

Sandy Springs City Council Retreat was held on Tuesday, January 26, 2016, at 8:30 a.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Councilmembers and Staff in attendance

Mayor: Mayor Rusty Paul present.

Councilmembers: Councilmember John Paulson, Councilmember Ken Dishman, Councilmember Graham McDonald, Councilmember Gabriel Sterling, Councilmember Tibby DeJulio, and Councilmember Andy Bauman present.

Staff and other individuals in attendance: City Manager John McDonough, Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole, Finance Director Karen Ellis, Police Chief Ken DeSimone, Fire Chief Keith Sanders, City Attorney Wendell Willard, Assistant City Attorney Cecil McLendon, Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman, Director of Recreation, Parks Ronnie Young, Director of Community Development Michelle Alexander, Communications Director Sharon Kraun, Director of Economic Development Andrea Hall, City Advisor Ennis Parker, Executive Assistant Raquel Gonzalez, and City Clerk Michael Casey.

The City Council received presentations from staff and participated in broad ranging discussions on many subjects including the topics in the attached retreat materials. An audio recording of the retreat is part of the records maintained by the City Clerk.

City Manager John McDonough provided an overview of the retreat agenda.

1. **16-037** Review of Adopted Priorities

City Manager John McDonough gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Review of Adopted Priorities.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio asked how many is full staff for the Fire Department.

City Manager McDonough responded 108 employees.

Council Member Ken Dishman asked how long the lanes will be closed for the Marsh Creek project.

Assistant City Manager Bryant Poole stated the lane closure will last two weeks. The City Springs lane closure will start after that, which will be a four-month process. The information will be relayed to the public to use alternate routes and to expect delays in this area.

City Manager McDonough asked what the projected start date is for the Riverside Drive roundabouts.

Assistant City Manager Poole stated the work should start in the next day or two. There will be nighttime and Saturday work on the project. As staff knows more, that information will be relayed to the public.

Council Member DeJulio asked about Windsor Meadows Park.

Director of Recreation and Parks Ronnie Young stated there will have to be a new design and resubmission of the project. The bridge has been approved and staff can now present the park design. This could happen within twelve months.

Council Member Graham McDonald asked about tree planting on the south side of Abernathy Road and if staff is worried about missing the time frame for tree planting.

Director of Recreation and Parks Young stated the trees have already been purchased and they should be ready to plant soon.

Director of Economic Development Andrea Hall presented slide 22 of the Review of Adopted Priorities presentation.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated the City has an issue with residential brokers and agents, because they have a lack of knowledge of what is happening with the public schools within the community. Families with children looking at schools do not come to the community or they feel they need to place their children in private schools. It would be good to get the real estate agents into the schools to show them what is happening, but the school system has not been proactive in that regard. There is nothing more crucial in economic development efforts than the perception of the school system. The City will have to work on this issue. The City needs to take some kind of initiative to get the residential brokers into the schools and educated about the positive things that are happening.

Council Member Graham McDonald stated the Sandy Springs Education Force is having a liaison symposium this week.

Mayor Paul stated our Sister City in Israel does a very good job of beautifying the community by using flowers and shrubs. You can engage people to walk, but there has to be something that is visually attractive. The City could use standards that encourage property owners to go beyond just planting trees to also beautify their property.

Council Member DeJulio stated the intersection at Windsor Parkway and Roswell Road was mentioned on one of the slides. He asked about the time frame for completion of the project.

Assistant City Manager Poole stated the project will hopefully be completed by March. Until the City of Atlanta gets the water line installed, the rest of the work cannot be completed.

City Attorney Willard stated he will be getting water records from the City of Atlanta for the water rate studies.

City Advisor Ennis Parker gave a PowerPoint presentation on City Springs.

Council Member DeJulio asked if the City is doing a good job of keeping the roads around the site clean from mud runoff.

City Manager McDonough responded yes. He spoke to the contractors on site just yesterday about protecting against mud runoff. The contractors are using best management practices on the site.

2. 16-040 Midyear Budget Review

City Manager John McDonough gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Midyear Budget Review.

Council Member John Paulson stated the City is looking to potentially buy a couple of things this spring. He asked if those funds will come out of the \$4.2 million in available City Springs funds.

