

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, September 3, 2019 at 6:02 p.m., Mayor Rusty Paul presiding.

Mayor Rusty Paul welcomed guests present at the meeting including Georgia State Senator Kay Kirkpatrick, State Representative Deborah Silcox and Kevin Able, Georgia Department of Transportation Representative.

Invocation – Reverend Bill Murray, Holy Innocents’ Episcopal Church

Council Members present: Council Members: John Paulson, Chris Burnett, Jody Reichel and Andy Bauman, Steve Soteres, Tibby DeJulio.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Administration

1. **19-290** Georgia Department of Transportation gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding the GA 400 Managed Express Lanes Project

Mayor Rusty Paul remarked that GDOT has been very open to working with the City of Sandy Springs and that there will be challenges. He commended GDOT for coming to the table in trying to work through this massive project with a lot of moving pieces.

GDOT Representative Tim Matthews, P.E. began a high level update on the project, in particular the area in the Northridge community. The project limit begins at the North Springs MARTA Station, with 2 lanes in each direction of express lanes, mostly in the center. These lanes will extend all the way to McGinnis Ferry, 2 lanes in each direction. Then one lane in each direction from McGinnis Ferry to McFarland Parkway.

This went out to the public in a series of PIOHs (Public Information Open House) meetings in February – March, 2019 timeframe; there were about five (5) of those meetings. These meetings resulted in good feedback from the community with over 1200 attendees and 500 plus comments. The next round will be when the public gets a look at the layouts, based on changes made since the last meetings. This is part of the NEPA document (the environmental document process) that has to be approved by the Federal Highway Administration, Georgia Division.

Recognizing the concerns heard at the PIOH meetings, the response from the City, and listening to the schools, an alternative was derived that brings the express lanes under Northridge, but requires a shift to the east on 400. Northridge was replaced several years ago as a new interchange and it does have the width underneath to accommodate the express lanes; however, it is restricted in the location due to the columns that are located there. There is a spot to the east of 400, underneath Northridge. It would have new impacts as it does encroach onto some properties that were not impacted before. There is a small portion of this that is a little closer to the schools and GDOT is committed to working with the schools to work out any issues or concerns. Additionally, there is still a lot of environmental work to be completed and refinement of the alternatives.

He reiterated that these are design-build projects, versus design-bid-build, which means GDOT does not design them to 100%. The design is done to about 30-35% (to know the environmental risk, utility risk and ROW risk) then it is given to a developer to do the final design. The developer also does a NEPA (or environmental re-evaluation) that addresses any changes that they made.

Through the series of PIOH, there was also feedback received on the Pitts Road bridge replacement. There were two (2) alternatives shown. One showed (1) staged-construction (which means Pitts Road would be open during the construction phase) and the other (2) closed Pitts Road and offered a detour. The next step is to recognize if the choice is stage-construct and Pitts Road is left open, there is going to be significant ROW impacts that could include displacement of up to 4 homes. The goal is to avoid this where possible.

If there is a detour of Pitts Road then issues have to be mitigated from an Emergency Management prospective. Additionally, it would require coordination with the public school system to understand bus routes. There will be a *Public Detour Open House* meeting showing what the detour looks like.

There will be additional PIOH meetings sometime next year where draft environmental documents will be available. That's called the *Public Hearing Open House* (PHOH). The expectation is to get a contractor to begin construction sometime in 2022. This is a complex, major project so it will probably take about 5 years or so to get constructed. There will be continued community involvement, both at the public level and key stakeholder level, with cities, counties and otherwise on this project.

GDOT looks at direct impacts first on projects and tries to avoid directly impacting a unit or person. Because Northridge did not directly impact a property, it went over Northridge, it was not perceived as a concern until public feedback was received. After listening to the schools and the Council of Sandy Springs, a potential opportunity was identified to mitigate and manage some of that concern, which is 'Alternative No. 2' was developed. The goal is to move forward with Alternative No. 2. As to property displacements, as stated earlier, there may be 4 or so homes involved, but more ROW needed, south of Northridge. Mr. Matthews stated that the incentives to do this came from the public feedback. As to other open house meetings regarding Northridge and Pitts Road, generally there would not be another one, but given the community concerns, there may be a need to hold another meeting. This would be outside any policy or procedure perspective. On the topic of displacements mentioned by Council Member Burnett, Mr. Matthews stated that he was not sure if every single property owner had been contacted, even to the point where there was a specific meeting with those communities where it was concentrated. Mr. Matthews stated that GDOT does not traditionally use landscaping. He stated that they are changing from a metal wall to a concrete wall with a decorative finish.

Mr. Matthews stated that the 285 Top End Express Lanes that ultimately connect into the 400 Express Lanes was scheduled to go to the public for PIOHs in January 2020. That is when the layouts can be viewed by the public.

Council Member Paulson, thanked him very much for coming tonight and for responding to the community concerns regarding Northridge and Pitts Road. At this point, it looks like the Northridge Bridge is unchanged. Making sure that the children are safe and not jeopardized is an important aspect of this. Council Member Paulson stated he has had informal conversations with the Police and Fire Chief and that there could be alternatives that are available.

