

**Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, September 7, 2010, at 7:08 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.**

### **CITY COUNCIL DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### 1. Work Session Meeting with Main Street Alliance

**Main Street Alliance Member, Lonnie Mimms**, introduced Wanda Morganstern. She has been instrumental in creating the Alliance.

**Main Street Alliance Member, Wanda Morganstern**, stated the Main Street Alliance is made up of a group of commercial property owners. These property owners are located in what is being called the downtown district. There is a total of about 125 acres, with the commercial property owners represented in the downtown district of Sandy Springs. This is over 50 tax parcels and there is a list with signatures from various property owners that are represented. They continue to reach out to additional commercial property owners.

Mr. Mimms stated the Alliance has been meeting for approximately the last six months. The first things they wanted to identify are the challenges within the Main Street district. They want to create a place where people want to go to that represents a true Main Street district. There is an opportunity here with the demographics that are in place. There isn't another place like Sandy Springs in regards to the education level, wealth, and all the things that make Sandy Springs great. We don't really have a downtown district that reflects these qualities. The Alliance came up with six different areas of challenges: lack of identity, aesthetics and energy, infrastructure and traffic, market, economics, and regulatory challenges. He and his brothers own four of the shopping centers in the district: Parkside, Exchange at Hammond, Marshall's Plaza, and Sandy Springs Village.

**General Partner of Sandy Springs Plaza, Jan Saperstein**, stated it is debatable where downtown Sandy Springs starts and ends. He believes this is something that needs to be defined. Sandy Springs has undergone quite a transition. Its origins were suburb, molten neighborhood, evolved to small regional, and from regional back to neighborhood. This was due to one factor, Perimeter Mall. Parking and pedestrian access is an issue in Sandy Springs. Sandy Springs has negativity to the tenants they speak with. Sandy Spring was an automobile society. The future is a pedestrian society. The location of downtown Sandy Springs needs to be established. There is also a physical design problem. It's hard to retrofit a property that's fifty-years old. There is no commonality of design. Sandy Springs also has visual pollution. The retailers don't want to see power poles. They want the streetscape and trees that the City has started to create. When he and others remodeled Sandy Springs Plaza, it was unbelievable. If he had more space at the Plaza, he could lease it. The negativities are the lack of core and catalyst. Every great city has a core and Sandy Springs core isn't defined. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a legacy that will last for one hundred plus years.

**Mayor Eva Galambos** stated the part she liked best was when he stated if he had more space to lease, he could lease it, because it all looks so good.

Mr. Mimms stated the next section of discussion is the infrastructure and traffic. This is probably the biggest hot button for the general public. This is not something that is unique to Sandy Springs. This area is in a somewhat awkward position by being in the middle of where most people live, which is the east Cobb County area with limited access to get out, and where most people work, which is the Perimeter market or "Pill Hill". Unfortunately, over the decades the downtown Sandy Springs area has become somewhat of a speed bump for people trying to get to work. A part of the challenge here is to figure out how to have the traffic directed without destroying the City's whole infrastructure. As far as the

infrastructure goes, the Sandy Springs downtown area needs to be user friendly. This can be done by shared common parking and potentially shared retention. There are a lot of things that can be done to make the area more walkable and pedestrian friendly. We are limited with the streetscape because Roswell Road is a State Route. In order to make Sandy Springs more pedestrian friendly, if there is a barrier between the road and walking area, it may help. With further studies, we could come up with more ideas to help the area become more walkable.

**Councilmember Ashley Jenkins** stated the burying of utilities has been discussed, except for the silver poles. This makes the projects more expensive. She asked if burying the utilities would help.

Mr. Mimms stated there is also the option of moving the poles behind the building. The visual part is the concern. On the human scale, the telephone poles are an eye sore. The Alliance would like to be a part of the process. There have been several plans for streetscapes and connecting things better.

