

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, August 13, 2012, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Bob Ramsey
Councilmember David Elvig
Councilmember Colin McGlone
Councilmember Jason Tossey

Members Absent: Councilmember Randy Backous
Councilmember Jeffrey Wise

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Fire Chief Dean Kapler
Police Chief James Way
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill
Assistant Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson
Management Analyst Patrick Brama
City Attorney William Goodrich

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Ramsey called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Consider Analysis of Dedicated City Owned Lands

Management Analyst Brama reviewed the staff report and requested direction regarding the analysis of the 22 identified dedicated/restricted City-owned properties; specifically whether staff should complete a detailed property profile and analysis. It is estimated that completing this step will take notable time and human resources and cost about \$2,800 for owner and encumbrance reports.

Councilmember Elvig noted if the park dedication is ceased, the underlying property owner can take back the property, noting it would now be a buildable lot. He asked if a change in property use results in the need to put out public and mailed notice to property within 650 feet.

Development Services Manager Gladhill advised the mailed notice is to 350 feet.

Councilmember Elvig stated that may be the requirement, but the City typically provides notice to 650 feet so it will be a substantial notice.

City Attorney Goodrich advised that one of the practical problems is finding the underlying property owner, noting the development corporation or individual may be gone so you would then need to follow the family tree and potentially probate, which is an extensive process.

Councilmember McGlone asked if it could be a layered approach depending on whether you can find the underlying property owner. He noted even if the underlying property owner wants the property back, it still puts it on the tax rolls.

City Attorney Goodrich advised that if the City takes away the public use requirement and the lot sits, then it could go back to tax forfeit and be purchased.

Councilmember Strommen stated the assumption is being made the City could sell or get the property back on the tax rolls but many are properties that do not have a lot of value. She expressed concern about putting a lot of investment in the process and then not receiving as much benefit as anticipated. Councilmember Strommen suggested staff look at parcels that appear to be developable and compare them to taxed assessed parcels so it can be determined what would be gained. She would like staff to weigh that benefit against the time and effort put into the process.

Councilmember McGlone stated the land has value whether or not it is buildable. He noted in Windsor Woods the neighbors expressed interest in having a larger lot and then it would be off the City's maintenance list and go back on the tax rolls.

Councilmember Strommen noted that piece of land could have been developed but there is other land that is wetland where there is no benefit to buying since it is undeveloped and would remain in that state.

Councilmember McGlone stated the idea is to get the best result and he understands the City is not able to sell or un-dedicate all excess land.

Councilmember Strommen asked about the cost to do that in staff time, noting it may be more than the City will receive in benefit and there may be a low cost to maintain the properties.

Mayor Ramsey stated the Council went through a process to create a policy to do this so he supports following that policy and allowing staff to use common sense on which parcels have enough value to consider. He noted if the property has no value, perhaps it should be given to the adjacent property owner so taxes are paid on the property.

The consensus of the Council was to support looking at properties with the most amount of benefit for the least amount of cost and directed staff to prioritize the properties based on that standard.

2.02: Discuss Alcohol Policy in Public Places

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Police Chief Way advised the Code does not allow the sale of liquor, even by a business, in an outdoor area. The City issued a permit to allow that to occur at The Draw.

Councilmember Tossey noted the same type of permit can be considered for restaurants or these particular vendors.

Councilmember McGlone asked how to handle the situation should all three local establishments want to do their own event.

City Administrator Ulrich explained the City can require the event occur on an adjacent premises, which would allow each to have its own outdoor event.

Councilmember McGlone asked how many liquor vendors the City needs and if there could be a process to compete for this ability.

Councilmember Strommen stated if the event is required to be located on the establishment's property, there could be more than one tailgating event, which would help create synergy and the City would not have to be involved other than to consider such a permit.

Police Chief Way reviewed the language used in Anoka's code and explained how the City's code language could be revised to require a permit to allow restaurants to serve alcohol for an outdoor event. He asked if the Council supported tailgate events in the parking ramp or parking lot, noting if allowed there may be need for restrooms as well.

