

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a work session on Tuesday, April 5, 2011, in the Lake Itasca Room, at Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota,

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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis G. Ulrich  
Deputy City Administrator Heidi Nelson  
Director of Public Works Brian Olson  
Senior Planner Tim Gladhill  
City Attorney William K. Goodrich  
Management/Planning Intern Patrick Brama  
Development Manager Darren Lazan

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ramsey called the work session of the City Council to order at 6:17 p.m.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

Mayor Ramsey stated he would like to add a Topic Report titled Staff Roles.

Consensus was to approve the agenda as amended.

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.1) Update on Anoka County Conversation regarding Access Spacing Guidelines**

Director of Public Works Olson stated that we have had multiple meetings with the Cities of Andover and Anoka and Anoka County. Anoka County is somewhat willing to look at the policies they created that have created access issues due to medians. He reported that last year, during the discussion of the Bunker Lake Boulevard (Sunfish Lake Boulevard – Germanium Street) project, the County was operating under the 2003 Access Spacing Guidelines. He noted these guidelines are attached to the Topic Report. These guidelines provided little flexibility for modification and basically required full access control at one-half mile increments. Almost all of the County roadways in the City of Ramsey fall under that same criteria since they have a speed

limit of 50 to 55 miles per hour. It really doesn't matter whether the roadway is classified as an A minor arterial, B minor arterial, or collector roadway because the access spacing guideline remains the same. Full access is allowed at one-half mile increments and conditional secondary access is only allowed at one-quarter spacing. Under this guideline, a conditional secondary access is considered only right-in / right-out. Mr. Olson continued that in late 2010, the County changed their access spacing guidelines by allowing other access consideration as long as there was a benefit provided to the County transportation system. This is done under an exception rule, Number 4, that was identified in the 2010 access spacing guidelines, which he noted are also attached to the Topic Report. This does provide for an exception to the access spacing guidelines but the spacing guidelines remained pretty much the same as before from Ramsey's perspective because the access is still relative to speed limit. The City did benefit from this shift in policy direction as it did allow us to ask for a deviation from the approved policy to get a three quarter access (left-in) at the intersection of Unity Street and Bunker Lake Boulevard. Mr. Olson continued that, of course, the overall goals of the City and the County are the same in that we want to have safe transportation corridors through the City and the County. He stated that it would be unrealistic to think that we could eliminate hard channelization altogether but he felt there could be changes to the access spacing guidelines that could effectively maintain a safe corridor and provide for better access into our local businesses. He alluded to the meetings that have been taking place with the Cities of Anoka and Andover and the County of Anoka and stated that a number of topics have come up that revolve around the spacing requirements. We collectively agree that one-eighth mile spacing would be more reasonable for a conditional secondary access and that there should be consideration for allowing a left in as a conditional secondary access. If we could agree on different spacing – any deviation shall have a detailed traffic study. He stated we have identified two primary concerns with the access spacing guidelines. 1) It does not matter what type of roadway they are because they are basing everything on the speed limit. Since we are always on the one-half mile full access and one-quarter mile secondary, it does not provide any flexibility. If you design a road for 55 miles per hour – if you talk about changing speed limits, you will have to ask for a study to be done and it will not have an 85 percentile lower than 55 miles per hour. They have agreed to look at other counties and compile a list of what other Counties do. He noted in the attachment for the 2010 Guidelines, the higher the function, less access and more mobility. In looking at other counties, they all started out with MnDOT's access guidelines but they all tweaked them. Access spacing criteria changes whether urban or rural. There is a dramatic difference as to what we currently have. It is based on speed limits and since all of ours are high, the spacing is high. If they stick with 50 to 55 miles per hour, we feel it's reasonable at that speed limit to have one-eighth mile versus one-fourth mile for conditional secondary accesses and not only right-in / right-out, but left in. Other issues – full access in the urban district in Hennepin County is at one-quarter mile – ours is one-half mile. Dakota County's is based on traffic flow versus speed limit. Carver County has not changed MnDOT's spacing whatsoever – so that's even worse than Anoka County. Sherburne County allows for conditional accesses as well – there is no reference to speed limit. The other thing he wanted to share is that they are willing to share the design modification if the traffic study is done by an agency and would have to be supported by the City. Mr. Olson continued that he had talked to Doug Fischer again today and in the next 30 days, he will have the other Counties questions and our survey completed and would like to sit down with Ramsey, Anoka and Andover.

