

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, July 10, 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
Finance Director Diana Lund
Police Chief James Way
Parks and Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Street Superintendent Grant Reimer
Human Resources Representative Colleen Lasher
Senior Planner Timothy Gladhill
Management Analyst Patrick Brama
City Attorney William Goodrich
Development Manager Darren Lazan
Interim Engineer Ron Wagner

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:13 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Consider Request from Ramsey Raceway re: Use of Community Sign

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

The consensus of the Council was to support the request of Ramsey Raceway to use the community sign to advertise the Raceway's schedule.

2.02: Discussion Regarding Contracted Building Official Services

Senior Planner Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Ramsey stated he has received many compliments on Permit Technician Katy Okerstrom and asked why that position is not being considered for a salary increase.

Human Resources Representative Lasher advised of her meeting with Ms. Okerstrom and indicated she will be looking into whether Ms. Okerstrom is working outside of her job description.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated he has also received compliments on the Permit Technician and thinks there is opportunity to find avenues to reward for her hard work. However, he needs more time to meet with Permit Technician Okerstrom to better understand her work duties before making that recommendation.

Mayor Ramsey stated his support to stay with a building inspection contractor at \$50/hour, especially when considering the costs for an employee during the winter when inspections are not needed.

Councilmember Elvig agreed and asked whether turnover is an issue with residents.

Senior Planner Gladhill indicated the general resident will not notice but certain builders will notice a staff change. He advised the City had two good inspectors from Inspectron that worked well and noted that turnover can happen on contract or employee. Senior Planner Gladhill stated another consideration is the learning curve and advised that the contracted building official is still learning some of Ramsey's processes but the Permit Technician is also there to provide consistency.

Councilmember Elvig stated he has no problem with reducing the contract inspector's hours during winter months and while there has been an up tick in building permits, he thinks it can be balanced.

Senior Planner Gladhill noted the Council had looked at building permit fees to determine if adjustments were needed. Once staff knows whether the Council supports contracted services, that analysis can be completed.

Councilmember Strommen stated she has no strong feelings on this issue but the staff report indicates the City would benefit from cost savings if it went with an on-staff building official so there would be no saving with a contractor unless the winter hours are cut back. She stated her concern with the potential for turnover, which may happen more often with contractors who are looking for full-time work elsewhere. Councilmember Strommen noted builders want to talk with the same inspector instead of re-starting that conversation with another inspector.

Senior Planner Gladhill confirmed that Inspectron has provided good service and inspectors.

Councilmember McGlone noted there is more flexibility with a contractor and the staff report is based on an FTE; however, there is no intention to keep inspections full time during winter months.

Senior Planner Gladhill stated that is true with inspections and asked how many hours the Council supports for the Building Official.

Councilmember McGlone advocated for hiring a building intern to handle septic tank letters. He stated he is not interested in a proposal with St. Francis for shared service because that person is probably looking for a full-time government job and will move into another position, resulting in turnover.

Councilmember Strommen stated that is not correct since Ramsey will hire full time and shop out hours to other cities.

Councilmember McGlone stated he has received many accolades about the building department as it is today so he thinks today's service level is higher than it has ever been and would not support a change.

Councilmember Tossey noted the City can send a contracted Building Official home when there is no work.

Senior Planner Gladhill concurred that is the case with contracted services but not with a full-time Building Official. He noted another option is to hire a part-time Building Official, which would provide some flexibility.

Councilmember Tossey stated he has heard good comments on Inspectron's inspectors and suggested the Council consider the FTE option only if building up ticks.

Mayor Ramsey reiterated his support to continue with contracted services and suggested a wintertime plan to reduce the Building Official's hours be established for specific days, such as every Monday and Friday.

Senior Planner Gladhill agreed it would be best to identify set days.

The consensus of the Council was to continue with contracted building official services.

2.03: City Owned Land Inventory Update: Peltzer Park, Windsorwood, Dedicated Lands

Informational; no action required.

Mayor Ramsey reordered the agenda to next consider Item 2.05.

2.05: Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO) – Implementation of Third Generation Plan; New Development Requirements

Interim Engineer Wagner reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Strommen advised that the LRRWMO will continue discussion on this item at its July meeting and vote on it in August. She explained this item relates to one piece of the Third Generation Plan implementation. The LRRWMO has requirements in place and wants to ensure the public does not pay for private projects. However, some projects and surety requirements are already covered by member cities. The discussion has been if these are already covered by member cities in development agreements, should it be handled by the LRRWMO. The general preference expressed is that it be handled by member cities. Since this is a LRRWMO requirement, there is a preference for consistency between member cities. Councilmember Strommen stated the LRRWMO is requesting feedback in how its requirements compare to what member cities are already requiring.

Councilmember Elvig stated when talking about the surety or bond, he supports requiring a letter of credit held by the City. He felt the LRRWMO is not structured to handle those types of funds.

Councilmember McGlone stated his concern is that the LRRWMO has prevue over a “heartburn issue” for all developers and property owners. He stated he wants to better understand the issues, thinks the LRRWMO adds cost to a project, and asked if Ramsey can set the surety number.

Mayor Ramsey agreed that the Council needs to get more information about the LRRWMO, the Third Generation Plan, and the City’s requirements for its membership.

Councilmember Strommen clarified that the requirements are already set in the Third Generation Plan and the LRRWMO is now looking at how to implement the Plan. The member cities have indicated they are already requiring those sureties so the LRRWMO does not need to do it. The other issue is if the level of surety should be consistent between member cities since it is a LRRWMO requirement.

Councilmember McGlone asked whether Ramsey already takes sureties for these projects so developers are being required to place double sureties.

Councilmember Strommen noted that is the issue so the City is being asked to consider who should require the surety, the City or LRRWMO, and the amount of the surety. She suggested a cost comparison be provided so the Council can address the potential impact.

Mayor Ramsey stated the Council needs more information, such as an executive summary of the Third Generation Plan. He stated he had voted against the wetland standards while serving on the LRRWMO.

Councilmember Strommen stated she will provide an update on Ramsey’s consideration at the LRRWMO’s July meeting.

The consensus of the Council was to direct staff to provide an executive summary of the Third Generation Plan and present a comparison of Ramsey’s surety requirement with the LRRWMO’s surety requirement.

2.04: Attorney/Client Privileged Discussion Relating to the Isanti County District Court Litigation Titled Isanti County vs. Keith Kiefer vs. City of Ramsey – Portions of this case will be closed to the public

City Attorney Goodrich advised that under Minnesota Statutes, the meeting can move into closed session to discuss pending litigation. He indicated closed session discussion will relate to the Isanti County District Court litigation titled: Isanti County vs. Keith Kiefer vs. City of Ramsey.

Motion by Councilmember Wise, seconded by Councilmember Strommen, to move to closed session to discuss confidential client attorney negotiations.

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

The City Council meeting moved into a closed session at 6:48 p.m.

The City Council reconvened in open session at 6:51 p.m.

2.05: Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO) – Implementation of Third Generation Plan; New Development Requirements

This item was considered prior to Item 2.04.

3. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

City Administrator Ulrich presented future topics and asked the Council to direct requests through his office.

Councilmember Elvig requested City Administrator Ulrich address staff levels at a future Work Session.

Mayor Ramsey stated his support to streamline the process for Council consideration if non-controversial in nature.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ramsey declared the Work Session of the City Council adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.