Fulton cities were to partner with Cobb County. There were negotiations up until September or October of 2010. The North Fulton cities kept asking for the cost per radio to get onto the system. It was difficult to get a number from the senior policy group. It was then announced that Fulton County was working with UASI and agreed to pay $10.3 million to capitalize a solution for the system. The solution is the three sites for North Fulton plus three sites in south Fulton. The user fee would be $350 annually, per radio, based upon 4,000 users. Of the users 2,000 would be the North Fulton cities and the other 2,000 users would be the Fulton County Public Safety users. The $350 includes a contingency fund, but does include funds that would allow for upgrades and refreshing of the system. Fulton County started meetings in January 2011 and it was discussed having a final design and transition to the new digital system under UASI in Q3, 2011. Where we are and what was brought forth is that the county would pay for it, but the North Fulton cities would not be in an agreement with UASI. The North Fulton cities would be subcontracted under Fulton County for the radio usage. This is where decisions need to be made. As a subcontractor to Fulton County, Fulton County has one seat on the UASI Board. Fulton County would not have enough members on the Board to control or enforce continuity of service or quality of service to make it advantageous for the North Fulton cities. He is not sure why the North Fulton cities would want to contract under those terms with someone that could not be held accountable for the system.

Councilmember Sterling stated this is a digital system and we are currently using analog. Would the digital system require new police radios for all the officers?

Police Chief Sult stated all the current Sandy Springs radios are digital capable. The supervisor radios have some UASI channels already programmed, but the line officers do not.

Councilmember DeJulio asked how many radios the City has.

Police Chief Sult stated the City has about 350 radios.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked what the difference in cost per year would be.

Police Chief Sult stated he will get to that point shortly.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked what south Fulton and Cobb County are doing.

Police Chief Sult stated some cities have their own system and some cities partner with another county. DeKalb County and the City of Atlanta have their own system, which is digital and P25 compliant.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated Sandy Springs could do the same thing.

Police Chief Sult stated the problem is the cost of infrastructure. That is why there is an option of partnering with Cobb County and using their master site to cut the North Fulton cities' costs.

Mayor Galambos asked with the economies of scale if it is cheaper per radio.

Police Chief Sult stated the more users there are on the system, assuming there is enough capacity, the lower the cost per radio.

Assistant City Manager Noah Reiter stated if it is the whole county, there would be a lot of infrastructure. In south Fulton there is not the density or number of radios on the system.

Police Chief Sult stated Fulton County initially capitalized the $10.3 million and the $350 per radio based on 4,000 users. If you look at these numbers, it would be about $800,000 the North Fulton cities would be paying annually into the system for maintenance. The cities would also pay half of the maintenance of every bit of the UASI system. That would be the towers in DeKalb County, Cobb County, south Fulton and North Fulton.

City Manager John McDonough stated this is a very fluid and complex situation. This is just a general update and there is no particular recommendation at this point. The City is working with other cities in North Fulton and continues to explore the options with Fulton County. Fulton County originally agreed to absorb the cost for the general fund. Fulton County has now come back and told the cities they are looking to charge a fee to cover the $10 million cost. Public Safety is not where it needs to be from a communications standpoint. Chief Sult has done a great job helping to lead this process. Probably within the next sixty days this will come back before Council with specific recommendations, since it coincides with the budget process.

Councilmember Fries stated the North Fulton cities cannot have their own system, because there are no available signals.

Police Chief Sult stated there are frequency issues with the system. There is the option of working with Cobb County. An advantage of that would be the North Fulton cities would have more control. Harris has done a lot to improve their technology. There is an opportunity to visit a location in Texas to look at a similar system to see if that is a proven technology.

Councilmember Paulson asked about the system that Cobb County is using.

Police Chief Sult stated Cobb County is a P25 compliant system. If you add the cost Fulton County is thinking about charging to pay back the capitalization of the $10.3 million, the total cost would then be about $500 per radio per year, which pushes the cost to $1 million per year for the North Fulton cities. Now it is at the tipping point where it no longer becomes an economy of scale. The only way to reduce the cost is to not pay the capitalization fee or add more users to the system, which is UASI's desire. The system would then have to be expanded for capacity, which increases the maintenance rate. He has not seen the proposed MOU or been able to speak with UASI directly.

Councilmember Paulson asked if he has spoken to Cobb County informally.

