



## City of Brookhaven, GA

2020 City Council Advance

February 8, 2020

*Villa Christina - Ball Room*

*(4000 Summit Blvd NE, Atlanta, GA 30319)*

### Minutes

**Attendees:** Mayor Ernst, Council Members Jones, Park, Gebbia, and Simmons participated via speaker phone.

**Other attendees:** City Attorney Chris Balch, City Manager Christian Sigman, City Clerk Susan Hiott, Assistant City Manager Steve Chapman, Management Analyst Marybeth Bucklen, Public Works Director Hari Karikaran, Communications Director Burke Brennan, Emergency Management Coordinator Paul White

**Media:** Dyana Bagby of the *Reporter Newspaper*

#### **8:00 AM – 8:30 AM: Breakfast**

Mayor Ernst welcomed everyone and thanked staff and Council for all the hard work and getting a lot of work done over the past year.

#### **8:40 AM – 9:00 AM: 2019 City Council Advance Recap**

City Manager Christian Sigman summarized status of the various plans of the City and recapped the changes and accomplishments of those plans. The Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the Buford Highway Improvement and Economic Strategy Plan need to be updated in 2020.

Christian Sigman provided recap of 2019 City Council Advance: The 5-Year Capital Improvement Plan, MARTA 2.0 and Brookhaven Demographics Update in advance of the 2020 Census.

*The Atlanta Business Chronicle's Brookhaven Market Report* (published January 2020) was given to those in attendance.

Christian Sigman named the focus areas listed on the agenda:

- Stormwater Fund Sustainability
- Brookhaven City Centre Master Plan
- Census 2020 Update

**9:00 AM – 10:15 AM: Stormwater Fund Sustainability (Christian Sigman, Steve Chapman, and Hari Karikaran)**



The City has come a long way in the review and improvement of the stormwater system including completing the first round of assessments and maintenance of stormwater structures and conveyances required for the City's discharge permit from the State. Additionally, the City has completed two watershed improvement studies that call for a significant amount of capital investment. While the City has been successful in securing three 319h grants for stream bank restoration work, significant funding needs remain.

Request of Mayor and City Council: To provide general guidance on the pace of work in the coming years toward the many stormwater needs across the City and the extent of requisite rate increases and potential debt financing to improve the stormwater system.

Christian led in a power point presentation. The presentation is available in the record.

Questions and discussion followed. Directions included:

- Staff will correct the change in rates spreadsheet to reflect the initial Brookhaven rate that carried over from DeKalb County (\$48-\$60).
- Staff will prepare the entire 10-year capital project list to reflect all projects. The actual year of implementation is a City Council policy decision.
- The 10-year project list will be grouped by district, recognizing that the impact of stormwater runoff and the benefits of stormwater projects cross district boundaries.
- Staff will develop a rate comparison sheet, with recent changes in rates, for the following cities (Dunwoody, Chamblee, Sandy Springs, Doraville, and Norcross).
- Staff will model a financing to address all the projects in the 10-year list in one financing.
- The "how" to maintain the infrastructure was addressed. The challenge of unknown infrastructure was discussed. Staff needs to get all easements identified and mapped.
- Steve Chapman will explore with the County to see if a stormwater debt issue could have its own line on the property tax bill. (i.e. stormwater separate district)

**Summary of discussion:**

- Staff noted DeKalb County did not provide an inventory when the City took the stormwater system at incorporation. We did not know where pipes were and did not have any maps. The system is better today, but it is a system that needs work. The question was raised "What is our next step today?"
- Education was important; i.e. stopping grass clippings getting into drainage system
- Multiple issues and challenges to be addressed included such projects as street sweeping, unexpected system failures, construction of detention facilities, maintenance, operations, and emergencies.
- The importance of Funding was addressed. Options to pay for projects were discussed:
  - Pay-go - \$3.00 per month increase beginning in 2020

