

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, February 16, 2010, at 9:10 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Sandy Springs Fire Department

1. Outdoor Warning Sirens Grant

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Jeff Scarbrough stated the Warning Sirens Grant that Sandy Springs won from FEMA is for \$425,766. State and federal will pick up all of the cost except for \$97,506, which is the City's portion. The grant is for ten warning sirens that will be used for tornado warnings. In 2007, when the staff applied for the grant there was a propagation study done through Federal Signal, one of the larger manufacturers of siren warning systems. That propagation study was based on population, topography, and geographic layout of the City, which is where the amount of ten sirens came from. The two areas of concern to focus on as the City moves forward are appearance and testing and use. For appearance the sirens will be located on the top of the Georgia Power poles above eye level, so as to not be seen when driving through the City. Technology today allows Cities to do silent testing instead of audio testing every week. Staff did not want to conduct audio testing because it conditions people to not listen to them. Staff plans to set the sirens off at least once a year during Tornado Awareness Day and if there is an issue with one of the sirens making audio testing necessary. Staff will not repeatedly set off the sirens as it is a concern to citizens. There are two basic types of sirens; the fixed siren and the rotating siren. Staff recommends the fixed siren because the rotating siren has moving parts, requires a crane to access, and there are maintenance issues, which makes it more expensive in the long run.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins asked if the City of Sandy Springs has to come up with the \$97,506.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough answered yes.

Councilmember Jenkins asked if the funds would come from the CIP budget.

City Manager John McDonough stated in the adopted budget there are funds set aside to match grants that may become available during the year.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny said she thought those funds were for non-profits.

City Manager McDonough answered no, this is a separate grant fund.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked to what extent the 9-1-1 reverse system has the capability of reaching the major proportion of the Sandy Springs population.

Assistant City Manager Noah Reiter stated the 9-1-1 center has the capability to reach the majority of the population. It wouldn't cover the people who are in public places, if they didn't have cell phones. One area the City could use some more public outreach and communication is in registering cellular telephone numbers for the system. The initial database that was purchased from that vendor brought in 34,000 landline telephone numbers. Then the City did the media campaign to get citizens to register additional phone devices and email addresses. At this time, there are 1,800 cell phones registered. That is concerning. If citizens aren't at home and they don't have access to their landline, then the City can contact only those 1,800 on their mobile phone. There is some gap, but a percentage can't be specified.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated this has been discussed a lot. Council is either for it or not. For this item she feels it is just another layer and there can't be too much safety or too much precaution. The siren is not going to be going off all the time. It is just going to be alerting citizens if there is something bad happening. She has lived by a siren for 25 years. Cherokee has its own small siren for the golf course. She is real happy to hear the siren. She has reverse 911, but it doesn't do any good when the cell phone is in the car. She thinks people have been struck by lightning on blue sky days.

Councilmember John Paulson asked if there are existing sirens anywhere in the City.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough answered no.

Councilmember Fries stated there is one at Dunwoody Club at Cherokee.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated he is in favor of the sirens. In reviewing the coverage map, there are two pockets, one in Huntcliff and one in Riverchase down by the river, that are outside the coverage area. He wants staff to make sure that coverage is provided to all residents of Sandy Springs.

Councilmember Fries added Morgan Falls Park did not have coverage.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny added a small portion of Chastain did not have coverage.

Councilmember Collins added there is a person in his district who is in this type of business. He sent an email that was forwarded to City Manager McDonough making sure the City considered certain things such as topography that affect the coverage area of the sirens, but it sounds like staff has covered that.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated staff is looking at relocating the siren at 660 Spaulding and moving it up a little, so the pocket in the middle will be eliminated. That would leave two small pockets located on the north and south end of the City. Staff will look at those and based on the stipulations of the grant, staff may have to come back to Council for funds for one more siren to get complete coverage of the City. The intent is to cover the whole City. The problem is the sirens have to overlap, which causes limits for the sirens.

