

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 19, 2011 at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Colin McGlone
 Councilmember David Elvig
 Councilmember Jason Tossey

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis G. Ulrich
 Public Works Director Brian Olson
 City Engineer Tim Himmer
 Councilmember Bob Ramsey
 Councilmember Randy Backous
 Economic Development/Marketing Manager Aaron Backman
 Parks Supervisor Mark Riverblood
 Street Supervisor Grant Reimer
 Senior Planner Tim Gladhill

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson McGlone called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:32 p.m.

CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Chairperson McGlone and Councilmember Tossey to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson McGlone and Councilmembers Elvig and Tossey.
Voting No: None.

APPROVE MINUTES

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Chairperson McGlone, to approve the minutes from the March 15, 2011 Public Works Meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson McGlone and Councilmembers Elvig and Tossey.
Voting No: None.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Case #1: Consider Site Plan for Parking Lot Amendments for Ramsey Office Plaza

Senior Planner Gladhill reviewed the staff report. He noted 24 feet of drive lane is the minimum needed and expressed concern there could be conflicts in a small parking lot. A future drive through access is planned. He also noted some park space on the north is being eliminated and some is moving to the east.

Public Works Director Olson added that it is not clear yet how this plan impacts the streetscape. Staff has spent a lot of time and effort in achieving continuity with the plans in place. When this plan is further defined, Staff wants to reserve the right to adjust as necessary.

Chairperson McGlone suggested the ingress parking spaces off Sunwood would be safer if they were angled for the purpose of in/out traffic.

Public Works Director Olson explained the way the parked cars would have to pull out and to the north and turnaround would not be safe.

Chairperson McGlone stated if all parties are satisfied with the current plan, then it does not need to be changed at this point.

Councilmember Elvig expressed concern with the shared parking that the City is encouraging. He cited the situation at Subway. He asked where the discussions are regarding the use of the easement and parking lot the city owns.

City Administrator Ulrich responded the parties are in the process of negotiating. He explained it is difficult to project a timeline, however, optimistically it could be 30 to 60 days.

Councilmember Elvig asked if there has been discussion of having an access from Rhinestone Street.

Public Works Director Olson indicated that is a State Aid road. There are State Aid roads on both sides.

Senior Planner Gladhill noted discussions have taken place regarding access on this road, exclusive of this discussion.

City Administrator Ulrich noted the 60 feet of property owned by the HRA will be discussed at a future meeting. This item is being discussed to move forward with the restaurant proposal. The Staff recommendation at this point is that this proposal does fit into the City's overall plan. It is not compromising what was originally envisioned.

Public Works Director Olson pointed out this is a walkable community, and the design of The COR is geared more toward pedestrians. There is a happy medium.

Motion by Councilmember Tossey, seconded by Chairperson McGlone, to recommend that the City Council approve the site plan for parking lot expansion and additional access at 7533 Sunwood Drive NW, contingent upon site plan approval by the City Council.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson McGlone and Councilmembers Tossey and Elvig. Voting No: None.

Case #2: Review Sidewalk Plowing Policy

Street Supervisor Grant Reimer reviewed the staff report.

Chairperson McGlone pointed out that homeowners that have a sidewalk on their property knew when they bought the property that they would be responsible for it. He noted that hiring subcontractors for some of the plowing is something that should be explored. He said the townhomes have association dues, and the dues should cover the removal of snow. He cautioned the City to carefully consider any design standards that could cause issues such as a car parked on the road making traffic difficult to flow through. He added that snowplowing can be a precarious issue for the City. It is easy to fall into providing a service.

City Administrator Ulrich said the City will do some portion of snow clearing, but the question is whether the city crew does it, it is contracted out, or the residents do it. The City needs to define what it will take responsibility for.

Public Works Director Olson indicated 75% of trails are on State Aid Roads or connecting neighborhoods. He noted one of the reasons the department is only over budget by \$3,000 is that the roads and school walking trails are done first. It takes three to four days to get to trails and sidewalks, but the City is not paying overtime to get them cleared. If the department was to cut back, the cost savings may not be evident.

Councilmember Elvig asked how many hours or days are put into clearing trails.

Street Maintenance Supervisor Reimer responded they are done in four hours by three Staff.

Councilmember Elvig suggested the City take over all the trails as part of the City Parks maintenance. The internal sidewalks in the residential areas should be done by the residents. The areas that have associations should manage the snow clearing themselves. The school trails must be done by the City for the students to get to school safely.

Councilmember Tossey agreed. He predicted there may be issues with empty lots because many will be bank owned.

