

Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council

January 8, 2008, 6:00 p.m.

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Work Session of the Sandy Springs City Council was held Tuesday, January 8, 2008, 6:00 p.m. Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

Councilmembers Present: Councilmember Doug MacGinnitie, Councilmember Dianne Fries, Councilmember Rusty Paul, Councilmember Ashley Jenkins, Councilmember Tibby DeJulio, Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnery.

Staff Discussion Items

Discussion of Stormwater Utility Change Order

City Manager McDonough stated that this Change Order was funded in the FY 2008 budget. Public Works staff will give a brief overview of the work that will be done in the first phase of Stormwater Utility Development.

Deputy Director of Public Works Drysdale gave the following presentation.

Presentation Goals

- Update and educate the council and the public on the Stormwater Management Program
- Approve Phase I Study
- Create the Stormwater Advisory Team

Stormwater Utility Study

- **Phase I – Define Program**
 - Public Involvement (Meetings and Public Advisory Team)
 - Utility Ordinance
 - Update in March
- **Phase II– Refine Program and Development Structure**
 - Update in July and September
- **Phase III – Implement Program**

Key Phase I Task

- Determine level of service and program cost
- Evaluate organization and management needs
- Evaluate parcel data for customer database
- Develop preliminary rate recommendations
- Implement public involvement
- Present draft stormwater utility report
- Develop and present Stormwater Utility Ordinance

Key Phase I Tasks

- Define SW Program - January 2008 - October 2008
- Public Involvement/Education - January 2008 – October 2008
- SWU – January 2008 – March 2008

Key Phase II Tasks

- Impervious Surface Database Development- February 2008 - October 2008
- Billing Database Development - March 2008 – October 2008
- SWU Implementation Plan– April 2008 – October 2008

Key Phase III Tasks

- Begin SWU billing/collection- October 2008 - 2009
- Billing Database Development – December 2008 - 2009
- SW-Capital Improvement Plan – January 2009 – 2009

Recommendations

- Approve Phase I Utility Study
- Create the Stormwater Advisory Team

Deputy Director of Public Works Drysdale stated that staff is recommending eleven (11) geographic representatives for the Stormwater Advisory Team who are able to serve for about a year.

Councilmember DeJulio questioned the qualifications a person would need to be on this team. Mr. Drysdale explained that some engineering background would be helpful, but not necessary, to help with the technical details. An interest in stormwater and familiar with the geographical area, because commercial customers will pay more and will need to have it explained to them in detail.

Mayor Galambos questioned if there were stormwater problems occurring throughout all of Sandy Springs. Mr. Drysdale explained that the stormwater problems are based on the development, denser areas have more problems. Staff has received calls about these types of problems; they seem to be spread out all over the city.

Councilmember MacGinnitie questioned what the estimated cost is for Phase II and Phase III. Mr. Crace stated that Phase I and Phase II combined would cost about \$800,000. Mr. Rapson explained that Roswell is at the implementation phase, which means they are not ready to start the billing. At this point, Roswell is further along than Sandy Springs. Roswell has about \$325,000 in this particular utility. The last utility that was created in the state was Peachtree City. Peachtree City spent about \$625,000. The big cost in Phase II will be for the inventory, in essence your entire basin, which are all the things you need to fix as well as where everything is currently.

Mayor Galambos questioned if this was a competitive bid for the change order. City Manager McDonough stated that it is not. Mr. Rapson stated that when staff revised the budget, \$200,000 was set aside for the purpose of creating and starting the Stormwater Utility. Staff chose to do it this way because a Change Order can be done under the City's Purchasing Policy. The policy allows the City to piggyback off the prime contract. In addition, RFP2 has a lot of services in regards to the people who take care and maintain stormwater related activities within the Public Works Department.

Mayor Galambos stated that if Phase II cost about \$600,000, Council would prefer to have it bid out. Mr. Rapson stated that he understood.

Councilmember MacGinnitie questioned how the \$200,000 was negotiated.

