

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, May 16, 2017, at 6:59 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

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

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Economic Development

1. 17-178 Incentive Policy Update

Economic Development Director Andrea Worthy gave the Incentive Policy Update PowerPoint presentation.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked if the proposed incentives for retail and hospitality business would be identified by parcel or region.

Economic Development Director Worthy stated they could be identified as a portion of the Comprehensive Plan.

Council Member Andy Bauman asked if there would be a wage requirement for the retail and hospitality incentive.

Economic Development Director Worthy stated she does not recommend a wage requirement for those categories.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio stated if the City is going to give an incentive to a company to relocate to Sandy Springs, their mailing address has to be Sandy Springs.

Council Member Ken Dishman asked if the affordable housing incentive policy should be re-examined in conjunction with the other work that is being done on the Next10.

Assistant City Manager Jim Tolbert responded no. We were in the middle of the Next10 project when the new impact fee policy was adopted. Staff was aware of this moving forward and the policies are consistent.

Council Member John Paulson asked if the 120% of annual median income is already part of the policy.

Economic Development Director Worthy responded yes.

Council Member Paulson asked if she has spoken to any developers about the proposed policy.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated he does not think this policy has been promoted, yet. Once the policy is adopted, staff can distribute the information. The policy has been in place for six months. We have not had any projects come to the City who have utilized this policy. This is a tool, if we can start promoting it, especially in the redevelopment areas.

Council Member DeJulio stated there must be talk on the street, because he received a call from someone in Chicago looking to buy an apartment complex on Ison Road. They wanted to improve the complex and stated they would use 20% for affordable housing and for the remainder of the units the rents would be increased.

Economic Development Director Worthy stated she thinks that number is an industry standard.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated that phone call had nothing to do with impact fees. He was applying for tax credits and the Federal program required that.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated in some respects the City's incentive package reflects the Federal program with percentages.

Economic Development Director Worthy stated this is just one piece of the bigger pie. The City's incentives are a smaller piece of other incentives that may be offered at the county or state level, specifically with job types of incentives. There are other things for housing incentives besides waiving monetary fees.

Council Member Andy Bauman asked if an incentive exists for companies that relocate in the City and have employees that live in the City. One of the City's goals is to have people live closer to their work.

Economic Development Director Worthy stated she is not aware of one. She can do more research on that.

Mayor Paul stated there has been a lot of effort through the years to try and figure out how to get the businesses and employees to relocate to Sandy Springs. No one has come up with a plan as of yet, other than the employer providing financial incentives to the employees.

Council Member Bauman stated the things the City has asked companies for in the past relates to subsidizing MARTA.

Mayor Paul stated what we are finding is that the existence of housing close to the high volume job centers does have an impact. People do tend to move into these areas. This is more about how do we incentivize redevelopment in areas where we want redevelopment. That is why Economic Development Director Worthy is working to target these more than just a general incentive program that anyone can get. These would be targeted in areas where redevelopment is desired and where we want a mix of retail and residential. No one will do a project just because these incentives exist. When you do these projects, layered financing becomes crucial.

Council Member Bauman stated he was referring to the basic corporate relocations in the Perimeter area. Large businesses are moving to this area. He understands that housing and redevelopment are two separate items.

Council Member Chris Burnett stated new units have been built in the Perimeter area in recent years. He wonders if City staff can meet with the apartment owners and get some statistics on where the residents are coming from. He asked if the desired result from building residential within the PCID area is having the effect of getting people off the roads. The other question is are these people moving into the areas where they work.

Mayor Paul stated Assistant City Manager Tolbert's department has done research on this and still has work to do.

Assistant City Manager Jim Tolbert stated staff has had a great deal of difficulty getting a lot of the apartment owners to share that information. The numbers are significant, in the range of 30%, of people working somewhere near where they are living in the PCID or getting on MARTA and going somewhere else.

Mayor Paul stated he spoke to a woman that lives in the Perimeter market and works in Midtown. She uses the train to commute to work. One of the City interns is working on gathering this information. The data the City has obtained shows that living near work is having an impact.

Council Member DeJulio stated that when he asked about this several months ago, he was told that the Fair Housing laws would not allow the City to ask tenants where they work in relationship to where they live.

Mayor Paul stated he is not familiar with that law. To be able to qualify for Federal assistance, you have to provide the Housing Department with a significant amount of economic data. Staff is still working to try and get that data.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward and bring the Incentive Policy back to Council at a future Regular meeting.

City Attorney

2. 17-179 City of Sandy Springs Ordinance – Article IX Precious Metal Dealers

City Attorney Wendell Willard stated there is a company in Atlanta that would like to relocate to Sandy Springs. They are a dealer of items that are located under the category of precious metals, specifically watches. The company trades, sells, and buys expensive watches. The only thing the City has as far as an ordinance is the one for pawn shops. The business does not want to be under that category, because of some of the things that are required such as fingerprinting and photos.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated this business is not a pawn operation. They buy and sell watches.

City Attorney Willard stated the buying and selling is not done on site. There is no walk-in business. The business has about forty employees and is a multimillion dollar business. City staff used the Atlanta ordinance to model the Sandy Springs ordinance and that is what is before Council tonight.

Mayor Paul stated he is familiar with this business, which is a very high end company. The owner was in the City previously and would like to relocate back to the City. These watches are Rolexes or even higher end.

City Attorney Willard stated this ordinance will also cover those that are buyers and traders of gold and silver.

Council Member John Paulson stated the definition states that dealers are any person engaged who exclusively or incidental to or in connection, is engaged in the business of purchasing precious metals or goods. There is no mention of selling in the resolution. He asked if the businesses sell, too, and if there is a requirement that a business has to buy and sell.

City Attorney Willard stated there is selling. Staff will check the wording, but he thinks the language listed as buying will cover that.

Mayor Paul stated this business is different than a pawn shop, because a pawn is a loan. The object is the collateral for the loan. This is not a loan at all. This is an outright purchase.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling stated this could apply to the gold brokers as well. One of the issues we have seen in the last three to four years is a lot of theft of these gold items. We were talking about treating these businesses like the pawnshops, such as requiring fingerprinting for on location purchasing. He does not want to create a lack of regulatory oversight over businesses that are more inclined to be criminal, like the gold purchasers.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with the proposed ordinance.

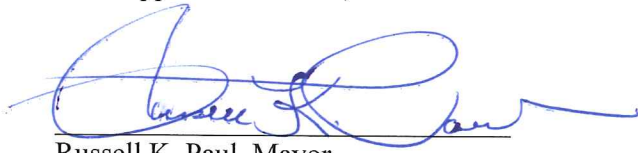
There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

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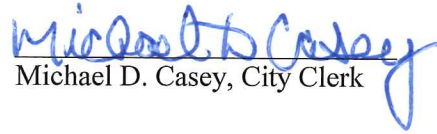
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Date Approved: June 6, 2017

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Russell K. Paul, Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Casey", written over a horizontal line.

Michael D. Casey, City Clerk