

**HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority conducted a Work Session meeting on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson David Elvig
 Commissioner Randy Backous
 Commissioner Colin McGlone
 Commissioner Sarah Strommen
 Commissioner Jason Tossey
 Commissioner Jeffrey Wise

Members Absent: Commissioner Bob Ramsey

Also Present: HRA Executive Director Heidi A. Nelson
 City Administrator Kurtis G. Ulrich
 Development Manager Darren Lazan
 Landform Project Principal and Planner Kendra Lindahl

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Elvig called the Work Session meeting of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority to order at 7:28 p.m.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1) Review Proposed Amendment to The COR Design Framework

Senior Planner Gladhill reviewed the staff report and explained the next step is to amend the City's Zoning Ordinance to implement the City's vision for land use for The COR.

Kendra Lindahl, Project Principal and Planner with Landform, presented the amendments to The COR Design Framework and described the inclusion of new maps and six levels of street hierarchy to create design solutions for public realm improvements. Different standards have been created for each street type. She explained Part 1 is the guideline philosophy, more general in nature, and tells the story of what it will look like. Part 2 is more subscribed and includes requirements. Parking districts have been added to address how parking will be dealt with in addition to minimum and maximum parking standard guidance. Ms. Lindahl stated staff wants to make sure the proposed amendments are moving in the right direction, and if the HRA would like to focus on any specific issues.

Chairperson Elvig asked about the inclusion of minimum and maximum parking standards.

Ms. Lindahl explained staff discussed whether a use needed to provide a minimum number of parking stalls to supply their use. The proposed language sets out the minimum number of stalls and on street parking can be included for particular buildings as well as stalls within the parking ramp. The idea is that all have to do their fair share to meet the minimum parking demands for their use.

Senior Planner Gladhill explained staff found there was a need for a maximum as well as a minimum to be sure parking needs are met for peak use.

Chairperson Elvig raised a scenario where the parking needs are met for the original use but a later tenant, such as a restaurant, has a higher need for parking.

Senior Planner Gladhill explained that staff would recalculate the parking requirement when that use change is being considered.

HRA Executive Director Nelson stated this issue was addressed with the Ramsey Professional Building when The Falls restaurant use was considered. Staff reviewed the parking and it became apparent there was a need for a minimum parking requirement. In that case, the applicant was required to conduct a parking study to show they could meet the parking requirements for the new intended use (restaurant).

Development Manager Lazan explained the requirements originally included a minimum but the City wanted to assure there was not too much parking or asphalt so a maximum was determined. Now the City has realized there is a need for both to assure each use addresses its share of parking. He noted if a developer wants to fill the entire block with building then they will need to purchase stalls.

Chairperson Elvig asked about the ability to modify parking after build out.

Development Manager Lazan indicated some room for modification exists since there is a 30 ramp stalls influx and, going forward, he suggested the HRA hold that margin. In addition, the City can consider cross use, allocating ramp stalls, and shared ramp stalls.

Chairperson Elvig noted the build out can occur quickly and asked what will trigger the mandate for a ramp.

Development Manager Lazan reviewed that it was previously discussed that densification could be built into the plan. He noted that Ramp A can accommodate two more vertical stories and that may also be possible with Ramps B and C. Development Manager Lazan clarified the shift in parking philosophy in the District Plan approved several months ago because street parking no longer counts toward required parking, which simplifies the process. The trade-off was to not allocate for the parks.

Commissioner Wise noted there had been discussion about angled parking with mixed use on the first floor and asked if handicapped parking would be allocated to the business.

Development Manager Lazan stated the concept of on-street handicapped parking came up with The Falls. He thinks the City would want to incorporate handicapped spacing so that type of space is available where needed. Street parking is now all parallel but staff has thought about the next generation of users, looking at those street sections, and considering whether the parking should be angled.

Commissioner McGlone stated his preference to require the use to provide its own handicapped parking stalls so it is not the City's responsibility.

Development Manager Lazan explained if the City wants an urban environment, it will have to facilitate handicapped parking. He noted that providing handicapped parking within the ramp may not meet the needs for some uses so maybe the City should start spacing handicapped stalls throughout The COR.