Councilmember Tibby DeJulio stated he covered this topic with two groups just this week. Those groups were the Highpoint Civic Association and the other was a women's group in Highpoint. Both groups were really supportive of this concept. Cobb County and several other municipalities have these sirens now. With the current weather conditions people are realizing the need to be protected. This is a really good investment of the tax payer's dollars.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated the importance of the sirens is letting people know what they need. She asked Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough to discuss the public communication interface.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated staff will do an education program to teach people what the sirens mean when they go off. One thing he has heard repeatedly from other jurisdictions is don't make it complicated. Make it simple, so that when it goes off the citizens know what it means. The only time we are going to set them off is if the City is under a tornado warning, or a severe thunderstorm warning and a tornado watch. It will only be set off when the National Weather Service issues those or a public safety official spots a tornado.

Councilmember Jenkins stated those occurrences happen at least once or twice a week.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated there are a lot of watches, but not warnings.

Councilmember Jenkins stated if the sirens are being run that much people are going to ignore them.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked how often the sirens would go off in a normal year.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated in the last year there have been maybe three warnings.

Councilmember Jenkins stated that does not include the watches. Several times when she has had a babysitter they see watches on the news and get worried.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated the siren is limited to a warning that includes a combination of a severe thunderstorm warning with a tornado watch. The intent is to try to keep from setting the siren off too much.

Councilmember DeJulio asked how the sirens work.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated the 9-1-1 center will be responsible for setting off the sirens and there has already been conversation about the details. When the National Weather Service alert comes in for a severe thunderstorm warning with a tornado watch, then the sirens would be set off depending on the area that the National Weather Service said the storm is going to hit, which can be as specific as just the south part of the City.

Councilmember DeJulio asked if part of the alarms could be set off versus all of them.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated the sirens are controlled by zones. They would be activated from the 9-1-1 center.

Mayor Galambos stated she thinks the City is supposed to be a very modern and up to date City. She thinks the sirens are old fashioned. In terms of our notification, there are a large percentage of people that can be reached on landlines, cell phones, and radios. She thinks this is an unnecessary item. The City spends a little bit here and little bit there and pretty soon it adds up. The budget isn't going to be that beautiful in the coming year. This is one place where she thinks the City can save \$100,000.

Councilmember Jenkins stated that is why she asked if this item was going on the ranking sheet for the next budget.

Councilmember Fries stated you can't put a price on safety. She asked if the signals would go off for tornado watches.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough answered no.

Councilmember Fries asked if the sirens would go off for thunderstorms.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough answered no.

Councilmember Fries stated the golf course takes care of thunderstorms. She asked if the sirens had the ability to sound different types of noises for each type of warning.

Senior Deputy Fire Marshall Scarbrough stated those options do exist.

Councilmember Fries stated if there is a true national disaster, then a certain siren sound could be used for that purpose.

Councilmember Jenkins stated no one would know what it meant.

Councilmember Fries stated there is an education process.

Councilmember Paulson asked if sirens are passé since we live in a world of technology. Are the fire departments around the country still using sirens? If they are viable, use them. If they are out dated, don't use them.

Assistant City Manager Reiter stated he echoes Councilmember Fries' comment. No matter what group of experts, consultants, or emergency management officials across the country you ask, the first thing to go out in a disaster is mobile telephones. He has been through a couple of disasters and the cell phone was the first to go out. Redundancy and older technology is not always a bad thing. For example, when the City is outfitting the new emergency operation center at ChatComm, it will have analog telephone lines, because they don't rely on power. When you lose power, you lose voice over IP. Technology is great, but sometimes an older passé solution isn't necessarily a bad thing from a redundancy perspective.

Mayor Galambos asked if cell phones went out during 9-11.

Assistant City Manager Noah Reiter answered yes. During the black out of 2003, cell phones went out in about 45 minutes.

Fire Chief Jack McElfish stated the sirens will sometimes go off for severe thunderstorms, because the City gets some severe thunderstorms.

Mayor Galambos stated the City does get a lot of those.

Fire Chief McElfish stated the sirens may be used for severe lightning also based on how they are set up. The siren is a tool. The Council has to trust staff and let them use the tools that are out there. He worries about kids on a sports field and all of a sudden a severe storm comes up and they don't know about it.

Councilmember Collins stated this is directed mostly at people outdoors, because at home people are either on the internet or watching TV. Two examples are the golf course at Cherokee and where he coaches little league at NYO, which now has a lightning warning system. For years there could be a lightning bolt 100 feet from the baseball field and the coach would say it is two miles away and the kids keep playing. Now the only time anyone will leave the field is because the siren goes off and they have to. Most people are only going to pay attention to something very drastic like the sirens. He is glad to hear that it is not just tornados, but severe lightning also, because that is probably more of a threat in the area.

