

The Regular Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was broadcast live via webinar, teleconference, and Facebook on Tuesday, April 7, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mayor Paul began the meeting by discussing procedural matters. Mayor Paul stated that rather than a voice vote or show of hands, the Council would vote by roll call, and each council member will vote either yes, no; ay or nay. During discussion, council members will need to ask to be recognized so that everyone can present statements or provide any comments on issues that are presented on the agenda. We have intentionally reduced the agenda while we are doing the meetings in this novel way, to do only those things which we need to get done on a timely basis. Things that are fairly significant or that we do not have a time deadline, we are holding those off the agenda, hoping we can do those back in a normal public meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

City Clerk Raquel D. González called the roll and made the general announcements.

Mayor Rusty Paul – present.

Council Members present: Council Member John Paulson, Council Member Jody Reichel, Council Member Steve Soteres, Council Member Andy Bauman, Council Member Chris Burnett and Council Member Tibby DeJulio.

III. INVOCATION – Mayor Paul called for a moment of silence in honor of those who have passed away due to COVID-19.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Mayor Paul led the Pledge of Allegiance.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comment cards received.

VI. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Motion and Vote: Council Member DeJulio moved to approve the agenda for Regular Meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Council Member Reichel seconded. Mayor Paul called for a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A. 2020-90 Approval of Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2020 City Council Work Session
March 17, 2020 City Council Regular Meeting
March 20, 2020 City Council Special Called Meeting

B. 2020-91 Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration of Acceptance of a Permanent Drainage Easement for the Seville Chase Stormwater Project – 65 Seville Chase

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-04-44

Motion and Vote: Council Member Bauman moved that the consent agenda for April 7, 2020 be approved. Council Member Soteres seconded. Mayor Paul called for a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. 2020-92 Request for Mayor and City Council Consideration of a Purchase and Sale Agreement for Property Located at 151 Hilderbrand Drive, Sandy Springs, GA (Tax Parcel # 17 008900081016)

City Attorney Dan Lee stated that the property is across the way from City Springs. The BMW Repair Shop has been there for some time, and is a very thriving, on-going business. Former City Manager John McDonough began negotiations with the owner, Mr. Burdett. The City and property owner have reached a very good price of \$1.8 million. This is well within the budget and it meets the plan that has been in place for approximately three years. Unlike other sales completed the City, Mr. Burdett has included this is the close-out of his business and he will not be vacating the property until the middle of August, 2020.

Mayor Paul reiterated this is an agreement that has been negotiated for some time. Although an agreement had been reached, the owner has been waiting because he wants to close in the summer. Is the City buying the property and his business interest?

City Attorney Lee responded that is affirmative. Mr. Burdett is closing out his business there.

Motion and Second: Council Member Burnett moved to approve agenda item 2020-92, Consideration of a Purchase and Sale Agreement for Property Located at 151 Hilderbrand Drive, Sandy Springs, GA (Tax Parcel # 17 008900081016). Council Member Paulson seconded the motion.

Council Member DeJulio asked if there has been an appraisal of this property that is separate from the appraisal of the business. The City is purchasing less than half an acre for \$1.8 million, which is \$3.6 million per acre. If the City goes to a condemnation of the property, then do we have to purchase the business from the owner in addition to purchasing the property? Is the City buying his business, including his accounts receivables, etcetera or are we just buying the sign that says his business? I spoke with someone who went to look at his business with the intent of purchasing it, because this man has been trying to get out of business. Council Member DeJulio stated that he met with another business owner about 8-10 months ago, who had been negotiating with him to purchase this business and the owner had not been truthful with this person in telling them that the City was going to buy the property. The prospective buyer was told that the City was not going to buy the property and the owner was trying to sell it for approximately \$2.5 million. The prospective buyer stated that the sales price relayed to him was \$2.5 million, as an ongoing concern. Council Member DeJulio stated that he felt that people are looking at the City as having deep pockets and are trying to get better prices out of us and our taxpayers are paying the bill.

