

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, May 8, 2012, 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  
Public Works Director Brian Olson  
City Engineer Tim Himmer  
Fire Chief Dean Kapler  
Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson  
Senior Planner Tim Gladhill  
Administrative Intern Patrick Brama  
Development Manager Darren Lazan

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:03 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Residential Curbside Recycling Contract**

Environmental Coordinator Anderson reviewed the staff report.

Mike Berkopec, Ace Solid Waste Manager, offered to be a resource, noting they have been in business in Ramsey for a long time and have a lot of experience with different communities. He stated a curbside recycling contract can work in a number of ways and thinks there is a slight preference to let the hauling company do it. He assured the Council that Ace Solid Waste wants it to work and is the dominant hauler in Ramsey.

Councilmember McGlone noted the Council discussed this matter about a year and a half ago and he had advocated for an open hauling system but the Council decided not to do that. He advocated again for the open hauler system because when the cities were mandated to recycle, someone had to get it started so haulers came to the City and asked for help to get it off the ground. Councilmember McGlone noted the City receives SCORE funds to pay for part of a

staff position and asked if those SCORE funds would be received even with an open haul system.

Environmental Coordinator Anderson answered in the affirmative, noting SCORE funds are intended to reimburse the City's cost for the recycling program.

Councilmember McGlone stated his support for an open system, which would result in no loss in revenue and allow Environmental Coordinator Anderson to migrate to community development activities. He indicated the Council will consider a recommendation to recycle oil at its regular meeting tonight. Councilmember McGlone stated other communities offer a drop-off site where their residents can drop off things like oil and metal, and maybe Ace Solid Waste would offer help in that endeavor. He noted the City may be looking at a site for an oil tank and he would support adding several dumpsters.

Mr. Berkopec stated Andover and Coon Rapids are open market and if Ramsey is serious about that option, he would point to the City of Big Lake as an example to consider.

Councilmember Backous stated he supports free market and competition but in this case there are many reasons why contracted/single source makes sense, as detailed in the case report. He stated he usually also advocates for an RFP process to assure the City is taking a fresh look at it but believed that in this situation it is not practical so he would support staff's recommendation in this case.

Councilmember Strommen stated she would favor staying with a contracted mode due to concern with traffic volumes; an open system would require more staff resources to work with multiple entities; and staff information shows this is a good way to maximize what is being recycled. She stated support for continuing with Ace Solid Waste because they have done a good job and been a good partner.

Councilmember McGlone noted Mr. Berkopec has stated his preference is towards the open market, the business community/hauler is leaning toward an open market if it had a choice. In addition, a drop center was mentioned, which could boost tonnage greater than keeping the same hauler. Councilmember McGlone indicated during the Expo many people asked where to take things they have laying around their property.

Councilmember Strommen noted an open system would require staff to shuffle more papers from more entities yet the City would be paid the same amount from the SCORE grant.

Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated households are charged \$2.95/month for recycling and it is paid on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Berkopec indicated Ace Solid Waste has not increased prices since 2007 yet deals with fuel price increases and changes in commodity prices.

Councilmember Tossey stated if it is not opened there should at least be an RFP to allow the market to speak.

Councilmember Wise noted Councilmember Backous had not advocated for an RFP in this situation.

Councilmember Backous confirmed that is his position in this situation because it would take too many resources, noting the current system is working.

Councilmember McGlone pointed out if recycling is opened to the market, the recycling fee would come off the resident's bill.

Mr. Berkopec explained that will depend on the fee charged by the hauler. In their case, they would add a fee to the garbage bill and the resident would then pay that one fee. Mr. Berkopec stated for Ace Solid Waste customers, the fee would remain the same.

Mayor Ramsey noted residents may realize a savings with open recycling if they find a hauler that charges less for recycling.

Councilmember Backous pointed out it would also result in more trucks on the City's roads and increase maintenance costs.

Mayor Ramsey stated he sees problems with both but would support opening competition.

Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated while Anoka County has never actually pursued this, by signing of the recycling agreement, whether by contract or open hauling, the County can pull SCORE funding if the City does not achieve its recycling goal.

Councilmember Tossey asked if the recycling goal is based on tonnage information submitted by Ace Solid Waste.

Environmental Coordinator Anderson explained the Anoka County Board of Commissioners sets the recycling tonnage goal based on population, generally 175 pounds per person. The City also offers recycling events and that tonnage is included in the City's total. He indicated the City had been close to not meeting the recycling goal set by the County prior to going to single source but from 2006 to this year the City has hit the tonnage goal each year.

Councilmember Tossey stated he would principally lean towards open market but meeting the recycling tonnage is a concern.

Mayor Ramsey noted the City did not have a recycling program at that time but it now has such a program and residents are participating.

Councilmember Elvig stated when the City got involved with Ace Solid Waste, he liked having its large wheeled container with a cover. He commented on its ease of use compared to open bins and indicated he recycles more because of it. Councilmember Elvig asked whether the City should look at providing additional containers to encourage recycling. He stated if this service is

put out for RFP, he would not support a vendor that does not provide wheeled containers with lids.

Councilmember McGlone agreed trash lids are needed so it is not blowing around. With regard to the recycling goal, he noted Anoka County sets that tonnage and if it was not met by the City, he doubted the County would keep the City's \$50,100 of SCORE funds.

Environmental Coordinator Anderson advised there are Anoka County communities that do not meet its goal and the County has not withheld those funds but, theoretically, it could do so.

Mayor Ramsey noted if Ace Solid Waste is not interested in signing a recycling contract, then the City would have to go out for RFPs.

Mr. Berkopec clarified that Ace Solid Waste wants to continue to do the work but has a slight preference for an open system. He noted Ace Solid Waste is in a unique situation because "we live here," it needs to do what everyone wants, and has done so since before 2000.

Councilmember Wise asked if they would do it for the same money if the City extended the contract.

Mr. Berkopec stated that is likely and he would be willing to discuss that with staff.

Councilmember Wise stated Ace Solid Waste charges a reasonable fee for quality service and while there are good things for an open market, others need to be regulated. He felt there were some upsides to keeping the same system if at a fair rate.

Councilmember Backous agreed and stated he preferred to address "things that are broken," noting this is not one of them.

Councilmember Strommen asked if this consideration can be placed on the Council agenda, if there is no rate change, rather than being reconsidered at a Work Session.

Councilmember Tossey agreed that the recycling containers provided by Ace Solid Waste do make it easier for residents to recycle, resulting in the City reaching its tonnage goal. He stated concern that a different vendor may not provide that type of container.

Councilmember McGlone again stated his rationale for supporting an open market system.

The majority consensus of the Council was to direct staff to negotiate with Ace Solid Waste, the current service provider, to provide recycling service and place it on the Council agenda.

## **2.02: Update on Comprehensive Plan Amendment Discussions**

Senior Planner Gladhill reviewed the staff report.