Councilmember Jenkins stated the ball fields at Morgan Falls do have lightning warning sirens.

City Manager McDonough asked if a resolution is needed to get the Warning Sirens Grant. It is within the budget and it is less than \$100,000. If there is a consensus of Council, staff can move forward.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated there probably is a consensus among Council, but there may be some people that oppose it. She suggested it go on the website and that it be announced in the regular session, so those that are against it will know about it. If the sirens will be used for lightning strikes, be sure the education includes all the different things the sirens can go off for.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with this item.

Public Works

NOTE: This agenda item (Chattahoochee River Bridge on Roswell Road) was discussed during a recess of the Regular Meeting.

1. Chattahoochee River Bridge on Roswell Road

Deputy Director of Public Works Jon Drysdale introduced Steve Acenbrack, Director of Transportation with the City of Roswell.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated there were 295 petitions online about bike riding in Sandy Springs. There are organized rides in Sandy Springs that equal 300 cycling hours per week.

Director of Transportation for the City of Roswell Steve Acenbrack stated he was joined by Kay Love, City Administrator, and David Lowe, Deputy Director of Transportation. The City of Roswell hosted a small work session for Mayor Galambos, Councilwoman Fries, and City Manager John McDonough a few weeks ago. They suggested bringing this briefing to the Sandy Springs Council. The City of Roswell received a federal earmark of about three million dollars back in 2004, and it simply said Chattahoochee River Bridge, Roswell, Georgia. It is a pot of money that was called bridge discretionary, which no longer exists. Over the last several years, Roswell has been working with GDOT and the Federal Highway Administration trying to come up with a definition on how to use this money. It is very strictly interpreted that the money must be used only on that bridge. There are currently no bicycle and pedestrian facilities on this bridge connecting Roswell with Sandy Springs. Roswell asked if they could enhance the bridge by adding bicycle and pedestrian facilities and they said yes. The bridge has two lanes in each direction; two going north and two going south. It is actually two bridges. The southbound lanes are the old arched bridge, and the new reinforced concrete bridge is the northbound lanes. The concept was to add two bridges, one on the southbound lanes and one on the northbound lanes. It would be strictly for bicycles and pedestrian use. It would tie into Roswell on the north side of the river and then into Sandy Springs in pedestrian, sidewalk, or a multiuse trail facility. That would be the scope of the project to submit to GDOT and FHA. On the north side of the river, there are historic ruins called the "Mill Ruins", which are owned by the National Park Service, and there is a trail. The bridge goes north and south and has an intersection with Riverside Drive to the east and Azalea Drive to the west, and then there's a pedestrian bridge south of there where there is a trail system that runs along the river. The concept would be that on the Roswell side they would tie into the existing pedestrian/bicycle path and then on the south side, tie into the Sandy Springs sidewalks that are currently underway.

The cost estimate for the two bridges is approximately two million dollars. They firmly intend to use all of the three million dollars earmarked. There are some restrictions on the approaches. They can't use anymore than 10 % on the approaches, so there might be a cost share. Right now they are tracking that there would be a match for this money. If that's still the case, the 20 percent match would be on the order of \$700,000. The City of Roswell suggested partnering with Sandy Springs to share this match. Roswell is moving forward with plans to eliminate the reversible lanes on Highway 9. At some point they plan to have two lanes in each direction, some landscaping, plus some pedestrian and improved bicycle facilities. Roswell is doing what they can to enhance things and it would be worthwhile for all the citizens to have safe access across the river.

Roswell is working on the match, but it is still a requirement. Things would need to move forward with some sort of a partnership, because when the concept report is completed it will ask for termini, which is the ending point in each City, and then the environmental aspects have to be looked at. Roswell's

intention is to hire a consultant to work out the details. Tonight's purpose is to bring the concept to Council and seek Council's support on moving forward in a joint way.

He showed a timeline for the project. Pending support of Council, Roswell would like to move forward with GDOT. The ground work has already been laid in District 7. It has been explained that Roswell is working on the aspects of the project. If Sandy Springs agrees to a partnership, they will move forward with the City of Roswell as the sponsor of the project, and then advertise to hire a consultant and move forward with the process.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated assuming only one bridge is built; approximately 14% of it would be in Sandy Springs. Is it anticipated that both bridges will be built and if so, what percentage will be in Sandy Springs?