City Attorney Lee stated that the owner does not wish to close his business. Part of the problem in trying to find substitutive property is the zoning in Sandy Springs has very, very limited areas to where automobile mechanic businesses can locate. There is not one in Sandy Springs at this time. In order to get the property, it is the sale of the business and the real estate. The appraised value is \$1,000,000 each. If the City had a use for the property, then the option to use the power of eminent domain is available. In that case, the City would have to pay the owner for the interruption of the business. In this case, it is the loss of the business because the owner could not place it somewhere else. We have audited the business. It is a thriving, on-going business. City Attorney Lee continued that he understood that we are saying we are allocating about half of this to the real estate; roughly, \$2 million an acre. The property is .48 acres, and if you double that, it is about \$1.8 for the real estate. The City is purchasing all of the equipment. This is a decision for the Council to make. If you do not want to pay for the business, that's understandable. Before former City Manager John McDonough left, this issue came up that he would not sell without the City buying his business. City Attorney Lee stated that the City did not want to pay for the business and then he goes and establishes another entity. So, what we offered was for him to try and sell the business, his accounts receivables, any equipment he has, any good will, blue sky that he has. The agreement was that we would subtract that, we would get credit for that against this \$1.8 million. He came back and reported that he could not get a buyer.

Council Member Burnett stated whether we like it or not, the reality is we do have to buy his business if we want this piece of property. Otherwise, the owner could continue to operate his business there for as long as he wants to; he could sell his business and it could continue to operate there for as long as it wanted to, so we really don't have a lot of negotiating room when it comes to whether or not we pay value to his business. We have a history of paying that sort of price per square foot for real estate in this general corridor, especially when we consider that it is directly next to Heritage and it is a block from City Springs. That is the unfortunate reality, those prices are climbing now because the desirability of being near City Springs is climbing quickly as well.

Vote on the Motion: Mayor Paul called for a roll call vote. Council members Paulson, Soteres, Burnett, Reichel and Bauman voted in favor of the motion. Council Member DeJulio voted opposed to the motion. The motion passed.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-04-45

IX. REPORTS

A. 2020-93 Mayor and Council Report

Mayor Paul reported that the last four to six weeks have been the most challenging periods of his political life, trying to deal with all the ramifications of this particular virus. He feels that a lot of what he has done in the last 42 years has been, in some respects, a preparation to help deal with this circumstance. He has tried to provide the community with as much information, as we got it, as we could to keep the public aware of what was happening. He stated that he could not say enough about the staff and how they have been able to maintain a level of service and continuing the operations of the City even though the building is pretty vacant right now. All who can, are working remotely, and it has been a challenge, but the staff has risen to the challenge. I have been able to have more interaction with the staff on a daily basis over the last four weeks than any time that I've been involved with the City. I have been blown away by the professionalism, the commitment to it. Chief Sanders' team and Chief DeSimone's team have done a phenomenal job of maintaining our first response capabilities; putting themselves at risk in the public, going out and taking care of the people. During this time we have seen that the number of calls hasn't risen but the acuity rate, in other words how sick people are when our people pick them up, has increased significantly. We have some challenges in the police department, we have people who have turned SR400 and I-285 into NASCAR. I saw someone posted today, complaints about speed traps on Roswell Road. When you are clocking people at 129 MPH on SR400, I think we would be derelict in our duty if we didn't set up places to check speed and to reinforce the fact that just because people are staying at home doesn't open the roadways to excessive speed. I think that Chief DeSimone and his team are out there to make sure people not only survive the virus but they survive the reckless driving that is going on right now on many of our roads and streets because they are not as occupied and congested as they are normally. I want to close, I want to thank the people of this community. They have taken it seriously; they have stayed at home, they've rallied around a lot of our small businesses and restaurants by ordering take-out and pick-up. I see people that have really bought into the practice, our people are staying home for the main part and helping us get over this hump. The staff and the citizens of Sandy Springs have done a great job. We are not out of this by any stretch of the imagination. No one knows how or when this is going to end. So far, people have been very responsive and have acted very positively to the leadership to stay home and shelter-in-place, and just go out for necessities. Our folks are to be commended for that, and particularly our staff. I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank them for what they've done.

B. 2020-94 COVID-19 Update

City Manager Andrea Surratt introduced the COVID-19 Update presentation. Our very first priority is to reduce the opportunity for community spread. We are working hard on our public safety efforts every day and will cover that. We are working to protect the health and safety of our staff. We have made a number of decisions, including removing people from buildings and making sure they can telework. We will cover that and finally we will talk about modifying the protocols for our work, to ensure that we can still provide services, permits, calls for service, in a safe environment. We will start first with our Communications Director Sharon Kraun; we will hear from also from Sandy Springs Fire Department Chief Keith Sanders and others from Emergency Management; we will hear from Dave Wells, Deputy City Manager, and Ginger Sottile, Community Development Director and Marty Martin, Director of Public Works.