- City Council Action required by April 14, 2020
  - 3% annual increase from 2021-2025.
- Financing (15 years)
  - \$2.00 per month increase beginning in 2020
  - City Council Action required by April 14, 2020
  - 3% annual increase from 2021-2025
- Cooperation of property owners was important – the City’s process was crisper, but still have a way to go.
- If there is a bond issuance (Financing) route, there would need to be a list of projects, district by district.
- Will still go after grants and look for additional funding.
- All considerations for projects were a policy decision.
- Council Member Jones addressed if there could be a sunset and the extent of proposed stormwater fund increase, and if there were any other options. A bond issuance may not be well received in certain districts.
- Discussion continued about tying increase with bond inquiry and have sunset.
- Assistant City Manager Steve Chapman stated he would explore with the County to see if a stormwater debt issue could have its own line on the property tax bill. (i.e. stormwater separate district)
- The deadline to provide data to the County was April 15. If doing anything for 2020, must act quickly.
- Mr. Sigman asked what will our pace and general philosophy be on maintaining the stormwater system? It will take “x” in dollars to execute the plans.
- Mr. Balch suggested the districts should be listed on the project list. He knew an improvement to any watershed, was improvement to all watersheds. The goal was risk management as well as policy question.
- Mr. Sigman explained why it was not the practice to do list/projects by district. It was a universal system. If don’t do major projects, and wait five years, an increase of 3% indexed was needed to cover the operating costs because street sweeping, emergency repairs, etc. increase every year. Some type of escalator or indexed rate was recommended.
- The fund was an enterprise fund and runs off revenues. If revenues are not there, can’t run. The City has done as much as it can, but to go next step, need an increase.
- Council reviewed rates of other jurisdictions and changes in rates over time.
- Council Member Park noted there had not been complaints about the stormwater fee.
- Staff will inquire of EPD as to the “best” and “worst” stormwater utility in Georgia.
- The “how” to maintain the infrastructure was addressed. There are challenges that the City doesn’t know what it has; the City needed to get all easements mapped.
- The only legal requirement was to inspect every five years.

- Council Member Gebbia summarized the history of receiving the stormwater system from the County and the initial setting of the current rate.
- Mayor Ernst noted, paving had been done, parks majorly done, public safety building was largely done, so now it was time to handle stormwater.
- The City has stalled this out for couple years, the 3% is something that would have to be done. The question was how many projects the City wants to do.
- Mr. Sigman encouraged Council to discuss with their constituents. He reiterated the “more or less” for the stormwater projects was a policy decision.

### **Council District Discussion**

#### **District 1 – Council Member Jones reported:**

- Parks have been improved at such a rapid pace.
- Thanked Council for their support and staff for their work.
- Addressed how the City had done a lot for trees – i.e., relocated trees from CHOA project/Osborne Nursery/preventing tree predatory services. Want to bump up tree preservation.
- Looking at changes at I-285 and will be challenge and impact in the future.
- Ashford Dunwoody Corridor Study being initiated.
- Ashford Dunwoody and Johnson Ferry improvement underway.
- Addressed how alternative modes of transportation, walkability, paths, bike ability improvements are progressing. (A map was on the screen showing connectivity plan.)

#### **District 3 - Council Member Madeleine Simmons reported:**

- Thanked Mr. Sigman, staff, and Council for their help.
- Commented about greenspace acquisition and cultivation – Thanked Mr. Rader and DeKalb County and neighbors - Langford Park was on Tuesday’s agenda.
- Brookhaven Park – conversation moving. Construction timeline addressed.
- Sidewalks plan policy and process to be discussed.
- Traffic Calming and safety measures – Issues Brookhaven Heights, Fields, Historic Brookhaven, and Osborne Road, etc.

#### **District 4 - Council Member Joe Gebbia reported:**

- Peachtree Creek Greenway having impact on Buford Highway Development.
- Annexation policy has been beneficial; having uptick requests for future.
- Spoke about the current annexation objection (North Druid Hills).
- Spoke about Buford Highway development and potential investment.
- Addressed Brookhaven being first city to be a Dementia Friendly City.

### **Brookhaven City Centre (Christian Sigman)**

While City staff continues to engage MARTA to initiate redevelopment of the Brookhaven MARTA station; the City's 2034 Comprehensive Plan calls for the development of a City Centre with the MARTA station as the focal point. In the past two years, several additional significant planning exercises have been completed that would inform the development of a Brookhaven City Centre master plan including the Peachtree Road LCI streetscape standards, the zoning rewrite and associated Peachtree Overlay District, the North Druid Hills Corridor Study, etc. More importantly, private development is occurring on all sides of the MARTA site and is not guided by a City Centre master plan. The 2020 Approved Budget includes funding for City Hall planning and the Administration believes that effort should be within the context of a Brookhaven City Centre Master plan.

Request of Mayor and City Council: To provide feedback and guidance on the City Centre master plan exercise for 2020.

