Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, May 4, 2010, at 6:54 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Development

1. Sustainability Program Presentation

Deputy Director of Community Development Chris Miller stated one of the things that were mentioned last month as a benefit of the existing public private partnership is the ability to leverage the resources of CH2M HILL for unique projects. Due to the size and scope of CH2M HILL, this project can draw upon the resources of the larger company. The Green Program is an example of this type of reach back. In 2009, in response to the City Manager's request, staff prepared an analysis of existing environmental initiatives that had already been accomplished by the City. As a supplement to this effort, staff was assisted by Lindsay Ritter, who works out of the Denver office and is responsible for identifying green solutions for CH2M HILL's clients. Locally, the group is assisted by Environmental Compliance Officer David Schmid. The proposed program details a series of new initiatives for consideration. They are categorized by being achievable within a short time frame and to have an environmental impact upon the City that will be positive, with little or no impact upon the city budget.

CH2M HILL Sustainability Manager Lindsay Ritter stated she would provide the Council with an overview of green cities and then go over the methodology used when creating the proposed program. Cities across the globe are adopting green programs. These cities include Chicago, Illinois; Calhoun, AL; Columbia, SC; Dallas, TX; and local municipalities including Atlanta, Alpharetta, Roswell, and Duluth. The diagram breaks down the concept that's driving the move towards green cities. As the population grows and people continue to live in urban centers, environmental, economic, and social issues become amplified. There are groups that recognize that cities have the most ability to make an impact. Through these programs there are also external drivers to promote green cities as well. There are many different approaches for developing a green city program. After looking at the many methodologies, CH2M HILL decided that they would create a comprehensive and integrated approach. The findings here illustrate that concept in motion; creating aesthetic indicators that the City thinks are important. The focus is on issues that are most important to the City of Sandy Springs. They have identified these key five areas for the City to build their framework for the sustainability program. The City can leverage existing achievements such as the water conservation program, beautification efforts, and meet year trend goals such as achieving Atlanta Regional Commission green trend certification. Environmental Compliance Officer David Schmid performed research on how to achieve this certification.

Environmental Compliance Officer David Schmid stated that staff was directed to look into the Green Communities Program that is accomplished through the Atlanta Regional Commission. The Green Communities Program is a voluntary certification that municipalities and local governments can receive through the Atlanta Regional Commission. The program was developed to assist local governments in reducing their environmental impact. There are ten categories that are in the program that the City can choose to participate in. The minimum points needed to qualify for the level 1 certification is 175 points. City staff has identified twenty-four measures, for a total of 80 points, and the following categories are the ones that staff has identified that would mostly likely be what the City would participate in or what the City is already participating in. Existing City policies that were noted by staff, that the City is already participating in, equal approximately 40 points. The City can reach the level 1 certification if the City decides to pursue the recommended initiatives.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins asked if they would have to complete all ten of the initiatives.

Environmental Compliance Officer Schmid stated these are ten categories that the different initiatives are in. There are several initiatives within each of the ten categories that equal to the 180 points.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked, so we just pick and choose?

Environmental Compliance Officer Schmid stated correct. These initiatives are achievable within twelve months.

Deputy Director of Community Development Miller stated the City had a series of ten initiatives on Friday, now we have nine. The Water First Initiative is one the City wouldn't qualify for, since we are not a water service provider. These are achievable short-term initiatives that will have little or no impact on the City budget. They looked at items that could be handled by City staff existing on the project today. Many of these are things are already being done.

Councilmember Fries asked how many of those nine are policy driven.

Deputy Director of Community Development Miller stated from a policy standpoint, take off number two from the list. Number three, which is the tree canopy, is completed every five years by the University of Georgia. Staff added another piece, which is the field assessment program. It is where the City Arborist would go out and look at existing commercial property projects that have been approved by Fulton County or the City, and compare the built environment of the trees and landscaping to what was on the approved set of plans. If there is a tree on the set of plans that wasn't planted or maybe it's dead or dying, then he would work with the property owner and suggest trees that would possibly thrive more and still help them meet the minimum requirements of zoning. Number four, water certification, is more of a policy issue. Staff would need to perform research on the cost involved if green standards were adopted for new City-funded buildings, such as a new City Hall.

Councilmember Jenkins stated in the last meeting with Deputy Director of Community Development Miller, when Council and Community Development discussed Heritage Park, Council was told if they want to go with LEED paperwork, it will cost $50,000 to file the paperwork. The contractor said he'd build to the green standards anyway, because that's what they do. To her, it seems like a waste of money. She'd like staff to research the Green Globe program to see if the City would be paying money just to process the paperwork. As a City, we'd build to the green level, but to pay an additional $50,000 to receive a certificate is outrageous.

Councilmember Fries challenged staff to think of a certification from us as a City to give to other organizations. The City did it on the water thing. Why do we have to pay to lead? The City can do our own.

Councilmember Jenkins would like to hear more about Green Globe. Since it's $50,000 on a small project, she's wondering what it would cost on a large project.