**Patti Pearlberg, Coro Realty Advisors, LLC**, stated they own Sandy Springs Crossing and The Springs. She was asked to talk about the market. The demographics are strong in Sandy Springs. On paper, the demographics are stronger than in Buckhead. Sandy Springs is a stable environment, is settled and there is more money to spend. Why can't Sandy Springs attract the tenants that Buckhead can? The reason is because there is a disconnect. The tenants look at the demographics on paper and see one thing. Then they drive through downtown Sandy Springs and see something different. The question is what can be done in Sandy Springs to help attract tenants. The Alliance wants to improve tenant occupancy. How can they bring the quality of tenants into Sandy Springs so the residents won't drive to another city or location to shop? The tenants won't be pioneers in this. Landlords and property owners can't afford to make the investments that it would take to pull these tenants out of proven areas, only to have them fail, because the demographics here drive somewhere else for their leisure and social activities. The purpose tonight is to open this dialogue and work together to attract tenants to the area.

Mr. Mimms stated the next area of discussion is the economics.

**Main Street Alliance Member, Kirk Demetrops**, stated MidCity Real Estate is a company he started. He stated the reason why someone hasn't bought property in Sandy Springs, torn it down and built something else, is because the property is too expensive. He put together an analysis about buying and repositioning properties. The first section is complete redevelopment. That's when property is bought, all the existing buildings are torn down, and new buildings are built. The current situation is the existing properties are 1-2 stories with surface parking and are 10,000-15,000 square feet per acre. The average rental rate is \$15, which is a conservative number. That equates to a net operating income per square foot, per acre whereby the average landlord receives \$150,000-\$225,000 per year for that acre. The average cap rate would be 7-9. Property in Sandy Spring will trade for \$1.6-\$3.2 million. He chose a project close to here with those numbers calculated 3-4 years ago. It is the Perimeter Place mixed used development in Sandy Springs. It has 1-2 story retail, a midrise apartment building, and one high rise on 42 acres. At \$1.1 million an acre and because of the density, it averages 27,000 square feet per acre. Right there you can see we are at \$500,000 an acre more for our cheapest property in the downtown area. If our lowest prices are \$1.6 million and the most retail that can be built on the first floor is 15,000 square feet, and the upper floors carry their own value, then we need to build 60,000 square feet per acre, to buy a property, tear it down and come back new. At this density, a new development would need to be 5-7 stories with structured parking. However, retail and office cannot afford to pay for the structured parking. Five to seven stories is a difficult height in real estate. His conclusion is that tearing down properties and building new without available offsite parking is financially challenging. They looked at existing real estate and considered partial redevelopment. Partial redevelopment could be considered only if the traffic becomes more attractive. If a current owner was receiving \$225,000 a year, what would motivate the owner to reinvest or sell their property? If downtown Sandy Springs were to attract, for example, high

quality restaurants that could pay \$30 a square foot, the owner could double his rent. In order to do this, he would have to secure a lease with the restaurant. The owner would have to invest around \$100 a square foot. This would be for the building renovation and interior construction. The \$100 a square foot would be profitable for the owner. He believes the current owner needs to be motivated to reinvest or someone else who will pay the price and put the money into the properties. What can a catalyst user do to downtown Sandy Springs? What would be the benefits and what type of facility would be needed? This retail user would be at least 250,000 square feet. At this size, the buildings can be arranged in multiple configurations. All options of buildings would need a parking garage with approximately 1,000 parking spaces. He believes this can be done on a 7-10 acre site. What would the benefits be? The parking garage could be a shared garage. Parking in Sandy Springs is driving most decisions. If a restaurant buys a building that used to be 5 per 1,000 parking spaces, but needs 10 per 1,000, this can't work. If there is offsite parking available, it can work. The employees and visitors of the user would shop and possibly live in Sandy Springs and there would be more jobs. He believes a bold statement needs to be made to show tenants that a move will be made for the future.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** stated with the recent downturn in the real estate market, he's sure Sandy Springs commercial property hasn't been the only property that has not gone down in value. How much have you seen commercial property go down in value on a percentage basis?

Mr. Demetrops stated the value of commercial real estate is down 20-40%. The big issue is no one is selling at those prices unless they have to. Sandy Springs has a very stable ownership. This condition of the market motivates them even more not to sell. The value is down, but it's not trading at those levels unless it is distressed. He can't think of a better time to put plans in place to assemble property than right now. It is a cyclical business. They know the Atlanta real estate market will come back as well as the Sandy Springs market.

