

[PRINT THIS](#) · [CLOSE WINDOW](#)

2/10/10



City manager helms civic roundtable

By Noreen Lewis Cochran

ncochran@neighbornewspapers.com

John McDonough

A semicircle of 30 attendees comprised the winter meeting of the nonprofit Sandy Springs Civic Roundtable, gathered to converse with Sandy Springs City Manager John McDonough at the Dorothy Benson Senior Multipurpose Facility.

Attendees included District 1 City Councilman John Paulson, Sandy Springs Conservancy Executive Director Linda Bain and Leadership Sandy Springs Executive Director Carolyn Axt.

Rotary Club of Sandy Springs past president David Evans said McDonough is a U.S. Marine Corps Reserve colonel and assistant chief of staff, as well as the former city manager of Beaufort, S.C., population 12,000.

"He has become an expert in public-private operations," Evans said. "I have developed a great respect for him."

Facilitating a question-and-answer format, Gail Cohn, chair of the nonprofit and president of human-resources consultancy LeaderShape, asked McDonough how his responsibilities compare to those in Beaufort.

"What is different is the fact that Sandy Springs is a brand-new city," McDonough said. "It was very intriguing to work with others to set the groundwork for a brand-new city."

McDonough described his position as one of advice followed by action.

"For me and my staff, our job is to bring options and, ultimately, recommendations," he said. "Then the City Council decides. It's our role to take their vision and translate it into service delivery."

Ms. Cohn asked about how the budget, which in fiscal 2009 was \$96 million, is prepared.

"Based on priorities, we allocate resources," McDonough said. "No. 1 is public safety. No. 2 is transportation. The third priority is community development — protecting the neighborhoods through zoning and land-use planning. The fourth priority is parks and recreation; that's very important from a quality-of-life standpoint."

Other questions included public safety actions during recent storms, downtown revitalization and capital projects.

Highlighting some of the city's activities, McDonough said 35 transportation projects are in "some stage of completion," 83 miles of roads have been resurfaced, Morgan Falls Overlook Park will open in April and the Glen Errol Road bridge, damaged by September's floods, will be repaired by next week.

"We're very fortunate," he said.

McDonough said the city needs feedback from residents on topics like a grid system for downtown streets, the best way for City Hall to communicate with them, and whether the [CH2M Hill](#) operations contract should be altered.

Information: (770) 730-5600 or visit www.sandyspringsga.org.

Copyright ©2010 NeighborNewspapers.com. All rights reserved.