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack stated Roswell is really deep into a lot of different concepts for eliminating the reversible lanes. They've hired a consultant who did some modeling and some out-of-the-box thinking. They have modeled a concept that will last 20 years into the future.

There was concern about widening the bridge for vehicle traffic. The concept for the pedestrians does not add any capacity to the bridge. They are not sure if the bridge needs to be widened right now. If the bridge ever needs to be widened, the northbound lanes would be widened. There is not anticipation to widen the southbound lanes.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked if the proposal tonight was for pedestrians or widening the lanes.

Councilmember Fries stated Sandy Springs is not interested in the pedestrian bike lanes being on both sides of the bridge, because there is a concern that it locks them in and the City will never be able to widen that bridge, if things get even worse 30 years down the road. It can only be widened on the east side, the northbound lanes. That's the newest part of the bridge and it can handle being widened. The southbound lanes, the west side, can't support the widening for vehicular traffic, so that's the side that should take the bike and pedestrian bridge.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if the match will go down because Roswell's numbers assume lanes on both sides.

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack stated the match is for the three million dollars. It would be 20% of three million dollars. If all of the money is not used the match probably does go down, but that hasn't been explored.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated if the two pedestrian bike bridges are not done then the match will go down.

Mayor Galambos stated everyone would feel better about coming to some conclusion if the Council had a more definitive proposal of what is proposed to be done.

Councilmember Fries stated she was disappointed to see the two bike bridges and she could not support two bridges. She only supports the bridge on one side. She stated that per Director of Public Works, Tom Black, the funds are available in the budget. She likes the connecting possibilities for Island Ford and Morgan Falls. This is a great way to connect Sandy Springs to the abundance of Roswell parks.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins stated she is in support of one side of the bridge also. She asked what Roswell is specifically asking Council for. Do they want \$350,000 from the City of Sandy Springs to cover half of the match?

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack answered yes, that would be Roswell's going into position.

Councilmember Jenkins stated Roswell needs to be real specific on the amount needed because budget talks are coming up.

Councilmember Fries asked if there was time for this item to go through the budget process.

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack answered yes. The earmark has been sitting for several years. It may not be their number one priority, but it is sitting there with their name on it waiting on them to reach an agreement and then move forward. A lot of the questions being asked are the same ones the Roswell City Council has. His recommendation is the same as he would give to the Roswell Council, which is if Sandy Springs Council agrees to the concept, then they can get a consultant on board to work through the details.

Mayor Galambos asked what percentage of the square footage of the total amount of construction work will be in Sandy Springs.

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack stated the City limit of Roswell is actually the southern shore of the Chattahoochee River. They calculated by square footage that 86% of it will be in the City of Roswell and 14% of it will be on the Sandy Springs side.

Mayor Galambos stated there is a strong consensus that Council wants to accommodate this in some way. She does not think there is a total consensus to pay 50%.

Councilmember Jenkins stated she is willing to pay 50% to ride her bike over to Roswell and enjoy all of Roswell's trails and parks.

Councilmember Fries stated she is also willing to pay 50% to ride her bike over to Roswell and enjoy all of Roswell's trails and parks.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated there is a \$300,000 savings from the Astro Turf, which would be a way to accelerate this. She is in support of connectivity for bike trails. This trail meets that threshold and she is open to the 50%.

Councilmember DeJulio stated he believes the consensus of the City Council is that they all think it's a great idea and would like to see something like this proceed, but before committing to any type of dollar amount or percentage amount, more definitive plans and concepts need to be drawn up. Roswell has been sitting on this earmark for four years. How long can you sit on an earmark?

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack stated they are actually a little worried about that. With the state of the Federal Government right now, they are afraid of two things: the federal government will be looking for earmarks that haven't seen any movement; and the fact that the Federal legislation now has lapsed and it is in a restatement period. That bridge discretionary funding program is dissolved. It would be incumbent to reach a general agreement for him to take back to the Roswell Mayor and Council, and perhaps draft a joint resolution with some finer points included. He is looking for Sandy Springs Council's consensus to take this forward to GDOT to let them know that Roswell is actively moving forward with the earmark, so they don't take it away.

