

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, November 12, 2013, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Randy Backous (arrived at 6:39 p.m.)  
Councilmember Jill Johns  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Jason Tossey

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Finance Director Diana Lund  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill  
Assistant to the City Administrator Patrick Brama  
City Attorney Joe Langel

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:26 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Newsletter Advertising Contract**

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report and indicated the City has contracted with Wheels of Thunder since 2010 to sell ads for the *Ramsey Resident*; however, the number of ad sales has greatly reduced, resulting in higher costs to the City, and the number of complaints from ad customers has been increasing. She reviewed the 30-day termination clause that is required with Wheels of Thunder. Finance Director Lund presented alternatives from Wheels of Thunder, Frugal Shopper, and Prime Advertising and described the terms of each. She recommended consideration of Frugal Shopper because it is community based, has a high rating from the Better Business Bureau, and there is only a 30-day termination clause. Finance Director Lund presented a profit/loss statement, noting Frugal Shopper is the only one with a positive outcome.

City Administrator Ulrich stated staff recommends working with Frugal Shopper and if the Council supports that option and thinks the ads have value, staff would return with a contract for the Council's consideration.

Finance Director Lund reviewed the declining number of ads since 2011 and advised that Frugal Shopper and Prime Advertising have both indicated there would be no problem getting up to 20 ads.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if staff has control over how the ads look.

Finance Director Lund stated Frugal Shopper would sell the ads and nothing would change in how the ad looks or is positioned in the newsletter.

The consensus of the Council was that staff had shown a change was in order and supported moving forward with Frugal Shopper as recommended.

## **2.02: Discuss RFP for Real Estate Broker Services**

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama reviewed the staff report, noting the issue of real estate broker services was originally discussed on September 10, 2013, at which time staff was directed to conduct a Request for Proposals (RFP) for real estate broker services on a select number of City-owned properties. He reported staff solicited about 100 brokers and received five responses. Staff conducted three informal interviews and received one response with interest in listing both commercial and residential real estate. The other four responses indicated interest in listing residential real estate only. Because staff was unsatisfied with the number and quality of RFP responses, Assistant to the City Administrator Brama recommended the Council terminate the original RFP process initiated on September 10 and consider a new process for soliciting real estate broker services through a Request for Qualifications (RFQ). He described the proposed RFQ process and timeline to receive RFQs, interview, and award the contract to a preferred broker. Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated staff would like a disclaimer relating to an inventory of properties.

Councilmember Backous arrived at 6:39 p.m.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated brokers have indicated that a market exists for a large portion of The COR but listing only two parcels would greatly lower interest in listing the properties or responding to provide services to the City. He completed presentation of the staff report, noting the primary objective is to list and sell City-owned land. If approved by the Council, staff will call ten of the larger brokers with the merits that best fit the RFQ but will also send it to other brokers of which staff is aware. It was noted this item is on tonight's Consent Agenda.

Councilmember Riley stated the big question is with commercial property as there is a limited supply of residential property. He noted that a higher response was received for residential properties and asked if it makes sense to have a broker in charge of residential properties and do a RFQ for commercial properties.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated it is an option to section out residential. However, staff supports identifying a preferred broker for all City-owned property whether commercial, industrial, or residential.

Councilmember Riley asked whether quality responses were received for residential properties.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama agreed the response was sufficient.

Councilmember Riley stated that is more of a known quantity but he does not know how difficult it would be to combine it with the commercial property.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked if anything encumbers any realtor or broker from representing a buyer of a City-owned property.

Assistant to the City Administrator Brama stated that is a possibility but the intent was for the City to have a preferred broker.

Councilmember Backous supported posting “For Sale” signs on the residential property so people are aware of the property and the City can accept offers. He noted that the City would then not need a preferred broker.

Mayor Strommen felt staff’s recommendation afforded the City additional flexibility.

Councilmember Riley stated he also supports posting the property “For Sale.”

The consensus of the Council was to support staff’s recommendation to terminate the original RFP process, direct staff to further an RFQ approach, and to post “For Sale” signs on the City-owned residential properties.

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

Councilmember Johns asked that a future Work Session agenda include discussion of the Home Occupation Ordinance.

Development Services Manager Gladhill stated it has not been reviewed for three or more years and review would be timely since a home occupation permit is currently under consideration.

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

None

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Strommen declared the Work Session of the City Council adjourned at 6:52 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.*