



Where Community Connects

COUNCIL RETREAT
5785 Peachtree Dunwoody Rd.
Sandy Springs, GA 30242
February 8, 2024
9:00 a.m.
Summary Minutes

Mayor & City Council

Mayor Anthony S. Ford
Mayor Pro Tem Kyle Berry Sr.
Councilmember Elton Alexander
Councilmember Yolanda Barber
Councilmember LaKeisha Gantt
Councilmember Alphonso Thomas

Administration

Frederick Gardiner, City Manager
Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk
Vacant, City Treasurer
Quinton Washington, City Attorney
Samantha Embry, City Attorney

Mission: To provide visionary leadership and superior municipal services that enhance the quality of life for citizens while creating a welcoming business atmosphere focused on sustainability and expansion of tourism and cultural events.

Staff Present: Decius Aaron, Public Works Director

DAY THREE AGENDA

Mayor Ford called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Invocation by Councilmember Alexander

Pledge of Allegiance recited by all in attendance.

City Clerk, Vanessa Holiday was asked to proceed with the roll call. All members were present except Councilmember Gantt.

Motion to adopt the Agenda made by Councilmember Barber; seconded by Councilmember Alexander. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Mayor Ford read the Civility Pledge that has been adopted by the City: *The way we govern ourselves is often as important as the positions we take. Our collective decisions will be better when differing views have had the opportunity to be fully vetted and considered. All people have the right to be treated with respect, courtesy, and openness. We value all input. We commit to conduct ourselves at all times with civility and courtesy to each other.*

Motion to convene Executive Session made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Councilmember Barber. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Motion to adjourn Executive Session and sign an Affidavit without Action made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Motion to reconvene the meeting made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Mr. Gardiner gave a review of Day Two noting there are challenges with the police department manpower and technology; and there will be a budget amendment coming before Council to redistribute funds for (6) new officers and equipment.

Councilmember Alexander stated that he needs to know that the (6) six new officers will be patrolling officers.

Mr. Gardiner stated that would be up to the Chief.

Councilmember Alexander asked that the Chief be contacted for clarification that the (6) officers would be patrol officers.

Councilmember Thomas stated that it is the Council's obligation to make sure effectiveness and efficiency is taking place with policies and procedures; noted the Council and the community is seeking more police presence and the directive needs to come from the top with a recommendation of a minimum of (4) of the new (6) officers be patrol officers. The Council agreed.

Mr. Gardiner reviewed the visit to the Sandy Springs City Center which was formerly an old heavy commercial area; noted the city is complimented by the cities of Dunwoody, Alpharetta and Roswell; noted the housing stock average is one million dollars with connectivity to great restaurants and retail within walking distance and mixed-use developments; noted the City of Stockbridge is currently looking at parking options in the downtown area.

Councilmember Alexander noted Sandy Springs has \$100,000+ average income and asked the Council to have the courage to lead and create the vision that you believe in for Stockbridge; and to consider adding on to City Hall rather than putting \$500,000 into the Merle Manders Conference Center; and noted Sandy Springs has only been a city less than twenty years.

Councilmember Barber referenced the Sandy Springs City Manager's comments where Ms. Freeman stated their plan was executed by first purchasing and owning the land to allow the city have control and work with a perspective developer; and noted the importance of correcting the Code to prohibit sub-dividing lots and asked the Council to revisit the plans to acquire properties in the downtown moving forward; noted the Sandy Springs re- development did not happen overnight and that the City of Stockbridge should not expect that either; and noted overall, the Sandy Springs complex was impressive, especially the Arts Center.

Mayor Ford noted that as it relates to property acquisitions, the question to be answered by the Council is, are you willing to pay the price of the properties, and the Council should revisit the plan and have conversations with the DDA and the City Manager.

Councilmember Alexander noted the previous Broker, (Capehart) presented a \$20 million plan to the city; and noted the city has put out an RFP for the land across from city hall based on what the city wants to see in the downtown, noting high density is okay as long as it is not low quality density, but high density with high quality as the Market Study suggests; and noted the DDA is looking for Public/Private partnerships.