Mayor Galambos stated she doesn't care how beautiful the streetscape is; she doesn't want to walk up and down Roswell Road if there isn't something to look at in the windows. What comes first, interesting tenants and items to buy and look at, or the streetscape? Or does everything have to be done at once?

Mr. Demetrops stated that's a great question. The Alliance discussed changing the streetscape. Sandy Springs needs a streetscape that has a landscape strip with either trees or other greenery, so when walking on Roswell Road you don't feel the cars drive by. We need to show new tenants coming in that we have made our streetscape, so when it is executed it will be pedestrian friendly. For example, in California on the Pacific Coast Highway coming through Newport Beach, they have buttons every half a block where pedestrians can hit a button, activating lights on the street, and all the cars stop. He believes the streetscape standards need to be changed, so people will believe it will be pedestrian friendly when the shops come.

**Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny** asked if Mr. Demetrops has seen a decline in the \$15 rental rate? She has seen a lot of vacant properties on Roswell Road. What is his experience on the rental rates?

Mr. Demetrops stated there are areas north of Sandy Springs Circle that are deteriorating. The tenant quality is going down or the properties are empty. Those properties might go down in value.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated Mr. Mimms mentioned having pedestrian friendly areas and barriers. Her first thought was trees on the edge of the road. She thinks DOT does not want trees by the street.

Mr. Demetrops stated they are doing this in the City of Atlanta. In the Peachtree Battle area, the landscape strip is not only a tree, but a short iron fence and bushes.

Mr. Mimms suggested we should not overreact if we construct something and it is hit by a car. Other areas are experiencing this as well.

**Councilmember Dianne Fries** stated she thinks when trees are too close to the curb, as they mature they start tearing up the road. This can be seen in some older parts of Atlanta. There is a give and take on it. It would be worthwhile to investigate other options that would work.

Mr. Mimms stated maybe the end result will be traffic will slow down.

Mayor Galambos asked if Buckhead is considered a successful commercial area.

Mr. Mimms stated there are over 100 restaurants within a couple of miles radius.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated the setbacks of the buildings off of Peachtree Street are so far that you get the feeling of a boulevard. Setbacks will increase the cost.

Ms. Pearlberg stated Buckhead is a very successful area. Now, with the economic downturn, they are feeling the pinch just as others are. She believes that looking at what CID has done in Buckhead, starting at Maple Drive up to Phipps Plaza, you will see physical improvements that brought pedestrians to the area. Before these improvements were made, you didn't see people crossing Peachtree Street or Piedmont Road. This is a reiteration of what bringing mixed uses to an area can do, where there are multiple players that have shared parking, for example.

Mayor Galambos stated mixed use is the City of Sandy Springs philosophy.

Councilmember Fries stated she thinks what makes Buckhead attractive for walking is the window shopping. The buildings are closer to the sidewalk and parking is behind the buildings or underneath.

Ms. Pearlberg stated Sandy Springs has to acknowledge the fact that something dynamic has to be done to pull the players to this area. If you speak to major retailers, they all know Buckhead as well as the Perimeter Mall market. What will help Sandy Springs draw retailers? The beauty of Sandy Springs is the ability to attract local tenants that will thrive and be successful. How do you put in place a framework that allows that success to happen? What is being discussed tonight are all the pieces that have to come together.

Mr. Mimms stated the Alliance is debating a bold idea. It would run from Sandy Springs Circle at the new elementary school to Johnson Ferry Road, taking the four lanes down to two lanes with 60 degree parking. Therefore, where the Ace Hardware is now, another building could be built on the street and new parking spaces would be provided along Sandy Springs Circle. Everyone would start doing this along Sandy Springs Circle.

Councilmember DeJulio stated we tend to not walk around Sandy Springs. He believes what the Alliance is trying to propose is when walking, your view should constantly be changing. He doesn't see how this fits with bringing the buildings back and making wider streets.

Mr. Mimms stated the example for Sandy Springs Circle would create a boulevard. People would walk in downtown Sandy Springs and build new buildings.

Councilmember DeJulio asked how you can convince a developer to put additional retail space in front of Ace Hardware when half of the businesses that are in the shopping center are closed down.

