

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, March 16, 2010 at 7:27 p.m., Mayor Eva Galambos presiding.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Recreation & Parks

1. Hear an Update on the Bluestone Building Design Process

City Manager John McDonough stated this is a status update on the progress of the design process. This item was budgeted in the FY10 budget.

Recreation and Parks Director Ronnie Young stated for the past six months he has had the pleasure of representing the City with the Heritage Steering Committee and the Sizemore Group, the design engineering firm. He introduced Paul Hass and Bill de St. Aubin.

Sizemore Group, Bill de St. Aubin, stated they have completed the design development, which is where all the design decisions have been made, and worked with Ronnie Young and staff to get a budget together. They sat down with Staff to make sure everyone was comfortable with the decisions and they walked through all the design drawings and then addressed any concerns. The next step is to do the construction documents and put it out for bid. In viewing the site plan, on level one a wraparound porch is added and an overlook deck area. There is storage in the lower level, but a new storage building is being added with back and forth access. There was parking added in the front of the building. The upper floor is primarily done except for the deck. The new construction would be the wraparound deck and some construction in the bathrooms related to the mechanical systems, but nothing major. The lower level is where the most work is being done. It will be a large ballroom with a warming kitchen, green room, a place for cold storage, and adequate restrooms. The storage area is built in a way that would gain space for food service, if necessary. They are maximizing every inch of the building. He then showed pictures of how it would look from the outside view. He asked Council their opinion about the stonework on various areas of the building. He showed a slide with the different seating ideas for the deck by setting the tables up in different ways. The budget in the beginning was \$1.5 million, but with all the items it looks like it will be \$1.4 million with a 10% contingency. There is one line item to think about, which is the LEED certified paperwork in the amount of \$50,000 in order to get the plaque stating it is a recognized green building. The building will be built to be green, regardless of the plaque.

Councilmember John Paulson asked about parking.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated the very first page of the site plans shows the parking.

Councilmember Paulson asked if there is parking in the back.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated no, the back is not affected much, because there is an island in the back, so all the parking that is there stays the same. The only parking affected was up front. Some spaces were added up front and then there was a space lost on the side.

Mayor Eva Galambos asked how many total parking spaces would the facility have.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated he wasn't sure how many spaces the facility had.

Councilmember Paulson stated there is seating for 250 people. He asked where they would park.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated he challenged his client early on about this issue. They have an agreement with a church to use their parking.

Mayor Galambos stated there is shared parking in the City's ordinance, but there needs to be provisions made for the shared parking and it needs to be in writing.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated it is a legitimate question.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated the City has seen enough with the festival and other things how upset the businesses in the area get when their parking is utilized. We need to be sensitive of that.

Sizemore Group, Paul Hass, stated the Heritage Green site has about 80 or 90 spaces between the grassed in area, a portion of the parking lot they own that is available by the strip center, and the area behind the building. Above those spaces, there is an agreement with the Methodist Church. In addition, the new streetscape project will allow them to connect to the Target parking lot.

Mayor Galambos stated the Target lot is going to be used for something else.

Mr. Hass stated there was some existing berm carved out to create an additional five spaces. They are maximizing the lot to the best of their ability.

Mayor Galambos stated the building and the plan is delightful.

Councilmember Fries stated she likes the wider veranda and the first version of the backside of the building with the columns going up in the back.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated the wider veranda causes two of the parking spaces to be lost. The area that shows the four to five compact parking spaces would become two parallel parking spaces when using the wider veranda.

Mayor Galambos cautioned to be very careful about giving up parking.

Councilmember Chip Collins asked if twelve feet on the back and ten feet on the side could be constructed so it would not affect those parking spots.

Mr. de St. Aubin stated he would have to see if it affects the geometry for the tower on the corner before he could give a definite yes.

Councilmember Collins stated that is where the seating would be.

Councilmember Fries stated she is concerned with anyone who may use the ballroom area for an event, like a wedding, because they would be looking out the windows at a parking lot, when they rented a beautiful garden area.