Deputy Director of Community Development Miller stated the other initiatives in this category are ISO 14000. These are more policy related and certify the City is purchasing green materials whenever possible and using recycled goods. Staff will investigate renewable energy credits. It is a long-term thing staff is looking into. The final initiative is to commission a resource audit of water and energy usages, something the City is already doing today. What staff plans on doing is meeting with the City Manager on a quarterly basis to provide him an update, and provide response back to Mayor and Council to keep them up-to-date. This was the City Manager's directive.

Councilmember Jenkins stated Deputy Director of Community Development Miller didn't place beautification and environmental conservation on the list.

Deputy Director of Community Development Miller asked if Councilmember Jenkins was referring to it as being one of the categories.

Councilmember Jenkins stated yes. Since investigating renewable energy credits isn't feasible. She asked if they could place beautification and environmental conservation as an item on the list. The beautification and environmental conservation is something the City is currently doing, as well as cleaning up GA400 and I-285.

Mayor Galambos stated the City is keeping litter off the roads.

Councilmember Jenkins stated the City already has a litter program and a graffiti program in place.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated she would like to see what the City can do to further limit illicit soil sedimentation into our streams by the properties that are under construction. She lives on a stream and has watched the stream clear up, to an extent, because the gradient construction is no longer occurring. On one particular street, West Belle Isle, where four or five houses were built, every time it rains the soils runs into the stream. She suggested staff provide a review in the next quarterly update regarding if there is anything they can do for steep slope requirements such as double hay bale fencing. She would like to figure out how to do a better job on the amount of soil going into the streams.

Mayor Galambos stated even though the City cleans up the soil flowing into the river, it seems the river is still a mess.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated the down gradient people absolutely do pay for it. She agrees that the City has good Ordinances. She hasn't attended an environmental court session lately, but the City is enforcing the Ordinances. Perhaps with further review, the City can come up with better BMP's as a part of this green program.

Mayor Galambos asked if there were any other comments.

Councilmember John Paulson stated we keep talking about LEED certification and the expense of that. Has any tangible benefit been identified that the City will receive if we complete the LEED certification?

Deputy Director of Community Development Miller stated he believes the benefit would to be to build to LEED standards and have the energy savings. We may not go through the arduous process of becoming certified, but would still get the benefit of savings on the light bill, for example.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated LEED is a national standard that is widely accepted throughout our country. One of the criticisms of LEED is you have to demonstrate you bought your recycled material from wherever and it increases the cost. The other criticism of LEED is that there are prospective things that you do, but no measurements after the building is built. In commercial office buildings where individuals lease to tenants, that is the real reason for LEED certification. The buildings lease out at a faster rate, because the tenants want to be associated with LEED. It is a positive statement to the community if you are LEED certified.

Mayor Galambos stated she thinks the green certification would give us the gold stars. Let's go with the green. She thanked Deputy Director of Community Development Miller.

Police Department

1. Proposed IGA with Paulding County for Firearm Range Use

Chief of Police Terry Sult stated Council and the Mayor have previously discussed the new Sandy Springs gun range. The agreement the Police Department signed will take care of 60% of the firing range needs within the City of Sandy Springs. The agreement before Council now is to take care of the rest of the training with Paulding County. Paulding County needs to move some of their facilities due to ecological issues. Paulding County would adjust some of the range and in return we would have the ability to do the training needed beyond the gun club here in Sandy Springs. The goal is to have a long-term relationship where we can depend on a place to complete the officers training. The City will pay for the initial agreement out of drug forfeiture funds. It won't impact the budget. Once the Paulding County Sheriff gets re-elected, the City will go for another four-year agreement. The Sheriff didn't want to go beyond his term and commit someone else. The use of this facility is mainly for rifles. There are approximately 300 acres there, so you can do some stress shootings and things along that line. There's also a shoot house where the officers can do live fire training.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated go for it.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked if there were any alternatives that the Sandy Springs Police Department explored with a closer government that could provide the services. Paulding County is how far away?

Chief of Police Sult stated 45-50 miles.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated you will have time for your staff and wear and tear on your vehicles. Are there any closer alternatives? She stated you are almost going to Alabama.

Chief of Police Sult stated the other alternative is Douglas County. As the urban area has grown, there are fewer places that like to house ranges. Indoor ranges are easier to deal with. We've talked to Holly Springs, who is developing an indoor range, or would like to for that purpose, but it doesn't accommodate tactical stress training and long rifles.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated there is a gun range in Cumming, but it doesn't give you that many options.

Mayor Galambos asked what Sandy Springs Police Department has used to date.

Chief of Police Sult stated wherever they can make arrangements. It usually ends up being Douglas or Paulding County. They're paying individual fees of anywhere from $300-$500 a day.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked what Roswell or Alpharetta use.

Chief of Police Sult stated Johns Creek and Roswell have an agreement with a shooting range in northern Georgia.

Mayor Galambos stated Chief Sult is in the best position to figure out where he can get this training. She thanked the Chief and closed the discussion.

Public Works

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

Deputy Director of Public Works Jon Drysdale stated Public Works is wrapping up the capital improvement program update. They have one more meeting scheduled with Councilmember Collins. They would like to know if there are any final questions. If not, they will make the information available on the website.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Date Approved: August 3, 2010

Eva Galambos, Mayor

Michael Casey, City Clerk