Mayor Ramsey inquired if there was any conversation about altering existing projects without traffic volume - so – there could be three-quarter accesses there so not two lanes.

Mr. Olson stated he did not think they got into traffic volume or willingness to change that to traffic volumes. He stated he knows Council is concerned with C.R. #116 and S.H. #47 and others for Sunfish Lake Boulevard.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that it got down to what are the impacts on the system. If we can show it benefits the system overall, they are open to that approach.

Mayor Ramsey clarified that it has to benefit – it cannot be neutral.

Mr. Ulrich responded it has to show at least a slight benefit.

Director of Public Works Olson stated that one challenge would be they would not allow left out anyway – only left in.

Councilmember Wise asked if the project was a developer who wanted to have a change in access – does the City have to hire someone to do the study.

Mr. Olson replied that the only way they will consider the access improvements is if the City supports it. We do not have to hire – but we have to support the recommendation from the design engineer.

Councilmember Elvig stated that he feels the County is talking out of both sides of their mouth. The speed limit on Sunfish Lake Boulevard is 50 mph, Ramsey Boulevard is 55 mph, and Armstrong Boulevard is 55 mph. When we were talking about the overpass, people said it's down to 45 mph – not that much of a slowdown. He stated he still has a contest with them. He feels we should be able to put some sort of petition together to get these things slowed down to 45 mph. Then we do not have to have dedication turn lanes.

Councilmember McGlone cautioned that we have to consider where our corners are at the highest place of conflict. In Andover, by the cinema, you have that limited access. You can make left in but not left out. That was a brilliant compromise. There are still two lighted intersections and it works well there. Being able to not make a left out, he could not see how that could not benefit the system. We need a grid of high speed, high mobility roadways. We should make a push on things that would give us better access for our businesses.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated his quest was for public safety around schools. We got the flashing lights and they finally lowered the speed limit to 50. The County moves slow – we will be waiting for a long time.

Mayor Ramsey stated there are other areas we need to look at.

Mr. Olson asked where do we push and where do we not. We will not get rid of median – we will not get the County talked into that but if we could provide a better access, that would be

good. As far as them asking us to support, we had better know what we want for our business park on the north and south side.

Mayor Ramsey asked if there has been any thought of redesigning down #47 and Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Mr. Olson replied yes, the owner of the bank hired RLK Engineering that provided some conceptual design for modifications for that area. Working with the City of Anoka would be the next action step before we go to the County.

Councilmember Elvig asked should we look at different legs; are we looking over all and how do we organize the rest of this and what is our goal.

Mr. Olson stated that's why we are here tonight is to hear our goals. We talked about eliminating hard channelization – that will probably not be possible.

Mr. Ulrich stated that he thinks the approach will be going intersection by intersection. We need to show these designs will work versus the spacing. Is there still support for modifying access on Bunker Lake Boulevard and #47. There will probably be some dollars matched for engineering from the two cities. We may have to do it ourselves or get some share with business owners.

Mayor Ramsey stated they have talked about it having to benefit the County system – what if it benefits the State system.

Mr. Olson replied that was a good point.

Mayor Ramsey stated that a right-in at End Zone and Sunfish Express would benefit the State system. You will make it safer on Highway #10 with a right out only and adding an acceleration lane.

Mr. Olson stated, regarding Frank Yamoutpour, that he is not so sure business owners would want that but he is fairly certain the biggest concern he heard from him (Yamoutpour) was a left out northbound.

Mayor Ramsey suggested that a left in northbound would be a 50 percent plus for Mr. Yamoutpour.