Mr. Mimms knows of significant restaurants that want to be located in Sandy Springs that won't go to the existing real estate. If they did build that building, they could do a rooftop deck and 20 foot ceilings. The new tenants need the new look and for the building to be located on the street.

Councilmember DeJulio asked what the Alliance needs from City Council to implement these types of plans.

Mr. Mimms stated the Sandy Springs Circle project is one idea. When referring to the economics, he thinks about the CID and ideas other communities have used. There are public-private financing options as well.

Mayor Galambos stated when you look at the capital budget for the City of Sandy Springs, the amount now going into streetscape and the downtown, including the bridge at Roswell Road and I-285, the City is spending substantial amounts of capital to shore up our infrastructure.

Mr. Mimms stated the Alliance commends the City on the I-285 Bridge. He believes a lot of the things the Alliance discussed aren't an expense to the City. They think the Target site needs to be developed a certain way to be a catalyst.

Councilmember Fries stated it sounds like it needs to incorporate a parking deck.

**Councilmember John Paulson** stated what he found interesting was that high prices for commercial property right now are a disincentive to do anything. He doesn't know the solution to this. He's not suggesting we have a huge downturn so everyone gets motivated.

Mayor Galambos stated some of the prices are coming down.

Councilmember Paulson stated he believes this will take some time. The other thing he has noticed is within the last four months he has been to downtown Sandy Springs more than he has been in the last ten years because he's going to a Farmer's Market. Here is a case where 25 tents in a parking lot is enough to draw 500-1,500 people on a Saturday morning.

Councilmember Fries asked if he goes back home afterwards.

Councilmember Paulson responded sure, there's nothing else to do, but maybe get a cup of coffee. This is an example of being able to successfully draw people to Sandy Springs with an event that didn't cost a lot of money.

Mr. Mimms stated in Midtown, when it was surface parking lots and one story buildings, they went to twenty story buildings, so the math was easy. In Sandy Springs, we want midrise and the market wants midrise. That is the problem, putting up enough density to replace the current value without any mechanisms to help it happen.

Mayor Galambos stated when he mentioned structured parking, he is talking to an audience that is willing to listen.

Mr. Mimms stated the Alliance may have been too ethereal on their terms. To be more specific, when they refer to a sense of place, it is not a huge master strip mall. What the owners in this group represent is already a mall. A community anchor consists of libraries, museums, schools, civic and cultural centers. You have all those things when you have a vibrant city. It would be hard to build a strip of stores with a beautiful street front and not be just completely forgetting about the property behind it. This is a longer

term project and will be done one section at a time. For some of the regulatory challenges, there are rules in place now that say to get the benefits of some of the redevelopment rules, you must have at least five acres. Maybe the five acre rule needs to be reexamined.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she has heard many great comments that she agrees with; one of them being great cities have great public spaces. New York City has the incredible Central Park. She would like to hear about green space in downtown Sandy Springs. She can see a town square that would include green space near the new city hall.

Mr. Mimms stated when looking at great cities, the green space isn't a tree here and a tree there. The green space is in a useable fashion. Trees in the parking lot have a different function. The idea is to create shade and get rid of the heat island effect. If we put in the right trees and do the right trimming, they can be placed in the parking lot without taking extra spaces.

Mayor Galambos stated these are the types of things the Council would like the Alliance to counsel them on to improve the City's Ordinances. The Council looks forward to specific suggestions of that nature.

**Morris & Fellows Consultants, Inc., Cheri Morris**, stated she began looking at opportunities for green space in Sandy Springs. Several years ago when a lot of these properties were built, the cost of land on Roswell Road was high. As a result, many of the shopping centers are perpendicular to Roswell Road. They run from Roswell Road towards Sandy Springs Circle and that makes them dysfunctional now. You can't see the store fronts or shop very well. There is a built-in grid system linking Roswell Road to Sandy Springs Circle. There is an inexpensive opportunity to create a major green space along Sandy Springs Circle. There are wonderful sidewalks and bike trails that will allow people to go from the Chattahoochee River to I-285. When she attends the concerts and weddings at Heritage Green, she can see the people love it. She likes Mr. Demetropoulos' idea of placing parking on both sides of Sandy Springs Circle. One of the negatives is that Heritage is so successful, but there is no parking. They would like to see the City Hall complex developed in such a way that it continues the east west connection from Roswell Road to Sandy Springs Circle. Roswell Road will always be the marketplace. Sandy Springs Circle can be the heart and be much more village in scale. A lot of the shopping centers are called over parked. Buildings could now be built on the street edge with outdoor green spaces, with roof decks. The Alliance would like to see a consideration of focusing on expanding the civic, green, cultural, performing arts and recreation part of the City along Sandy Springs Circle from Johnson Ferry Road to Allen Road.