City Manager McDonough responded no. The fund balance will have to be utilized. There are a couple more Hammond Drive acquisitions that will be occurring.

Council Member DeJulio asked how far along is the City on revenue for this year.

Finance Director Karen Ellis responded the City is at 50%. The City came in ahead on the insurance premium. The Georgia Power funds should be received next month and she hopes the City will be above budget on that.

City Manager McDonough stated if there is not a really cold winter or a really hot summer, that number could be different by \$800,000. He is not overly optimistic on this number. Last year the Georgia Power number was good.

Finance Director Ellis stated the City is at 65% of the year. Almost 100% of the City's ad valorem taxes have been collected for which she received confirmation from Fulton County.

3. **16-038** Multifamily Fire Ordinance Recommendations

Fire Chief Keith Sanders presented the Multi-Family Residential Fire Prevention Considerations PowerPoint.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked what year did the commercial buildings start using better fire resistive construction.

Fire Chief Sanders responded within Fulton County he cannot give that answer. He saw some buildings in Alpharetta that had not been brought up to code. This is something staff will have to do research on.

Council Member Sterling asked if the City adopted the suggested changes to the ordinance and a property transferred ownership, would the new ordinances then apply to the property.

City Attorney Wendell Willard replied something can be done to make the buildings more fire resistant over a certain number of years. All of the buildings will have to go through the repainting process and that could be with the intumescent paint.

Council Member John Paulson stated the City could adopt an ordinance that states any new renter for an apartment has to sit through a ten-minute fire prevention video before they are given the keys.

City Attorney Willard stated that is difficult for a government to enforce.

Council Member Andy Bauman stated the apartment complexes could voluntarily do this.

Council Member Graham McDonald stated he is cynical that education will solve these issues. The way people rush through signing contracts, he cannot envision them taking the time to watch a training video.

Council Member Sterling asked if the property owners could receive an insurance benefit by having the fire stops in the apartment units.

City Attorney Willard responded yes.

4. **16-039** Police Manpower Study

Carol Rasor-Cordero, Associate Professor with the Center for Public Safety Management, LLC, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the study of the operations of the Sandy Springs Police Department.

Council Member Ken Dishman asked about the physical security of the police vehicles and if this will be changed in the near future.

Police Chief Ken DeSimone responded no, because of the property owner and what space is currently available.

Council Member John Paulson asked Chief DeSimone what his view is on the review of the Police Department.

Police Chief DeSimone stated he is appreciative of how the Department was rated. The security of the building does concern him.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked about the suggested changes in the department.

Police Chief DeSimone stated one change would be assigning patrol officers to different areas of the City at different times or days to address the "hot spot" crime areas.

Council Member Andy Bauman asked when the proposed changes for the Police Department will occur.

City Manager John McDonough stated staff has already begun to implement a number of the recommendations starting with monthly communications from the Police Chief. There is also a reorganization of the department that is currently taking place. The Deputy Chief position is going to be filled as well as someone will be responsible for the day to day operations and reports. Within one to two months a Deputy Chief will be hired. Another recommendation is to keep the two Major positions and also add a civilian position. Some of the civilian functions that are now under the Major's position will go to the civilian position.

Council Member Bauman stated there is mention of moving resources.

City Manager McDonough stated the City has begun studying this. Although some things have been done in the area of false alarms, he believes not enough has been done. Staff hoped to have that presentation ready today, but it is not. That item will be coming before Council at an upcoming Work Session. One out of every five or six alarm calls is a false alarm. Staff is looking at implementing a verified alarm system. There is also a suggested change regarding small traffic accidents in order to free up additional patrol time.

Police Chief DeSimone stated for the accidents on private property, ChatComm can send out a Citizens on Patrol (C.O.P.S.) unit to respond.

5. **16-041** General Government Services Contract

City Manager John McDonough presented this item.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio asked about The Collaborative contract that increased by 16%, but showed no increase in personnel.

Director of Communications Sharon Kraun stated when the contract began, there were five people and one was shared with Community Development. That person was later removed from the Communications Department and moved to the Community Development Department. One staff member was added to Communications last year.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked if the suggestion is to extend the contracts for three years for just the existing task orders or for the backup contracts as well.