Councilmember McGlone stated that Bunker Lake Boulevard is a reliever for Highway #10 NW. Bunker Lake Boulevard is the only roadway close to that one. The idea of limiting the speed in moving things will not fly with the County. It seems they will be unreasonable to some suggestions. If you think it's difficult to lower the speed limit, try raising them.

Councilmember Wise suggested that if 45 gets rid of hard channeling you could move just as many people just as fast. You are not stacking people. He did not know if any, as far as engineering firms, would support that.

Councilmember Elvig talked about a road (#96) over in North Oaks, which is a beautiful road plus the one in Lakeville. That's Dakota County – they move them at 45 or 50 mph.

Councilmember McGlone stated he is not pro concrete median – if we could find a way to do it without them – that would be great.

Mr. Olson identified #116 and #47 and Sunfish Lake Boulevard – and asked if there are any other issues Council would like staff to look into or do we not want to work at changing the spacing guidelines.

Councilmember Wise suggested that old sites like Holiday are a lot more marketable if we have accesses. He mentioned a design that Mr. Yamoutpour came up with seemed viable and that it might be a benefit.

Councilmember McGlone asked how it could not be a safety problem. You come out and the railroad track is right here – how can that not be a safety issue.

Mayor Ramsey stated he feels the argument could be that a left turn on Bunker Lake Boulevard would be safer and he talked more about acceleration lanes.

## **2.2) Potential Revisions to Accessory Structure Regulations**

Senior Planner Gladhill stated that Council agreed that the amount of square footage allowed for an accessory structure could be increased administratively. Staff put together a packet that would get at Council's direction at that work session. At that time, we talked about continuing to allow variances. He inquired if that is still Council's direction. He noted that attached to the case are the standards we would anticipate. For all residential districts, the thought is to require a minimum 3/12 pitch roof rather than limiting sidewall height.

Councilmember McGlone felt that would be ridiculous – the 3/12 roof pitch – it still has to match the house. At minimum, it would have to match the house. If we can match the pitch of the roof, it can be up to 14 feet.

Mr. Gladhill stated that we could look at the sidewall height to increase to match the pitch. He asked are we still requiring hip roof or just pitch.

Mayor Ramsey stated that it depends on where the structure is placed; then what do you care. He did not know how you could include that – maybe if the setback is far enough away, you will not have to match the pitch.

Mr. Gladhill asked Council if they want to address requiring driveways for secondary buildings.

Discussion ensued relating to whether or not a driveway should be required to the secondary building. It was noted that if the secondary building had doors and could store a vehicle, it should be required to have a driveway. Also discussed were certain garage door sizes. Mr.

Gladhill clarified if, for example, a shed is not large enough to fit a vehicle, it would not require a driveway.

Councilmember Elvig stated he would be fine with Class 5, but to have a 15 to 20 foot apron.

Councilmember McGlone asked if we didn't address this with street paving that we would be coming 20 feet or so. He added that if there is access from the street – but if it's from your driveway – there's nothing to talk about.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated we could just calculate detached garages – we do not see any issue with not including attached garages. He asked if there is a preference on increasing square footage overall – and excluding the existing garage. There is still an overall square footage you can have for the lot. Mr. Gladhill continued with if there was any appetite for allowing accessory apartments.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is in favor of them but not as living space.

Mr. Gladhill stated that this is one tool we can use to address living arrangements for aged parents but added that it is controversial.

Mayor Ramsey suggested making it attached – not detached.

Councilmember McGlone stated that when you allow these and Grandma dies, you have to pay taxes on this extra space.

Mr. Gladhill stated it may be a bit premature to discuss this topic and suggested it be brought back for the HRA for discussion or a future work session.

Mayor Ramsey stated that if you match the accessory structure to the pitch of the roof, that's a lot of wasted space.

Mr. Gladhill stated that this would be brought back under a separate discussion – and that staff has some good ideas for dealing with this. He talked about defining living space – just having a bathroom does not make it a living space. On lots that are one acre or larger - two acres – any appetite to use one acre – it can be in the front yard or leave it as is.