Councilmember John Paulson stated there is a traffic problem on this bridge. He would hate to see both sides of the bridge hemmed in with bike lanes to the preclusion of another traffic lane. Also, if this is only 14 % on Sandy Springs side, why not just pay 14% of the \$725,000 match money that is required.

Councilmember Fries answered Roswell thinks that the Sandy Springs residents will take advantage of this much more than the Roswell residents will. She agrees 100%.

Mayor Galambos stated Mr. Acenbrack can take back a positive message to the Roswell City Council.

Councilmember Fries asked if there was a binding dollar amount on the resolution he did with Alpharetta. Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack answered it was really specific. In the case of West Side Parkway, because it straddles Roswell and Alpharetta, they did a similar agreement. Roswell was the lead agent, hired the consultant, and paid 100% of the design of the entire corridor including the part that was in Roswell and Alpharetta. Alpharetta came up with right-of-way dollars, which ended up not being enough, so they got the CID and some other people involved to cover their match. Then the federal dollars were obtained to do the rest of the construction.

Councilmember Fries asked if he would need to move forward somewhat to get the design cost.

Roswell Director of Transportation Acenbrack answered correct; Roswell's consultant partners will do the design cost. Roswell also has a lot of questions as to how this will work out. He will take the Sandy Springs Council's concerns back to the Roswell City Council and GDOT.

Grant Administrator

1. Update on Approved Solid Waste Haulers

Grant Administrator Eden Freeman stated she contacted all 23 approved solid waste providers in the City and broke them down as residential providers and the commercial providers. The vast majority of the providers within Sandy Springs provide commercial services. There are eight residential providers which provide services at a similar cost. Most of the companies offer recycling, but they do charge a fee for it. She asked the providers if the recyclable materials get mixed in with the trash or if they are taken to a recycling facility. They all stated they are taken to a recycling facility and if the facility name was given, it was included in the Council's material. 1-800-GOT-JUNK only does junk collection. There are four commercial and construction-oriented haulers that charge by the volume and type of trash they are collecting. There are two providers who are no longer providing service in Sandy Springs. All haulers have to register with the City by March 20, 2010.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins stated the information is excellent and asked if it could be posted on the website.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated her provider is listed and the amount she pays does not match the amount listed. She asked if the providers were asked what they are currently charging as a snapshot in time.

Grant Administrator Freeman answered yes, that is exactly what she asked for. She did have one provider go into a lengthy educational discussion on what makes their fees go up.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated she was delighted to see the numerous residential companies listed. She was afraid that there could be a monopoly situation.

Councilmember John Paulson asked if the fee column is the monthly or quarterly cost.

Grant Administrator Freeman answered some costs are monthly and some are quarterly.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated if this information is posted on the website, be sure it states that the City has no control over the rates.

Grant Administrator Freeman stated she would update the information to show all fees on a quarterly basis.

Councilmember Chip Collins asked if the contact information will also be posted on the website.

Grant Administrator Freeman stated if Council would like, she can give the contact information for the providers who gave her the information.

Councilmember Paulson asked if those people knew this would be public information.

Grant Administrator Freeman stated she didn't specifically say to them it would be public information, but she did tell them it was for information to present to Mayor and Council.

Councilmember Fries stated the contact information for most of the vendors is already listed on the website.

Mayor Galambos stated it is good to know that there are so many residential companies in the area.

Councilmember DeJulio stated he can see what he is paying for the service compared to what other neighborhoods are paying.

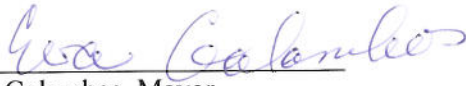
Grant Administrator Freeman stated one thing all the providers stated is that they will give a much more competitive price if there is a group of homeowners that would like to go in together.

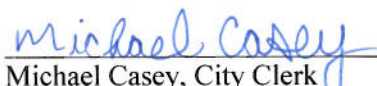
Councilmember Fries stated that is a good thing for Community Service Manager Dan Coffey to mention to the homeowners when they have their quarterly meetings.

Mayor Galambos stated this would also be a good handout during those meetings.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Date Approved: July 13, 2010


Eva Galambos, Mayor


Michael Casey, City Clerk