

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, May 2, 2017, at 6:56 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Councilmembers present: Council Member Ken Dishman, Council Member Chris Burnett, Council Member Gabriel Sterling, Council Member Tibby DeJulio, and Council Member Andy Bauman were present. Council Member John Paulson was absent.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Public Works

1. 17-163 Consideration of Commuter Trails Concept Study (DK-418, PI0012876)

Director of Public Works Garrin Coleman introduced Bruce Landis with Sprinkle Consulting. This project is a concept for a multi-use trail and sidewalk along Peachtree Dunwoody Road that goes from Hammond Drive to Central Parkway. The area is about 3,100 feet long. The odyssey of this project goes back to 2011 with the LCI that was done in the Perimeter Center area. Subsequent to that study a follow up study was done for a commuter trail system in 2012. In 2013, PCID was awarded transportation alternative plan funds, which are called TAP funds. These funds were for \$400,000 and the PCID matched that grant with \$100,000. PCID then issued an RFP in 2014 for design purposes. The City participated in the selection of the company. The Sprinkle team was selected and the City of Dunwoody served as the project sponsor for this project, because this was a joint project across both jurisdictions at the time. In 2014, the RFP was released and Sprinkle Consulting was selected as the designer. Negotiations commenced with property owners and the project selection moved forward. We have developed an initial concept report and a concept. We do not have any construction funding identified for the project at this time. One of the aspects of the limited project report means a cost concept is developed, but you do not do anything additional.

Bruce Landis, Sprinkle Consulting gave the PCIDs Commuter Trails System Peachtree Dunwoody Road Pathway, Hammond Drive to Central Parkway PowerPoint presentation.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling stated by looking at the map there is a tremendous amount of right-of-way that will need to be obtained, because there is a lot of greenspace. He asked if the landowners agreed to that.

Mr. Landis responded yes. Many of the property owners want their homes near the trails and walkways.

Council Member Sterling stated the City has been moving their trails and sidewalks through existing trees. He asked if the plan is to plant larger trees that will have a bigger canopy on the interior section of the inner greenspace area.

Mr. Landis responded yes. We are looking for a protected area and shade for the users in a way that does not interfere with trucks and other vehicles on the roadway.

Director of Public Works Coleman stated the purpose of this presentation is to show Mayor and Council this concept to see if there are any topics that need to be discussed before moving forward with the public information meeting. Staff will move forward with that on June 1st.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with the concept plan.

Police Department

2. 17-164 Revisions to False Alarms Policy

Police Chief Ken DeSimone gave False Alarm Ordinance PowerPoint presentation.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked if there are many particular alarm calls that the officers do not respond to, because they are repeat false alarm calls.

Police Chief DeSimone stated there are several of them that occur each week and they are easily identified by address.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio asked if the users would no longer be required to register their alarm systems.

Police Chief DeSimone stated the alarm company would be required to file the alarm registration. He referenced the fine schedule on page six.

Council Member Sterling asked what the registration fee for registering an alarm is.

Police Chief DeSimone stated there is no registration fee.

Council Member Chris Burnett stated the fine for three to five false alarms is presently \$50 and that would be changed to \$250. He asked if that fine would then be incurred by the alarm company versus the business or homeowner.

Police Chief DeSimone responded yes.

Council Member Sterling asked what we are defining as an individual site. For example, a shopping center may have eighteen sites on it and five of them may be handled by one Alarm Company.

Police Chief DeSimone stated it would be differentiated by the suite number.

Council Member Sterling asked if this can be done under the State law and if the City is allowed to go after the companies directly for the false alarm fines.

Fire Chief Keith Sanders stated this has already been implemented in Savannah, GA.

Police Chief DeSimone stated there is State law that covers the alarm topic, which is O.C.G.A 43-14-8.1.

City Attorney Wendell Willard stated the list of all the individuals licensed through that particular company would be subject to the open records law.

City Manager John McDonough stated he is not sure it is any different than people currently registering their alarms.

Council Member Sterling stated the issue is people could find out who does not have an alarm by submitting an open records request.

Council Member Burnett asked if these fines would only be imposed for those whose alarms are not registered.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated the fines would be for those who have false alarm violations.

Council Member Burnett asked if we could face the law of unintended consequences when alarms are set off beyond the control of the alarm company or property owner. Some business alarms are set off by lightning.

City Manager McDonough stated there is an appeals process that anticipates such occurrences.

Police Chief DeSimone stated hazardous weather events are taken into consideration in the appeals process.

Council Member Burnett stated if the fine increases and shifts to the alarm company, the alarm companies would likely pass that fee onto the homeowners and increase monitoring fees.

Police Chief DeSimone stated or the alarm companies will get the problem fixed.

Council Member Sterling stated or it could be a combination of both.

Council Member DeJulio stated many of the alarm companies operate off of the internet or telephone lines. Some of the companies could be located in Oklahoma or Ohio. He asked how the City will collect money from these companies that are located out of State or out of the country.

Police Chief DeSimone stated the fines would be collected the same way as if someone drives through the City and receives a traffic citation. Staff will do their best to collect the fines through the mail. If the company does not pay, the property owner will be placed on a do not respond alarm list.

City Manager McDonough stated the false alarm system does not work as it is currently structured. We also know that alarm companies have a business because of the apparatus that the citizens pay for.

Mayor Paul stated you also see how those systems and the failure to monitor them properly is costing the City's taxpayers money. He cannot justify the City spending that amount of money on false alarms calls. When the City first started ChatComm, he thought it would have been a good idea to create their own alarm company. At least the City would have the money to respond to the false alarms.

City Manager McDonough stated that may be the next step. The City wants to give the private industry another opportunity to correct these issues.

Mayor Paul stated the City can also consider contracting with a company to provide alarm services to the residences. There would be revenue coming in to offset the cost of these false alarms. If the alarm systems are not properly functioning, the City needs to recoup the cost of responding. We hope to do this by increasing the fines.

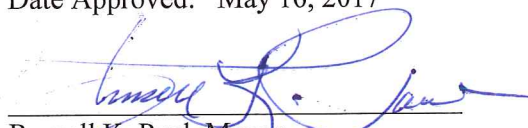
Police Chief DeSimone stated the biggest issue now is verified alarms and verified response. With the technology in the newer alarm systems, you know when someone has broken into your home, because there is video, audio, or both. Many of the old alarm systems do not have those features and those are the systems causing repeat problems. With the newer technology, a verified alarm is very easy to do. With some commercial systems you can operate the alarm system over your smart phone.

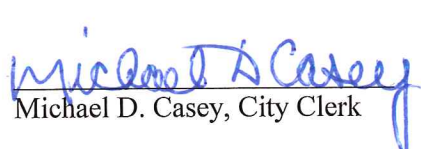
Mayor Paul asked if there is any objection from Council to staff proceeding with preparing an ordinance for this item.

There was a consensus of Council to finalize the false alarms policy and bring it back at a future City Council meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Date Approved: May 16, 2017


Russell K. Paul, Mayor


Michael D. Casey, City Clerk