

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, April 9, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Randy Backous  
Councilmember David Elvig  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Jason Tossey (arrived at 6:58 p.m.)

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Fire Chief Dean Kapler  
Assistant Fire Chief Matt Kohner  
Police Captain Jeff Katers  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Ramsey Fire Station #2 Rebuild – The History**

Fire Chief Kapler stated the purpose of this item is to bring the Council up to date. He introduced Assistant Chief Kohner and Police Captain Katers who were also available to answer questions. Fire Chief Kapler presented the history of the Fire Station's establishment and locations/relocations. He displayed a map of the desired 2.4-acre site on Alpine Drive. Because the Fire Department will remain a paid-on-call department for the foreseeable future, he noted the Department needs to pull from the area for fire fighters. He felt the locations for Station #1 and #2 were well placed as well as Station #3 that came with the Nowthen contract; however, there are a few homes outside of the five-mile driving radius from the three stations, triggering a higher homeowner's insurance rate for those homes. Fire Chief Kapler advised that the Nowthen agreement has worked well, including the shared costs.

Fire Chief Kapler described the 2.4-acre site, its surrounding uses, and determination by a consultant that the lot will support the Fire Department building under consideration. He stated

the 12,000-square-foot design is on the high side but that was the suggestion of the consultant. Fire Chief Kapler addressed needs versus wants relating to building components, including training space that has been beneficial at the Fire Station on Armstrong Boulevard.

Fire Chief Kapler explained the BKV Group estimate from today until the building can be used is 13 months. If the project is moved forward and the current lot is sold, the Council will have to address where staff and apparatus will go until the new Station is completed. He stated he would like to consider budgeting funds in 2014 to start the design phase (expected to take 5 months). It was noted that a public informational meeting will be held on April 18, 2013.

Councilmember Kuzma asked how much the design phase will cost.

Fire Chief Kapler stated estimated \$50,000 to \$60,000.

Councilmember Elvig asked if the Council has already received a project budget that included the design phase.

Fire Chief Kapler stated the Council did receive a project budget.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked what is the motivation for this consideration, because there is a user for the current site or needs.

Fire Chief Kapler stated it is all of the above, explaining there are safety issues and lack of efficiencies as the Fire Station is using a fraction of the old City Hall building but the entire building is heated and moderately cooled. He indicated the Fire Department can continue to use the current site but if a user is found, it would be a better use. In addition, staff has run funding scenarios and if the old City Hall property is sold for the expected use (data center), the sale will cover much of the anticipated costs.

Mayor Strommen explained that when the new Municipal Center was constructed and the Fire Department moved into the old City Hall, it was never expected that the Fire Department would remain there forever.

Councilmember Backous asked if grants are available for Fire Station construction.

Fire Chief Kapler stated he did make application for a federal grant but it was not approved.

Councilmember Elvig stated he is willing to consider moving forward with the design phase and asked about a temporary site.

Fire Chief Kapler stated if the two overlap (sale of the old City Hall site and construction of the new Fire station), they could consider interim use of the old grocery store in the commercial node at 167<sup>th</sup> or the concrete plant by Public Works. He stated there is not an ideal site to keep the coverage area perfect, but it would be a reasonable risk as long as it is on a timeline.

Councilmember Elvig noted it may be down to a time period of nine months if the design phase can be completed first. He felt that would be a reasonable approach.

City Administrator Ulrich stated the City purchased the land a while ago and it was the intended plan to move forward but the Council needs to be comfortable with selling the old City Hall site and moving forward with constructing a new Fire Station. He noted when the old City Hall is sold, development could occur in phases and staff will look at the options of a temporary site. He asked whether the proposed site meets the needs of the five cities considering the potential of a combined services agreement.

Fire Chief Kapler stated the future third station has been “taken off the table.” With the Nowthen shared services agreement, staff has driven the distances for all communities in the shared studies group and determined that Ramsey’s two stations are needed whether or not it pursues a shared service because there is not enough overlap to the south to abandon one of the City’s Fire Stations.

Councilmember Elvig stated a data center use is a tremendous need so he would support staff looking at the costs and moving forward with the design phase for the Fire Station, noting it does not need a 23-acre site and it has been in the City’s plans for ten years to construct another Fire Station.

Councilmember Backous concurred and asked how long it will take to move out of the current City Hall site if there was an interested buyer. He agreed the old City Hall site is highly marketable and undertaking the design phase now will move the construction schedule forward.

Fire Chief Kapler stated if there is an alternate site he would estimate two weeks. He stated staff can put more effort into finding an alternate site.

Councilmember Riley stated it makes sense to move forward with the design phase since it has always been planned to construct another Fire Station. However, depending on the timing, an alternate site may not be needed. He agreed that making plans now will lessen the possibility that an interim location is needed.

Mayor Strommen supported having an alternate plan in place, just in case it is needed.

Mayor Strommen stated there is Council consensus for staff to bring back a Case on the cost to move forward with the design phase, and interim plan to house fire service.

