

City of Sandy Springs Development Authority Meeting was held on Thursday, January 9, 2025 at 8:30 a.m., Chair Chip Collins presiding.

I. Call to Order

Chair Chip Collins called the meeting to order at 8:46 a.m.

II. Roll Call

Members Present: Chair Chip Collins, Vice Chair Andy Bauman, Member Hardy Dorsey, Member Sunny Park, Member Toshia Battle (attended by Zoom)

Members Absent: Member Joe Houseman, Member Ed Ukaonu,

Staff Present: Chris Burnett, Director of Economic Development, Madison Melton, Economic Development Specialist, Kristin Byars Smith, Assistant City Manager, Raquel González, City Clerk, Nathifa Cunningham, Assistant City Clerk

III. Approval of Meeting Agenda

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Vice Chair Andy Bauman**, seconded by **Member Sunny Park** to approve the meeting agenda. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes

DA2025-01 May 9, 2024 Development Authority Annual Meeting Minutes

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Vice Chair Andy Bauman**, seconded by **Member Hardy Dorsey**, to approve the May 9, 2024 Sandy Springs Development Authority Meeting Minutes. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

V. New Business

DA2025-02 Introduction of New Staff Member

Chair Chip Collins introduced **Chris Burnett, Director of Economic Development** and **Madison Melton, Economic Development Specialist**. We are happy to have both of them helping the City and the Development Authority Board.

DA2025-03 2025 Development Authority Annual Meeting Schedule

Director of Economic Development Burnett said the next scheduled meeting is April 10. Following that, it will be on July 10, and the final meeting of the year is October 9. These meetings are scheduled for Thursday mornings at 8:30 a.m.

Director of Economic Development Burnett said historically the Authority has met at 8:30 a.m. Is there any discussion to change that time?

Chair Chip Collins said it is not my desire to change the 8:30 a.m. time. Hopefully everyone also agrees.

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Member Andy Bauman**, seconded by **Member Hardy Dorsey**, to approve the 2025 Development Authority Meeting Schedule. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

DA2025-04 Election of Development Authority Vice Chairperson
Should the offices of Chairperson or Vice Chairperson become vacant, the Authority shall elect a successor from its membership at the next regular meeting, and such election shall be for the unexpired term of said office.

A nomination was made by **Vice Chair Andy Bauman** to elect Chip Collins as Chair. The nomination was taken in consensus.

A nomination was made by **Member Sunny Park** to elect Andy Bauman as Vice Chair. The nomination was taken in consensus.

A nomination was made by **Vice Chair Andy Bauman** to elect Nathifa Cunningham as Secretary. The nomination was taken in consensus.

DA2025-05 Review Development Authority Mission Statement and Guidelines

Development Authority Background and Mission Statement

The Development Authority provides support for desirable economic development projects in Sandy Springs by providing access to capital and other financial incentives. The Development Authority is charged with a constitutional mandate to support “trade, commerce, and industry” in Sandy Springs. The Authority is designated with the power to:

- Finance (by loan, grant, lease, borrow or otherwise) projects for the public good.
- Execute contracts and agreements.
- Purchase, lease, and sell property.
- Issue revenue bonds and notes.

Mission Statement “The primary mission of the Sandy Springs Development Authority is to support City-sponsored projects, City redevelopment and economic development goals, educational institutions or other non-profit organizations in the City by providing taxable and tax-exempt bond financing opportunities and other incentives pursuant to the Georgia Development Authorities Law.” The goal of the Authority is to market Sandy Springs as a prime location for new and expanding businesses, which is achieved by working with city staff, government leaders and other regional economic development organizations to attract development and promote job growth and the public good in the City of Sandy Springs. The Authority operates under the direction of a seven member board and meets on an as-needed basis. Members serve four-year terms and each member is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by City Council. The Development Authority is funded primarily by service and loan fees related primarily to loan/bond programs administered by the Development Authority. To apply for the incentive program through the Sandy Springs Development Authority, or for more information please contact a member of the City of Sandy Springs Economic Development staff by calling 770-730-5600.