Councilmember Jenkins stated what has been said this evening has been mentioned among the members of City Council. She thinks where the Alliance expertise comes into play is if something in the Comprehensive Plan discourages certain types of development. She would like to know if there are things in the Sandy Springs code that need to be changed.

Mr. Mimms stated there may be some items in the short term that can be as simple as addressing a few things. The Alliance is still looking at the bigger picture here.

Mayor Galambos stated this has been an extremely valuable session. The thing she likes the best is that finally the property owners are talking to Council. Council has listened to the constituents, who don't own the property, but have grandiose ideas. The property owners weren't part of the plan before. She believes this is the beginning of trying to focus in on trying to remake downtown Sandy Springs.

Mayor Galambos stated the Gwinnett Technical College, which is the largest technical college in the State of Georgia, is going to develop a campus in North Fulton. All five cities will be competing for this branch of the Gwinnett Technical College. The College will give the City of Sandy Springs an RFP on September 16, 2010, explaining the requirements. From what she has heard, they will require 250,000

square feet and will eventually require 500,000 square feet of space. The school will begin with about 5,000 students and end up with 10,000 students. This is going to be a competition between Johns Creek, Alpharetta, Roswell, and Sandy Springs. She has had discussion with a few of the Alliance members on how the City can bring something to the table that will be exciting to the State Technical Board. With 5,000 students coming to school every day, there is an opportunity for economic development. She knows that some have wondered why the college couldn't be located on the Target site with City Hall. The college will be too big to go on the same site as City Hall. The new City Hall will have Police Headquarters and Court. There may be some ways the new City Hall site can be developed that would complement additional economic development in the downtown area. Charlie Roberts suggested the City form a committee to work on the RFP to find the right site. The site will be convenient for students to travel off of GA400 or I-285. One site that can be possibly be considered is near The Prado at Northwoods. Redevelop some of the old apartment sites or maybe a major site along GA400. This may be a chance to get rid of some of the dilapidated apartments. In return, the City gets a school and land left over for retail space. She is going to appoint a committee, but not with anyone she has already had discussions with regarding the property. Charlie Roberts is the Chairman of the Committee. Kirk Demetrops, David Rubenstein, Jan Saperstein, and Patrick Burt from the school system are other members. One of the aspects of the college is to have dual enrollment with the public school. Assistant Director Building and Development Blake Dettwiler will be available to assist and Director of Community Development Nancy Leathers will be assisting in the background as well. She hopes the City of Sandy Springs will be the winner in this contest.

**Committee Chairman Charlie Roberts** stated he and the Mayor were on the Sandy Springs Revitalization Committee about 15-20 years ago. The retail owners in Sandy Springs fight a battle that the City is a 1950's sprawling bedroom community. The village of Sandy Springs needs to be fixed. He stated this will be a very competitive RFP and it's a real honor to be chosen to be on the Committee.

Mayor Galambos thanked the Alliance for bringing their ideas.

### Mayor

#### 1. Sales Tax for Regional Transportation Resolution

**Mayor Eva Galambos** stated when this originally came before Council there were questions. She had other questions brought to her attention from the Greater North Fulton Chamber of Commerce, by the Director of Atlanta Regional Commission, and Todd Long. The Mayors were asked to reword the Resolution into a more positive message. Before, the Resolution stated "we oppose, unless they form a regional transit system". Now the Resolution states, "we support the imposition of the additional \$.01 sales tax, if you will form a Regional Transit System with financial help by the other counties". She gave the revised Resolution to Mr. Al Nash, who seemed to be pleased with it.