City Manager McDonough stated that he went through this process before in Beaufort County. The total cost, over a four year period, and before getting to the point of implementing was about \$2,500,000. Beaufort County did both a rate study as well as all the work that we are considering.

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Councilmember Fries stated that Council believes more meetings will be needed for the public, somewhere between 6 and 10 meetings would be better. She has concerns and questions on the fees set for Stormwater; it needs to be a ratio of the impervious versus the pervious surface for the properties. There needs to be some equitable adjustment on the fee amount depending on the acreage of each property. Mr. Drysdale explained that most of them are not done that way. Most are based on a tier system or a flat rate for all residential.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated that these questions were raised in the town hall meeting and she stated she may have a solution. When the county taxes a house the owner can appeal. The city can do a tier system or an equivalent residential unit rate for residential property but if the homeowner objects, they may appeal for an exact measurement of imperviousness similar to how appeals are handled during the Tax appeal process in Fulton County.

Councilmember Fries stated that she would like to have options. Mr. Drysdale stated that staff will present a number of options to City Council.

Councilmember Jenkins questioned which phase would determine the total liability cost. Mr. Drysdale stated that the estimate is done in Phase I and will be refined later on.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated that at a Leadership meeting, Angela Parker, Director of Public Works in Fulton County, estimated that the stormwater issues would be about \$400,000,000 for all of the Sandy Springs area.

Councilmember MacGinnitie questioned Mr. McDonough if he anticipated any other Change Orders to the CH2M Hill contract this year.

City Manager McDonough stated that staff had anticipated this and it was discussed as part of the FY-08 budget development. Council went through this process during the budget deliberations and came up with this number. On an annualized basis, the cost is \$750,000, and since there is only half a year left, the cost will be less than \$375,000.

Discussion of amendment to Chapter 9, Building Codes regarding sub-metering.

Assistant Director of Building and Permitting Wesserling stated that this is a change to Chapter 9 of the Building Ordinance for multi-metering for multi-family units. This will require that all new construction or any construction over 50% of the assessed value would be required to supply independent meters for each unit they have. Individual metering has been authorized in the Official Code of Georgia section 12-5-180.1.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery questioned where the assessed value came from. Mr. Wesserling stated that the appraisal value comes from the Tax Assessors office.

Discussion of RC07-06SS at 890 Edgewater Trail.

Assistant Director of Land Development Dettwiler stated that RC 07-06SS is a River Corridor review for the property at 890 Edgewater Trail. The applicant, Mr. Thomas Arasi proposes the construction of one modular retaining wall approximately 100 feet long, 15 feet wide associated with the existing single family residential home. The property is located on lot 65, block "C", unit 3 of the Riverside subdivision. The site is 0.41 acres, located in vulnerability categories "C" and "E".

The subject application was submitted to the Atlanta Regional Commission on November 9, 2007, and was found to be consistent by the ARC on December 6, 2007.

Discussion of Impact Fees

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Director of Community Development Leathers introduced the new Assistant Director of Planning and Zoning, Hamit Bedi. Mr. Bedi worked in Savannah on the Metropolitan Planning Council. Mr. Bedi has a lot of experience and previously worked in Metro Atlanta, Duluth, Sugar Hill and Woodstock.

Based on the Mayor and Council input at the meeting of Tuesday, December 11, 2007, staff has been working to revise the Impact Fee ordinance to address the significant issues:

- The fee should be competitive with nearby jurisdictions; (Alpharetta and Atlanta)
- The process should allow maximum legislative discretion to select the schedule of projects and be flexible to meet changing needs; and
- The analysis and administration should be straight forward and clear. That will make explanation easier and reduce the risk of error.

Proposed meeting schedule for the remaining process:

January 10, 2008 (Thursday) -- 4:00 p.m. meeting with Jacobs, Carter, Burgess – staff

Director of Community Development Leathers stated that staff will meet with the consultants and begin to revise the fee, to bring it inline with the adjacent jurisdictions. She has asked them to take a look at the office calculation, because it is the one that runs along the common boundary. This is where our largest amount of development is occurring. Tracking it will help staff address the issue of the true impact of project.

