

Work Session Meeting of the Sandy Springs City Council was held on Tuesday, September 20, 2016, at 7:44 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.

STAFF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Development

1. 16-362 Technology Surcharges on Permit Applications to Offset Software Costs

Assistant City Manager Jim Tolbert gave a Software Costs & Surcharges for Offset PowerPoint presentation.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling asked what is the cost differential of a paper application versus an electronic one.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated he is not sure the City has analyzed what the cost is. From an environmental standpoint, paperless is the better option. Sometimes staff will receive an application with 80 – 100 pages per set of drawings.

Council Member Sterling asked if it is easier for staff to review the plans electronically.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert responded yes. Staff has been receiving electronic permit applications at the end of the review process. This allows the City to get everyone involved in the plan review process and submit their comments electronically. This is a more efficient system, compared to what the City currently has.

Council Member Sterling asked if the City can charge more for a paper submittal.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated staff had that conversation and we may want to do that further down the road, after we work out all the bugs with the City's electronic system. Staff is working on cleaning up the issues with the electronic submittals.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio stated if he recalls correctly, when the City first incorporated, we spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to get all of the City's tax records in an electronic format.

City Manager John McDonough stated the City spent a significant amount of money digitizing records.

Council Member DeJulio stated maybe the City should charge those who submit permit applications in a paper format.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated staff had that conversation and would like to come back to Council after that is studied a little more. Staff wants to make sure we are comfortable with the electronic submittal process before moving forward.

Council Member DeJulio stated these records are kept forever and the only way to keep them that long, without having an enormous warehouse, is to have them electronic and digitized.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated when someone calls the City about an old Fulton County case, the City has some of the files, but does not have all of the files.

City Manager McDonough stated staff will study this and bring a recommendation back to Council.

Council Member Sterling asked if there is a consistent software and licensing maintenance fee every year on EnerGov, or is it a onetime fee on the front end.

City Manager McDonough responded no. The annual costs are the maintenance fees.

Finance Director Karen Ellis stated the maintenance fee is about \$40,000 and then there is an escalator of about 5% that is built in for every year.

Council Member Sterling asked how long the contract is for.

Finance Director Ellis responded the contract is for as long as the City has the software.

Council Member John Paulson asked about the software that staff is looking at. Is it special software or is it standard software?

Assistant City Manager Tolbert answered the City already purchased EnerGov. The electronic drawing submittal fee will help cover the cost of the license updates.

Council Member Paulson stated when he was a practicing engineer, if he could pay \$12 and not have to drive somewhere to submit the drawings, he would have preferred to do that. He asked how many sets of drawings the City requires to be submitted.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert responded four.

Council Member Paulson stated he thinks that those who submit permit applications will not object to the \$12 fee. He is fine charging the fee for the paper permit applications.

Council Member Sterling asked what the typical charge would be if a homeowner is installing a deck.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated he would guess about \$200.

Council Member Paulson stated to keep people from submitting paper copies, he thinks that a fee is fine.

There was consensus of Council to move this item forward to a future City Council meeting.

2. 16-363 After Hours Construction Noise Variances

Assistant City Manager Jim Tolbert gave a Dealing with Construction Noise Variances PowerPoint presentation.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio stated the purpose of putting hours on construction was not for traffic or the convenience of the contractor, it was for peace, convenience, and quiet for the residents. The City should be very judicious in giving out these types of permits. If work can only be done during a certain time of the day, for whatever reason, the City may be able to consider it. We need to take into consideration our residents. The residents have a right to peace and quiet in the neighborhoods. We have to be very careful or contract work will be occurring from sunup to sunset, and the people that live in the neighborhoods will have to live with it.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated it is staff's first priority to see where the construction is taking place. If staff receives a complaint, the work will be stopped by staff. Generally, when the complaints are received they are for four hundred yards of concrete pouring and it is in July and the workers are starting when the temperatures are cool. Another complaint is when the contractor has to get access to the site. There was

one situation where one whole section of Hammond Drive needed to be shut down. Staff felt it was better to do that a couple of hours earlier to get them out of the road. Staff will check to make sure the allowed permits will not disturb citizens and wake them up from their sleep.

Council Member DeJulio stated he would like the quality of life for the residents to be a condition for this noise variance.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling stated when he has seen staff work on these variances that is always the first question, whether the work location of the permit will be in a neighborhood. These are generally along major thoroughfares. When this is brought back before Council, he would like to see the hierarchy of need to make these decisions, so that Council has a clear understanding before passing anything having to do with the fee.

Assistant City Manager Tolbert stated when there are one or two requests a month, that is not a big deal, but when it is three or four a day, that is quite a bit.

Mayor Rusty Paul stated we want to be sure this process is not being done for the convenience of the contractor, but that there is a legitimate need for the request, such as a concrete pour.

Council Member Paulson stated one way to do this is to grant a one week permit at \$250, the second week at \$500, and the third week at \$1,000. This could be done to disincentivize the contractors.

Council Member Sterling stated he believes this is a legal question. Should the City only be charging hours for doing this or can the City go beyond those hours?

