

**PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a special joint meeting on Thursday, June 2, 2011, 2011, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Gary Levine
 Commissioner Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Ralph Brauer
 Commissioner Robert Schiller
 Commissioner Gary Van Scoy

Members Absent: Commissioner Andrew Dunaway
 Commissioner Joseph Field

Council Members Present: Mayor Bob Ramsey
 Councilmember Randy Backous
 Councilmember David Elvig
 Councilmember Jason Tossey

Council Members Absent: Councilmember Colin McGlone
 Councilmember Jeffrey Wise

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
 Senior Planner Tim Gladhill
 Economic Development/Marketing Manager Aaron Backman

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Levine called the special joint meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

CITIZEN INPUT

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Van Scoy, seconded by Councilmember Tossey, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Bauer, Brauer, Schiller, and Van Scoy. Mayor Ramsey, Councilmembers Tossey, Backous, Elvig. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Dunaway and Field, Councilmembers McGlone and Wise.

APPROVE PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

There were none.

NOTE CITY COUNCIL MINUTES

The Council minutes were noted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/COMMISSION BUSINESS

Case #1: Discuss Development Review Process, Regulations, Standards and Development Fees

Senior Planner Gladhill presented the Staff Report.

Councilmember Elvig stated there has been some pressure on the Council to keep the fees more competitive with other cities to be sure Ramsey's fees do not hinder development. He noted he was not sure if there were sufficient fees over the years and he was reluctant to bring the fees down. He did not want to have to raise the fees in time, having residents pay in the long run.

Mayor Ramsey stated he did not see a problem with the current fees. He questioned how to qualify that the builders and residents are getting what they pay for in a building permit. He suggested looking into the next five permits to watch how much work goes into them internally and document the staff time. That could be compared to what the consumer pays for in the permit.

Councilmember Tossey stated he was tentative regarding the fact that the builder has to pay a fee to build, and the City retains \$100 of that fee in setting up an erosion control escrow. That fee is kept in an escrow account that doesn't grow interest. He suggested rather than giving a subsidy on the back end, the fee can be reduced on the front end and thereby, make it more competitive.

Councilmember Backous stated he had been appalled at the Park dedication fees. He indicated when he was on the Park and Recreation Commission, he found Ramsey's fees were lower than those nearby. He stated it is more important to break even, and the City should be determining whether the fees cover the costs. If the costs are covered and the City's fees are still quite a bit different than neighboring communities, they should be reconsidered.

Senior Planner Gladhill noted as the 2040 Comp Plan moves closer, staff may have to look at all the management plans again.

Councilmember Tossey explained he spoke with Senior Planner Gladhill that day and asked how many building permits were issued in the current year. There were 9. Of those fees, the City kept \$100 each for a total of \$900. He said he felt the City did not need to take that amount from the builders. He suggested the money be deducted from escrow if the soils become an issue.

City Engineer Himmer explained the \$100 fee has been on the books since 2006. However, it wasn't collected until just last year. There was staff time to set up the accounts this fee goes to. The fee was based on recommendations and on the Capital Improvement Plan. The fees cover the staff costs to set up the accounts, inspections that occur, software and permits.

Mayor Ramsey stated he viewed the \$100 administrative fee for erosion control escrow as minimal. He suggested that the building permit fee be a flat fee instead of 2% of the value of a single family home, for example.

Senior Planner Gladhill responded he understood the percentage is based on the State Building Code, and offered to check on that.

Commissioner Van Scoy questioned how the value of a fee is determined.

Senior Planner Gladhill explained there are benchmarks, and historical data can be used as well.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked whether the item will come back to the Planning Commission.

Senior Planner Gladhill noted the issue will be brought to the Council, though he will keep the Planning Commission apprised of decisions. He noted he is looking for ways to improve the review process.

Case #2: Discuss Employment District Concepts for West of Armstrong Boulevard and South of Highway 10

Senior Planner Gladhill presented the Staff Report.

Councilmember Elvig left at 6:26 p.m.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is satisfied with the Office Park on the south side of Highway 10. He is not in favor of more industrial use on the north side. He suggested that area should be more retail.

Commissioners Van Scoy and Levine, and Councilmember Tossey agreed.

Senior Planner Gladhill questioned if both bodies are comfortable with the new zoning district. He noted this was created in the 2030 Comp Plan and will now need to amend the zoning ordinance to officially create it.

Consensus was reached that both the Planning Commission and City Council agreed with the new zoning district.

City Engineer Himmer pointed out there is a buffer around the area so it doesn't go right into low density housing. Staff will work at trying to find a good way to transition into the area.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked how the land can be accessed.

Senior Planner Gladhill explained it has been difficult to plan with the frequent changes to Armstrong Boulevard. He said he is unsure there would be a direct access to Highway 10. Staff will be working with MnDOT and their new policies.

Commissioner Van Scoy asked what the impact would be of having a river next to the area.

Mayor Ramsey replied the likelihood of a river crossing being built at Armstrong Boulevard is very slim. The interchange is being constructed to accommodate a river crossing some day, but it is a long way off. He added this does not have any bearing on where the office park is located.

Case #3: Review Outside Storage and Employment Districts

Senior Planner Gladhill presented the Staff Report. He questioned whether further clarification should be added to surfacing and screening requirements and clarified this is focused on the industrial area; not the commercial areas.

Councilmember Backous asked if these businesses are along the rail.

Senior Planner Gladhill answered some are.

Councilmember Backous noted there have been discussions regarding screening and it is needed for appearance near the rail.

Economic Development/Marketing Manager Backman explained Hanson Building Products has 40,000 square feet of area, and another 2,700 square feet of office space. The owner wants to expand and stay in Ramsey. The business is along the railroad tracks. There are semis going in and out with siding and roofing products. This is cyclical throughout the year. The trucks need to be unloaded when they come in. The owner would like to have the business along Highway 10. The screening would require more than a fence.

Chairperson Levine stated he prefers to clarify the policy; however, there are individual needs and they must be addressed.

Commissioner Brauer pointed out there are abandoned properties and those that have been left to deteriorate.

Senior Planner Gladhill explained the policy can require those types of places be cleaned up. He noted he would be using code enforcement to deal with this issue.

Case #4: Legislative Update

Mayor Ramsey noted the Governor signed into law the variance ordinance. The cities now have flexibility to issue variances in certain instances. A revised variance ordinance will be submitted to the Council at the July meeting. This variance ordinance is effective immediately.

COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

- 1) Councilmember Backous reminded the Bodies of a benefit for David Jeffrey at the Fountains of Ramsey, on Sunday, June 5, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Tossey, seconded by Commissioner Van Scoy, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion Carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Levine, Commissioners Van Scoy, Bauer, Brauer, and Schiller, and Mayor Ramsey, Councilmembers Tossey, Backous, Elvig. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioners Dunaway and Field, Councilmembers McGlone and Wise.

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Senior Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Planning Division Secretary

Drafted by Chris Moksnes
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.