

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, July 21, 2009 at 10:20 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Communications and Media

1. Website Redesign

Judy Parker, Director of Communications and Media introduced the subject. **Nathan Crenshaw, Communications Coordinator**, gave a presentation on the design of the new website. Extensive surveys both in person and on-line have been conducted to include City staff, the public, Mayor and the Council, and focus groups for the new website. As a result of the surveys, the following goals have been developed to create the new website: organize a more user-friendly site; provide up to date news and information in an easy to follow and consistent manner; use the site as a portal to other communication social media outlets, i.e. Twitter, Facebook; and to have a more modern, sophisticated website design. Features include adding an area for "How Do I" or "I Want To"; displaying recent news and information; displaying upcoming events; and a rotating graphic on the home page.

After Council questions and discussion, there was a consensus of City Council to move forward with development of the new website.

Community Development

1. Community Development Innovations – **postponed**

Public Works

1. Discussion on the City Sidewalk Program including sidewalk widths, right-of-way, easement acquisition, etc; and the FY 2010 Program

John McDonough, City Manager stated the issue we need to deal with is whether or not the City is going to pay for right-of-way acquisitions. If the City does pay for acquisitions, based on cost, there may be a limit on which projects can occur in the course of a year. The other option is if the City does not receive a donation from a property owner, then we don't build in front of that piece of property.

Mayor Galambos stated that there are two sidewalks issues that need to be kept separate. One is the local streets that do not involve streetscapes and federal money. Then there is the sidewalk issue along Roswell Road with the streetscapes. The City needs to be judicious in the way sidewalks are built in residential areas, doing the least possible incursion into private property, so the City does not have to buy any right-of-way.

Councilmember Fries stated she thinks it is a residential neighborhood luxury to have a sidewalk, so the residents should donate the right-of-way.

Transportation Planner, Mark Moore stated the state guidelines, the City's development regulations and the national standards all call for a minimum sidewalk width of five feet. The minimal passable distance for a wheelchair is thirty-six inches wide, but that is an accessible path. The legislated minimum Federal regulation for ADA recommends a thirty-two inch wide sidewalk. There is a minimum overall width of five feet for two wheelchairs passing or turning a single wheelchair around. The five foot minimum sidewalk width with a two foot grass strip, going from the national guidelines down, is considered the gold standard in what is a safe accessible sidewalk path.

Mayor Galambos asked why the sidewalks on Peachtree Dunwoody in the City of Atlanta measure from forty-five inches to forty-eight inches, depending on the lay of the land. She stated if the City can save money by not having

to intrude and do extra design work let's not be beholden to this standard that is not included in the ADA Regulations that came from the Justice department.

Councilmember Fries asked what is included in the grey areas of the state guidelines.

Wendell Willard stated this is a standard, not the law. The law does not mandate anything other than with ADA you need to have an ability every two-hundred feet to have a wide area for passing.

Councilmember Fries asked the City Attorney how he would advise Council on this matter.

Wendell Willard stated the Council should do the practical thing for particular areas. Most of the subdivisions will have a sufficient amount of space on either side of the road as right-of-way. The main streets probably need to have five feet wide sidewalks.

Councilmember Jenkins stated the roads in question are heavily traveled roads.

John McDonough stated the minimum standard needs to be set on these arterial and collector roads. Staff needs to know what the recommendation is on these roads if they are not in an overlay district.

Transportation Planner, Mark Moore stated the staff recommends five feet.

Mayor Galambos asked what the percentage increase would be if the City went from four feet to five feet.

Transportation Planner, Mark Moore stated it would be a marginal increase. Cement does not cost that much and it is the grading work that will have to be done that drives the need for right-of-way and easements.

Capital Program Director, Marty Martin stated the additional cost has not been in more concrete. It has been in accommodating a utility, constructing a retaining wall to hold back the slope, and those kinds of things. It has never been about the concrete material.

Mayor Galambos asked that common sense be used in making decisions in building the sidewalks.

The Mayor and Council discussed the issues surrounding the acquiring of right-of-way for construction of sidewalks along the arterial and collector roads. The first effort needs to be to have the right-of-way donated. Council does not want any gaps in the arterial and collector sidewalk projects.

City Manager, John McDonough suggested that Council move on with the submitted list. As the City gets into the design, right-of-way needs can be determined at that time. We can identify all of the property owners and contact them, asking if they are willing to donate the right-of-way. If a threshold of 85% is met, then that project moves forward. If the threshold is not met, then the project is brought back for reconsideration by the Council and that project falls down the priority list.

The Council agreed to the list in the agenda packet and the City Manager's recommendation for arterial and collector streets using the process discussed.

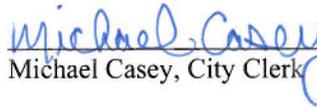
2. Streetscape Project Funding - postponed

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Date Approved: March 2, 2010



Eva Galambos, Mayor



Michael Casey, City Clerk