Available Assistance and Deal Structure

The following tax abatement schedule is typical for redevelopment projects approved in Sandy Springs and has precedent in Fulton County. The schedule begins in the first year following construction of the project. The schedule may be modified if the project includes several phases over a period of years, or if additional benefit to the City development plan can be demonstrated.

- Year 1 – 50% of the taxable value of the property
- Year 2 – 55%
- Year 3 – 60%
- Year 4 – 65%
- Year 5 – 70%
- Year 6 – 75%
- Year 7 – 80%
- Year 8 – 85%
- Year 9 – 90%
- Year 10 – 95%
- Year 11 – 100%

The Sandy Springs Development Authority may choose to include a Community Benefit Clause in the structure of the final agreement. This is entirely up to the discretion of the members of the Sandy Springs Development Authority. Examples of how this clause may be satisfied include but are not expressly limited to:

- Amenities or uses for the public to enjoy as part of the project itself.
- Specific conditions on certain elements of the project, for example a requirement that new housing units be fee-simple.
- Paying a portion of the annual tax savings into a fund that supports City projects and/or goals in the surrounding area.

The applicant may also be required to pay a portion of the project cost to the Development Authority as the administrator of tax abatement.

Applicant Process - What to Expect

1. Submit an application to the City of Sandy Springs Economic Development Department staff.
 - *Note: Applicants should allot at least six months for the review and deliberation process.*
2. Following an initial review of the application, the SSDA Chair and Vice Chair may grant approval for the applicant to proceed with an independently conducted Fiscal Impact Analysis.
 - *Note: The applicant should confer with staff to determine firms qualified to complete this work. The cost of the analysis is the responsibility of the applicant.*
3. Following a preliminary review of the Fiscal Impact Analysis, the Development Authority Chair will determine if the project may move forward for consideration before the full Authority.
4. The applicant will be required to present the details of the proposed project and their request for support at a meeting of the Development Authority.

5. The SSDA may indicate their initial support for the proposed project by voting to approve an Inducement Resolution.

- The Inducement Resolution indicates that the SSDA's Bond Attorney and the Firm's Attorney may begin preparing paperwork for a final agreement to be voted upon.

6. At a subsequent meeting, the SSDA will formally vote to approve or disapprove their support of the project.

Chair Chip Collins asked on a scale from one to ten, how likely is it that the Development Authority will have a project this year?

Director of Economic Development Burnett said less than five. Much of what we are asked about from the development community is multi-family. In 2025, there will be a cleansing of bank balance sheets where a lot of completed projects move into permanent financing, and that frees up the capacity of banks to finance projects. Multi-family will be one project that becomes supportable again from a debt equity perspective. Most of what we will see will probably be multi-family with a retail component. Multi-family is the principal driver of things that we will look at in the developer department, and if we do not do abatements, we may not see many requests.

Vice Chair Andy Bauman said **Director of Economic Development Burnett** traditional new construction is what you are considering. Some councilmembers including myself have talked about façade improvements, for example there is a significant and nice façade improvement at Springs Landing. Also, in the area of redevelopment, we could see significant upgrade to properties come to us. Hopefully we can meet with some businesses this year, not just waiting for new multi-family, because the City needs it.

Director of Economic Development Burnett said at the appropriate time we will segway to the discussion of goals and initiatives and will potential façade grants, and more.

DA2025-06 Discuss 2025 Goals and Initiatives for Economic Development

Plans and Programs to Support New Business Growth and Existing Business Retention

- Complete Perimeter Small Area Plan with Rhodeside & Harwell
- Energize local business outreach through B to B social media that profiles successful CoSS companies of all sizes
- Provide small-business training and mentoring opportunities utilizing the wealth of volunteer talent available in Sandy Springs
- Create CoSS Business Council (division of the Greater Perimeter Chamber), to focus specifically on our city
- Seek more opportunities with Sandy Springs leadership to interact with our largest employers
- Complete and go-live with Select CoSS website

Member Hardy Dorsey said Cox Communications has been headquartered here for a while and it has been said that they are considering moving their headquarters.