Mayor Ramsey stated he does not support allowing this type of event in the City's parking ramp.

Councilmember Tossey noted that charcoal grills are not allowed at the stadium parking lot and he would not support that type of grill use in Ramsey's parking lot.

Councilmember Strommen stated if a business wants to host a tailgating party, she would not object but she would not support allowing such an event in the parking ramp.

Police Chief Way stated a business could sponsor an event in the plaza under their liquor license, if allowed by City permit. However, the need for restrooms would remain.

Councilmember Elvig noted if the Code is not changed, people would not be able to meet in the parking lot and drink a beer before they leave for the game.

Development Manager Lazan reported on negotiations underway with a restaurant on the Flaherty and Collins site that he had encouraged to consider dual indoor/outdoor spaces. He noted this type of use may be rationale to not allow a tailgate permit in the parking lot since that type of restaurant would be making a substantial investment.

Mayor Ramsey suggested permit language indicating it shall be issued if geographically driven within The COR and if certain conditions are met.

The consensus of the Council was to allow by permit at establishments and direct staff to define conditions under which a permit will be issued, number of permits to be issued, geographic area, and develop an ordinance with those parameters.

Mayor Ramsey asked the Council if it would consider allowing beer in the parking lot before a game.

Police Chief Way noted people will be living nearby the parking ramp and he would not support allowing beer in the parking lot because of resulting litter, noise, and potential nuisance issues.

Councilmember McGlone stated he would prefer to consider permits for current establishments and not allow beer in the parking ramp.

Police Chief Way explained that a patron with a drink would need to be within a close geographical location of the establishment, not across the street or carrying it to another area.

Mayor Ramsey suggested signage in the ramp indicating: "No Open Containers."

The consensus of the Council was to not consider consumption of beer or alcoholic beverages in the municipal parking ramp or parking lot.

2.03: Discuss Format of Weekly Update

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and requested Council input whether it wanted to change the format of the Weekly Update.

Mayor Ramsey stated it is public information so he thinks it could be placed on a web-based server instead of e-mailing. On the content, he felt it was good and in some cases may include too much detail.

Councilmember Strommen stated she has no problem with posting to a web location and would suggest including only highlights instead of the current bulleted listing.

Councilmember Tossey stated he likes the Weekly Update and information included but would not object to posting it to the web since it is public information.

Mayor Ramsey stated a lot of the information coming from Department Heads is probably needed by City Administrator Ulrich anyway.

City Attorney Ulrich stated he prefers a summary format.

Councilmember Elvig suggested the Update not include when Councilmembers are out of town.

Councilmember McGlone stated he had pushed for this accounting because he was horrified to find out employees get paid for 80 on the honor system. He felt the City Administrator should know what employees are doing all the time. Councilmember McGlone stated he does not object to the Weekly Update being posted to the web or including a detailed accounting because it has a purpose.

Councilmember Tossey stated the Council previously discussed a work order system/customer service management system and there is no need for redundancy in adding those items to the Weekly Update.

The majority consensus of the Council was to not object to a web-based Weekly Update in a summarized format.

2.04: 2012 Happy Days Update

Management Analyst Brama reviewed the staff report and requested suggestions for the 2012 Happy Days event.

Councilmember Elvig asked about the location of restrooms.

Management Analyst Brama stated it was suggested to spread out the location of restrooms and staff will assure that happens on both sides of the road with a central location by the Polka tent.

Councilmember Elvig stated lighting was an issue last year as well as sand burrs.

Management Analyst Brama indicated an additional light tower will be rented this year and he has contacted the Public Works Department about the sand burrs. He noted if electric improvements are made to this parcel as part of the Center Street project, it will reduce Happy Days costs by one-half.

Development Manager Lazan stated if staff prepares specs for extending electric power, it can be worked into the grant for the Center Street project.

Councilmember Elvig suggested staff also look at installing conduit as part of that project.

City Administrator Ulrich thanked Management Analyst Brama for his work on Happy Days and the resulting motivation of sponsors and volunteers.

3. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/Calendar

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None

5. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Ramsey adjourned the meeting at 6:55 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.