Mayor Pro Tem Berry noted he was impressed with the Sandy Springs structure as a whole and the connectivity, and also saw the number of staff required to run the operations along with the maintenance and budget required; and noted the balconies overlooking the venue, the views and the neighborhood were great and hopes to incorporate some of the entertainment area at city hall to make low hanging fruit transformations.

Treasurer Recruitment

Mr. Gardiner advised the Council that resumes have been included in their Agenda packets for review, noting the City Treasurer is a Council appointment.

Councilmember Alexander asked Mr. Gardiner if he is familiar with any of the candidates and how the Interim is doing.

Mr. Gardiner advised that he is familiar with two of the candidates, one candidate he worked with in East Point, and the Interim, who is holding down the fort.

Councilmember Thomas referenced the directive issued at the January 8th meeting to place the City Treasurer position back out for recruiting.

Mayor Pro Tem Berry noted the resumes in the packet are the same resumes sent to the Council in 2023 by Ms. Wheeler, the HR Manager.

Councilmember Barber asked the City Manager to instruct the HR Manager to send a letter of acknowledgement to the applicants of their resumes and to find out if they are still available; advertise the City Treasurer position with multiple outlets including GMA, LinkedIn and Indeed with a closing date of March 24, 2024, and submit all applications that meet the minimum qualifications to the Governing Body for review. The Council agreed.

SPLOST VI

Mr. Aaron referenced his seven-year tenure with the city as the Public Works Director, and noted there were several major throughfares that were previously maintained by the County that are now the responsibility of the city; noted the County is taking the lead on TSPLOST Projects in coordination with the city specifically with the curb and gutters project and trails; noted the city is in need of storage space in addition to the Maintenance Shop renovation and repairs, incorporating room for growth.

Mayor Ford suggested prioritizing SPLOST VI Projects.

Mr. Aaron presented a spreadsheet of proposed SPLOST VI Projects which allocated \$2 million dollars to each District for Road Resurfacing and Sidewalks, \$19 million dollars for Municipal Buildings, \$7 million dollars for Infrastructure, \$5 million dollars for Parks, and \$1.5 million dollars for Vehicles and Equipment, for a total of \$44.5 million dollars (estimated).

Mr. Aaron noted the roads are currently being assessed by using a 2019 City of Stockbridge report and the latest Henry County assessment report.

Councilmember Barber asked Mr. Aaron and Mr. Gardiner to use the same approach that was used to re-allocate road resurfacing funds from Davidson Parkway to resurface Walt Stephens Rd. and Mt. Zion Rd., the same approach should be used to re-allocate funds to resurface Valley Hill Rd.; and asked that the Council cease with approving developments in District 4 until the infrastructure needs have been addressed.

Councilmember Alexander noted you should not jump over city roads that have already been ranked with roads that were newly annexed into the city, noting pressure should be placed on County Commissioners who did not address the poor condition of these roads prior to them being annexed into the city of Stockbridge; and noted Walt Stephens Rd. carries a lot of traffic when I-75 backs up, making it a prime economic corridor.

Councilmember Barber referenced the new developments and revitalization of the downtown area, noting East Atlanta Road needs to be widened with the increased population and developments; and referenced the lighting that was recently added to Campground Road and Speer Road needs to also be installed along Valley Hill Road and Davis Road; and more conversation and dialogue needs to take place between city and county officials to work together.

Councilmember Thomas referenced the city's Comprehensive Plan to be used as a tool and a guide for developments in the city, and that resources need to be directed to the areas of the city where there is an abundance of development to make sure the infrastructure can sustain the new developments.

Councilmember Alexander motioned to use the Ranking System to assess the roads; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 4-0.

Councilmember Gantt joined the meeting at 1:44 p.m.

Mr. Gardiner asked the Council to provide guidance on the SPLOST VI List.

