

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, October 11, 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 Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Jason Tossey  
Councilmember Jeffrey Wise

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Deputy City Administrator Heidi A. Nelson  
City Clerk Jo Thieling  
Economic Developer/Marketing Manager Aaron Backman  
Development Manager Darren Lazan  
Fire Chief Dean Kapler  
City Attorney Bill Goodrich  
Senior Planner Tim Gladhill  
Street Supervisor Grant Reimer

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:29 p.m.

**APPROVE AGENDA**

The agenda was approved as submitted.

**COUNCIL TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**1) Discuss Executive Style Minutes**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Ramsey questioned how the public hearing minutes would be handled.

City Administrator Ulrich replied staff could transcribe those minutes from video.

Councilmember Wise said he was not against this proposal. He suggested adding the functionality of a word search, and hyperlinking where the topic starts.

Councilmember Tossey inquired whether staff would be trained to transcribe, or if a secretarial service would be used. He suggested people sign in if they want to speak at meetings.

City Clerk Thieling explained staff does proof the minutes, pulls staff direction from minutes, and adds resolution numbers. It does take time to do these things, but not as much time as transcribing the minutes. She noted there would be much less to proof with executive style minutes.

City Administrator Ulrich indicated the transcription and executive style minutes option would save time and money. He suggested staff try it for a while, and if it does not meet the needs, they can go back to the previous style.

Councilmember Elvig raised the issue that some people would want a copy of the written minutes. He asked how that would be handled.

City Administrator Ulrich responded the minutes would be in print form to comply legally. If someone wanted more detail and they didn't have a computer, they could use one at the library or possibly the City Hall could make one available.

City Attorney Goodrich explained if there is an appeal, the written minutes would serve in court reviews. When the Council adopts findings, those minutes need to be verbatim. Those records must be accurate and findings of facts must be transcribed and put into written form.

Councilmember Wise pointed out the minute taker does not necessarily take verbatim minutes and comments can be reworded.

Councilmember Strommen asked about the long-term file storage implications.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson explained there would be concerns with QCTV for storage, as their storage is not mandated by State law. The City would need to check with them and consider how their retention schedule compares.

City Attorney Goodrich noted there is no minimum time the State requires retention of records. The State does mandate that minutes must be preserved forever.

Mayor Ramsey stated the City is only required to keep and publish executive style minutes so Ramsey's minutes are over and above the requirements.

Consensus was reached to move to executive style minutes for the meetings that are video taped.

**2) Proposed Lease & Fire Suppression System for City-Owned Property at 6701 Hwy. 10**

Economic Development/Marketing Manager Backman reviewed the staff report. He noted the Met Council concurred with the City's proposal. They approved the lease, the project, using all of the revenues for improvement of the building, and the City does have to forward any monies

to them for four years. He said he requested in writing that the building will remain exempt until such time as the use is changed on the property. That allows the City to apply what would have been used for taxes to the debt.

Councilmember McGlone said he disapproved. He explained in 4 years' time, it is likely a renter could be found to pay for the improvements themselves. He said none of the revenues go back to the RALF fund so the City is shorting itself and the taxpayers. Councilmember McGlone noted the building is slated for demolition in the future, so considering improvements makes no sense.

Councilmember Wise agreed with some of Councilmember McGlone's comments. He said the building has been here a long a time and if fire suppression can be installed, it could possibly be leased when the church is done.

Councilmember McGlone stated the building does not need improvement to be leases.

Economic Development/Marketing Manager Backman stated this particular property has been vacant six years. He has approached businesses for this building and there is now an opportunity to lease the space, and generate \$20,000 or more per year.

Councilmember Strommen stated if the space can be used as an incubator space for the church, it seems better than having the building sit empty for the time being.

City Administrator Ulrich explained if the RALF property is getting leased revenue, the revenue would go to the RALF program. This could make it a more valuable property after the four years is up. The alternative is to deny the lease and look for a taxpaying entity. He noted the priority has been to get the properties to pay taxes and there is a concern about the appearance of the building and having the building occupied would improve the appearance.

Councilmember McGlone stated he thought all the points the City Administrator made were disadvantages. The use next door is perhaps why it hasn't been leased for six years. He said he would rather find a taxpaying entity but if the church paid for fire suppression, he would approve the request. He noted he does not consider that building to be a problem.

Councilmember Backous stated there are huge advantages to having a church in the community and asked about the parking situation.

Economic Development/Marketing Manager Backman responded that based on the information provided and discussions with staff; there is sufficient parking for what is proposed.

Councilmember Backous pointed out this would be taxing on the police and fire departments. The best-case scenario is breaking even. He asked what the remedy would be if they broke a four year lease after two years.

Economic Development/Marketing Manager Backman explained the parent church is the United Methodist Church of Anoka and their board has agreed to this start up.

Councilmember Tossey questioned whether the lease has a buyout.

City Attorney Goodrich said there is not.

Councilmember Tossey said he would not vote in favor of this project because the City should not own the property and should not invest money into it. The Met Council and MnDOT offered a freeway six years ago and he is tired of holding these types of properties.

Mayor Ramsey stated if the church paid for the sprinkler system in exchange for rent, he would approve it. The only positive part is that Youth First would have a sprinkler system. Mayor Ramsey said he didn't like that the City would bring money for the sprinkler system, and possibly not have someone in the building all four years.

Councilmember Elvig commented that this use wouldn't bring that much business to the City.

Councilmember Strommen mentioned it would bring and keep people in the community and strike a balance while waiting for Highway 10.

Councilmember Wise asked if the church would be able to get a loan and pay for the sprinkler system.

Councilmember McGlone cautioned the Council against setting a precedent, noting there are other churches along that stretch of highway that have funded their own building and needs.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson noted the moratorium is intended for new construction so this would be an allowed use.

City Administrator Ulrich pointed out there are two issues: the City is a potential landlord, and the City is being asked to be a banker. The City does not want to be a banker, but will lease the property if the church comes up with the money. The City does not want to finance the improvement.

Gary Kyka with United Methodist Church stated there are those that have offered a guarantee for the new church.

Councilmember Backous said he would agree if that could be brought forth in writing.

Councilmembers Wise, Elvig, and Strommen said they would support the project with conditional points.

Mayor Ramsey opposed the project.

### **3) Consider Changes to Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy**

Street Supervisor Reimer reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Ramsey stated he is completely opposed to changing the sidewalk policy. He said the City puts in sidewalks with the intent of maintaining them and has the equipment to do so.

Councilmember Tossey said if there is a change in the policy, it should not be a moneymaker for the City.

Public Works Director Olson noted there is nothing in the policy regarding enforcement. He said the department does not get to all the sidewalks for three to four days after a snowfall event. The priorities are the roads and the two-mile walking zone.

Councilmember Tossey stated there are vacant lots on each side of him, so he does that snow removal. However, not everyone can do that. He noted there are issues to work out with this policy in regard to accountability and if the department is already clearing sidewalks, they may as well do them. Councilmember Tossey pointed out there are sidewalks on City streets that are connected to a townhome development and the townhome association would be responsible for removing snow from those sidewalks. He suggested abolishing the Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy.

Consensus was reached to reword the Sidewalk Snow Removal Policy to make the streets and two-mile walking zone the City's priority. This will be communicated through *The Resident*. The snow removal implementation will stay the same as last year.

#### **FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

Noted.

#### **MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT**

None

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Jo Ann M. Thieling  
City Clerk

Drafted by Chris Moksnes  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*