

Sandy Springs City Council Retreat was held on Tuesday, January 27, 2015, at 8:30 a.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Mayor Rusty Paul called the meeting to order at 8:47 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, Assistant City Manager Jim Tolbert, Finance Director Karen Ellis, Police Chief Ken DeSimone, Fire Chief Keith Sanders, City Attorney Wendell Willard, Staff Attorney Kathy Williams, Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman, Director of Recreation and Parks Ronnie Young, Director of Community Development Angela Parker, Communications Director Sharon Kraun, Senior Project Engineer Jonathan Crowe, 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.

I. Welcome and Introduction

Mayor Rusty Paul provided opening comments.

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

II. Legislative Initiatives Review

City Attorney Wendell Willard provided legislative initiative reviews.

Councilman John Paulson asked if all of unincorporated Fulton County becomes incorporated, how will that affect Sandy Springs.

City Attorney Willard stated the current position that Fulton County has taken is the right to pave those streets in unincorporated areas using general funds as opposed to special tax district funds. This is a discussion that has gone on for years in Fulton County. With the new Fulton County Commissioners starting, they will probably recognize certain things that the county government has to provide.

III. Review of Council Adopted Priorities

City Manager John McDonough reviewed the customer service and public safety adopted FY2015 priorities for the City. He suggested a potential new additional priority of sustainable growth.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked if Sandy Springs has ever looked at providing a 311 service like other cities as an option to calling the City's main number.

City Manager McDonough stated this option was discussed about one year ago, but no major decisions were made. The City of Atlanta uses 311, but there are issues with the service areas.

Councilman John Paulson asked about the City services survey that was conducted in 2010 and when the next survey will be conducted.

There was a consensus of Council that a customer service survey should be conducted every five years.

Police Chief Ken DeSimone reviewed the Public Safety police priority.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated the City should ensure there is a good relationship between the Police Department and the community, so there is a level of trust. The community should have confidence in the City's police force knowing they are being treated fairly and not being subjected to arbitrary behavior.

Councilman Graham McDonald asked if more information can be distributed to the residents about how the Police Department offers home checks for residents out of town.

Police Chief DeSimone responded yes. He encouraged all Councilmembers to include this information in their weekly newsletter.

Fire Chief Keith Sanders reviewed the Public Safety fire priority.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked where the City is at choosing a new location for Fire Station 2 and the Fire Department headquarters office.

Fire Chief Sanders stated staff has looked at three or four potential sites.

Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman reviewed the transportation priority.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked how many miles of sidewalks and roads have been built and resurfaced since the City's inception.

City Manager John McDonough stated the number is around 150 miles for resurfacing and about 20 miles of sidewalks have been built.

Councilman Andy Bauman stated regarding the I-285 project, a number of people have brought up the noise, which is a GDOT issue. He asked if staff can remind GDOT about the noise issue. He asked if there is an update on the new Atlanta Braves stadium.

City Manager McDonough stated there is a meeting planned to be held in February regarding the transportation impacts in this area.

Mayor Paul stated staff needs to be cognizant of the cost of projects increasing.

Director of Recreation and Parks Ronnie Young reviewed the recreation and cultural enhancement priority.

Councilman Andy Bauman stated he loves the joint programs for the schools and shared use of facilities. He asked if it has been shown that the City has partnerships with the schools.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling suggested there could be a sign that says “provided by the City of Sandy Springs”.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated at the Chattahoochee River south of Riverside Drive the City has a pavilion where the grass is overgrown. He asked if there is anything that can be done by incorporating cleaning up this area with the Abernathy Greenway project. There is a beautiful vista of the river, but this is also an unsightly area.

Director of Recreation and Parks Young stated a couple of times staff has cleared the brush.

Mayor Paul asked that this area be maintained.

Councilman Graham McDonald stated the Old Riverside Park was included in last year’s budget. He asked if there is ambiguity with the City is moving forward with the park at this point.

City Manager John McDonough stated there is no ambiguity, but just a matter of the timing for the park. The City’s intent is to get the community engaged in the process in 2015.

Councilman Tibby DeJulio asked about the new park on Abernathy and the utilization of the park. He asked if the parking is sufficient.

Director of Recreation and Parks Young stated the parking is not sufficient. Some individuals have been parking on Wright Road when the parking lot is full.

Councilman DeJulio asked if the option of converting the property on Wright Road into a parking lot needs to be looked at again.

Director of Recreation and Parks Young stated that can be done when the design board begins working with the City in the next couple of weeks.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling stated there is room to add about thirty-four parking spaces.

Councilman McDonald stated all of the neighborhoods will feel the effect of overflow parking. It would be a good idea to have the design team come up with a number of possibilities that include attractive uses for that parcel that can coexist with the parking.

Councilman John Paulson stated a couple of weeks ago he and Director of Recreation and Parks Young spoke about the Spalding Drive park near River Exchange. He suggested to the Conservancy and Leadership Sandy Springs that they do volunteer work in this area during the “For a Better Sandy Springs Day’ in April. The organizations thought it was a great idea.

City Manager McDonough reviewed the natural resource protection, community appearance, downtown development, economic development, and sustainable growth priorities.

Councilman Sterling stated using the tree canopy study staff originally spoke about breaking the results down into stormwater basins and finding specific locations where the tree canopy was lost in the neighborhoods. He asked how staff can use the tree canopy study as a tool.