**2.02: Acknowledge Pending Resolution Establishing No Parking Zones on Riverdale Drive, Rivlyn Avenue and Tungsten Street; and Approve Letter to Affected Parties**

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood briefed the Council on the need for No Parking zones on Riverdale Drive, Rivlyn Avenue, and Tungsten Street. He displayed a map of the subject site, King’s Island, and advised the City of Anoka received funding from the DNR to restore the side channels. He then described the natural features in this area and proposed trail alignment. Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated it is staff’s

recommendation to send the letter to affected residents and move forward with the Resolution establishing No Parking zones along the MRT route and to examine the future schedule for Riverdale Drive's reconstruction as part of the Street Reconstruction Plan and Policy project scheduled to begin in September 2013. He advised Ramsey has access to \$52,504 in grant money that will be shared with the City of Anoka for this project.

Councilmember Riley stated he did not think the parking would be an issue and asked if this is being considered to create a trail or get money to reconstruct the road.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated it is about the Mississippi River Trail and eventually through reconstruction projects, it will become an off-road trail.

Councilmember Elvig asked what is the long-term plan for the trail and if it will take resident's front yards.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated there is no intention to acquire additional right-of-way and the trail will remain on the road until redevelopment occurs and Riverdale Drive narrowed in width.

The consensus of the Council was to acknowledge the required No Parking zones on Riverdale Drive, Rivlyn Avenue and Tungsten Street, and letter to affected parties; understanding that all resident comment on the No Parking zones will be brought back for City Council information as appropriate.

### **2.03: Select Park Monuments' Scope and Cost for The Draw – 2013 Parks Capital Improvement**

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood described features within The Draw and current signage. He stated staff receives feedback that residents have a hard time finding The Draw so it was envisioned to have a more traditional park sign on Ramsey Boulevard as well as a kiosk in the northwest corner of The Draw to advertise upcoming events. Because there was a lot of discussion at the Parks & Recreation Commission meeting on signage, staff obtained quotes for base, medium, and optimal designs. Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented the Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation of approval for a \$20,000 traditional sign on Ramsey Boulevard and \$36,000 kiosk at The Draw.

Councilmember Elvig stated he is taken aback on the high prices for the signs and has been disappointed with how sterile The Draw appears due to the amount of metal. Because of that, he would support the use of a lit kiosk to create a warmer atmosphere.

Councilmember Riley stated he supports the recommended middle-of-the road monument sign but was unsure of the higher-end kiosk.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated the kiosk will alert people of the location of The Draw and provide wayfinding because many residents do not know there is an amphitheater in that area.

Councilmember Kuzma stated he receives many comments that residents do not know the location of The Draw so he supports signage.

Councilmember Backous stated he would support considering this type of signage as one of the finishing touches. He asked if there were cheaper options, such as a spotlight during the concert series to draw attention and recognition. He stated the sign on Ramsey Boulevard makes sense because the City wants to attract businesses but he thinks this consideration is premature.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood offered the option of considering the sign on Ramsey Boulevard and saving the kiosk for later consideration.

Councilmember LeTourneau agreed there is a lot of work remaining in The COR but The Draw is a functioning element and missing some identification so he can justify the need for additional signage and understands how funding would be allocated. He stated he supports both signs as recommended and asked if the kiosks would advertise upcoming events.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood displayed the proposed kiosk and noted the area that can contain “coming soon” information.

Councilmember LeTourneau supported the continuing informational element of the kiosk.

Mayor Strommen stated she thinks the signs are fine and agrees the City has invested in the park and should finish its identity. She also thinks that just adding two signs may not fix the issue and there are other options, as mentioned by Councilmember Backous. She stated another concern is that there is a brand identity issue because The COR and The Draw sound similar and the logo color difference is too subtle.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated in the future, the City will be considering changes to some street sign blades to provide additional wayfinding and to divide The COR into districts.

Mayor Strommen stated it may be a matter of timing, as mentioned by Councilmember Backous.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood asked if staff should move forward to obtain competitive quotes to address that concern of Councilmember Elvig, and allow staff to work on innovative ideas to draw attention to The DRAW.

The consensus of the Council was to direct staff to proceed on a scope and cost for the two signs.

### **3. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

Noted.

#### **4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT**

City Administrator Ulrich asked if the Council would like to schedule joint meetings with other communities, such as Elk River.

Mayor Strommen suggested there should be an issue or agenda before scheduling such a meeting. She stated the City of Dayton has requested a joint meeting to discuss the bridge and asked staff to determine the purpose should a joint meeting be scheduled.

Councilmember Tossey arrived at 6:58 p.m.

Councilmember Elvig stated Nowthen and Anoka are important communities since there are shared services and commuter travel through these communities.

City Administrator Ulrich stated staff will further consider this matter and determine where priorities lie.

#### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Strommen declared the Work Session of the City Council adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Jo Ann M. Thieling  
City Clerk

Drafted by Carla Wirth  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*