Communications Director Sharon Kraun, *Communication Overview* - The Priorities for City Action include reducing opportunities for spread; supporting public safety and emergency responders; ensuring the safety and health of staff & community; and adjusting protocols as needed. The City of Sandy Springs COVID-19 / Coronavirus webpage is a resource for the community. It was the site's number one page visited for the month of March. Webpage sections include City Services, Community Resources, and Business Resources and others. The press releases and notices on the home page of the COVID Section are easy for the community to find. The City uses social media and graphics to help drive home messages, produced internally by Communications staff, such as supporting the Take-Out. "It's on us" is a buzz-phrase used since the shelter-in-place began. We communicate mental and physical health tips, many of which are published in English and Spanish. Updates from the City Council are shared, also making sure that the public sees that we are still at work. Chef Rodney of the Performing Arts Center took the contents of our kitchen, which were stocked for several events, and made sure they did not go to waste by pulling together meals that we provided to the Community Action Center so they could distribute it to the community. Recreation and Parks has gone virtual with programming. Every day there is a new adventure. The most interactive one is the fitness updates. We are learning that our staff will exercise, but their kids are better in shape. By e-newsletter, Economic Development puts out something almost every other day to the businesses to make sure they are informed. The City Springs Insider is publishing information for our patrons. Anyone who has been at the Arts Center, a ticketed event, we are making sure they are informed. Through Community Development and Parks, we are putting out an additional e-newsletter. One interesting item to note, if there is an upside to pandemic, if you are ever going to change ticketing software, pandemics are a great time to do it because we did the technology switch with very little interaction with the public. In fact, most of the times with a ticketing software switch, the patrons experience little bit of discomfort from one system to the next, in this case we have 100% success rate in not impacting that situation. There have been a lot of flyers shared, in English and Spanish, flyers that retailers can download and use for their own purposes or just good social reminders. We have put out signage either reminding folks about the safety tips or the closures that are in place. Mayor and Council get daily updates, and with staff, providing them news of the day. Then we have provided sources for public information, i.e., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which

provides the daily stats that we use; the Georgia Department of Health; the World Health organization; and, our own website.

Chief Keith Sanders, *Public Health Overview* – discussed the timeline of the City's COVID-19 Operational timeline since March 17, 2020. The Fire Department identified some of the senior communities in the city that are shut-in and do not have a community kitchen. The Community Assistance Center has provided food to those centers every day. We want to say thank you to Mayor Paul and Council Member Paulson for directing us to Capstone, whose team there have been a tremendous benefit to us in ensuring that our essential employees and public safety first responders can get testing there. It has proved to be a very valuable resource for us. They have done everything they can to help Sandy Springs, and are also helping other senior facilities within the City. The Emergency Management Team and the Fire Department introduced a protocol where the Fire Marshall team is calling every day, twice a day to every senior facility in the City. We do have a few cases in some of the senior facilities, but could have been a lot worse had they not implemented proactive measures early on and reinforced them consistently. Some of surrounding cities are having a difficult time with their senior facilities, just as we do have some challenges with ours. But, we have been able to keep that curve lower down in these facilities for a long period of time. We continue to collect data on the high-risk facilities. And continue to work on identifying the location for a Point of Dispensing for when a vaccine becomes available. We will have a plan of action to implement in the City of Sandy Springs to be able to disperse that in an orderly fashion. One of the most essential elements we can do, we have established safe protocols to our first responders, to provide essential services to our communities. We continue to communicate with the surrounding jurisdictions; meet with them daily to discuss challenges that all are facing. One of our local fire departments, about the size of ours, they are down 27 firefighters because of exposure in the station. We have not experienced that type of impact here in Sandy Springs because we, early on, took steps to reduce those possibilities. I'd like to recognize is Section Chief Patrick Flaherty, in being able to bring him on-board about five years ago full-time was a great decision. He has quality skills: knowledge, ability, and common sense. He has done a tremendous job in overseeing this pandemic. We have had three confirmed COVID-19 cases, and those surrounding them have had to go through the 14 day self-quarantine protocol. Making sure all protocols are being followed; so far, everyone has worked well with us and complied with those. All essential fire department staff does report to City Hall every day; they open the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) every morning in the event it has to be escalated into an active EOC. Also, fire marshal employees are monitoring employees as they come into City Hall to ensure they are not running fevers or hitting any of the benchmarks that would cause concern. The EOC is operational virtually in order to reduce person-to-person contact and is staffed with one certified manager during works hours. The fire stations remain closed to the public; they will greet at the door and assist, if needed. Police and fire personnel continue to report to work and respond to emergency calls. AMR ambulance services continue to meet requests for transport. They have transported 50 possible COVID-19 patients since March 19, 2020. Every time a possible COVID-19 patient is transported, there is a quick protocol to decontaminate the truck to get those vehicles back into service. All are doing a remarkable job. With 25 first responders being monitored, we have only had one confirmed COVID-19 case, which is attributed to the protocols that have been implemented. The police department is doing the same phenomenal job. Checking their people every day, every shift change.