Councilmember Thomas noted the importance of Arts in the community.

Councilmember Alexander suggested \$300,000 towards the Pedestrian Bridge.

Councilmember Gantt noted the city's Wayfinding Signage should be a priority along with expanding City Hall due to growth, and noted the citizens want a community center.

Streetlights

Mr. Aaron noted the Council selected Option 2 for the Streetlight Program with the cost to the city approaching \$1.1 million dollars, and proposed an Annual Homeowner Fee effective January 1, 2025 and excluding the following major thoroughfares: Campground Rd., Davidson Pkwy., Davis Rd., Eagles Landing Pkwy., Flippen Rd., Hudson Bridge Rd., N. Henry Blvd., Old Atlanta Rd., Old Conyers Rd., Patrick Henry Pkwy., Rock Quarry Rd., Shields Rd., Speer Rd., Valley Hill Rd. and Walt Stephens Rd.

Motion to approve the Annual Street Light Assessment Fee to homeowners excluding the major thoroughfares made by Councilmember Gantt; seconded by Councilmember Alexander. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Motion to task staff to assess the streetlights for Davis Rd; Valley Hill Rd. and Shields Rd. made by Councilmember Barber; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Mr. Aaron was tasked with revisiting the city's Streetlight Policy and bringing updates and revisions to the Council for final approval.

Amphitheater

Mr. Harold Young noted the 2023 Concert Series was a great success; introduced the 2024 Team; noted 2023 had 19 paid concerts, 1 graduation, and 3 city events; noted Amphitheater staff is working with Visit Henry to promote the Concert Series; VyStar has renewed its sponsorship of \$60,000 and Amazon is in negotiations for sponsorship renewal.

Mayor Ford noted VyStar has also sponsored a number of city events in addition to being an Amphitheater sponsor.

Councilmember Barber noted a request was made for Pepsi to be the naming rights sponsor, and Vulcan was recommended as well.

Mr. Young noted the marketing team is in negotiations and will report back to the Council with updates.

Councilmember Thomas suggested a better system for reporting as per the contract.

Motion to approve the Ordinance prohibiting outside drinks with the exception of water in coolers no larger than 12 x 12 made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed 4-0-1 (Gantt Abstained).

Mr. Young was asked to provide information on food trucks from other venues.

Motion to approve a Resolution to prohibit outside food from being brought into the venue made by Mayor Pro Tem Berry; seconded by Councilmember Alexander. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

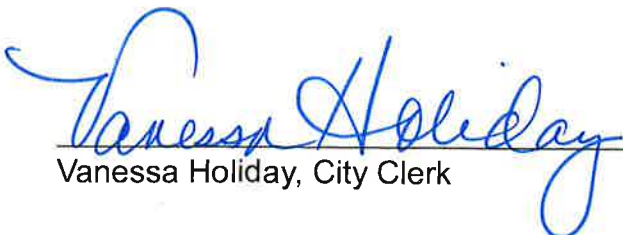
Councilmember Thomas asked how the city would get a true accounting of concessions.

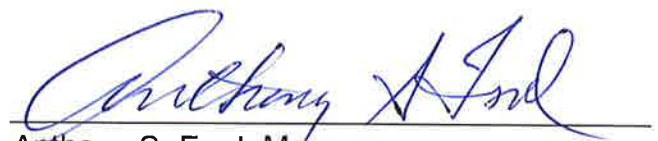
Mr. Gardiner suggested charging a flat rate/fee to vendors; and will bring back the Toast Point of Sale system for alcohol.

Mr. Young stated the \$2 million dollars budgeted for the Amphitheater is not sufficient, noting, another \$2 – 3 million dollars will be required.

Motion to adjourn at 6:03 p.m. was made by Councilmember Alexander; seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Berry. The motion passed unanimously 5-0.

Respectfully submitted by:


Vanessa Holiday, City Clerk


Anthony S. Ford, Mayor