

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, February 14, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Jill Johns (arrived at 5:37 p.m.)  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Melody Shryock  
Councilmember Kristine Williams

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby  
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama  
Public Information and Event Specialist Nichole Wenberg

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:35 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Continued Discussion Regarding Communications Plan**

Public Information and Event Specialist Wenberg reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Johns arrived at 5:37 p.m.

Councilmember Kuzma commented that the communications plan looks good and it will be helpful to have an easy tool for people to use for quick reference.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he also likes the plan as it provides focus and a framework but also leaves flexibility to craft the message to the desired audience.

Mayor Strommen agreed and noted that she really likes the definition of audiences and the ability to tweak the message. She asked if additional discussion would be helpful regarding

communication tools that could be used for developers. She noted that the *Ramsey Resident* is helpful for residents while Facebook might be more helpful for developers.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he would be in favor of that as long as it does not constrain the flexibility.

Mayor Strommen agreed that primary tools could be identified but that would not limit the ability to use alternate tools as well.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he likes that this tool is a way to communicate something but did not want the City to lose focus of the visual aspect of communication as well.

Mayor Strommen agreed that a statement could be added that the tools are not limited to written and/or spoken and could include visual or sensory.

## **2.02: Discuss Concept Development Project: Case of Flagship Fitness & Aquatic Center**

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama welcomed Adrian Haid and Jeff Minea and opened the floor for them to introduce the case to the Council.

Adrian Haid stated that they have been working with Ramsey for the past 18 months, noting that this City would be a fabulous location for this project. He stated that this would be a very high-end family wellness center. He stated that he has been in the business for 20 years and most of his experience comes from the YMCA and LifeTime Fitness. He stated that this project would be between 64,000 to 70,000 square feet complete with a spa, juice bar, indoor aquatic center, fitness center, and youth center. He stated that while most fitness centers are geared towards fit people his focus would be towards those that are not yet fit. He stated that he would like the entire community to participate in this project.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked if the model is new or consistent with other sites.

Mr. Haid stated that this is his own approach. He noted that other fitness clubs market towards fit people while his focus is to improve the health of those that are not yet fit. He stated that fitness clubs are not providing features for the youth between the ages of 9-12, whose parents might be working out. He stated that his aim is to focus on the entire family and encourage people that are not fit to become healthier and to feel welcome regardless of physical or economic stature. He stated that he would like to have an area where children can learn how to eat well and exercise to gain a different approach to have a healthier mentality. He stated that the City would be proud of all aspects including design and programming. He stated that this would be a 24-hour facility that would bring in consistent traffic, as people come into the facility more frequently than other businesses, which would benefit other businesses in the community. He used the example of Champlin noting that once LifeTime came into that community, other businesses came to the city as well. He stated that this business would allow the community to become healthier and socialize with other members of the community. He stated that when people become healthier, they feel better in other aspects of their life as well. He stated that this

would be a high-end gathering space for the community that could be used regardless of the temperature outside.

Councilmember Shryock asked for information on the membership rates that would be offered.

Mr. Haid stated that he would be willing to offer credits to Ramsey residents. He stated that the children are not charged for membership. He stated that a single person would pay \$64 per month, while a family of four (two adults and two children) would pay \$132 per month. He noted that health insurance often provides a reimbursement of \$20 per month. He noted that he would also provide discounts to students. He noted that initially he would provide a large amount of credits to residents, explaining that if he could provide a discount to someone joining the club that would help that person become healthier and he would also gain a long-term client. He stated that the model is that in the next 20 years the facility would not become overcrowded. He stated that he has a different model which offers different programming for those people that are unfit, so that they are more comfortable and work with personal trainers to find the best program for them. He stated that if there is a child that is not fit, he would involve a personal trainer to work with that child. He explained that he would not nickel and dime those costs to clients, as he sees that as a benefit in building the relationship with the clients.

Councilmember Shryock stated that discounts are great but encouraged Mr. Haid to think about how much people are willing to commit. She stated that discounts are one thing but you would need to ask who is going to join and whether they are willing to commit. She asked if there is a way you could address the unfit clients who may have concern with the long-term commitment to fitness.

Mr. Haid stated that he has experience in the field and noted that fitness becomes a drug. He noted that once people start feeling better they realize the benefit and want to come back. He stated that he will manage by walking the facility and being involved, rather than sitting back at a desk. He explained that the person who signs up the client is responsible for that client as part of his income is tied to those memberships and therefore they want to see people be successful. He noted that he has specialized people he can assign to a client that helps them develop a program that will be successful for them.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama thanked Mr. Haid for the introduction to the project and reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked the difference in acreage if a parking ramp is used.

Jeff Minea replied that if a parking ramp is provided it could shrink the site size to 1.5 to two acres.

Mr. Haid stated that if the ramp is considered he would still want some site parking as well for families.

Councilmember Riley asked for more information on the financing partner.

Mr. Haid stated that PDI would provide the financing for the project as an equity partner.

Mr. Minea stated that PDI would not take equity in the property and would simply provide financing.

Councilmember Riley asked the equity that Mr. Haid would put into the project.

Mr. Haid explained that his personal equity would be \$800,000 to \$900,000.

Mr. Minea stated that the balance, after Mr. Haid's contribution and the City's contribution would be financed.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that it is interesting and exciting and would like to see this move along. He noted that this is the first time he is seeing this concept. He stated that in the future he will be thinking about the investment the City would be asked for and the methods in which that could be done. He stated that he would like to mitigate the risk as much as possible and determine how the investment would be structured. He stated that as a community they do not embrace risk well.

Councilmember Williams stated that she agrees with Councilmember LeTourneau. She stated that this seems to be very sudden and noted that she would like to know what a community center means to the residents and whether a fitness center would qualify. She agreed that this is an exciting project.

