

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Wise
Councilmember Randy Backous
Councilmember David Elvig
Councilmember Colin McGlone
Councilmember Jason Tossey

Members Absent: Mayor Bob Ramsey
Councilmember Sarah Strommen

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Deputy City Administrator Heidi A. Nelson
Public Works Director Brian Olson
City Engineer Tim Himmer
Economic Development/Marketing Director Aaron Backman
Planning Intern Patrick Brama

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Wise called the City Council Work Session to order at 8:07 p.m.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1) Consider Participation in the Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program

Planning Intern Brama reviewed the staff report of establishing a Beyond the Yellow Ribbon program (BTYR) for the City of Ramsey. The BTYR is a comprehensive program that creates awareness for the purpose of connecting service members and their families with community support, training, services and resources.

Master Sergeant Dave Denton, United States Army, stated the program is a concerted effort in bringing cities and organizations together in support of service members and their families.

Councilmember Elvig asked what the program is looking to do.

Master Sergeant Denton replied the program creates awareness and synchronizes sustainable community support networks and connects organizations and companies in order to provide resources and support services which is coordinated by setting up a steering committee.

Councilmember McGlone asked what the steering committee will do.

Master Sergeant Denton replied the City would be asked to support the program by placing information on the City's web site, providing BTYR volunteers to use meeting space, allowing BTYR to utilize equipment (printing, copying, scanning, faxing, etc.) allowing BTYR volunteers to be involved with City events.

Councilmember McGlone asked who will volunteer from the City.

Planning Intern Brama replied staff could support the BYTR by providing resources for tasks that may be needed (meeting space, copying, telephones, web site, etc.).

Councilmember McGlone commented this program may be a good fit for the Ramsey Rotary.

Master Sergeant Denton stated some cities do refer the program to their rotaries.

Councilmember Tossey stated he supports the BYTR program, noting Anoka County has the most veterans in the State.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated the City's staff would help the program get started. She stated staff could volunteer to be the steering committee and take a leadership role at first and be a resource. She stated the City staff will have a facilitative role in the program.

Councilmember Elvig stated the program is a conduit to strengthen the community. He asked why Master Sergeant Denton went to Anoka first.

Master Sergeant Denton stated Anoka is an Amory city and explained that Anoka suggested he talk to Ramsey.

The consensus of the Council was to authorize staff to participate in the new multi-city Beyond the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated the kickoff will be late March and a steering committee will be established at that time.

2) Consider Membership in Twin Cities Gateway Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB)

Economic Development/Marketing Director Backman reviewed the staff report about considering membership with the Twin Cities Gateway Convention Visitors Bureau (CVB) to increase the marketing and promotion of the City of Ramsey.

Councilmember Elvig stated it would be a handicap if the hotel does not participate in a CVB.

Mayor Pro Tem Wise stated he agrees with Councilmember Elvig and if the City moves ahead, a clause should be added that all hotels will participate in CVB.

Councilmember Tossey stated he is not in favor of an additional tax.

Councilmember Backous stated this is not a tax, it is a user fee that the hotel guests pay. He stated he does not see this as a tax and is in favor of membership with the CVB.

Councilmember McGlone stated he is not in favor of an additional tax. He asked if the hotel fills up during the soccer season and the response was that it does not. He stated guests would have to pay an additional 3% tax. He stated he does not support an additional tax.

Mayor Pro Tem Wise stated this is an opportunity to “level the playing field” and increase business in Ramsay. He stated a large hotel chain could come to town and may not want to participate in the program.

Councilmember Tossey gave an example of the Christmas tree tax that was proposed and how it failed in the legislature. He commented the tax, once in place, will not go away.

Councilmember Elvig stated this is a user fee that is dedicated to a specific industry to bring and grow business in the City.

Councilmember Backous stated the hotel has been in the City through “thick and thin.” He gave an example of a family staying at the hotel due to a fire at their home.

Scott Davie, Comfort Suites general manager, stated there is currently a family from Ramsey that is staying at the hotel free of charge.

Councilmember McGlone gave an example of a church that needed a sprinkler system and the landlord put in the sprinkler system because the church signed a new lease. He stated sometimes the City needs to stay out of issues.

Councilmember Tossey stated the government is involved in too much. He restated this is a tax.

Mayor Pro Tem Wise stated it is not a tax for everyone; it is for the users only. He asked how long CVB has been around.

Economic Development/Marketing Director Backman replied that CVBs have been around since 1983.

City Administrator Ulrich stated more information can be made available for the City Council, if desired. He stated the deadline is June 30, 2012.

Mayor Pro Tem Wise stated the CVB is a public relations option for the City.

Economic Development/Marketing Director Backman stated one check per month would be written to the CVB from the hotel.

The consensus of the Council was to bring forward the item to the City Council as a Case.

FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Noted.

MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

None

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Tossey, seconded by Councilmember Backous, to adjourn the Work Session meeting.

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

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Linda Dahlquist
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.