- January 16, 2008 (Wednesday) -- Revised fee schedule and ordinance due to Community Development staff
- January 22, 2008 (Tuesday) -- Distribute revised fee schedule and ordinance sent to Impact Fee Advisory Committee members
- January 29, 2008 (Tuesday) -- final Impact Fee Advisory Committee meeting and City Clerk deadline for materials for February 12, 2008 work session
- February 12, 2008 -- Mayor and Council work session
- February 19, 2008 -- Mayor and City Council regular meeting, adopt Impact Fee Program and Ordinance

Director of Community Development Leathers stated that staff looked at Council's concerns regarding having two impact fee areas. The City would not be able to collect funds in one area and spend them in another. Staff discussed the issues of trip length and impact with the consultants. It became apparent to staff that work trips are the longest trips taken. As a result, the Perimeter CID area has the largest amount of employment in the area and has the longest trips. The ability to do the road improvements in that area would not be available to us, if we spent the funds coming from those projects only within the area itself. For example, the City could not do improvements to Hammond Drive, Mount Vernon, Johnson Ferry, and Abernathy outside of the PCID area, even though that is where much of the traffic is coming from. The reason is the City would not be allowed to spend money outside of the actual impact fee area. Staff has a possible alternative solution. The alternate way to approach this is to have a standard fee for the entire City and to decide which areas the City wants to provide economic development incentives in, and then have a fee reduction for those areas. This would give the City the ability to reduce fees in the areas that we want to encourage development. That would be a possible alternate approach based on the information and input given to staff at the last meeting by Council. One thing that might be appropriate is for Council to look at the various activity nodes staff has identified along Roswell Road and give input back on where incentives should be given for redevelopment. Staff could begin to build some kind of fee structure in the areas that are most significant in terms of encouraging new development.

Councilmember Jenkins stated that she is interested in hearing about this idea. It is an interesting way to go about it but, she worries about all the development in the Perimeter CID area. She questioned if the City would be able to generate enough funds, because major road and intersection improvement have to be made there. If the City starts discounting fees for everyone then the City will not have the funds to rebuild the Perimeter CID.

Director of Community Development Leathers stated that it is very important to distinguish between what kind of development you are getting in the two areas. A policy decision will have to be made. Most of the development that is occurring in the Perimeter CID area is new development. Therefore, the City will not have to give credits for the existing development that is on the ground. Staff is not suggesting a reduction in the Perimeter CID area. Most of their fees will probably get collected in that area but, can not say for sure if that will be the case. If Council gives incentives by reducing fees in other areas, there will be a reduction in the overall collection. That is a decision Council will have to make. If Council chooses to make the fee in the Perimeter CID area competitive with adjacent jurisdictions, that will set the amount received from the area. Then it is just a question of how much the City would collect in the remainder of the City and how Council wants to structure it.

Mayor Galambos stated that the impact fees will not finance all of the City's capital improvements. The City will not be able to fix everything. The PCID indicated to the City that they would not have problem with paying the full impact fee if the money is going to stay in the CID area. She questioned if that was something under the new policy the City could do. Ms. Leathers stated that the City could not, without having to have two separate capital improvement programs in two separate areas. This means, you can not include the trips that are coming in to the CID area that impact the local streets outside the area. The streets between Roswell Road and the CID area are impacted significantly. If the City does not give any economic incentives on Roswell Road it would be entitled to a reduction, because the City would be eligible for re-development. The City would not have the ability to use the CID area funds, which would be the largest amount of funds the City could collect. This will not give the City a great deal of funds to work with in the remaining area. Staff requires direction from City Council on this decision.

Mayor Galambos stated that no matter what decision is made on the impact fees, there will never be enough money to do everything. She questioned if the City's greatest priority on impact fees would be in the CID area. Ms. Leathers stated that there are a number of improvements in the CID area but, there are also ones moving into the CID area. Councilmember Paul stated that there needs to be flexibility because there are a lot of other areas.