Director of Community Development Angela Parker stated using the tree canopy study has been discussed at a previous Work Session.

Councilman Sterling stated he wants to be able to use this tool to address issues in neighborhood areas. The economy is now picking up and the City will be losing more tree canopy in Districts 3, 5, and 6 due to construction. He would like to know how the City can prevent the tree canopy loss before it occurs. This could be similar to the tool the City is using to figure out where it is best to place stormwater devices. The City has tree money to spend on pretty trees versus having a plan to plant the trees in a place where they will have the best affect on the environment. He wants to be able to measure where the City is losing tree canopy, where it is being replaced, and how it is best affecting the environment. The City is currently focusing on beautification and he would prefer the City also focus on environmental protection.

City Manager McDonough stated that can also be addressed through the use of tree funds.

Councilman Sterling stated he would like a system in place for tree canopy similar to the road ranking system.

Councilman Paulson asked about the number of complaints.

Director of Community Development Parker stated staff is receiving fewer complaints.

IV. Update on Organizational Structure

City Manager John McDonough presented the new organizational chart.

V. Mid-Year Budget Review

This item was postponed to the February 3, 2015 Work Session agenda.

VI. Growth and Development Discussion

City Manager John McDonough presented the current environment.

- Overview of Current Conditions

Director of Community Development Angela Parker presented the following items.

- Sandy Springs The Next Ten Years
- Comprehensive Plan Update
- Roswell Road Redevelopment Planning Process

Councilman Ken Dishman asked why the north side of Sandy Springs was not included in the initial scope of reviewing areas along the Roswell Road corridor.

Director of Community Development Parker stated there are 15 nodes in Sandy Springs. She highlighted the PCID node because this is an area where development is occurring faster.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling stated developers are encouraged to develop in the north area of the City.

City Manager John McDonough stated staff is looking at addressing the most challenging areas from a development standpoint.

Councilman Tibby DeJulio asked if would it make sense to have a study done similar to the Goody Clancy study before the City's Comprehensive Land Use Plan is reworked. It seems like developers are coming to the City with apartment complex proposals with some retail and restaurant uses. The developer is leading the City instead of the City leading the developer on what the Council prefers to see. He believes part of this is because the City does not have a vision. The City should consider hiring a company to create a concept of what Council wants to see in the future, so more time is not lost.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated he agrees and he believes this is what staff is leading towards.

City Manager McDonough stated the process needs to be put together where a community involvement component is included. These are major undertakings that will take time to achieve. If Council agrees with the priorities and processes, staff will come back to Council with suggestions.

Councilman Andy Bauman asked how the bicycle and pedestrian plan fits into what staff is currently looking at for the City's future.

City Manager McDonough stated the bicycle and pedestrian plan fits in the City's future plan. An example is the Park 225 project for connectivity, but the neighborhood did not want it. The City cannot get to connectivity for a bicycle and pedestrian plan if the community is not involved.

Mayor Paul stated the City needs to communicate they want things to happen in this corridor, but it needs to be done in a way that makes sense, rather than on a case-by-case basis. This process will take involvement from the development community. Staff has done a phenomenal job listening to Council's concerns.

- Sign Ordinance
- Convenience Stores

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked if the City has any entitled convenience stores that are not in use.

Director of Community Development Parker stated there is only one property right now.

Councilman Sterling stated that property is located across the street from Moderna. He asked about the property located near I-285 on Roswell Road.

Director of Community Development Parker stated that property has NAPA Auto, which is not a convenience store, but the location does sell gas.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked if the entire presentation will be shown to the Planning Commission.

Director of Community Development Parker stated that can be done.

There was a five minute break at 11:50 a.m.

VII. City Center Update

- Design Update
 - Site/Landscape
 - Public Building Floor Plan
 - Elevation Studies
 - Residential

John Fish, Landscape Architect, with jB+a, Inc., gave the City Green presentation.

George Bushy, Rosser International, gave the Development and Floor Plans presentation.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked if certain materials of the building are more or less expensive on upkeep.

Ennis Parker, City Advisor, stated curtain walls are more expensive than brick, which will cost about \$60 - \$90 per square foot.

There was Council discussion regarding the exterior brick of the building.

Councilman Ken Dishman stated he envisioned one building, but the concept plan seems to be two buildings shoved together.

Greg Blaylock, Architect for Carter/Selig, gave the residential component presentation.

- Sustainability
- Budget & Schedule Updates

Councilman Andy Bauman stated the PAC and the residential component should relate to each other.

Councilman Gabriel Sterling asked about the decks and rooftop amenities overlooking the park and interacting with the residential component.

Mr. Blaylock stated currently that will not be part of the residential component, but it will be part of the retail and free standing restaurants.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated while the City may not want to move forward with the LEED certification, the City does want to be environmentally responsible.

Councilman Tibby DeJulio asked if the construction time frame of the project from beginning to end will be two years.

Mr. Blaylock responded yes, the time frame will be about twenty-six months.

Ennis Parker, City Advisor, stated it is expected the residential component will be open before the rest of the project.

Michael Raponi, Holder Project Executive, and Bob Campbell, Program Director with Holder Construction, gave the presentation on sustainability, construction sequence, and budget.

VIII. Other Items

IX. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the Retreat meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

Russell K. Paul, Mayor

Michael D. Casey, City Clerk