**Councilmember Ashley Jenkins** asked who Mr. Nash is.

Mayor Galambos stated he is on the Greater North Fulton Chamber Board. He shared the Resolution with the Atlanta Regional Commission. It will be discussed by the south Fulton County Mayors, who are meeting with the north Fulton Mayors downtown in Chairman Eaves office.

Councilmember Jenkins stated her concerns remain the same. She appreciates the change of the language, so it sounds positive. She has concerns about killing the only opportunity the City will have within the next 10-20 years to raise transportation funds. She would hesitate to do anything on a Resolution until the City sees what the Governor's Commission comes back with that Representative Ed Lindsey is serving on. The purpose of the Commission is to figure out what to do with MARTA. Are

they going to pull the hard rail under State authority and then have all the metro counties and cities run the bus system? That is what they are looking at right now. She would like to defer any resolution until the Council sees what the Commission comes up with. She doesn't see any rush when there is a group of legislators looking to do what the Mayor is asking them to do.

Mayor Galambos stated she can repeat what Mayor Wood of Roswell, GA said, "We have been asking people to see it our way for years, to have the other counties help pay for Regional Transit. We need to use the leverage we have now, or it will be too late later".

**Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny** stated the Resolution still says the same thing. It says the City of Sandy Springs won't support the 1% sales tax, unless all the rest of the adjacent counties do and / or the legislature requires them to. It seems to her that looking at how long it took the legislature to pass the 1% sales tax, getting the support of the legislature to require the rest of the cities and counties to participate isn't very likely. She doesn't want the Sandy Springs Council to be out in front of all the other cities on this issue. She would like to wait and see if the other cities are supporting the Resolution in Fulton County. She agrees to wait until the legislature subcommittee has a response on this. She thinks the City is risking too much to be out in front with this.

**Councilmember Dianne Fries** stated she was at the Mayors meeting. She appreciates the change in the language. She agreed with Councilmember Jenkins early on. She has now changed her opinion and she thinks it was because of Mayor Wood's comment. He stated if you don't do it now, it won't happen. If you wait until later, then there won't be a chance. Let's see if there is common ground now and let them know we are all together on this.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked what about Metro Atlanta Mayors Association (MAMA)? Where will they be on this issue?

Mayor Galambos stated MAMA is made up of Mayors from eleven counties. These are the counties we are trying to convince to join in on the Regional Transportation. MAMA won't agree with the North Fulton Mayors.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated she thinks what the North Fulton Mayors did was an outstanding effort to get focus on this issue. She would prefer to use the Mayors forum without asking our City Council to sign off on it.

Councilmember Fries stated that she'd like the City of Sandy Springs to be out in front on this issue.

Mayor Galambos stated this is not being voted on tonight. She needs to know if it will go forward on an upcoming agenda.

**Councilmember John Paulson** stated if Sandy Springs has to pass this Resolution in order for all the other cities to know Sandy Springs position, he believes this needs to be done. Are the other cities in Fulton and DeKalb counties aware of the fact that this is a Resolution Council is interested in?

Mayor Galambos stated yes. At this point the cities know its Mayor Galambos position, but they don't know if it is Council's position.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if any other City Councils have signed it.

Mayor Galambos stated she believes it is on the Consent Agenda for the City of Roswell next week.

Councilmember Paulson stated he is in favor of this.

Mayor Galambos suggested this item will go on the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Jenkins stated not on the Consent Agenda. She will vote against this.

**Councilmember Chip Collins** stated he was previously swayed by Councilmember Jenkins comments relaying that Representative Ed Lindsey and others in the legislature were urging the City not to sign the Resolution. Is this still their consensus?

Councilmember Jenkins responded yes. This is State Senator David Shafer and Representative Ed Lindsey's position.

Mayor Galambos asked City Attorney Wendell Willard what his position is.

**City Attorney Wendell Willard** stated he thinks it's helpful to have a voice of the cities that the legislators can use as part of the argument. This coming session a proposal will be brought forward as a mandate to pull the MARTA and the various transit systems into one entity. He believes there is something to be gained from this. There won't be a mass transit system unless the individual pieces are combined.

