

Town Center" carries some bad connotations and the committee feels that the look of the project needs to change, including particularly the name. He stated this will give the City an opportunity to put a new, fresh face on the project and will create a buzz in the community that something has changed and something is taking form with this project. He stated there are projects starting to happen and the City should not miss this opportunity to market this unique property.

Mr. Lazan stated that Landform is currently reviewing the feedback gathered to date, establishing a project vision, vision statement and mission statement, and summarizing all the data.

Mayor Ramsey asked what impact any rebranding would have on others using the Town Center name.

Councilmember Elvig stated the steering committee discussed this at length and felt there were valid reasons for keeping certain elements of the name. He stated the committee felt it would be helpful to hire someone to help steer the committee with respect to the branding process.

Councilmember Dehen stated that in his opinion, there has been a lot of activity by various parties on this project, all trying to accomplish the same purpose, including the steering committee, Landform, City staff, and the Council. He indicated it is critical that communication remain a priority in order to keep everybody updated, and asked that the *Weekly Update* from staff include current updates on this project.

Mr. Lazan discussed the renaming and noted there is a potential to keep some aspects of the Town Center name, and focusing on branding the retail village with a new name, while still being part of the overall town center. He indicated that several names have been floated by the steering committee, including Ramsey City Center, Ramsey Center, City of Ramsey Center, as well as names that include a theme, e.g., Park West or Park East, or a name that includes the Northstar component.

Councilmember Wise expressed concern that there is not one person in charge of the overall project and felt it was important to streamline the project as much as possible.

Councilmember McGlone stated with a project of this scope and magnitude, it is important to focus on and come up with the mission, and to define that mission to keep the project on track. He added he was in favor of slowing down the project a little in order to see who might be out there and be interested in the development.

Councilmember Look agreed and added that a decision will have to be made at a relatively early stage regarding the City's exit strategy on the project.

Councilmember Elvig stated that one of the things the steering committee has learned is that there is already a component of retail, park, residential, etc. in the project, and some of these things are hardlined into the project. He added that the steering committee remains committed to being flexible and to working with developers on the project.

Councilmember Wise expressed concern that the City has not yet finalized its exit strategy and felt the City should get the ball rolling on the project and then get out of the way so that its role is approving the development but not driving the development.

Councilmember Elvig stated there are currently a lot of overlap and/or dovetailing, and communication throughout the process will be critical. He stated he felt the City has to figure out what it has first, before figuring out its exit strategy.

The Council discussed marketing opportunities and ways of finding out who might be interested in this market. The Council also discussed currently viable prospects and making direct contact with those prospects.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated that there will be an HRA meeting following the regular Council meeting; the purpose of the meeting is to ask the HRA to establish a budget for marketing the Ramsey Town Center.

2) Review Levels of Service for Building Inspections / Permits

Deputy City Administrator Nelson reviewed the staff report.

Local Electrical Inspections

Mayor Ramsey asked how much recordkeeping would be involved if the City were to undertake the electrical inspections.

Building Official Kaehler indicated that the recordkeeping would not be significant, but expressed concern that any revenue generated by contracting with a licensed electrical inspector directly would be offset by the cost.

Councilmember McGlone stated he is opposed to an electrical inspection program and felt there was no benefit to the City.

Councilmember Wise agreed with Councilmember McGlone.

Councilmember Dehen stated he felt the current electrical inspector does a good job and did not feel there would be any advantage to the City taking over this program.

Mayor Ramsey agreed and stated it was not worth it to pursue an electrical inspection program.

Siding, Roofing and Window Installation Permits

Deputy City Administrator Nelson provided information regarding 2007, 2008, and 2009 permits, adding that on average, 2.5 inspections were done per permit. She stated staff feels there is value in this since there are some things that are missed by contractors. She noted that if Council direction is to eliminate these permits, it would require a Code amendment.