Deputy City Manager Dave Wells, *Operational Overview* – All City staff are teleworking as of the issuance of the shelter-in-place order. Field workers are coming in the morning in their field trucks; Public Works field superintendents are making their rounds, as well as Code Enforcement and Utility Inspectors; and then all are going back home at the end of the day. Our call center continues 24/7/365. They are fielding calls and we are still responding to emergency calls after hours. For Capital and TSPLOST projects, as of Friday, April 3, we have temporarily suspended the actual work. They are assessing getting the COVID plans in place. We will begin more of that construction next week, on a case-by-case, once they have proven that they have all their measures in place. In terms of design work, all field activities have been suspended, i.e., surveying, staking, site surveys, on-site meetings with residents in an effort to eliminate that first contact with the residents. There are currently 221 active City administered utility permits, and we have suspended 55 in residential neighborhoods to eliminate the possibility of resident / contractor interface. Work continues for permits in commercial areas where in-person contact is not necessary. Emergency repairs as needed, still fully operational. All non-emergency maintenance activities have been suspended until the shelter-in-place order is rescinded. We will respond by having our Field Service people driving around looking for things that need to be done or call the contractors back at that time. Residential work, new single-family detached homes are permitted to complete work. Families are waiting to move into their homes, so we are allowing that work to continue on. Existing, interior alterations on single-family attached / detached homes currently under way will allowed to be finished. Applications currently in-process will be allowed to be completed and permits issues. New applicants will be processed but permits will be held until this crisis is over. If an applicant can demonstrate a hardship, a release of permit will be considered, on a case-by-case basis. All inspections will be conducted, however, the homeowner / contractor must maintain a minimum distance of 10-15 separation. All of our inspectors, all of our Public Works folks have been issued the masks, gloves, hand sanitizer and Lysol spray for their vehicles, but it is really about the safety of our personnel in the field. Permits issued for apartment complexes to correct failures and deficiencies will be allowed to continue, as long as they maintain the safety protocol. The Inspire Brands interior alterations, will get their Certificates of Occupancy one floor at a time. They are doing nine floors at that location. Homes currently under construction at the Aria will be allowed to be completed. No new permits will be issued. Work at the 6075 Roswell Road can continue as long as safety protocols are followed. Staggered residential occupancies are not permitted if you are under the current shelter-in-place directive.

Council Member Paulson asked if the City had a link to the Chamber of Commerce on the Communications and Economic Development webpages. They have a lot of good information for businesses that are trying to navigate all of this. Also, what has the call volume been at the Call Center, is it up, is it down?

Communications Director Kraun responded that Economic Development, the Chamber and Visit Sandy Springs, along with Communications, are working together to share information and repost each other's information. The volume of calls through the Call Center has been steady. The types of the calls have changed with more calls related to the shelter-in-place, what is permitted and what is not permitted. Staff are receiving phone calls on either their home phone or cell phone,

as all calls are being forwarded. We have provided the Call Center a Q& reference in anticipation to questions.

Mayor Paul thanked the staff for the great work that everyone is doing. Chief Sanders called out Section Chief Patrick Flaherty; Imani White, also. These are two amazing people that he has on his team; they are all amazing, but they have been working through this entire process and whose performance has been impressive.

City Attorney Dan Lee requesting a personal privilege, stated that he has survived the coronavirus. He stated that it is a testament to folks that have it, and I'm thinking about our City Manager right now. You can get through it. Sandy Springs has state-of-the art health services. We are well positioned to fight a virus like this. It is a bizarre, mysterious illness but one that you can survive.

Mayor Paul went on to say that the survival rate is 97% in Georgia right now. The healthcare teams are doing phenomenal work. He stated that he has had no symptoms and is quarantined but still getting the work done. The team has been phenomenal through this whole thing. In the end, we are going to get through this. Life will return to normal and hopefully in the not too distant future. He said that he had meant to say this earlier, but wanted to thank Samantha Bullinger, Assistant to the City Manager, who has done all the technology for pulling this thing together, along with Raquel Gonzalez and her team in the City Clerk's Office. They have done a phenomenal job of making this possible.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Motion and Vote: Council Member DeJulio moved to adjourn. Council Member Paulson seconded the motion. Mayor Paul called for a roll call vote. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 pm

Date Approved: April 21, 2020



Russell K. Paul, Mayor



Raquel D. Gonzalez, City Clerk