Mayor Galambos stated the new entity is not necessarily going to be MARTA. It is going to be a regional mass transit system.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** asked when this will be put on the Agenda.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she won't support this being on the Consent Agenda.

Mayor Galambos stated this item will be placed on a Council Meeting Agenda in October. She stated she can have Mayor Jere Wood come speak to Council. He is persuasive on this issue.

### **STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS**

#### **Public Works**

1. Quarterly Updates on the Capital Improvement Program and other Major Public Works Programs

**Deputy Director of Public Works Jon Drysdale** stated these items will go on the Sandy Springs website for people to refer to for updates.

2. Presentation of the Downtown Livable Centers Initiative (LCI) 5-Year Update/Action Plan

**Transportation Planner Mark Moore** stated this is an update on the Downtown Sandy Springs LCI. It is ten years old at this point. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) has been telling staff something needs to be done. In 2006, he completed a 5-year update for ARC to update them on where the City was. Just recently there was another 5-year update completed to allow the City more time. ARC has been pressing the City to either close out the LCI or to do what ARC considers a 10-year update. The 10-year update would be a significant new study. Staff has looked at the LCI program and it's a good way to leverage local funds. There are short-term work programs the City currently has that have some sort of LCI money attached to them. Most of the sidewalk and streetscape projects discussed have gotten some funding through LCI. What staff recommends is going ahead and approving to give ARC the 5-year

update to let the City continue to keep the LCI in activity. Staff would like to apply again for supplemental funding to do a significant re-study. This would require a new market analysis. He suggests leveraging the expertise here within the City. If Council feels this is a good vehicle, they can then go into things like the Comprehensive Plan and the zoning overlay districts.

**Mayor Eva Galambos** asked how much it will cost.

Transportation Planner Moore stated the City can submit for up to \$50,000, with 20% of that to be locally matched.

**Councilmember Ashley Jenkins** asked what the City receives in return for the \$50,000, besides the study.

Transportation Planner Moore stated the City would receive an updated study. Staff would update the project lists. Ultimately, the City would be able to do the same thing you can do with any LCI. Staff would look for a chance to receive matching funds for projects. Receiving the supplemental study funding, rather than another sidewalk project, is getting \$40,000 plus worth of leveraged funds to bring in professionals to look at things.

Mayor Galambos asked what kind of professionals?

Transportation Planner Moore stated he assumed staff would look at consultants to come in and re-write the study.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** stated we are looking at \$10,000 of our money, plus \$40,000 of grant money. The \$10,000 can be leveraged when we apply for grants to do these projects, because they have been included in the study.

Mayor Galambos stated she'd like the money used on a market analysis. Can it be used for that?

Transportation Planner Moore responded yes. There is a box of things that need to be addressed within the study. You can emphasize the items you want. He was listening to the Main Street Alliance presentation and some of the things discussed were ideas from ten years ago. It's a way to get some of the ideas and re-validate how they can be accomplished today. Initially, staff wants approval for the 5-year update. All they have done is taken the update from four years ago and updated the data in it. This first step won't cost anything. Staff will apply by the end of the year for the study. If the City receives the study, it will cost \$10,000.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the study can work hand-in-hand with the Main Street Alliance and what they are trying to do. A marketing study would also require an outside marketing consultant. It will require outside help, no matter how the City does it. There will be help from the existing property owners, who will also have input into this.

Mayor Galambos stated there is support of the Council to move forward with this item.

### **Community Development**

1. A Resolution to Rename Heards Drive/Heards Road to Raider Drive between Heards Ferry Road and Powers Ferry Road

**Assistant Director Planning and Zoning Patrice Ruffin** stated the street name change from Heards Drive/Heards Road to Raider Drive is a request from Riverwood High School. There has been extensive discussion and staff is at a point now where the question is what name the street will be changed to.

