

**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, April 12, 2011, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Bob Ramsey
Councilmember Randy Backous
Councilmember David Elvig
Councilmember Colin McGlone
Councilmember Jason Tossey
Councilmember Jeffrey Wise

Absent: Councilmember David Jeffrey

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Deputy City Administrator Heidi A. Nelson
Public Works Director Brian Olson
Assistant City Engineer Tim Himmer
City Attorney Bill Goodrich

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:40 p.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1) Grass Public Nuisance and Abatement Process

City Attorney Goodrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Wise questioned if there is a clause that a resident cannot plant grass that does not need to be mowed, such as prairie grass, in their front yard.

Public Works Director Olson responded a resident can have a yard with those types of grasses, as long as there is a management plan showing how it will be maintained.

Councilmember McGlone indicated he was hired at the end of last season for grass mowing when the previous contractor was released. There was an issue with the previous contractor

being unable to mow before the grasses were too long and bent over. This meant Councilmember McGlone had to mow 4 times or more in order to get all the grasses cut, which drove the cost up. He agreed this was a good idea to get grass mowed in the City before it gets out of control.

City Attorney Goodrich noted most of the properties this ordinance would pertain to would be foreclosed properties. However, if there is a habitual offender, the City would want to have the ability to mow the grasses sooner than the 14 days currently in the ordinance. He questioned where the defining line would be for the City to become a landscape contractor. He posed the question if the mortgage company realizes the City would maintain the lawn, would it cause issues.

Discussion took place regarding a fee structure. City Attorney Goodrich explained the potential fees would be discussed at a later time.

Consensus was reached to agree with the concept of redefining a public nuisance and starting the abatement process at the 8 inch height.

2) Discuss easement acquisitions related to City project #11-21; the signalization of Armstrong and Bunker Lake Boulevards (portions of this discussion may be closed to the public)

Assistant City Engineer Himmer reviewed the staff report. He stated the City has considered the purchase of an entire property, considered the purchase of an easement on Armstrong Boulevard and considered the purchase of an easement on Puma Street.

Councilmember McGlone questioned whether Mr. Pearson owns the property along Puma Street.

Mr. Himmer answered he does and staff has discussed these options with him.

Mayor Ramsey stated he would prefer 10-foot trails, not 8-foot trails.

Mr. Himmer responded 10-foot trails could exist with the existing right of way. The City will own more land later, depending on the potential sale of the land to the City.

Public Works Director Olson indicated it looks as though the 10-foot trail can fit within the limits, and allow for a good-sized street as well. The City is asking for 20 feet now to ensure there would be sufficient room.

Councilmember Wise and Mayor Ramsey agreed they are not interested in the 35 acres by the fire station.

Councilmember Elvig questioned why the City cannot request, or demand, that it gets the easements needed from Legacy Christian Academy.

Mr. Himmer explained the trail is on the west and they own everything on the east. They are dedicating 40 feet for the right of way. The east side has more wetland to deal with and a more

defined swale. The west has more trees to work with, but is easier to work with in regard to construction.

Public Works Director Olson pointed out Legacy had a certain budget and City staff has worked with them extensively to fit within their budget. It was affordable for them to go more to the west. It is much more expensive to work with the land on the east due to the wetland and creating buildable ground. It has been a challenge for staff to make this project keep moving forward with Legacy.

Public Works Director Olson noted Legacy now owns the land, and the City cannot take the land without legal issues.

Motion by Councilmember Wise, seconded by Councilmember McGlone to move to closed session.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Ramsey, Councilmembers Wise, McGlone, Backous, Elvig, and Tossey. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember Jeffrey.

The Special Council meeting moved into a closed session at 6:05 p.m.

The closed session ended at 6:20 p.m.

Consensus was reached to present an offer to the landowners.

FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1) Review Future Topics/Calendar

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Chris Moksnes
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.