Councilmember Shryock echoed the comments made thus far. She asked how this would play along with the Lake Ramsey discussions and the facilities they have talked about providing at that location. She stated that this is a wonderful concept to have something like this in the community. She stated that when people say community center she thinks of the Eagle's Nest where there is a fitness center, play area, and meeting rooms. She agreed that she would like to continue to explore this idea.

Mayor Strommen stated that this is not the equivalent of a community center and instead views this as a fitness center. She stated that the concept of a community center for Ramsey would look very different than the Eagle's Nest. She stated that her view would be more deconstructed as there are multiple locations within The COR that would provide those services. She agrees that the opinion of the residents would be helpful to determine their thoughts on a community center. She agreed that this should continue to move forward. She noted that this is a fitness center that has its own merits and agreed that more information would be helpful.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there are examples of hybrid centers, such as Champlin and Andover. He agreed that there would need to be public engagement to determine if there are public and private uses that could work together. He stated that this plan fits within the confines of a public/private hybrid. He agreed that community engagement could help to determine the public uses. He stated that the private portions of the center would take a huge financial burden off the City. He stated that this is a great opportunity that fits the hybrid model and would need more information on the public aspects of the model that would be desired.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he likes the project a lot. He stated that he does not look at it as a community center but a separate business. He stated that he does not like the eight acres for size and would like to see more details on a parking ramp. He stated that this would bring a big tax base, would create jobs, and would be a destination. He stated that he would like to see additional details.

Mr. Haid stated that this facility would provide 83 jobs with pay ranging from \$23,000 to \$33,000. He stated that the ripple effect would be about another 200 jobs in Ramsey. He stated that they would focus on hiring within the City of Ramsey or those within an eight-mile radius given preference.

Councilmember Johns echoed the comments of Councilmember Kuzma in regard to the parking ramp and believed it's a great project.

Councilmember Shryock stated that this is a great concept that she feels would be supported by the residents. She stated that part of the success of a deconstructed community center would be education. She believed that details would need to be flushed out to ensure the success of the project. She asked the Council to keep in mind the outdoor water facilities, noting that she would want to ensure that the outdoor water recreation facilities are not duplicated.

Mr. Haid stated that he would provide access to the outdoor water park to non-members at an economical rate.

Councilmember Riley stated that if the City of Ramsey is going to contribute funds he would want to hear more about the benefit to the Ramsey residents.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama confirmed that the Council is interested in moving forward on this project and advised that he will work with City Administrator Ulrich to flush out further details. He noted that a more formal presentation can be given with a guide of how this could move forward.

Mayor Strommen stated that she would also like to see community engagement to determine the desires of the community.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he would like to see the communication message for this as a business and not a community center, noting that the two might overlap in some areas.

### **2.03: Discuss Concept Development Project: Case of Rum River Hills Golf Course**

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama welcomed Mike Allen and Dick Tulette who are present to discuss the case tonight. He noted that this project has been discussed in the past and therefore he would highlight the newer elements. He reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Riley stated that one of the biggest questions is regarding whether or not it would be trunk sewer and asked for more information.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that the City has a comprehensive sewer and water plan and outlines the trunk sewer and water system in the City, where it will be located and the cost. He provided additional details.

Councilmember Johns asked where the trunk sewer line currently is.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that the closest line is at Alpine Drive.

Mayor Strommen stated that this is the question that needs to be answered before a response to this proposal can be given. She stated that if the City is not willing to extend the sewer line, the project would not be possible. She stated that there is a broader conversation the Council needs to have, specific as to where the sewer line extension would occur should the City want to extend the line. She stated that the first question would be whether the Council is willing to reconsider the policy and identify the next potential area they would invest in terms of sewer.

Mike Allen stated that the water line is already there, which is helpful. He stated that there are other needs in the area that would benefit from the trunk sewer line and then they could be a connection on the trunk sewer line. He stated that they do have equity partners but they want to know first if the City is willing to extend the trunk sewer line. He stated that they envision a cool community with an improved golf course, a tunnel that goes across to the strip mall, and homes. He stated that the development of those homes would bring in additional viable businesses to the strip mall. He stated that there are improvements that need to be made to the golf course and this would be a huge positive.

Councilmember Riley stated that the Council previously discussed that it would not make sense to bring the sewer line up to that area. He stated that it seems that someday the sewer will need to be everywhere in the City. He stated that this is an interesting project, noting that the sewer is the biggest question and the tunnel is the second question. He asked if there is a benefit to the tunnel for others in the community.

Mr. Allen replied that the tunnel would be great to provide connections to the community and walking trail and Elmcrest Park.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that it is great to see the guests back tonight. He stated that the golf course is an amenity and necessity as it helps to define the community. He stated that the investment in the golf course will improve its longevity and success in the community. He stated that he is pleased to see an equity partner, which will help to ensure a higher quality product that will benefit the community. He stated that he is curious as to how to answer the questions regarding the sewer line and noted that once more information is known this discussion can continue.

Mr. Allen stated that the demand for real estate is high. He was unaware of another golf course community and receives interest regularly on the project.

Mayor Strommen confirmed that the questions should begin with the sewer discussions, specifically whether this would be where the trunk expansion would occur.

Councilmember Riley asked how water was extended to this area without sewer.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the water is at a fixed elevation while sewer is gravity fed and requires a lower elevation. He stated that it is not as complicated or expensive to run a water line.

**2.04: Review Preliminary Assessments for Improvement Project #17-00, Sunwood Drive Reconstruction**

No comments.

**3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION**

**3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar**

Noted.

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

City Administrator Ulrich noted that Commission and Board interviews will take place on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

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 Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*