

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

The Housing and Redevelopment Authority conducted a Work Session meeting on Tuesday, March 27, 2012, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis G. Ulrich
 HRA Executive Director Heidi A. Nelson
 Public Works Director Brian Olson
 City Engineer Tim Himmer
 Senior Planner Timothy Gladhill
 City Attorney Bill Goodrich
 Development Manager Darren Lazan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson McGlone called the Work Session meeting of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Consider Requests from Solomon Group Regarding Sunwood Realignment Project

HRA Executive Director Nelson reviewed the staff report and provided an update on the Development Team's negotiations with Solomon Group regarding the Sunwood Drive realignment project. She advised that the request to provide a right-in access from the interchange has been laid to rest. The issues are requests for additional signage, preservation to sight line to buildings, and granting grocery exclusivity to Solomon Group/Mid-America.

Matt Reger, Mid-America Real Estate Company, stated they are excited with the whole project and The COR development and once the right-turn issue was dropped, the developer also got excited about the development. He indicated they are representing the owner to discuss the items presented by staff. Mr. Reger noted Coborns has been a strong retailer and they are trying to get

a 20,000 sq. ft. restriction to protect Coborns and keep them viable in this market. Other items are to assure a visibility corridor and additional signage. He noted Armstrong Boulevard will eventually be redeveloped and while the current signage has worked well, it will have to be addressed and they would like additional signage capabilities along Sunwood Drive. Mr. Reger stated they appreciate their good working relationship with the City and want to do what they can to keep their retail strong and viable.

Development Manager Lazan displayed a slide depicting the site plan, noting potential locations of signage on the Coborns site in addition to off-site signage opportunities. He also pointed out the location of the existing building and request to create a sight corridor and sight triangle. Development Manager Lazan reviewed the efforts of the Development Team with Anoka County and the State to preserve Coborns anchored center during the upcoming interchange project. Development Manager Lazan acknowledged Coborns is a great tenant in this development; however, the requested grocery exclusivity is a challenge because of where the restriction is sized. He explained the design intent of a 20,000 sq. ft. restriction would be to allow small C-Stores or a P-Fresh option but it would preclude another grocer or Super Target/WalMart. He stated when the HRA considers limiting marketability, it needs to ask how it is structured, whom the restrictions favor, and what would be fair value to the HRA if that project restriction is considered.

Alan Young, Mid-America Real Estate Company, opined it would benefit all in this district. He acknowledged Ramsey has done a lot of work to create a project that will bring Ramsey to the forefront but also needs to be concerned about what it will look like in ten years. In Coborns, the City has a retailer that is starting to see good success and has opportunities in the future to decide if Ramsey is the right community for them, which hinges on what happens with the rest of the development. Mr. Young explained a 20,000 sq. ft. restriction would allow concepts like Trader Joe's or Target's P-Fresh concept. In terms of compensation, he suggested it is the right thing for Ramsey to do. He noted there are different options in how it could be structured, length of time, but they want to look at how to position Coborns so it continues to be vital.

Commissioner Ramsey stated the HRA owns property in The COR and does not want to damage the entire project, so why would it consider allowing another grocer into the project. He stated he understands why Mid-America wants exclusivity but he would not favor it unless there is a benefit to be gained. Commissioner Ramsey stated he would not object to assuring a sight line; however, it would eliminate a potential retail site for the HRA.

Chairperson McGlone stated Coborns has operated for seven years and there will not likely be anything across the way in the dirt for a few years. He noted the HRA does not control the dirt on the other side of Armstrong Boulevard. Chairperson McGlone stated support to convey some property in this project to give a better site for a restaurant and maintain a sight line for existing buildings.

Commissioner Wise stated his Wiser Choice Liquor business has been in its location for 11 years and he has gone to the City three times, prior to serving on the Council, asking for limits on liquor licenses. However, this request was turned down because of Coborns or because a CUB Foods was coming. Commissioner Wise stated while too much of any one type of businesses is

not good, with a few exceptions, it would be a complete reversal of City policy to consider an exclusivity agreement.

Commissioner Tossey stated he too has owned property in the Ramsey Town Center and does not want to show Coborns it is not important by putting a grocer across the street. He agreed things are improving and often tells neighbors to spend money at Coborns but would not favor exclusivity.

Mr. Reger suggested if a CUB Foods goes into The COR, either Coborns or CUB Foods will not make it, likely Coborns due to its positioning, resulting in leaving its space empty. He again stated the 20,000 sq. ft. restriction would still allow a Target P-Fresh or Aldi's or Trader Joe's so they are not suggesting no grocery, but not an anchor grocery within a rock's throw of Coborns.

Commissioner Ramsey pointed out that since The COR was contemplated, the HRA has unanimously indicated it does not want a Super Target with full grocery because of Coborns.

Mr. Reger commented the concern is that this Council/HRA may not have the same membership in future years and this conversation will not be remembered.

The consensus of the HRA was to support additional signage in and around the Coborns site, subject to permit and approval, to support preservation of a sight line to the existing retail buildings, but to not support consideration of grocery exclusivity on lands it owns.

Development Manager Lazan indicated the Development Team will continue its work on these items.

3. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

HRA Executive Director Nelson provided an update on taping The COR Report at the Acapulco Restaurant.

4. COMMISSIONER INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Tossey, seconded by Commissioner Strommen, to adjourn the Work Session meeting of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority.

Motion carried.

The Work Session of the Housing and Redevelopment Authority adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich for Heidi A. Nelson
HRA Executive Director

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.