Mayor Galambos stated that she could see the problem of having two separate capital improvement amounts to deal with. Council would like to explore this possibility. There tends to be some reservation about taking too much of the CID money and spending it elsewhere, but would like the flexibility to do so.

Councilmember Jenkins stated that she had met with Yvonne Williams and was told that they would not have a problem if the City could find a way to extend the PCID area to include Hammond, Mount Vernon and Glenridge. Ms. Leathers explained that Council had control of where the funds would be extended.

Director of Community Development Leathers requested City Council to advise staff on what portions of Roswell Road they have interest in having the reductions and what their highest priority is, regarding the development area.

Discussion regarding authorizing the City Manager to accept funds from the Georgia Department of Transportation for the upgrading of signal equipment at 61 city intersections.

Director of Public Works Parham stated that Jeff Messer, Traffic Service Manager has been working with GDOT in getting funds to upgrade the City's traffic signal equipment at 61 intersections. The requested funds will be used to upgrade traffic signal cabinets and controllers and to add better back-up systems. This will enable the equipment located at the intersections to communicate with the City's Traffic Management Center that is anticipated to be operational in 2008.

Georgia Department of Transportation is providing the equipment and the City will provide the installation. The funding will come from the intersection improvements program.

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Councilmember Jenkins questioned when the City would start putting the signals in. Ms. Parham explained that staff could start the installation at any time.

Traffic Service Manager Messer stated that once the City has the cabinets and controllers, staff could install one to two per day. Staff is putting together a bid to send out for contract on the installation services. Council was provided a list of the 61 intersections with detailed description.

Councilmember Paul questioned what the final result would be. Mr. Messer stated that once everything is hooked up and tied back to the City Traffic Management Center, the timing will be synchronized and traffic will flow much better. At this time, each signal works independently and, with the installation of the cabinets and controllers the signals will work together off one device and the flow of traffic will be improved.

Director of Public Works Parham stated that this has to be in place in order to get the Traffic Management Center to work and be able to have improvements and the other things Mr. Messer talked about. One of the major improvements is, staff will be able to look to see if there is an incident, be able to change the timing, see if there is a need to evacuate a route. There are a lot of different things staff will be able to do off site. The City has to have the traffic signal equipment to make this work.

City Manager McDonough stated that this is a cost effective way to better manage the system that is in place today without having significant capital improvements to it.

Councilmember Paul explained that when all of this is done, he would like to see significant improvements in the operational efficiency of the system. He understands the mechanics of how this will work. He questioned what improvements, efficiency and capacity was anticipated. Ms. Parham stated that the capacity would not increase; the delay would decrease, allowing the same amount of cars through at a better time and will increase the level of service.

Councilmember MacGinnitie questioned the cost of the installation. Mr. Rapson stated that it would be bid out in the next 30 to 60 days. The equipment will need to be purchased using City funds, and then GDOT will reimburse the City for the upgrades of the intersections. The estimated cost is \$120,000.

Councilmember DeJulio questioned when this project would be complete. Ms. Parham explained that this part of the project should be complete in three (3) months.

Councilmember Fries thanked staff for finding the funds for this equipment.

Councilmember Jenkins thanked Ms. Parham and her staff on the paving of the roads.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery questioned when the roads would be done that is listed in the 30 percent range. Mr. McDonough stated that staff will work down the list based on the ranking of roads. Ms. Parham stated that this year staff brought forward the first phase of the City paving project which was arterial and collector streets for Council approval. The first phase is totally city funded.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery commended the Community Development Department on the Allen Road Park. They have done an outstanding job and with the help of Trees Sandy Springs volunteers, all the trees, shrubs and plants are in the ground.

Councilmember Fries announced that the Martin Luther King Celebration will be held at City Hall on February 21, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. The City will award the second annual Humanitarian Award. This year the speaker will be Commissioner Thurman.

Mayor Galambos reminded Council to give her their nominees for the Stormwater Utility Committee.

Date Approved: February 19, 2008



Eva Galambos, Mayor



Christina V. Rowland, City Clerk