

Commissioner Emma J. Darnell



Presents

The Special Report

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Sandy Springs Incorporation: Winners and Losers

Background

It has been almost one year since 15,000 residents of Sandy Springs—population 85,000—voted to create “their own city” and “spend their own money.”

Before the Georgia Legislature adopted the Sandy Springs Bill, Fulton County collected a special tax from residents of the unincorporated areas to provide city services. In January of this year, for budget purposes and to comply with the new law, taxes were increased in South Fulton and services were cut. Deeper cuts attempted by Commissioner Handel and Commissioner Riley failed. Despite impassioned pleas from parents, Fulton County parks services in South Fulton were drastically cut and employees laid off.

Today, residents of unincorporated Fulton County, including residents of District 5, are experiencing the “domino effect” of the “Sandy Springs/Sub-District Legislation.” Some communities are scrambling to find ways to maintain and upgrade services without a substantial increase in property taxes and fees.

It is my hope and expectation you will find the following information, supported by the record, to be useful:

WINNERS

Elected officials and their relatives with jobs or contracts with the new city;
Banks and other financial institutions who loaned the new city money to resolve cash flow problems;
Members of the “organizing committee” now elected city officials;
A construction contractor who was awarded a multi-million dollar, sole-source contract to operate the city;
Relatives of Fulton County officers and employees who have sub-contracts with the sole-source contractor;
Former Fulton County employees who now work for the City of Sandy Springs;
The Carl Vinson Institute of Government;
Lawyers;
Caterers; and
Sandy Springs Real Estate companies renting space to the new city.

LOSERS

Residents of Fulton County's Unincorporated Areas as follows:

Residents of the City of Sandy Springs: Cuts in SSD services, excluding public safety;
Residents of the Northwest Fulton Sub-District: Cuts in SSD services, excluding public safety;
Residents of the Northeast Fulton Sub-District: Cuts in SSD services, excluding public safety; and
Residents of the South Fulton Tax District: Cuts in all SSD services, increase in property taxes.

Residents of Fulton County Cities

(Alpharetta, Atlanta, College Park, East Point, Fairburn, Hapeville, Mountain Park, Palmetto, Roswell, Sandy Springs and Union City)

Cuts in county-wide services; including libraries, health and human services and criminal justice.

Laid-Off Fulton County Employees

All SSD Departments
(Emergency Management Services, Environment and Community Development, Fire, Parks,
Police and Public Works)

C o n t a c t i n g C o m m i s s i o n e r E m m a I . D a r n e l l

<http://www.co.fulton.ga.us/emma>

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