2. Update to the Hiking Trail Research at the Overlook Park Bluff

Recreation and Parks Director Ronnie Young stated the Recreation and Parks department had partnered with the Sandy Springs Conservancy and executive director Linda Bain in taking a look at the possibility of hiking trails on the adjacent bluff to our Overlook Park. They met with several professional landscape architects that specialize in trail design on the site and researched, investigated, and evaluated the possibility of developing these hiking trails. Linda has gone beyond the call of duty to meet with

these groups and lead these excursions in the area. He stated that he participated in one and it's a high and rough place, but it looks good for creating trails. He asked Linda to provide an update.

Sandy Springs Conservancy Executive Director, Linda Bain, stated she walked that trail ten years ago with Charlie Cochran before the City was established and it is spectacular, especially during this time of year when the river can be seen. Two years ago she went up with the master trail builder, Marian McLane, and looked to see what could be done for a rustic type of trail. She would love to see the trail as a different, more rustic, natural trail that citizens could hike through, walk around, and experience an interesting view of the river. It could be educational and absorbing in a natural way. It is a beautiful area populated with American hollies, hardwood, and with mountain laurel and rhododendron on the backside. The camp road is set back at least 150 feet, so there is no violation of any setbacks for the river. There is a 50 foot setback and a 150 foot setback for the river.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked if those setbacks count for walking trails.

Mrs. Bain stated she has had several discussions with Jim Santo at ARC and he felt we are in great shape with this trail. She has walked with four different people from four different trail companies, all recommended by the National Park Service or Georgia Power.

Councilmember Fries stated it would be a great place for an overlook, similar to national parks where they have an observation point.

Mrs. Bain stated she would love for Councilmember Fries to be part of the team when the trail is being laid out.

Mayor Galambos asked Mrs. Bain to point out on the map where she envisions the trail.

Mrs. Bain pointed the area out.

Mayor Galambos asked would there be a view towards the west of the river when the leaves are up.

Mrs. Bain answered no. There is no place on the bluff where the river can be seen when the leaves are out, but the view is fabulous overlooking the park and upstream.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins asked where the trail would start.

Mrs. Bain stated there would be two possible start sights, one by the parking lot and the other by the old road bed. It is a very steep hill with a very steep rise with a 30% grade and ADA is 2-4.

Councilmember John Paulson stated hiking trails aren't ADA.

Mrs. Bain stated she did not think the trails would be ADA, but you could get a 7-10% grade.

Councilmember Fries stated there is nothing wrong with a little steepness and a little exercise.

Mrs. Bain stated Mr. Young has some safety concerns as well with children coming over the wall.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked if it would be a loop.

Mrs. Bain stated yes, it would be a loop, but to make it interesting there will be all kinds of loops. There is an opportunity to do so and take advantage of the terrain. The key is to put the trail in right so it drains

properly and there is minimal maintenance. Everyone she has spoken to would like to have a minimal soil, packed down trail with no mulch, like the national park.

Mayor Galambos asked if there would be a view of the dam.

Mrs. Bain stated no and asked if that is something that is wanted.

Mayor Galambos stated there is a view of the overlook going north.

Mrs. Bain stated there is a reason why it has been recommended not to put trails in that area. There is a significant Blue Heron rookery on this site. She counted twelve nests yesterday, which means there are at least two dozen birds. Georgia Power tagged the trees that were closest to the trail area and they are going to GPS it, so we are aware of their location. It makes sense to keep the trails away from the nests and try not to disturb them.

Councilmember Fries stated when walking through the national park there are deer and they have lived with all the construction. A few folks walking under the trees should not hurt.

Mrs. Bain stated there are not that many folks walking under the trees. There are some recommended setbacks, but it is easy to set them back and still have a viewing area. The rookery is particularly busy during this time of year, before trees grow leaves, nesting and laying eggs.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery asked if the green area belongs to the City.

Mrs. Bain stated it is the property line. Georgia Power has a slight variation on the boundary.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated she would love to see trails all over the green area, excluding the rookery.

Mrs. Bain stated she was advised by Audubon, DNR, and Georgia Power not to put walking trails under the nesting trees or the rookery would move.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery reiterated her point to exclude the rookery, but to make trails inside the rest of the green area.