Commissioner McGlone noted The Falls has already petitioned for yellow curbs and a drop off area. He was concerned it may be a "slippery slope" if the City starts providing handicapped stalls, noting the users will want the stalls located in front of their store.

Ms. Lindahl presented the signage section, noting it requires the master developer to prepare a master sign plan for public areas. She presented the signage plan and standards for single versus multi-tenant buildings.

Commissioner Tossey left the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Ms. Lindahl noted the section added pertaining to buildings along Highway 10 allow unlimited square footage for signage as long as within the same scale of The COR. She reviewed the regulatory signage language noting it allows a process to consider creative signage.

Chairperson Elvig asked if the signage will be standardized in location, color, and type, making it more difficult to create individual identity.

Ms. Lindahl noted the signage language encourages awning signs and projecting signs.

HRA Executive Director Nelson stated the signage language allows for architectural branding identity.

Senior Planner Gladhill advised that the proposed language provides more flexibility than available today. In addition, the Conditional Use Permit process is available as a tool to consider unique circumstances.

Ms. Lindahl presented the subdistrict map and presented the prescriptive design standards.

Commissioner Backous left the meeting at 8:03 p.m.

Commissioner McGlone asked if the standards address roof style, gables, or overhangs.

Senior Planner Gladhill reviewed the text created to address roof slope, architectural features, and eaves. He stated more detail can be added, if desired.

Chairperson Elvig stated he does not want the text to stifle modern or prairie type of designs.

Senior Planner Gladhill indicated some flexibility will be provided as long as it meets the overall goal.

The HRA discussed restrictions on exterior colors.

Senior Planner Gladhill indicated floor plan variation and change in exterior color are addressed.

Ms. Lindahl presented the COR1 Development Standards chart, noting additional detail remains to be added and will define the concept of what is being proposed. Staff is working to develop streetscape standards that will be added to this information.

The HRA discussed streetscape standards and agreed that a tree species should not be allowed that may die from the same infestation/disease, should not create a root system that will push up the sidewalk, should not produce nuts or fruits, and the species be of a type that can be supported within the planter box.

Chairperson Elvig noted that when buildings are constructed to the sidewalk and streets to create an urban feel, it does not work well with traffic sight lines, such as at Coborns.

Development Manager Lazan agreed that sight distance is often a challenge with urban design. He explained how additional width can be incorporated with a bump out design at pedestrian intersections.

Chairperson Elvig agreed that bump outs will help improve visibility; however, will involve some challenges with plowing.

Commissioner Strommen commented this is a tradeoff with urban designed areas but also results in slowing traffic and enhances the pedestrian environment. She stated it will take some time to accustom drivers to this design element.

Commissioner McGlone commented on the need to assure intersection designs still accommodate truck and trailer access.

Ms. Lindahl stated she has presented the highlights of the Design Framework amendments and asked for comments.

Senior Planner Gladhill asked whether the amendments are going in the right direction to implement the Development Plan.

Chairperson Elvig stated these details are important but the broader issues were addressed by the Planning Commission relating to parking, how to screen parking, design standards, and how to make it work to the City's advantage.

HRA Executive Director Nelson stated this issue will be in front of the Planning Commission in February 2012, and will then start the formal process with Zoning Code amendments.

Commissioner Wise stated he does not want to "start wheels rolling" in the same direction taken with the Town Center being too restrictive. He stated he wants to be sure the standards are developer friendly and allow some "wiggle room" for deviation, especially during times of economic downturn.

Development Manager Lazan stated the amendments have added flexibility and provide the ability to be more responsive to the market.

Senior Planner Gladhill concurred and added it will also help at a staff level to know the Council's baseline.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

HRA Executive Director Nelson reported on upcoming agenda items and provided an update on outstanding negotiations.

Chairperson Elvig indicated that Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development Commissioner Mark Philips is interested in The COR and asked staff to contact him to schedule a tour.

COMMISSIONER INPUT

None.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairperson Elvig adjourned the Work Session meeting of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi A. Nelson
HRA Executive Director

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.