**Councilmember Chip Collins** stated the Raider Drive name has the support of Riverwood High School community and the surrounding neighborhoods. He believes it's a great opportunity for the City to instill school and civic pride. This may also clear up some confusion. There are a million Heards Roads, River Roads, Valley Roads, etc. This will be extremely distinctive and no question about where the road is located. He thinks it will be fun for the community and high school students. This isn't the first time it has been done in Sandy Springs. The former Crestwood High School, which is the location where Sandy Springs Middle School is now, renamed their road to Colonel Drive. The students loved the name change and it was extremely positive. He hopes Council will change the street name and do so for the length of the street.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** asked if they are discussing changing the entire Heards Ferry Road.

Councilmember Collins stated no, not Heards Ferry Road. This is the road off of Heards Ferry Road. It's the road the school is on that then crosses I-285 and connects with Powers Ferry Road.

Councilmember DeJulio stated the reason he asks is because there have been conversations about the split roads in Sandy Springs and it causing confusion for emergency vehicles.

Councilmember Collins stated that's why the street name is being changed. This road on this stretch currently has two names, Heards Road and Heards Drive. This is a way to eliminate the Heards and combine two streets into one.

**Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery** stated she sees where the Council will vote on this. She is looking for a compromise. Her only constituent that is affected is south of I-285. The resident adamantly does not want their home address to be named after a mascot. The compromise that she'd like Council to consider is to leave the stretch south of I-285 as Heards Road. The downside of that is the safety issue would not be alleviated. She sees an opportunity for her second compromise. It would be to have the principal at Riverwood High School engage the students to come up with a name for the street. Her constituent would be open to any other name besides Raider Drive.

Councilmember Collins stated there is no telling what other names for the street everyone might come up with. He supports the road being renamed to Raider Drive.

Mayor Galambos asked who would agree to place this item on the Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery responded she won't agree.

**Councilmember Dianne Fries** suggested there be a consensus on this item to have the street changed to Raider Drive. Then the principal of the school won't have to be bothered with this.

Mayor Galambos stated there is consensus this item won't be on the Consent Agenda, but will move forward on the regular agenda at the next meeting.

2. A Resolution to Rename Brandon Mill Road to Grogan Mill Drive between Grogans Ferry Road and Morgan Falls Road

**Assistant Director Planning and Zoning Patrice Ruffin** stated the street name change is Brandon Mill Road to Grogan Mill Drive. Staff did get a recommendation to use a different road name.

**Councilmember Dianne Fries** stated that recommendation was Morgan Falls Lane.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** asked why the street name is being changed.

Assistant Director Planning and Zoning Ruffin stated there are two sections of Brandon Mill Road.

Councilmember Fries stated there is a landfill in the middle of the road.

Councilmember DeJulio stated for these reasons he can understand why the road is being renamed.

Councilmember Fries stated the single family residences around this road prefer the name Morgan Falls Lane, since it intersects with Morgan Falls Road.

**Councilmember Ashley Jenkins** said that makes absolute sense.

Councilmember Fries stated they didn't think Grogans Mill was appropriate, because there was not a Grogans Mill, there was a Grogans Ferry.

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

3. A Resolution to Amend the City of Sandy Springs Board of Appeals Bylaws

**Assistant Director Planning and Zoning Patrice Ruffin** stated the next three items are the Bylaws for the three Boards. They have been revised to be consistent with each other.

**Mayor Eva Galambos** asked if the changes to the Bylaws are technical changes.

Assistant Director Planning and Zoning Ruffin stated they are separate from the Zoning Ordinances and are not technical changes. They are cleanup to make everything consistent.

**City Attorney Wendell Willard** stated it's an administrative change.

4. A Resolution to Amend the City of Sandy Springs Design Review Board Bylaws
5. A Resolution to Amend the City of Sandy Springs Planning Commission Bylaws

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with all three agenda items to amend the bylaws.

#### **City Clerk**

1. Discussion on 2011 City Council Meeting Calendar

**City Manager John McDonough** stated he wants to make sure everyone agrees with the 2011 City Council Meeting Calendar, so it can be published.

**Councilmember Tibby DeJulio** stated it can always be amended, if changes need to be made.

Work Session Meeting of the City of Sandy Springs City Council

Tuesday, September 7, 2010

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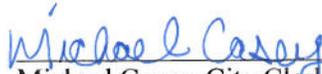
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There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Date Approved: September 21, 2010



Eva Galambos, Mayor



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Michael Casey, City Clerk