Mrs. Bain stated the green area encompasses the developed part.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated the goal is to maximize the site with the setback for the rookery, to maximize the land that belongs to the City, and to have tie-ins to the road; because it would be a beautiful trail place.

Mrs. Bain stated there are a couple of things that are challenging on the site. There are number of dead trees that would have to be taken down. There is a wisteria problem and there is a huge problem of privet.

Mayor Galambos stated if possible, Mayor and Council would like to see the trail expanded.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated he would like to propose a counter point. He stated the City is trying to preserve green space, so there is a benefit to having part of it completely untouched. In every National and State Park there are sections that are completely off limits.

Mrs. Bain stated there can be a half mile trail here, which includes turn outs, bends and dips. It could be a very interesting and complementary asset to the park.

Mayor Galambos raised the possibility to connect the trail built by Walton Falls to the Overlook trail.

Mrs. Bain stated she loved that idea. There is a social trail there now.

Mayor Galambos stated that trail is spectacular and it should be incorporated into the design of this Overlook Park.

Mrs. Bain asked if we had permission to go onto the owner's property.

Mayor Galambos stated the City could ask.

Recreation and Parks Director Young stated they would pursue contacting the owner.

Mayor Galambos stated at one time there was a letter from the management of Walton Falls, before they sold it to Laurel, stating they would give the public access to the trail.

Public Works

1. Consideration of approval to use the remaining money from the US Department of Energy's Energy Efficiency Block Grant to purchase fiber optic cable and solar powered speed detection signs

Traffic Services Division Manager Chris Waters stated at the last council meeting Staff presented to Council the Department of Energy Block Grant where Georgia Management Agency was awarded a contract for \$260,000, which left \$160,000 in excess money in that Block Grant for the Public Works Department. Staff was asked to look into purchasing some solar powered radar signs. They have come up with five options. Staff recommends option one, which is to purchase 31 of the radar signs, which would leave money to purchase some fiber optic cable.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny asked why fiber optic cable was chosen instead of another type of energy saving equipment.

Traffic Services Division Manager Waters stated fiber optics was identified in the original grant. If the City is able to expand its fiber optic network that will assist with moving traffic better which helps lower the carbon emissions. It also gives the City the ability to expand the camera network, which would also help fire and police during hazardous conditions and events.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if this would compare to putting solar panels on top of the fire stations to save on electricity.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated the solar panels were already approved for the fire stations.

Traffic Services Division Manager Waters stated the City received \$851,900 total. The Public Works Department received \$420,000 of that money, with the rest going to Community Development and that department is working with the Fire Department on the solar panels.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins thanked staff for looking into the radar signs, because it puts them at all schools that are on a road with a thirty-five mile an hour or over speed limit.

Traffic Services Division Manager Waters stated it would put them on all roads that are on the radar permit.

Councilmember Dianne Fries asked if he was referring to the radar permit that the police use.

Traffic Services Division Manager Waters answered yes.

Councilmember Fries asked why that would matter, since this equipment does not issue tickets.

Traffic Services Division Manager Waters stated it doesn't matter. He stated from the five options there was one option to do seven locations or the option to do them all. Of the five options, there were costs ranging from \$35,000 to \$175,000. Option one gives us the opportunity to do a little of both. If Staff chose to do all schools, the cost would have been \$175,000.

Councilmember Fries stated she would rather him say Staff prefers not to do them all so there are funds left over. There are so many roads where radar cannot be run for the police to slow down the traffic because of the topography. She wants to use these signs as an option to slow down the traffic.

Traffic Services Division Manager Waters stated another reason is that usually where the radars are located, there are also flashing beacons, except for two school zones. Staff is in the process of determining if one solar panel can run both the beacons and the radar.

Councilmember Fries stated she does not want it to become a policy to not use the signs in areas where police radar cannot be used.

2. Discussion of Sidewalk Policy Revision

Transportation Planner Mark Moore stated Staff has put together draft language to address some of the comments and concerns about the sidewalk policy. It is tentatively called the pedestrian access program and it would create a way to do some smaller scale, quicker turn around projects. The proposed language does not change anything in the existing program, other than to add that section into the policy. Staff is asking for Council's feedback and direction.