Councilmember Wise inquired if we are including the Mississippi River area to which Mr. Gladhill replied this would be overall.

Councilmember Elvig stated he cannot see it going onto a gridded area and plopping a building in front of the home but a lot of places have a good wood behind the house and the river and they may be considered a hardship.

Councilmember McGlone commented that if the owner wants to build in front of his house and if we don't allow it, he can move. He talked about in the 1990's, he was told he needed to do something with his commercial vehicles. We do not take away your right to move.

Councilmember Elvig stated there might be times when we can look at this.

Mr. Gladhill stated that would be a variance.

Councilmember McGlone reiterated that we are not taking away anyone's rights – they have a right to move.

Councilmember Wise suggested that maybe the definition of front yard could be the river side.

Senior Planner Gladhill talked about the critical river rule making – they could apply for a variance and if we could do it administratively, it would really streamline this process.

Mayor Ramsey stated that if you live on a corner and if your front yard is on both sides – that's wrong.

Mr. Gladhill talked about the idea behind that and about the ordinance and setbacks.

Mayor Ramsey felt that it was like you are being penalized for having a corner lot. There has to be some way to put in another garage.

Mr. Gladhill offered that staff could craft language to allow more flexibility in that instance.

Councilmember McGlone cautioned that on riverfront property, you do not want to turn what other people think is front yard into alleys.

Councilmember Wise commented on minimum setbacks.

Mayor Ramsey stated that he would be in favor of a case-by-case basis and to do it administratively.

Councilmember Tossey agreed.

Councilmember McGlone questioned how staff would handle the person that comes in and says they do not want to cut down trees.

Mr. Gladhill replied that if they do not want to cut down trees, that would probably have to go through a variance process. That would not be an administrative approval. He inquired about allowing metal panels in the rural area and laid out some criteria to allow that. He suggested we could choose three from the criteria and then we could administratively approve it. He added that he talked to a representative of Morton Buildings and that he could get more information.

Councilmember Wise suggested maybe changing brick to masonry.

Councilmember McGlone inquired if a metal building would be okay on the golf course to which Mr. Gladhill replied it could be approved with our current threshold.

Councilmember Elvig commented that the scenario of what you would like is good but he has concerns about no eaves.

Mayor Ramsey mentioned two-foot eaves and one-foot gable. If less than 5.5 acres, regardless of exterior material, you have to have an eaves overhang to match the home.

Mr. Gladhill reported that right now one would have to apply for a conditional use permit for a two-story accessory building – is Council interested in allowing that to be approved administratively.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated that if we only allow it so high – why would we worry about that – do it administratively.

Mr. Gladhill stated staff will put that into ordinance format. It will be in front of the Planning Commission in May.

### **2.3) City Survey Proposal**

City Administrator Ulrich noted that as part of an earlier proposal, the City had already approved \$9,000 for a 30-question survey on road reconstruction. At subsequent work sessions, the Council discussed conducting a public safety/police survey, asking more general questions. To increase this survey to 100 questions would cost \$15,500 total – an additional \$6,500 added to the \$9,000. Mr. Ulrich pointed out that the proposal is to survey 300 randomly selected households in the City. A sample of 300 residents would provide results projectable to the entire City adult population within plus or minus 6.0 percent in 95 out of 100 cases. Each additional question unit beyond the initial allotment would be about \$139. Mr. Ulrich stated that a draft survey was sent out with the agenda that contained about 80 general questions that could be added to get more of a broad variety of topics. It could be scaled back from the 80 or we could just stick with the 30 original questions. He inquired if there is any interest in pursuing the broader questionnaire.

Mayor Ramsey suggested the feeling would be if there are more than 20 questions, there should be some type of compensation for filling out the survey.

Mr. Ulrich stated this is a telephone survey.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated he could not imagine himself on the phone for hours answering 100 questions – this is a tough way to gather data.

