

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, May 14, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Randy Backous  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Jason Tossey

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Finance Director Diana Lund  
Fire Chief Dean Kapler  
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 6:10 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Consider Proposal for TIF District 14 Review**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report and recommendation to approve the proposal from Ehlers to conduct an analysis of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District 14.

Stacie Kvilvang, Ehlers, explained that economies and development patterns change and TIF District 14 is now at the point to sit down and consider where we are today, what is realistic for development into the future, revenues that can be generated, or if other parcels can be decertified out of the District and back onto the City's tax rolls. If approved, Ehlers would sit down with staff and look at the whole district, developable parts, figure out what can be built, a reasonable timeline, then build a proforma. The City would receive a model that can change over time as dynamics change and accommodate proposals that come in. Ms. Kvilvang stated the model would be a continuous and fluid document that will be reviewed annually. In addition, "TIF 101" would be presented as a refresher and focus on key issues about tax increment law so decisions can be made.

City Administrator Ulrich stated the not to exceed cost of \$5,000 would be paid from TIF administrative costs, which are expected to cover the costs to administer and monitor the District.

Councilmember Riley asked if the City would update the model each year or hire Ehlers to do that.

Ms. Kvilvang stated Ehlers typically provides that update, noting the TIF law is not easy to understand and no cities do their own TIF projections.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked if this has been updated in the past.

Ms. Kvilvang stated this District was created in 2010 and assumptions were made by previous staff members so this would be the first update and look at where the District will go in the future.

Councilmember Kuzma stated support for this proposal.

Councilmember Backous asked about the timing for the finished product.

Ms. Kvilvang stated in the next 30-60 days, Ehlers will have preliminary findings and then prepare the final report. She stated they can present TIF basics as the Council's schedule allows.

Councilmember Backous stated his support for the proposal.

Mayor Strommen stated the Strategic Plan includes receiving routine updates and to determine the City's future role in The COR and exit strategy.

The consensus of the Council was to authorize staff to proceed with obtaining a proposal from Ehlers to conduct an analysis of TIF District 14 at a not-to-exceed cost of \$5,000.

## **2.02: Presentation on New Signal System at the Intersection of CSAH 5 (Nowthen Boulevard) and Alpine Drive**

City Engineer Westby introduced the item and Curt Kobilarcsik.

Curt Kobilarcsik, Anoka County Highway Project Manager, stated the new signal system at the intersection of Nowthen Boulevard and Alpine Drive will be the County's next project in Ramsey. He noted that Anoka County had applied for and received federal funding to install a signal system at this intersection. Mr. Kobilarcsik described the project elements, noting there will be a raised median due to the complexity of this skewed intersection to assure safety for the traveling public. He used a map to point out points of access at this intersection and indicated Anoka County will work with the property owners to better their situation by relocating points of access and increase safety for the intersection. He stated this is a high-speed intersection at 55 mph and Anoka County thinks this project will result in a safer intersection. He noted the location of old County Road 5 and stated they would like to close that access and end it in a cul-de-sac. It was noted an open house for area businesses and residents is planned for early June of 2013. Mr. Kobilarcsik stated they would present a Joint Powers Agreement, which is required as part of the federal funding, reach agreement on the design, cost component, and future

maintenance in mid-July, receive appraisals in August, and construct in 2014. Mr. Kobilarcsik used a map to point out trail locations that would be reconstructed and indicated they will also address stormwater drainage and treatment. He stated that there will be 15-20 parcels involved in strip takings.

City Administrator Ulrich asked about access to the former municipal center property.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated a concrete median is proposed and a point where residents and the dental office traffic impacted by the median can make U-turns. He stated there will be a left turn lane into the former municipal center. Mr. Kobilarcsik described the travel path for residents and dental office traffic to gain access to their property and stated this U-turn element has been successfully used in other projects.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if the former municipal center will have full access.

Mr. Kobilarcsik answered in the affirmative.