Director of Economic Development Burnett said we are not aware of this.

Vice Chair Bauman said they may have moved their newspaper business in town.

Director of Economic Development Burnett said a round-table meeting was put together by the Perimeter Community Improvement Districts (PCID) and fifteen of the region's largest employers were there, including Cox Communications. We discussed return-to-office policies and Cox Communications said that employees have returned to the office in Sandy Springs three days a week. Based on a recent phone call, we have no indication that they are moving their headquarters out of the City.

Improving and/or Assisting Commercial Real Estate Projects in Sandy Springs

- City Springs 2.0
- Address aging buildings through a Citywide Design Guidelines project and consideration of pilot programs to assist owners in funding property improvements
- Evaluate competitiveness of CoSS' current incentive programs (B&O taxes, building permit & impact fees and tax abatements)
- Work as a liaison between the city and developers to move new projects forward in 2025 and beyond
- Identify ways the Development Authority can be most effective in fostering quality development in our city

Economic Development Specialist Melton said in an effort to make Sandy Springs as competitive to other local markets, we are doing a comparative data analysis of some neighboring cities and counties. We are looking at what incentive package they use, and have researched online, as well as contacted local economic development leaders, to set up meetings to discuss taxes, building permit impact fees, and county tax abatements. We will use this information to hopefully provide recommendations for Council.

Director of Economic Development Burnett asked was the last time we did an incentive assessment in 2017?

Assistant City Manager Smith yes, and we worked with Georgia Tech.

Director of Economic Development Burnett said it is a good time to evaluate where we are now with incentives, and continue to be competitive, especially with markets like Dunwoody, Brookhaven, and Alpharetta.

Member Sunny Park asked what type of assistance will you provide to work as a liaison?

Director of Economic Development Burnett said me and **Vice Chair Bauman** have had meetings with companies that already own sites and will soon acquire a site. You must understand the financial capacity of developers to determine someone who can access the debt and capital in a project. Once that is done and you have a capable developer, and properties identified under a zoning code, there is potential to expand or change that. We will work with the Planning Department and property owner to help them understand the street grid requirements that are in the City's Code, and how the grids have to be done to make it work most effectively on their particular site. For example, if there is an old office building site they want to redevelop,

they need to understand what they can do within the confines of the current codes. It is being there and accessible, and not having a traditional wall that government is often viewed as having. We are partners in this together because we want the same things. They want a high quality development to make their numbers work and be successful, and as a community we need a development to successful and desirable.

Vice Chair Bauman said the incentives are what we do, but sometimes it is a matter of getting out of the way, helping with any obstacles, and also the entitlements. We need to know about that. With our goals of development or redevelopment happening, we need to find out what it will take to get to get it done.

Member Sunny Park said in a country like South Korea, when foreign corporations are coming in and they do not know where to go, the local and central government has an office called one stop shop and offer free service. It is different but the same mindset.

Director of Economic Development Burnett said it is bringing a commercial mindset to governmental agencies. Our goal is to pursue clients such as property owners and businesses, and bring their business to the City. In many cases our interests are aligned, though we have codes, zoning ordinances, and more to work through. Most developers are savvy, and we are helping them based on historical projects and what we believe is possible in Sandy Springs. When incentives are appropriate, we can outline what may be available to them and help entice them to do it.

Chair Chip Collins said there are a lot of doers on this Authority, but there is a statutory mandate of what we can do. **Director of Economic Development Burnett** is energetic, experienced and knowledgeable, and knows what we can do. The amount of cash available to us is over \$100,000 and is a budget source to host meetings with developers and more. We have a group that wants to be more proactive and ready to assist.

VI. Other Business

DA2025-07 Open Discussion and Q & A

There was no other business.

VII. Adjournment

Motion and vote. A motion was made by **Member Sunny Park**, seconded by **Member Andy Bauman**, to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:42 a.m.

Date approved: March 11, 2025

William 'Chip' Collins, Chair

Raquel D. González, City Clerk