Police Chief Sult responded yes. The person in charge of the radio system is receptive, but he has not talked to the leadership.

Councilmember Fries asked how the costs would be shared for the North Fulton cities.

Police Chief Sult stated the cost is shared by radio. He previously stood up a system in Gastonia, NC. He was able to get the UASI to fully fund the project. The maintenance cost was $122,000 a year, which was about $200 per radio. He is on the SEC Committee in Washington, DC that looks at Public Safety systems. He sits beside the guy that runs the UASI in Chattanooga, TN. Their model of pricing is $109 per radio. To get into the system there is a onetime capitalization fee of $600,000 or an option to pay

$60,000 annually. By comparing these two cost factors from comparable systems, we are way out of the ball park.

Councilmember Fries asked if the City will be paid back and has it been discussed with the other North Fulton cities.

Police Chief Sult stated his next step is to brief all the North Fulton Police Chiefs. They would then inquire about the MOU and see about reengaging to negotiate directly with the UASI. The Harris system will be looked at as well. The third option would be to partner with Cobb County. That total cost would be $8 - $10.3 million for six towers in the North Fulton area, which would be split between the cities.

Councilmember Sterling stated Fulton County is shutting down their analog system in three years.

Police Chief Sult stated he was surprised to hear that. A decision needs to be made quickly, because standing up a system like this takes at least eighteen months.

Mayor Galambos stated this is very important and she is glad to see it will be a budgeted item. She thanked Police Chief Sult for the presentation.

2. Discussion of the Walk-Through of the Riverside Drive Land Parcel Owned by Fulton County

City Manager John McDonough stated this item is about the walk-through of the land at Riverside Drive. Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny led the effort. Councilmember Collins and Councilmember Paulson were also there. The walk-through was successful. Fulton County has cleaned up the land, which is about twenty acres. The land is gated and there is no public access. It is being used as an underground pumping station. If there is Council and Community support, Fulton County would consider a partnership with the City. If all the criteria are met, money could be included in the FY 2012 budget and then fund improvements in the 2013 time frame.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated nearby HOA presidents and neighbors were invited to attend the walk-through. The response was 100% enthusiastic about a park at this location. It would be an unbelievable opportunity for the City. He supports staff working with Fulton County to discuss a deal. He would like to have a citizen committee for this park similar to the committee for Lost Corners. This park will plan itself and can be spectacular.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated she heard one of the neighbors mention they want sidewalk access along Riverside Drive. The people that attended the walk-through do not want an active ball field with organized sports. They are looking for wonderful fields that allow play.

Councilmember Collins stated there are many parks that allow organized sports, but not many places where children can go to have their own game in a field. What they are looking for is open, active play fields, but with no lights.

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

3. Discussion of New Neighborhood 501(c)(3) Association Contracting with the City to Develop and Operate the Lost Corner Preserve

Mayor Eva Galambos stated in February, 2011, she met with the River North Garden Club. Several people at that meeting stated they want to help financially with the development of Lost Corner. Cheryl Barlow, an officer of the club, met with neighbors and came back with a proposal that a nonprofit group

would be responsible for the operation of the Lost Corner property in conjunction with restrictions in the deed. The Garden Club is willing to be responsible for managing and raising money for the property.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated he met with Cheryl Barlow and Trish Thompson and they envision a nonprofit organization that would support the park, not manage it. The nonprofit organization would be comprised of neighbors that would raise money for the park.

Mayor Galambos stated the Garden Club would be willing to assist by actualizing the things the committee comes up with.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated the City has a not-for-profit policy that does not allow for funding of operations. The Garden Club is only interested in providing a partnership. The City will still need to consider funding for the project.

City Manager John McDonough stated the City envisioned outsourcing this park similar to what was done at Big Trees, Heritage, and with Sandy Springs Youth Sports. The City could enter into an agreement with a company that could manage the property. If this is the desire of Council, then staff can begin exploring these options.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated the Club is not saying they have the resources to operate the park. It does not work well at Heritage Sandy Springs. It is a huge mistake to expect a not-for-profit to raise all their money and manage the park.

Mayor Galambos stated the operation of the park will be a City responsibility. Any additional items provided by the Club will be up to them.

There was a consensus of Council for the City to operate the Lost Corner Preserve and partner with other organizations for enhancements to the park.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Date Approved: May 3, 2011

Eva Galambos, Mayor

Michael Casey, City Clerk