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny stated she thinks it is a great idea and loves everything about it, except it is not as flexible as she would like it to be. There is a street in District Six that has come before Council several times that complies with the neighborhood sidewalk policy. She realizes there are several members of Council that do not support the neighborhood sidewalk policy, because with this policy the neighborhoods agree to come up with 25% of the funding. The problem is the City has never funded any of the neighborhood sidewalk request program. Therefore, Dudley Lane is the only neighborhood that has complied with that policy and never had the sidewalk put in. She would like to include in the language that a stretch of neighborhood roadway that is not a collector, but does connect to a clear pedestrian destination, should be eligible to be considered in this program. She would like to suggest the language be adopted as submitted, with an addition to the second bullet that reads "or connect a pedestrian destination, see the next paragraph, to a collector". A roadway that is not a collector that does connect a neighborhood to a pedestrian destination would have to meet the \$50,000 threshold.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated he drives on Dudley Lane a lot and it doesn't fall within the \$50,000 limit and it would be a waste of time to try to squeeze that particular project into this policy. Dudley Lane would be better served being addressed in budget discussions for next year. When looking at some of the estimates for projects currently in process, hardly any of them fall within the \$50,000 range. He asked if \$50,000 is a realistic number for any sidewalks.

Mayor Eva Galambos stated Staff went off of what Councilmember Collins suggested.

Councilmember Collins stated yes that was on a bid of \$17,000 but he has looked at some 300 foot long projects that cost \$60,000.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins stated that was because of the slope.

Councilmember Collins stated if it is because of slope and acquisition of right-of-way, then he understands.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated the City has a price per foot for just laying it.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated the price is \$100 - \$150 per foot of sidewalk.

Councilmember Collins stated then he is ok with \$50,000. He asked to add retail center to the list of things to connect, because it would make sense to connect a neighborhood to a shopping center. He suggested changing bullet number five to read: it must form of continuous segment from either an intersection or the end of an existing sidewalk facility to another intersection or end of a sidewalk facility or pedestrian destination. Other than those comments, the policy looks great and fills a void in our current policy.

Councilmember Jenkins stated she likes the policy and thinks it's a good policy. She stated where Councilmember Collins added retail center she would like to add Marta transit.

Councilmember John Paulson stated he likes the policy also. He asked if the staff would look at sidewalks and easements and rank them or would these be projects that come to the City from the neighborhoods.

Mayor Galambos stated the point of writing the policy is to keep the items from coming before Council. If there is money appropriated, it will be used until it runs out.

Councilmember Paulson asked if it is on a first come first served based from neighborhood requests or does staff find the locations.

Transportation Planner Moore stated the projects that come up now are requests from the elected officials, neighborhoods, and items staff sees. These are all put together and then ranked. The policy would require neighborhoods to submit a letter to the City to request a project and then if they did qualify and the projects were approved by the City Manager, the money would be spent on a first come first served basis.

Councilmember Paulson asked if the staff would generate these items.

Transportation Planner Moore stated no.

Councilmember Collins asked if there was a preference on a request being submitted via email verses a letter.

Transportation Planner Moore stated staff would use their best judgment in the matter of the form of the request.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked if this would be limited to collector roads to retail and pedestrian destinations or would it be open to small segments of roads that connect to pedestrian destinations that connect to a collector.

Mayor Galambos stated there is not as much traffic or as much of a safety hazard on the small segments of road.

Councilmember Paulson stated those roads fall under the neighborhood sidewalk section.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny stated that section was never funded.

Mayor Galambos stated she met with staff when the policy considerations were discussed. It is her very firm concern that it be limited to collector or arterial streets. The City will be inundated with sidewalk requests if it is opened up and there is not enough money. Until further decisions are made on how the City is going to spend money, we need to be very careful on opening the door to wide spread requests for neighborhood sidewalks.