Councilmember Dehen stated he felt there was value in requiring these permits and it helps make sure contractors do a good job.

**RECEIVE RAMSEY TOWN CENTER STEERING COMMITTEE
RECOMMENDATIONS**

By: Heidi Nelson, Deputy City Administrator/Community Development Director

BACKGROUND:

The Ramsey Town Center Steering Committee met on Thursday, September 24th to review the Development Process for Ramsey Town Center as depicted by Landform (see attached). The Committee discussed the work that has been completed thus far, work that is currently underway and the role of the committee going forward. The following is a summary of the recommendations of the committee:

STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Close out Phase 1. Schedule formal Council approval of land use/massing plan and community vision components.
2. Complete branding and positioning study by November 6, 2009.
3. In the next 60 days, the RTC Steering Committee will review current market data and absorption rates and establish a phasing plan and timeline for completion.
4. Establish a development corporation for Ramsey Town Center. The corporation would be charged with developing a project pro forma and establishing initial land prices based upon the City's cost of the land and the cost of anticipated project amenities. Extend current consultant contract 90 days to address these issues.
5. Upon creation of the development corporation, the Council shall decide the ongoing role, if any, of the RTC Steering Committee.
6. Continuously evaluate exit strategy based upon current user prospects (e.g., VA Clinic, Allina, and targeted Buxton Study businesses).

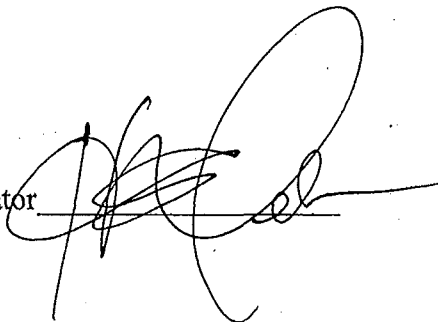
At the time of the writing of this case, the members of the Steering Committee are reviewing the recommendations as drafted by staff following the 9/24 Steering Committee meeting. Steering Committee members have been invited to attend the HRA meeting for this discussion.

BOARD ACTION:

Based on discussion.

Reviewed by:

City Administrator



HRA: 10/06/09

Attachments:

A: Ideal Development Process by Landform

Mr. Lano stated we have to believe it is always a moving target – as the market changes, development changes too.

Commissioner Ramsey stated he would be in favor of saying this is the plan. He asked why we need to do a zoning change and comprehensive plan amendment when we own the property and control the zoning.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated that because the zoning is all set – we need to relax the zoning. We need to start to look at timelines. If we are going to do it – we have to move it.

Chairperson Dehen stated that on the other hand, it cannot be planned in six weeks.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated we can either act on it or not but the Steering Committee will not look on it again.

Planning Manager Miller stated that if we are changing the comprehensive land use plan, we need to change the comprehensive plan.

Chairperson Dehen asked if we would develop the big box stores at the expense of housing.

Deputy City Administrator Nelson stated that the existing plan does not show any big box development. She wants to be able to illustrate to developers that flexibility. The map shows that you currently cannot bring in big box development without a lot of work. She suggested that if we want to communicate that flexibility it has to show on the map.

Commissioner McGlone inquired if we would have to move the houses somewhere else.

Ms. Miller replied that is possible.

Commissioner Wise felt you lose credibility from the get-go – that's why it has to be done.

Commissioner Look asked what the tax ramification would be of removing a thousand houses and replacing it with big box.

Ms. Miller stated she did not do the calculations but offered to get the information for Council.

Commissioner Elvig stated you will need a little bit of both – it has to balance.

City Administrator Ulrich stated there's a need for formal recognition by the City Council of that new plan.

Discussion ensued relating to water bodies.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated that to adopt this as a concept is important as we move forward and start to plan other things. He added it is a good point to look at the tax ramifications of housing versus retail.