Councilmember Tossey dittoed Councilmember Jeffrey's statement.

Councilmember McGlone thought the idea of public safety questions went down in flames and now it's in here again. He stated he did not appreciate that and stated we do not want to muddy this up.

Councilmember Elvig talked about contacting businesses to offer coupons - \$5 or something like that.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is not opposed to that but he did not want more than 20 questions. Councilmember Elvig agreed with that.

Councilmember Wise expressed issue with random selection. He suggested “x” percent coming from the northwest corner, “x” percent coming from another corner – or maybe do it by ward.

Mayor Ramsey asked why someone is going to care who lives in Sweet Bay Ridge right now – they will not have to deal with this for years but someone on 151<sup>st</sup> will have to have their roads done in the next five years.

Councilmember Backous stated that 100 questions is outrageous. The idea came up because we wanted it to be broader but maybe just five to ten carefully thought-out questions would work. People who are doing this proposal have figures on how much accuracy drops off after so many questions and paying people too much will do something to the accuracy as well. He appreciated adding some questions to it but not many.

Mayor Ramsey agreed that 30 should be the maximum amount of questions.

Councilmember Backous inquired how long the survey would take.

Director of Public Works Olson replied that staff has had a couple of conversations with Decision Resources and they have said 20 to 25 minutes and they would call randomly. That’s the only way you can get statistically significant results on this issue. Generally you are getting answers from people who have issues that need resolving. They will call and if you cannot spend a half hour on this, they will call you back unless you do not want them to – then they choose another random number. He stated he appreciated the comments received tonight and wished that Decision Resources could have been present. They do this and they do not have to supply coupons for doing it. He added that the City of Burnsville did a 139-question survey.

Councilmember McGlone stated that this road issue is a stand-alone issue. They will need 30 questions to get at what we are trying to get at and he was not interesting in changing it.

Councilmember Backous stated that if we are tacking on this other part of the survey, then we should just stick with the original questions. If it works well, we can do another one later on a different question.

Councilmember Wise inquired if these are anonymous, to which Mr. Olson replied yes. Councilmember Wise wondered if we should give the person the option to give his name and we could do a follow-up if they want – maybe conduct a focus group.

Mr. Ulrich suggested we could ask that question at the end. This will be a 30-questions survey and about ten questions be background information. It will be kept short, it will be purely about streets, and maybe it could be segmented into wards.

Councilmember Backous stated that we talked originally about doing this on-line and mailing people and identification number and that they would get a \$5 coupon. He asked why that is not a part of this proposal.

Director of Public Works Olson responded it has to do with statistical significance.

Councilmember Backous stated that he is saying to randomly select 400 households and ask them to participate and give them a \$20 coupon, etc.

Mr. Ulrich asked if Council is interested in a longer survey then; still look at the street survey as proposed but look at a broader survey.

Councilmember McGlone stated to keep it simple. We could remind the public to do the survey on line and maybe solicit coupons from Ramsey businesses.

Councilmember Backous stated we could randomly put a number on three or four of them – in the *Ramsey Resident*.

Councilmember Wise stated that people that respond to any City initiative – they are the 10 percent of the citizens who go to the Council meetings or visit on-line.

Mayor Ramsey suggested doing the 30 questions – get that done and then talk about other surveys.

Mr. Olson stated there are no questions in there that are dealing with road reconstructions. They wanted to do research on other communities that have done this type of survey and provide what they had success with and what they experienced challenges with. They will spend the next couple of weeks doing the research and then draft 20 questions plus 10 demographic questions. They will deal with financing packets or challenges facing us today with regard to road reconstruction. The survey will be brought back to the City Council for approval – we may have a survey out as early as June 2011.