Council Member Reichel thanked Mr. Matthews for being here and always taking our phone calls and answering our questions. She brought up the concern about sound barriers or sound walls and questioned the decision process of where the sound walls are going if contractors get incentives to put them up as soon as the project begins. She also asked about whether there would be any other open house meetings before the decisions on the Northridge and Pitts Road are done.

Council Member Bauman thanked GDOT, and thanked Council Members Paulson and Reichel, who have advocated tirelessly. He wanted to be clear on the Northridge and asked if there were not two best cases or is the goal to move forward with alternative no. 2, which will now take the fly-over and eliminate it and the express lanes where 400 goes under Northridge. He asked about the property displacements for Alternative No. 2. He also asked if there has been pen-to-paper on the potential savings, as one of the incentives, to come up with and consider Alternative No. 2.

Council Member Bauman asked Mr. Matthews about the 285 Top End Express Lanes.

Council Member Burnett questioned whether GDOT has been in touch with all of the property owners that could potentially lose their homes because of the project. He also asked about landscaping along the sound barrier or sound walls, adjacent to the neighborhoods where homes may now be facing these barriers or walls. Council Member Burnett asked that GDOT consider landscaping in terms of neighborhoods, somehow evaluating to see if there is something to come up with to buffer the sound, i.e., trees and landscape and to make it look more attractive.

Mayor Paul again thanked GDOT for coming tonight and as he had anticipated, they listened and responded. It is much appreciated; it's a big improvement from where we were.

Mayor Paul recognized State Senator Sally Harrell who was also in attendance at the meeting.

2. 19-291 Sandy Springs River Patch and Access

Assistant City Manager Jim Tolbert stated that as a reminder, the Mayor appointed a Task Force to revitalize the North End of the City of Sandy Springs. They came up with six (6) initiatives they felt were important. One of those initiatives was to access the Chattahoochee River and its public lands. Out of those, another initiative was to build a Greenline and make connections throughout the North End.

Behind this there were Requests for Proposals (RFP) issued requiring a *Public Involvement Plan* to include City staff and presenting the Mayor and City Council via multiple work sessions. Also the RFP required the Consultant to hold at least three (3) City-wide public meetings using the open house format and scheduled at the beginning and at mid-point to present recommendations. Additionally, the consultant shall meet to brief the Mayor and City Council three times (3) at generally the same stages as the public meetings. There will also be a Stakeholder Committee that the consultant group will consult with at least two (2) times during the process.

The RFP was released on June 5, 2019. On July 11, 2019, the City received eight (8) proposals. Utilizing previously stated criteria and looking only at the written materials, the Proposals were scored and ranked in accordance with the following three (3) top rank firms: Kaizen Collaborative, LLC, Heath and Lineback Engineers, Inc. and Rhodeside and Harwell. These three (3) firms were brought in for interviews. In bringing them in, it was requested that they go into more detail on the written materials that they had submitted.

The three (3) highest-ranking Offerors were invited to make presentations to the Evaluation Committee on July 31, 2019. In the presentations, each Offeror provided a brief overview of their firm and reviewed prior relevant experience examples. Each Offeror also responded to Evaluation Committee questions for clarification of aspects of its Proposal. The Evaluation Committee assessment was that Heath and Lineback Engineers understood the project and would provide the desired deliverables based on:

- Prior experience with similar projects working with the City and in particular building trails along a stream or river compared to the other Offerors;
- Team members representing the Trust for Public Lands and BioHabitats, both of who have experience in constructing trails with approval from the Army Corps of Engineers and the Atlanta Regional Commission;
- Team composition and experience;

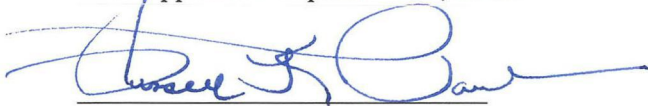
- Research done by the team prior to the interview that indicated the best understanding of the project and the uniqueness of the project, including review of historic maps and preliminary meetings with the ARC;
- Proposed level of effort equal to the requirements of the Project.
- Understanding of the broad scope of the project by providing a realistic budget to match requested outcomes.

Based upon evaluation of Proposals and interviews, the Evaluation Committee believes that the Proposal submitted by Heath and Lineback Engineers represents the best opportunity for successfully meeting or exceeding the recommendations of the Task Force Report and for fulfilling the adopted 2019 City Council priorities and recommends awarding the contract to Heath and Lineback Engineers. Their proposed cost is \$199,942.00. This is informational tonight and the goal is to bring this back to the September 17 meeting for action.

CONCENSUS OF COUNCIL bring back before Mayor and City Council at Tuesday, September 17, 2019 Meeting.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at: 6:37 p.m.

Date Approved: September 17, 2019.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Russell K. Paul", written over a horizontal line.

Russell K. Paul, Mayor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Coty Thigpen", written over a horizontal line.

Coty Thigpen, City Clerk