Consensus of the HRA was to move recommendation #1, which reads: Close out Phase 1. Schedule formal Council approval of land use/massing plan and reaffirming the community vision components of mixed use, transit oriented, and a high level of project amenities. Sustainability components should be considered as part of project amenities.

Consensus of the HRA was to move recommendation #2, which reads: Complete branding and positioning study in November 2009.

Recommendation #3 reads: In the next 60 days, the RTC Steering Committee will review current market data and absorption rates and establish a phasing plan and timeline for completion. Commissioner Jeffrey stated this is on our radar. We will continue to work on it.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that another important component is to establish reality of how the market will take this property and develop it.

Commissioner Jeffrey continued with recommendation #4. It is staff's recommendation on how we will move forward.

Mr. Lano stated we are trying to bring the best recommendations to the Council.

Chairperson Dehen suggested we want to give the Steering Committee the tools they need.

Commissioner Elvig felt that is some of the decisions we made with the branding.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated that staff can direct the consultant. He felt that the Steering Committee is telling the Council to go forward on this.

Commissioner Ramsey stated that the development corporation is going to be necessary at some point in this game.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated that the Steering Committee is recommending the Council consider Recommendation #4, which reads: Consider the use of a development corporation for Ramsey Town Center. The corporation would be charged with developing a project pro forma and establishing initial land prices based upon the City's cost of the land and the cost of anticipated project amenities. In the next 60 days, the Steering Committee will review the purpose structure and scope of the Development Corporation.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated that #5 talks about what is the role of the Steering Committee going forward. We will need further direction. Recommendation #5 reads: Upon creation of a development corporation, the Council shall decide the ongoing role, if any, of the RTC Steering Committee.

Chairperson Dehen inquired if the Steering Committee can be a confidential body to which City Attorney Goodrich replied no.

Commissioner Jeffrey stated that Recommendation #6 reads: The HRA should continuously evaluate exit strategy based upon current user prospects (e.g. VA Clinic, Allina, and targeted Buxton Study businesses).

Kris Williams stated that the Steering Committee will do what we can to shepherd this project – we will put this project in a position to be the best it can be.

Chairperson Dehen felt that the Steering Committee has valuable input and they are a good sounding board.

Brad Lano commented that this is a daunting task, but we will take it one piece at a time.

There was discussion about the VA Clinic and what the City was willing to give to get the clinic.

Motion by Commissioner Elvig and seconded by Commissioner Wise to accept the revised RTC Steering Committee recommendations.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Dehen, Commissioners Elvig, Wise, Jeffrey, Look, McGlone and Ramsey. Voting No: None.

Case #8: Discuss the Creation of a Development Corporation

Planning Manager Miller stated that since July, City staff, the Steering Committee, and the City Council have discussed the possibility of forming a development corporation as a means to progress the development of Town Center. Staff has begun to assemble background information on what procedures would need to be done to move that process forward. The Steering Committee passed a recommendation for Council to consider forming a development corporation for the administration of the Ramsey Town Center. The HRA made that same motion. Staff has since contacted the League of Minnesota Cities to request information regarding other communities in Minnesota, which may have development corporations and how they may be set up. City Attorney Goodrich has prepared a memo summarizing the process by which we could create the corporate entity and some of the issues, which may be involved. Ms. Miller talked about the EDA and development corporations. There is no City role in their development Corporation. The LMC has stated that in order to preserve privacy issues, the City should not have any role in creating development corporations.

City Attorney Goodrich stated it is easy to form a development corporation but our concern is that if the development corporation mirrors the City Council essentially just to have privacy, that will run amuck with the open meeting laws. He did not think Council would want to give the EDC the right to sell the land, etc. Most EDC's are formed to lend money. We could hire a development corporation and give them parameters. He also read a list of certain things that can remain private. Within that framework, we could redact a lot of stuff. We have had a lot of closed meetings to develop agreements, and establish prices so while it may not be an ideal thing, we could patchwork together some pretty good privacy data.