

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, August 30, 2011, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Bob Ramsey
Councilmember Randy Backous (arrived 5:43 pm)
Councilmember David Elvig
Councilmember Colin McGlone
Councilmember Jason Tossey
Councilmember Jeffrey Wise
Councilmember Sarah Strommen (arrived 6:23 pm)

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Deputy City Administrator Heidi A. Nelson
Finance Officer Diana Lund
Police Chief James Way
Economic Development/Marketing Manager Aaron Backman
Fire Chief Dean Kapler
Development Manager Darren Lazan
Parks Supervisor Mark Riverblood
Senior Planner Tim Gladhill
City Attorney Bill Goodrich

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:38 p.m.

APPROVE AGENDA

Mayor Ramsey noted the agenda items would be reordered as follows: 1) Consider Proposal from Landowner for the Conveyance of Land for the Trott Brook Greenway and Trail, 2) Review Proposed Floor Plan for Single Family Dwelling in the Ramsey Town Center 10th Addition, 3) Initiate 2011 Park's Capital Improvement – Central Park's Parkway, 4) 2012 General Fund budget, 5) Application for Aid to Firefighter Grants (AFG Grant).

The agenda was approved as amended.

COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1) 3) Consider Proposal from Landowner for the Conveyance of Land for the Trott Brook Greenway and Trail

Parks Supervisor Riverblood reviewed the staff report. He noted there is a resident that may want to purchase land to help extend the Trott Brook Greenway Trail. He asked whether the Council preferred to explore the concept, or whether the proposal should be denied.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is not interested in more density in that area; he would prefer to make sure there would be a trail there some day.

Councilmember Strommen expressed concern that the City may be taken out of the portion it wants to be part of.

Councilmember Elvig said he would not agree with this unless there was a solid agreement made and did not agree with the density on the other side of this land.

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

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

The Special Council meeting moved into a closed session at 5:48 p.m.

The closed session ended at 6:05 p.m.

2) 4) Review Proposed Floor Plan for Single Family Dwelling in the Ramsey Town Center 10th Addition

Senior Planner Gladhill reviewed the staff report. He noted the applicant is requesting a floor plan for a model that is new to The COR. He explained one of the City's policies is to encourage a front porch whenever possible. This floor plan calls for a split-level and a second story above the garage. The placement of the garage in this plan lessens the area that could be used for a front porch. He questioned whether this would be acceptable within the design guidelines as discussed in a recent work session.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson further explained this permit request arrived midstream in the discussion on new design standards for The COR.

Dean Willenbring, the applicant, pointed out the porch would be an area where guests would come to the front door. The porch would line up with the garage and is considered livable area. He described the materials that would be used in construction.

Councilmember Elvig stated he is concerned with the pitch of the roof.

Councilmember Tossey cautioned that every home in that neighborhood has some type of porch. He agreed with the concerns of the roof pitch.

Senior Planner Gladhill suggested a policy be added to the design guideline for a minimum square footage for a porch.

Mr. Willenbring commented he was one of the first developers in the Ramsey Town Center and is very familiar with the design guidelines.

Consensus was reached to add a dormer on the front roof, shakes on the dormer, and that stone should be added to the front.

3) ~~2~~ Initiate 2011 Park's Capital Improvement – Central Park's Parkway

Parks Supervisor Riverblood reviewed the staff report. He noted if the Council reached consensus to move forward, an acquisition agreement would be written and brought to the Council for review.

Mayor Ramsey stated it is nearing the end of this construction season but possibly the church can be approached in another manner next season.

The suggestion of swapping land with the old municipal building was raised in previous meetings. Councilmember McGlone questioned whether that is still open for discussion.

City Administrator Ulrich responded he was not sure if the church was open to that anymore. He stated he supports the concept of the large park, and the City could approach the church regarding that concept

Parks Supervisor Riverblood stated for more than 20 years, this land was identified as developable. He said if there is no usable solution by spring 2012, there could be congestion in the area. The City has been actively trying to pursue this.

Mayor Ramsey suggested staff work with the church for a month or so. If no progress is made, staff should again approach the Council and request that half the construction be done immediately, and half later.

Parks Supervisor Riverblood noted that performing the construction in that manner could add \$20,000 to the cost.

Consensus was reached to work with the church for the short term and report back.

4) ~~1~~ 2012 General Fund budget

Finance Officer Lund stated the total proposed levy for 2012 is \$8,462,283. The 2011 levied taxes were \$8,128,609. The change from 2010 to 2011 is \$333,674, which is 4.10%. The

change from 2011 to 2012 proposed levy is 12%.

Discussion took place regarding memberships to the Association of Metropolitan Municipalities and the North Metro Mayors Association and the benefits to the City of each. Also discussed were memberships in two Chambers of Commerce and it was decided there were benefits to each membership.

Finance Officer Lund pointed out the notable budget items including a health insurance increase of 10% over last year's budget, and a reduction on COLA on all employees.

City Administrator Ulrich explained the decision for the City to conduct their own lobbying and allowing Councilmembers to go to the Capitol was made prior to the budget discussions. The City's needs for lobbying are not a high priority, as they are handled internally.

Mayor Ramsey brought up the observation that there is a raise in provision for meals. He said he is in favor of omitting the meals, and the cost of them, as long as there is a chance for meeting participants to get their own meals during the meetings.

Councilmember McGlone noted there is a State Statute that provides for meals for Councilmembers at meetings that are held over a mealtime.

Discussion took place regarding whether a short dinnertime could be taken before the meeting time so Councilmembers and participants can get their own meal. However, this would add to staff time to have them stay through for the meeting. It was explained that most staff is exempt and hourly wages are not a concern. In the instances where it is an issue, personnel will decide how to handle it.

Consensus was reached to provide meals on Council meeting nights and not on work session meeting nights.

Mayor Ramsey questioned why the building inspection allowance is going up.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson explained there will most likely be increased permit fees. The City is utilizing the services of an inspector this summer, a few days a week, which helps cover hours when a staff is taking vacation. She stated she believed the contracting position was being used effectively.

Finance Officer Lund noted the Market Value Homestead Credit (MVHC) was a legislative change. Property tax relief will not be delivered by excluding a portion of qualifying homes' market value from taxation. The overall change proposed by the legislation results in residents paying \$42 less in taxes.

Consensus was reached to bring forth the levy with changes as discussed.

5) Application for Aid to Firefighter Grants (AFG Grant)

Fire Chief Kaplar requested authorization to apply for the AFG Grant. He explained there is a match for this population of 10% of the funds awarded. He noted he met with the Fire Department of Nowthen last week and discussed their budget concerns. Since the Nowthen and Ramsey Fire Departments are currently combined, this must be a unanimous agreement between the departments.

Consensus was reached to apply for the grant.

FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

City Administrator Ulrich noted St. Francis is interested in pursuing a long-term firefighter partnership. If the Council concurs, discussions will be scheduled.

Councilmember Wise suggested combining both Police and Fire Departments with other municipalities.

Councilmember McGlone replied he would not oppose the exploration of combining fire departments. He said his questions would center on which department would pay for certain salaries, etc.

Councilmember Wise stated there are other communities to the north that may benefit from Ramsey's structure.

Mayor Ramsey agreed that the discussion on combining fire departments should move forward.

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

Mayor Ramsey stated there has been conversation that some members of this Council may be at the City Hall too much. The City Charter, section 2.6.2, states the Mayor shall study the operations of the City government and offer suggestions. It is always made clear the purpose for the Mayor's presence as well as any Councilmembers. He said the idea that the Council and Mayor could be causing issues is erroneous, and he takes exception to it.

ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 8:20 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.