#### **Mr. Sigman presented power point which is available in the record.**

- The 2034 Comp Plan has over twenty references for a City Centre, all around the MARTA Station. It was not defined, and it is now time to begin discussion.
- Mr. Sigman named all of the plans and actions now in place – all important for the planning phase of a City Centre: Zoning rewrite, Peachtree Road Overlay, Peachtree Road LCI, North Druid Hills Road Corridor Study, TSW Design Studio, ULI Entertainment District, Transit planning, regulations and ordinances, recent development, and pending development coming fast. We are in a good spot and time to plan for City Centre.
- MARTA 2.0 – Discussions continue, DRI from MARTA 1.0, Library relocation considered, and continual developer interest.
- The next steps: develop RFP, develop community engagement strategy, continue discussions with MARTA, determine permanent City Hall space requirements.
- Mr. Sigman touched on binder information and City Centre sketches/master plans as samples for reference.
- Mr. Sigman asked for guidance for a City Centre Master Plan. Discussion followed about options to stay ahead of the development. (1) Hustle or (2) Moratorium, to be a certain necessary geographic area.
- A footprint of what would be the City study area was discussed, noting need for policy and philosophical decisions. What was important to us?
- Location, parcel, what proposing to do on, know footprint, to define before the RFP goes out. It would be a policy decision. Discussion followed about the area for a City Centre would be more obvious at the footprint being near the MARTA station.

- It should be a very public process and residents engaged.
- The pedestrian and bicycle bridge should be over Peachtree.
- Mr. Balch answered questions about interest of other agencies, DRIs, and GDOT's roles in the potential future development. The master plan would set the tone; we may have a development that does not require building more roads.
- Net steps before RFP – get consensus of footprint and community engagement. Every master plan needs to have everyone involved.
- Mr. Sigman stated the City would recommend a public input plan.
- Council Member Jones commented it would be helpful to have summary showing all meetings and inputs, etc. added on our website for our major projects.
- This would be a similar planning document as others.

**Recap by City Manager Christian Sigman:** Community Development will develop a City Centre planning area map for the RFP and send to the Mayor and City Council for consideration. The department will also develop a robust scope of work as it related to community engagement and the scoring of bids will include the strength of the bidder's community engagement plan. The City will share the scope of work for the community engagement plan with the Mayor and City Council before issuing the RFP.

**Council Member Park left the meeting after the City Centre discussion. There was a small break to 11:25 a.m.**

**11:26 a.m. - Census 2020 Update (Patty Hansen & Julissa Canas)**

For much of 2019, the City has been partnering with many different agencies and stakeholder groups to ensure that there is a "complete" count for the 2020 Census in Brookhaven.



Additionally, there are larger private development projects and recent annexations that need to be reflected in the 2020 Census. The City is definitively in a forward position for a successful 2020 Census complete count.

Request of Mayor and City Council: Continue your strong support of the City's Census 2020 efforts and provide any suggestions and guidance to have most accurate count of any Georgia city of a similar size.



### **Summary of Presentation:**

Strategic Partnerships Director Patty Hansen and Communications Department's Public Engagement staff, Julissa Canas, provided presentation on Census 2020: Brookhaven Counts. The presentation is available in the record. Julissa presented also in Spanish as demo for the presentation to the Hispanic and Latino community.

The Census was important because \$675 billion was distributed annually for local programs, based on census numbers. Georgia receives \$2,300+ per person annually, directly related to census count allocations. Brookhaven is an estimated community as we do not have a census county. This will be our first starting point, first census. Our current estimate was 54,145.

21,450 Households

54,145 Individuals

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino: 56.9%

Hispanic or Latino: 24.6%

Asian alone: 6.3%

Amer Ind/Alaskan Native alone: 2.5%

Black or African American alone 9.9%

Presentation continued. Media Campaign and community outreach was addressed. Ms. Hansen reported: Telemundo, posters, social media, press outreach to support, Buford Hwy meetings, Church "pop-ups", Park access, Library access, LAA access, Salvation Army access, and City Hall access. Information will be sent to the HOAs end of March. Information about how to identify the Census workers and literature should be disbursed. Questions and discussion followed.

Management Analyst Marybeth Bucklen reported on Sustainability Civic Governance. She stressed the importance of outreach to the community by having civic dinners. We need to engage new people and meet new people and invite them to participate in their communities. She asked Council to let her know of available dates for their district's civic dinner.

Mayor Ernst reminded sustainability was important for the City Centre, also.

### **Wrap-up**