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October 10, 2012

Dear North Commons area Resident,

As you may know, the City of Ramsey continues to make progress and investments in your neighborhood park known as North Commons. The most recent successes include a MN DNR grant for trees for the park and also City Council go-ahead to begin the planning for a playground. This letter shall address both projects somewhat separately - and in both matters I am respectfully requesting your response and feedback.

Tree Planting: As you know, grading, seeding and irrigation was completed earlier this summer so the site is ready for our trees, which will be delivered on Wednesday the 17th. We have deliberately scheduled the planting for Thursday the following day, as this is the school district's first day of MEA with children out of school. The hope is that families can join city staff in the park for planting and learning about trees. *You are hereby invited to meet at the park at 1 O'clock October 18th for a primer on how trees grow, and what important considerations there are in properly planting a tree.* (What a great opportunity for children to learn on their day off from school!) Thereafter together we will plant your neighborhood park!

If the weather is exceedingly poor, the volunteer planting will be delayed until 1 PM on Friday, the following day. Below this letter is a summary* of the tree planting grant and other aspects of the planting project.

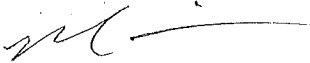
Playground for North Commons: As you may have noticed, there is a lot of construction staking within the park and to the west. This is to receive bids for bringing sewer and water to the lots that were created that will provide funding for the play equipment. (Please see the earlier letter I sent to you, or the large sign in the park for detail on these proposed new homes.)

Indeed, City Council has authorized staff to begin the planning for the playground. In August, the Park and Recreation Commission met at your park and determined that you and your family should have direct input on what the play equipment looks like. The Commission thought *the best way to communicate all these ideas would be if people e-mailed me pictures of your favorite elements of playgrounds that you currently visit in the city or elsewhere.* In fact this may serve as a bit of a treasure hunt for you and your children. On the City's web site is a Playground Location Map. Please go to <http://www.cityoframsey.com> then 'Departments' - 'Public Works' - then 'Parks' and scroll down the page to near the bottom for a link to a map with 13 playgrounds within Ramsey.

If you are interested in learning more on either of these two improvements for your park; or to e-mail me images of what you'd like to see for your proposed play equipment - please send them to me in writing at the above address, or at mrriverblood@ci.ramsey.mn.us. Or you may also reach me by phone at 763 238 1733.

On behalf of City Council and the Park and Recreation Commission, we are energized about all the favorable momentum building in The COR, and are equally excited to hear your thoughts for the playground and I *especially* look forward to planting trees with you next week!

Yours in Public Service,



Mark Riverblood,
Parks & Asst. Public Works Superintendent



***Project Title:** City of Ramsey's MAJESTY OF THE COMMONS

Project Purpose: In contrast to the 'Tragedy of the Commons', this unified planting project engages the residents within this livable community in the communal care, education and ongoing stewardship of their shared park space named North Commons. The outcome will be a diverse array of trees that are well adapted to the Anoka Sand Plain for this new public space; *and*, the endeavor will result in a 'mini-arboretum' showcasing species that perform well in sandy soils. Small, didactic placards will be installed adjacent to the individual species as on-going tools for public education.

Project Location Description: The project will occur in North Commons, a park within Ramsey's pedestrian and transit oriented, master-planned community known as The COR. The park is just over seven (7) acres in size, located in the south central portion of the community and connects the higher density urban area with the existing larger, rural lot neighborhoods to the north and east. The northern and northeastern portions of the property are wetland with the remainder of the site being upland consisting of sandy soil (Hubbard-Nymore association).

Project Goals: Engage residents from the adjacent neighborhood and townhome associations, who have expressed their desire to initiate park improvements, in the place-making practice of planting trees to create an aesthetically pleasing, inviting and functional public space. The project will also serve as an educational tool for the community by showcasing species well adapted to the area, their growth characteristics (habit and form), and pertinent facts about the needs, benefits and care of trees.

This project will provide living examples of tree species that perform well in sandy soils, which residents can see, touch and replicate as they landscape or reforest their property. The project will incorporate participation of a K-12 school (PACT), within walking distance of North Commons, to develop language for interpretive signage to highlight the *Majesty* of trees and community/urban forests.