Councilmember Jenkins stated this proposal states the proposed neighborhood access program provides a separately funded annual budget allotment to be spent, so Council gets to make the decision on how much money is allotted for the program.

Councilmember Collins stated it also allows Council to prioritize the projects. Once the requests stop coming in under this policy as drafted, then the needs have been met and Council can reexamine and expand the criteria at that time.

City Council

1. Recycling Requirements at Events in Sandy Springs that Require a Special Event Permit

Councilmember Karen Meinzen McEnerny introduced Kathy Reed, the Executive Director of Keep North Fulton Beautiful. She stated this item is a discussion about looking at surrounding communities to see how they handle recycling at special events. Sandy Springs does not currently have a practice or policy related to recycling at special events. The City of Atlanta and Athens-Clarke County have recycling ordinances and requirements to recycle at special events. She is asking Council for their feedback on whether the City should add another requirement for our citizens to enhance the quality of life or have an administrative requirement in our special events permit process. The City of Roswell and the City of Alpharetta encourage, but don't require, nor do they have an ordinance for recycling.

Executive Director Keep North Fulton Beautiful, Kathy Reed, stated Athens-Clark County and Atlanta do require that recycling be provided at any event and they are the only two in the region that require it. She stated it would be a bold statement on behalf of the City in support of recycling if it became a requirement.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnerny asked how Mrs. Reed would envision the policy working for Sandy Springs.

Mrs. Reed stated anyone who applied for an event permit would be required to have recycling in addition to waste hauling at the event. In order to receive the permit, the applicant would have to have a plan in place for providing recycling and it would have to be enforceable. She stated she is not implying that the applicant go through Keep North Fulton Beautiful for recycling supplies, but they do provide the way

from home trailer, which is recycling supplies provided at no cost. The plan could also include an approved waste hauler that operates in the City.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated the applicant would show a plan or the City could provide an example plan. The applicant would need to provide a certain number of bins per the number of people at the event.

Mrs. Reed stated Athens-Clarke County and the City of Atlanta both have guidelines that are included in their policies that advise how many bins are needed for an event.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery stated if there is a consensus with Council, we can go back and determine what the requirements would be and come up with a sample. As an example, the Farmers Market would require two hours of set up time and two hours to break it down at a rate of \$25 hour. Each day, for a four hour Farmers Market would cost \$150 per event. That is an example of what it would cost for an event person to be able to provide recycling.

Mayor Galambos asked Councilmember Meinzen McEnery if she was proposing that Council write the details for that tonight.

Councilmember Meinzen McEnery answered no; she is just giving an example.

Councilmember Dianne Fries stated she does events that include recycling and she does not like the idea of mandatory recycling. She stated most of the groups that the City works with already recycle in some fashion. She feels that Council can encourage recycling through our permit process and maybe provide information on how to do so.

Mayor Galambos asked if Mrs. Reed has any experience with Sandy Springs events to indicate whether or not there is recycling.

Mrs. Kathy Reed answered yes; they provide recycling for the Sandy Spring Festival.

Councilmember Ashley Jenkins stated she does not want to make it mandatory for smaller events.

Councilmember John Paulson stated as the size of an event gets large enough, this item can be justified, but the issue is forcing the smaller events to recycle. He is not in favor of forcing the smaller events to recycle. He suggested maybe there should be a minimum threshold size before there is a recycling requirement.

Councilmember Chip Collins stated he does not have a problem with requiring recycling for certain things, but the best idea is to require recycling for events with a certain number of people.

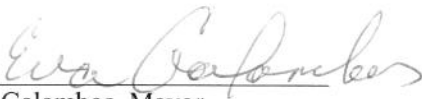
Mayor Galambos asked if recycling is required at the ball fields. She stated that if it is not, then Council needs to refer it to Ronnie Young to look into for the park.

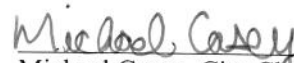
Councilmember Fries stated it is very difficult to take a head count when you are not charging.

There was a consensus of the Council to leave it up to staff to research this item further and come back to Council with suggestions.

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

Date Approved: April 6, 2010


Eva Galambos, Mayor


Michael Casey, City Clerk