Fire Chief Kapler emphasized it is critical that the former municipal center have a left hand turn south on Nowthen Boulevard.

Mr. Kobilarcsik confirmed it will have full access.

Mayor Strommen stated she wants to assure emergency vehicles do not need to navigate a U-turn movement in any direction.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated the median does not go past that point.

Development Services Manager Gladhill stated today with the current development it is open but if the former municipal center were to redevelop, it would be reevaluated.

Councilmember Backous noted the property with the long driveway that would have to drive quite a ways northeast and then drive back southwest to access their driveway.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated that is correct and they expect feedback at the open house but feel this is the safest alignment.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if they are willing to consider an alternative to that proposal.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated they are willing and to have additional discussions at the open house. He noted this is a preliminary plan and they want to assure all issues are addressed.

Mayor Strommen noted the staff report indicates the Council is asked to approve the layout; however, tonight the Council is just receiving information.

Mr. Kobilarcsik agreed that no action is expected and this is an informational item.

Councilmember Riley stated support for the project but asked if the median is needed both above and below the intersection, noting it impacts access to resident's property.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated they do find it to be important to assure safety, noting some of the resident access points are very close to the intersection, especially considering traffic is traveling at 55 mph. He stated the length of this proposed median is not too long for a vehicle to travel to make a U-turn.

Councilmember Riley asked about the cost share.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated there is about \$900,000 in federal funds with a local match of \$100,000 split between Anoka County and Ramsey using standard cost share. Since there is already a trail, Anoka County will pay for its restoration. Anoka County also pays 100% of the median. With the traffic signal, it is 50%/50% and on Alpine it is 100% Ramsey. The City would also be asked to pay a certain percentage of the storm sewer costs. Mr. Kobilarcsik estimated \$70,000 Anoka County / \$30,000 Ramsey.

Councilmember Backous asked about the policy for flashing turn signals and yellow lights during off peak hours.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated Anoka County does not have that type of policy but it can be considered for this intersection. He stated if there is a Council concern, the City could approach Anoka County.

Mayor Strommen asked if the open house will include the Elementary School, which will be impacted by this construction.

Mr. Kobilarcsik stated there will be a mill and overlay in that area so they will have discussions with the Elementary School. He stated they will also be looking at whether this roadway can remain open during construction or needs to be closed. He stated this project is similar to the 57<sup>th</sup> and Alpine Road project. Mr. Kobilarcsik stated they will meet with the most impacted residents to present the layout and address specific impacts to their property.

Informational; no action required. It was noted that Anoka County will present a Joint Powers Agreement mid-July.

### **2.03: Review of Draft Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization (LRRWMO) Joint Powers Agreement (JPA)**

City Engineer Westby reviewed the staff report and recommendation to approve the draft Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) with the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO). It was noted the only amendments proposed are moving the sunset date from January 1, 2015 to January 1, 2025, and the ability to terminate the agreement if membership drops below three members and there is unanimous consent to terminate. He asked the Council if they have any questions, noting this JPA will be discussed at the May 16, 2013, LRRWMO Board meeting.

Councilmember Kuzma asked about the impact should Coon Rapids pull out of the LRRWMO.

City Engineer Westby reviewed the JPA language, noting it would not impact since there would still be three remaining member cities.

Councilmember Backous stated that Ramsey being a member of the LRRWMO concerns him because of a recent issue that came to light when a member city of this organization made a PowerPoint presentation suggesting Ramsey pay 49% of a future dam project. He stated Ramsey has an equal vote on the LRRWMO but could be outnumbered and forced to pay 49% of whatever project the LRRWMO decides to carry. Councilmember Backous stated he would not be an advocate of renewing the JPA until the LRRWMO works out a weighted vote since currently, Ramsey is responsible for 49% of any project.

Mayor Strommen stated that formula is based on land area, noting Ramsey has more impact on the watershed area as it has more land within it.