#### **2.4) Game Fair Participation**

City Administrator Ulrich stated that last year the City became a more active participant in the Game Fair Event than it had in the past. As part of an agreement with Game Fair, the City discounted the charge for Police services from \$9,417 to one-third of that. The City picked up the two-thirds through the HRA and the EDA as this was an economic development event – promoting The COR. Last year's booth was staffed by Council, City staff and Landform. We had a 10 x 10 booth in 2010; however, this year we requested a 20 x 20, which would cost an additional \$750. Mr. Delaney has proposed that this be an additional reduction from his one-third of Police services. The additional space could be used to promote other aspects of the City which could include Police and Fire, Safety Camp, Police Explorers, Fire Safety, Recycling, local business contacts, large Public Works projects, park facilities, the boat launch, Happy Days

events, etc. He noted that it is not strictly Ramsey residents who attend this event and he felt this would be very valuable.

Councilmember Jeffrey noted that Mr. Delaney listed Ramsey on his website this year.

Councilmember McGlone stated that this is the most expensive booth he has ever seen. He stated he is not paying any more money and he wants the doubled space.

Councilmember Backous responded “amen to that” and added that he wants Ramsey listed on all his information. He suggested maybe having no police protection and Mr. Delaney could provide his own security.

Mayor Ramsey stated that Mr. Delaney gets a lot of assistance from the Ramsey Lions. He stated that last year the sentiment was it’s a big benefit to have this in our community. He added that we are forcing police coverage on this. He said to ask for the 20 x 20 booth but to skip the additional \$750 charge.

Mr. Ulrich reported that last year was the first year the City really embraced the Game Fair – giving publicity to the event.

Councilmember Elvig commented that we have always had kind of an adversarial relationship with Mr. Delaney but last year we tried to change that. It’s promoting the City of Ramsey. He stated he is not sure what we are doing at The COR booth. If there is another purpose we could give to the booth, that would be good. He stated he is not sure what we are doing there, other than showing support for the community. He added he was not sure Chuck shared that support.

Councilmember Wise inquired if we have information documenting that we need the Police Department present to that extent.

Mr. Ulrich replied yes, there are traffic concerns and that we get a number of complaints related to parking. He offered to provide the complaint information.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated that any time you have that many people in one place you will have issues. These things cross over the boundaries of the normal.

Councilmember Jeffrey stated that when Lord of Life had their festival, there were police there. We have them at Happy Days and we have them at lots of places so he felt having police presence at the Game Fair is not out of line.

Councilmember McGlone commented that the idea of why we have this booth – he thought was fabulous. He is not interested in making a business thing out of this.

Mayor Ramsey added he feels it is valuable to have a booth at the Game Fair but he is not interested in giving Mr. Delaney extra money for the 20 x 20 booth. That is the least Mr. Delaney could do and he needs to make sure he calls it Ramsey and not Anoka.

Mr. Ulrich summarized that the consensus of the Council is to go with the larger booth but to keep it within the cost of last year and request advertising efforts to state the City of Ramsey and explain the advertising we are doing for them.

Marketing Manager Lazan stated that some of the issues relating to Mr. Delaney go way back – storm water fees, property line problems, etc. He (Lazan) feels it is a tremendous component right here in the City. This fits us well. He was there all but one day last year and he would do it again. He encouraged Council to be a part of the event – to continue the relationship and identity piece.

Councilmember Elvig stated that in turn, we should give Mr. Delaney a booth at Happy Days or the Business Expo – or both.

Councilmember Backous requested Mr. Ulrich talk to Mr. Delaney about his radio copy too – say the Game Fair is located in the City of Ramsey – not located just west of Anoka.

## **2.5) Staff Roles**

Mayor Ramsey noted this case was added to clarify what roles everyone has with regard to development, etc. across the City. It was pointed out that all COR development questions, etc. should be directed to Heidi Nelson or Darren Lazan. Following discussion, Council asked that all staff be made aware of where questions should be directed and also be aware of what everyone's role is.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember Backous, seconded by Councilmember Jeffrey to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. All voted in favor. The City Council Work Session adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

## **ATTEST:**

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Jo Ann M. Thieling  
City Clerk

*Minutes drafted by Jo Thieling, City Clerk*