City Administrator Ulrich noted the consensus seems to be that the townhome associations should continue to be responsible for their snow clearing. The City should continue with school

zone areas. The City should also clear trails and sidewalks adjacent to State Aid roads or interconnecting different neighborhoods. Sidewalks in residential areas should be handled by the residents. He stated Staff will draft a plan and bring it back for consideration.

Case #3: Summary of Snow Removal Activities for 2010-2011 Season

Street Supervisor Reimer reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Elvig noted he was pleased with the efficient snow removal he saw all season. There was not as much ice buildup as in the past.

Councilmember Tossey commended Street Supervisor Reimer for having gone only 3% over budget considering the major snow events of the season. Since most of the big events were on holidays and weekends, and overtime had to be used for clearing the snow, this small overage in the budget is commendable.

Case #4: Consider Storm Sewer Outlet Revisions Related to City Project #08-33; Ute Street Improvements

City Engineer Himmer reviewed the staff report.

Resident Arnold Peltzer, 4863 179th Lane, stated the structure should be extended 12 feet out, and it should be narrower so it doesn't take up the entire easement. He noted when this project began, he thought it would look like any other project in the area. He commented it is unsightly and unsafe.

City Engineer Himmer stated he did have a conversation with the City Attorney regarding the liability issues. The City Attorney informed him there is no more liability with this than with anything else for the City or property owner.

Public Works Director Olson explained in the beginning, concerns were raised that the DNR may need to be involved. A few options were considered before the plan was final. The structure does not need to be any set distance away from the water's edge, but it does need to be higher than the high water mark. It was challenging to create a design.

Chairperson McGlone questioned whether more uniform rip rap could be used.

City Engineer Himmer stated he will specify smaller rip rap be used in reconstructing the project.

Mr. Peltzer pointed out the easement is not taken care of.

City Engineer Himmer noted the easement issue is being discussed. He said he is not sure if it is a recorded easement or if it is existing. He said he is in discussion with the City Attorney.

Mr. Peltzer stated the easement is recorded.

Councilmember Elvig stated as a resident that shares this easement, he was shocked to see the size of the project and the lack of uniformity. He understood from the City Attorney that he was the sole owner of the top of the land. He explained he wanted to put a dock on the top of the rock, and that cannot happen now. This has severed access along any easement he owns.

Chairperson McGlone clarified the City intends to change the structure as it is now.

City Engineer Himmer replied the City does intend to make changes that include this Committee's and the Council's direction. This will be a separate case on the Council agenda, and the City Attorney will be present to aid in the discussion. He added the contractor performed the work they were asked to do, and any changes would be paid by the City.

Case #5: Consider Amendments to the City's Topsoil Ordinance

Motion by Councilmember Elvig, seconded by Chairperson McGlone, to recommend that the Public Works Committee table this item to call the City Council Work Session to order.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson McGlone and Councilmembers Elvig and Tossey.
Voting No: None.

The Public Works Committee meeting recessed at 7:06 p.m. and reconvened at 7:16 p.m.

City Engineer Himmer reviewed the staff report. He added that Staff did attempt to determine the potential cost savings on a typical family home between the current standard and without, however the numbers were inconclusive.

Motion by Chairperson McGlone, seconded by Councilmember Elvig, to recommend that the City Council amend the topsoil ordinance in City Code to reduce the thickness requirement from 6 inches to 4 inches.

Discussion: Councilmember Tossey expressed concern in how readily available the topsoil compound is and how expensive it is. City Engineer Himmer explained it is a MNDOT specification now. The City gives reminders of its ordinance to all the contractors. It is more expensive. The builders have mentioned it is \$1,500 more per lot. It is readily available. Chairperson McGlone noted every state highway project uses this topsoil compound. He also noted that the soil Ramsey has is unable to hold water so this kind of compound is necessary. Public Works Director Olson stated this is a good compromise to help hold the water, and for the builders that have already graded their lots. This is a good step in finding another management tool to decrease water consumption and decrease the demand on the system.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson McGlone and Councilmembers Elvig and Tossey.
Voting No: None.

COMMITTEE INPUT

City Engineer Himmer gave an update on Potential Pond Cleaning Project Near 155th Lane NW and Armstrong Boulevard.

Resident Pam Chismar, 8070 155th Lane NW, described her property.

Chairperson McGlone noted the City is discussing this issue with Senators to get the issue addressed. This problem is in other suburbs as well.

Public Works Director Olson stated he does not want to lose track of this issue. It is a large, difficult issue because there are so many other jurisdictions involved. He indicated the City should continue to be involved and try to assist in whatever it can in a regional perspective. He noted it will be on a future Council agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Tossey, seconded by Chairperson McGlone to adjourn the Public Works Committee Meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Olson
Public Works Director

Drafted by Chris Moksnes
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.