

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, June 28, 2011, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: Councilmember Randy Backous
Council Vacancy

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Public Works Director Brian Olson
Senior Planner Tim Gladhill
Parks Supervisor Mark Riverblood

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

The agenda was approved as submitted.

COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1) Identify City Maintenance Costs for The Draw

Parks Supervisor Riverblood reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember McGlone inquired if staff hours for the Exmark are the same individuals on the mowers.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said this figure is total equipment hours, which together equals 9.75 hours.

Mayor Ramsey questioned the figures used for wages, stating it will cost more than \$1/hour for FICA, unemployment, and other charges.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said he included unemployment figures for temporary help, adding he verified these figures with Human Resources staff.

Public Works Director Olson stated unemployment and liability costs are next to nothing and that they could include the normal rate then multiply by 1.33 to reach an accurate figure.

Councilmember Elvig said that multiplier would only include FUDA and FICA, so the correct figure should be 12-15% or \$11/hour.

Mayor Ramsey noted this figure did not factor in unproductive time of training, briefings, staff meetings, and other downtime.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said these figures did not include supervisor training time, adding they use a 2.75 multiplier for full-time staff.

Councilmember Elvig questioned the 8% allotment of time for the mowing crew of three individuals at 40 hours/week. He said this time is not necessarily just at The Draw and does include unproductive time.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said \$9.75 is within that 40 hours and 8% is relating to The Draw. He said that of all the time allotted by the mow crew, 8% relates to The Draw. Parks Supervisor Riverblood clarified that at the end of the week staff spends a half day sharpening blades, checking oil, and cleaning machines; therefore, 16 hours/week are spent on machine-related maintenance associated with The Draw.

Councilmember Elvig asked what amount is allotted for supervisory time.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said that one-quarter hour per week is related to The Draw.

Councilmember Wise noted that as time goes on there will be less hands-on maintenance and more sprinkler head maintenance.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said that is correct, adding staff will still do tree trimming and irrigation but the Request for Proposal (RFP) will only be for maintenance items.

Mayor Ramsey noted the quarter-hour supervisory time will likely increase as summer continues and that if contracted the City wouldn't have to compensate for time because it adds up quickly.

Councilmember Elvig agreed; however, stated the analysis is a percentage of how many costs and hours are over all parks and includes factored downtime. He inquired about differences in spring mowing versus fall mowing.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said the mowing supervisor is a long-term employee who is competent and efficient, but said he could include another budget figure to factor for that, such as 10-11 hours. Parks Supervisor Riverblood said staff will go out on RFP using 10.50 for a multiplier after confirming costs with Human Resources for items such as training and

supervisory time. He said they could also add in a contingency for the day when things go wrong.

Councilmember Wise said it would be good to round up to an 11 multiplier.

Councilmember McGlone asked if we contract for everything, will depreciation cover this.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said depreciation would include the entire cost of the equipment piece but it is used outside the mowing season so it is more than compensated for. He said the equipment will likely last longer than 10 years.

Councilmember Elvig asked if salvage has been factored in.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said it was not because the values are holding well and they should receive 10% back or more on any trade-in.

Council consensus was reached on the method and manner of the cost accounting for the in-house maintenance, based on discussion.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said the RFP will be available online and will include the balance of 2011 and all of 2012, with another three-year contract after that. He added the exact amount of fuel needed to mow The Draw will be determined.

2) Discuss Mowing and Maintenance Policy for Boulevards, Vacant City-owned Lands, and “Open Space”

Parks Supervisor Riverblood reviewed the staff report.

Public Works Director Olson said we have many calls for areas such as Renner Park, adding that while neighbors now mow this area, Parks Supervisor Riverblood has spent a lot of time talking to residents regarding this area. He said this will be a topic for the July 18 worksession.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood reviewed the estimated mowing reductions in hours for 2009, and stated that approximately 323 season staff hours have been reduced by these mowing reductions.

Councilmember McGlone asked about the inventory for salable property and parks, suggesting overlaying that with the park map to better determine buildable lots and the mowing strategy.

Mayor Ramsey inquired about the trail mowing reductions and asked how much we use, suggesting there may be a better piece of equipment designed for trail mowing.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said the Exmark is a good piece of equipment that trims brambles and brush. He added with the volume of people using the trails, bigger equipment may not be well received because it interrupts trail usage. Parks Supervisor Riverblood reviewed a partial list of various areas and streets presently being mowed, adding the Parks Department could cut the trail mowing in half if directed.

Councilmember Tossey asked if staff could contact the owners/banks to do the mowing, adding at times the growth covers the sidewalks.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood said they could but this would take more effort to contact and abatement.

Councilmember Wise agreed staff would spend more time contacting and following up with the owners than actually mowing.

Councilmember Tossey asked about the administrative citation process.

City Administrator Ulrich said staff does increase enforcement for these intervals making this a more efficient process.

Councilmember Tossey inquired about enforcement for the occupied lots.

City Administrator Ulrich said staff issues a citation, allow times for abatement and then if not done, will abate and send a bill. He said the change was in shortening the timeframe for abatement.

Councilmember Tossey asked why this process couldn't be used for the bank owners.

City Administrator Ulrich said ownership doesn't matter because the same process would be used.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood spoke about the abatement person and policy, adding it can get discretionary and convoluted.

Senior Planner Tim Gladhill said the struggle is vacant lots, adding the City could require mowing the entire vacant lot but staff typically trades and does the boulevard only to help mitigate some of the complaints.

Public Works Director Olson said we could force owners to mow the right-of-way.

Senior Planner Gladhill said probably not the right-of-way but said staff will do more research.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood stated there are many complexities that staff is working on with Police, Public Works, and Parks, trying to be consistent across the board. He said staff recognizes the problem and tries to make the best decisions.

City Administrator Ulrich said this topic could be discussed more during the July 19 worksession utilizing overlay maps.

Council consensus was to continue the practice of not mowing certain parks/open space and continue reduced mowing levels for trails and low maintenance City properties/based on discussion.

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Cathy Sorensen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.