City Manager McDonough responded probably for both. As of today he recommends extending the contracts for the general government services. It is staff's recommendation to extend the contracts for three years with one-year task orders tied to the fiscal year budget process.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated he is one of the biggest supporters of the City's model. One of the strengths is the ability to re-compete the contracts on a reasonable basis. He supports the City Manager's recommendation on this item, due to the large number of major projects that are going on with City Springs and the Next10.

There was a discussion about the restructuring of the Community Development Department in order to focus more on planning and be more efficient in dealing with the massive volume.

6. **16-042** Strategic Communications

Director of Communications Sharon Kraun gave a PowerPoint presentation on Strategic Communications.

There was a consensus of Council to include the Week in Review on the City website.

Council Member John Paulson asked that staff have videos on the City website for significant City events.

7. **16-043** The Next Ten Planning Initiative

Director of Community Development Michelle Alexander introduced the following individuals: Elliot Rhodeside, Co-Project Director with Rhodeside & Harwell; Deanna Rhodeside, Co-Project Director with Rhodeside & Harwell; Sukirti Ghosh, Project Manager – Small Area Plans with Rhodeside & Harwell; Karina Ricks, Transportation with Nelson Nygaard; Joel Mann, Transportation with Nelson Nygaard; Lee Sobel, Market & Economic Development with RCLCO, and Carolyn Sponza, Urban Design & Architecture with Gensler. She then gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Next Ten Planning Initiative.

There was a discussion regarding the number square feet of office space available in the City.

Council Member Andy Bauman asked how transportation sharing influences the plan for the City. The City has needs for north/south Roswell Road and east/west along Abernathy. He asked what things are achievable with the sharing of economy.

Karina Ricks, Transportation with Nelson Nygaard, stated ride sharing and putting more people in the vehicles that are on the road is something that is being looked at. Sharing mobility can help with the traffic.

Council Member Bauman asked what the local jurisdictions can do to jump start the process.

Ms. Ricks responded HOV lanes give advantages to vehicles with more than one passenger.

Council Member Graham McDonald asked how many people need to be out of the existing one person per car pattern in order to offset the latent demand and achieve a ten percent reduction in traffic in the corridor.

Ms. Ricks stated she can get that number, but she is not sure how helpful or attainable that will be.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked Ms. Ricks if she has looked at transportation such as Zip Cars on multiuse lanes or protected lanes for these vehicles.

Ms. Ricks responded usually she has not. The State of Florida has provisions for golf carts and those types of electric vehicles.

Council Member Bauman asked about the Perimeter area being under housed.

Ms. Ricks stated living near work is a tremendous thing. A major employment center like "Pill Hill" is a great opportunity to encourage those to live near work.

Council Member McDonald stated placing housing near the hospitals may very well benefit the hospitals and the community by having the employees closer and happier. However, he is not sold on that idea as the solution for the traffic issues.

Council Member Sterling asked if staff has talked to the City of Dunwoody regarding the east/west connector. He knows Sandy Springs already has two connectors planned.

City Manager McDonough stated the City meets with Dunwoody about twice a month regarding new ideas.

Council Member Bauman stated within the last six months there were zoning cases inconsistent with the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and desirability issues. Most of the cases were withdrawn. Cases he recalls are the application for the property at Northwood and Lake Forrest Drive, the Glenridge Highlands office building, and at the corner of Hammond Drive. He asked if those zoning cases are being looked at. The issue with the Glenridge Highlands property was the appropriate size of the building.

Joe Mann, Transportation for Nelson Bygaard, stated when Council is in agreement with the suggested Small Areas Plans, all of the zoning cases should be compared to those.

Mayor Paul stated he prefers to have as much time as the Council needs in order to get the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code updated, so they can make more rational decisions based around the visions.

8. **16-044** Review of Underground Utilities Regulations

This item will be heard at a future Work Session meeting.

9. **16-045** Other Issues

There were no other issues discussed.

10. **16-046** Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the Retreat meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Date Approved: April 5, 2016


Russell K. Paul, Mayor


Michael D. Casey, City Clerk