City Attorney Wendell Willard answered that is allowed.

There was a consensus of Council to move this item forward to a future City Council meeting.

Public Works

3. 16-364 Hammond Drive Properties Assessment

Facilities Manager Dave Wells stated at the August 2, 2016 Work Session staff presented the consideration of use of City acquired properties for public safety employee housing. Council requested that staff implement an assessment plan for the homes purchased by the City along Hammond Drive and to report its findings. Council discussed the need to have a property management company maintain the homes and the rental fees for the City. Currently, the City owns six lots along Hammond Drive. There are homes on 3 of the lots. The homes are located on 418, 521, and 550 Hammond Drive. The City is currently in the process of purchasing 380 Hammond Drive. The engineering company that handles the Phase I inspection of the homes has also hired a certified master home inspector to give the City a home inspection of the houses. He referenced the result for 521 Hammond Drive. The house is in generally good condition and was built in 1958. Since it was built before 1978, there is a possibility it has lead based paint and asbestos. The estimated repairs from the inspection are about \$10,500.

Mayor Rusty Paul asked if those estimates would include the lead based paint or asbestos repairs.

Facilities Manager Wells responded no. There is no requirement to make those repairs, but there is a requirement to inform the tenant. One of the biggest problems with this home is the drainage in the basement. A contractor would need to review this issue and would probably have to trench around the foundation to make sure there is no penetration. For 550 Hammond Drive, the house is in extremely poor condition and was built in 1956. There are considerable signs of vermin activity, a severe cockroach infestation, and the house needs a new roof. There is also a lot of moisture in the basement. The driveway is barely drivable. Staff estimates the repairs to be about \$44,000 or more. The property at 418 Hammond

Drive was built in 1950 and is in poor condition. There is a block wall foundation, cracks in the walls, and the roof is in bad condition. 380 Hammond Drive is the property the City is purchasing soon. The home inspector will be at the property in the next couple of days to assess the property. The other inspections that have been added to the process are the erosion inspection and asbestos survey. That is what will be used for demolition, because it is required when a property is demolished. City staff is requesting direction from Council on a maximum dollar amount for repairs and if the repairs should be made or the homes demolished. Staff also needs to know a rental rate for the public safety employees, as well as a property management company to manage the repairs and the rental of the usable properties.

Council Member Gabriel Sterling stated he prefers to spend on the high end \$15,000 per home for repairs. In real life that means about \$12,500 with a \$2,500 contingency, because we have all done home repairs. They are never what you expect them to be the first time around. He does not want to start down a path and see the costs keep increasing. For a house to rent in Sandy Springs, the cost is about \$1,500. He would suggest \$500 or \$750 for a rental rate in order to help out the public safety employees and he is fine with using a management company. He wonders if it would be better for the City to spend the money for the employees to rent existing places or if it is better to use these properties for a limited time.

Council Member Andy Bauman stated if it were either-or, he would opt for a more widespread program. The City is looking at a three to five-year period for the rental of these homes and the City should not spend too much on them. If the homes can accommodate a few families, he is in favor of this at a low rental cost. He agrees with Council Member Sterling regarding the \$15,000. He hopes the City will provide some sort of opportunity or incentive for police and fire to reside in the City. Hopefully new workforce housing in the City will accommodate those employees as well.

Council Member John Paulson stated he is fine with \$15,000 as a maximum to be spent on renovations. There is one house that has potential. A rental amount of \$1,000 would be his suggestion.

Council Member Tibby DeJulio stated he prefers \$500 per month as a rental rate and \$1,000 is not unreasonable. Some of these homes have been renting in the range of \$2,000 to \$2,500 a month. If the police officers and fire fighters are able to rent the homes for \$500, he thinks the neighbors would appreciate it.

Mayor Paul stated as part of this, the City needs to figure out a selection process that is fair and equitable.

City Manager McDonough stated there is another issue that is not on the presentation. There has to be a period of time that lapses. If there are no employees interested within 90 days, he recommends demolition of the property.

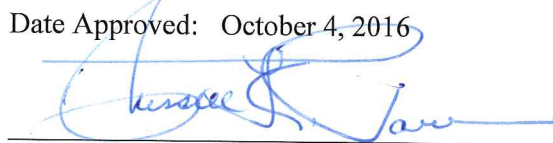
Council Member Sterling asked if the insurance questions regarding indemnification were cleared up.

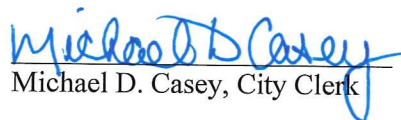
Finance Director Karen Ellis stated if the home values are about \$500,000, the cost per home will be about \$500 per year.

There was a consensus of Council to move forward with this program at a \$500 rental rate with a 2% escalator, and a maximum of \$15,000 in repairs per home. If there is no interest from City employees to rent the homes within 90 days, Council will be updated and the homes will be demolished.

There being no further discussion, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Date Approved: October 4, 2016


Russell K. Paul, Mayor


Michael D. Casey, City Clerk