Councilmember Backous stated he understands that formula and noted in the case of Coon Rapids, they have only a sliver of property in the LRRWMO yet an equal vote to Ramsey.

Councilmember Kuzma stated the actual change in the dam would be paid by other funding, not the LRRWMO funding.

Mayor Strommen stated she shares the concerns and does not want to react to a proposal put unilaterally on the table when there has been no discussion about future ownership of the dam or how it will get reconstructed. She noted there is a commitment in the Third Generation LRRWMO Plan to figure that out; however, that is not the proposal before the LRRWMO at this time. She stated that issue will not be resolved prior to Ramsey having to make this decision.

Councilmember Backous stated it does not sound like a safe LRRWMO exit clause if Ramsey has to petition to leave and three-fourths of its members have to agree. He stated the dam proposal was presented in public without talking to Ramsey ahead of time, which is a concern to him. He stated he does not support extending the JPA.

Mayor Strommen asked what the timeline for the LRRWMO consideration is, noting the JPA does not expire until 2014.

City Engineer Westby stated that is correct but he thinks the LRRWMO wants to move that consideration forward.

Mayor Strommen noted if Ramsey is not part of the LRRWMO, it would have to take those responsibilities on its own. She explained the LRRWMO is part of shared services and the issue is one of the member cities putting the dam study out in the public with funding proposed by the LRRWMO funding formula. She suggested staff inform the LRRWMO of these concerns with continuing a partnership when a proposal was put forward that does not sound like much of a partnership. Mayor Strommen stated for her it is not a concern about participation in the

LRRWMO but more about the proposal that was put forward. She stated a conversation is needed on all sides to assure all are committed to a partnership.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the LRRWMO wants to vote on the consultant contract, should he vote against.

City Administrator Ulrich stated Ramsey could vote against the proposal, but may not have the votes to defeat it.

The consensus of the Council was to direct staff to relay the Council's concerns about an extension to the JPA and the Rum River Dam project/study.

Mayor Strommen noted the proposal is to pay Stanly Consulting \$9,400 to prepare an application for grant funding towards the Rum River Dam being an Asian Carp barrier.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the LRRWMO indicated, at the joint meeting, that it had funding to pay for the Stanley Consulting study.

City Engineer Westby stated the Stanley Consulting proposal will also be discussed by the LRRWMO at its Board meeting.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked about the formula for funding and if the study will be paid by the LRRWMO's general budget.

Mayor Strommen stated the LRRWMO receives funding from member cities based on a formula with Ramsey paying 49%.

Councilmember Backous stated Ramsey can lose any vote, 3-1, and still be expected to fund 49% of the Stanley Consulting study. He asked if Stanley Consulting is the same firm that would conduct the study.

Mayor Strommen stated if the grant is awarded, Stanley Consulting would be used to prepare the grant application in addition to conducting the study. She stated she is concerned about hiring a firm to write a proposal that includes a scope of work that they would then conduct. Mayor Strommen stated she does not see the benefit of the dam accruing on a watershed basis of land area. She believed using that same formula for a dam project is not logical since there are recreational, historic, and many other benefits of the dam. She stated she wished the conversation was about the benefits of the dam.

Councilmember Backous noted it is now being referred to as the "Rum River Dam," not the "Anoka Dam."

Councilmember Riley stated it appears that Mayor Strommen is indicating it is not a good idea to spend this money.

Mayor Strommen stated she does not support the split of funds and thinks the likelihood is not probable that this will be funded. In addition, it is a lot to spend on a two-page application and she does not see it as being successful. Mayor Strommen stated she thinks Anoka should have a discussion with the DNR as to whether this is an effective location for an Asian Carp barrier. She stated she does not favor the Stanley Study without additional research and thinks it is premature.

**3. FUTURE TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

Noted.

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

None

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Backous, to adjourn the Work Session meeting.

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:54 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.*