

**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 25, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Acting Mayor John LeTourneau
 Councilmember Jill Johns
 Councilmember Mark Kuzma
 Councilmember Chris Riley
 Councilmember Melody Shryock
 Councilmember Kristine Williams

Members Absent: Mayor Sarah Strommen

Planning Commission

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Bruce Anderson
 Commissioner Cheri Gengler
 Commissioner Cindy Nosan
 Commissioner Patrick Surma

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
 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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:39 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Review Planning Commission Recommendation for The COR Interim Development Plan

Community Development Director Gladhill presented the staff report, noting the purpose of this case is to receive a final recommended policy framework for a document to be known as The COR Interim Development Plan, which will put into motion a more formal amendment to the Master Plan. He stated the Interim Development Plan will become the new format of the Master Plan, and outlined changes on the eastern half of the site that will introduce more medium density such as villas. He said the Interim Development Plan was intended to be flexible to recognize a vision instead of an exact site plan and contained sub quadrants with retail on one

side and residential on the other that is able to react to the market. Community Development Director Gladhill shared proposed recommendations and standards, adding assistance from the Architectural Review Committee would be included not to add more process but to fit in with a low-impact type of review. He highlighted The COR Interim Development Plan Key Policy Topics, including General Retail Strategy, Lake Itasca Greenway, Northwest Quad Future Land Use, Parking Standards, and Architectural/Design Standards. Community Development Director Gladhill explained if the proposed format were approved, the City would host a series of public workshops to gain feedback on potential changes as part of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update.

Chairperson Bauer noted big-box stores would be a draw with other surrounding development and could be located in the diamond-shaped area for better visibility. He said the Planning Commission thought basic COR uses would include a community center, entertainment, food and retail on Highway 10 and that retail would be at the mercy of the market and what would be realistic. He stated the many retail options in Elk River and Coon Rapids Riverdale needs to be taken into consideration, adding parking is important but everything should not be pavement so cost sharing options such as ramps and shared parking should be considered for the type of retail that would be located in The COR and along Highway 10.

Acting Mayor John LeTourneau thanked the Planning Commission for their work on The COR Interim Development Plan.

Councilmember Riley said he wanted to think about a master developer rather than the City doing the project and asked how this Plan fit with that idea.

Community Development Director Gladhill said the intent is to be clear on our framework in order to get a good fit and that the Plan still affords the opportunity to tweak the vision, which is why it is phrased as an interim plan. He said in this manner the Plan can be worked through and expectations set.

Planning Commissioner Nosan agreed that we need to have a strategic plan so a master developer knows what the City is expecting.

Councilmember Williams thanked the Planning Commission for their extraordinary thought on the Plan and said the other Commissions need an opportunity to provide their recommendations as they all have important focus that needs to be considered. She asked how other landowners within The COR would be affected even in the interim and inquired about their thoughts.

Community Development Director Gladhill said the idea was to communicate the Plan followed by the next steps of taking the Plan to the general public, including all Boards, Commissions, stakeholders, and potential and future developers. He confirmed that public engagement would be incorporated.

Councilmember Williams said she preferred that comments from the EDA and Commissions be incorporated within the Plan before taking it to the public.

Councilmember Kuzma said the original plan was dated and this Plan is progressive, flexible, and market-driven to help define the vision.

Councilmember Riley agreed the Plan is market-driven and that two areas of concern is changing floor-to-area-ratio (FAR) in response to market requests and parking structures. He said the market will not dictate that and if we push structured parking the result will be the City constructing a ramp instead of developers. He said flexibility and strict adherence to FAR does not sound very flexible and should be reviewed.

Community Development Director Gladhill said staff will work with the Planning Commission to acknowledge community impacts and market, adding it is important to balance between requirements and what will work. He said a ramp is not a new topic and this Plan will not solve all parking concerns but we want to study how parking could work in order to communicate the benefits to developers.

Chairperson Bauer said he was concerned that if we have a vision then it should be followed. He said the Planning Commission wanted to stress the need for shared parking so it was incorporated into each of the developments. He acknowledged structured parking may require some City dollars as developers will not pay for an entire ramp if they only use a portion.

Planning Commissioner Anderson said we should consider shared parking from the beginning for cost sharing as he does not want to see us bottleneck with nowhere to park. He said we have to consider either constructing higher or allowing for the capability to go up if needed.

Councilmember Riley said he wished we had the problem of not having enough space because we have nothing but space. He said structured parking costs \$50/square foot and the market will not support that because land costs now range between \$6-\$12/square foot. He commented that shared parking with Northgate Church works well.

Chairperson Bauer agreed, stating a theater generally uses parking in the evenings and could be another shared parking option.

Community Development Director Gladhill said it is fair to assume proformas, ROI, tax base, etc. to identify the funding gap and frame any vision in that context.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau commented that flexibility will be important.

Councilmember Williams asked if staff wants structured parking studies included in the Plan.

Community Development Director Gladhill said the Plan is a broad policy document and based off this direction we will lay out system plans, one being parking districts and/or parking ramps, and that staff is looking for feedback to kick off system plans, including parking strategies. He said this direction will establish how we make requests and bring contracts forward.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama said if Council is in a position not to support parking ramps then it will be removed from the Plan and will not be considered as part of the system plans going forward.

Councilmember Johns thanked the Planning Commission for their work and said she would like the parking structures to remain, as citizens have commented that they do not want to see large parking lots. She said affording a parking ramp is another question but does not want to take the option off the table.

Councilmember Shryock said it is important to have a vision and then follow it and if we have identified parking or other issues, then we need to further define them and suggested nodes of parking and then moving retail and housing around those parking nodes. She said there are too many moving parts right now but that this Plan will help us maintain cohesiveness.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau said he would like to see the parking remain and said while he is not sure where the greater density will be it is important to be open to consideration. He said we could work on ways to recover costs as The COR develops as one way to approach funding parking structures.

Councilmember Riley commented on the vision statement and how we know this is going to be something other cities do not have, especially when everything is market driven. He added the technology-orientated statement from the Plan could be dated.

Chairperson Bauer said this statement was suggested by Planning Commissioner Brauer and was intended to focus on providing fiber for future businesses.

Councilmember Shryock suggested the statement be amended to say technology accessible and not necessarily oriented.

Community Development Director Gladhill said staff will review some language to address these concerns but noted they would like to see something included as technology is important.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau agreed, stating vision statements helps narrow the focus.

Councilmember Riley commented on the welcoming cultures point as this seems to state that it is not already happening. He said the unique point will be difficult to achieve as well with the market as architecture and historical Ramsey are not very unique.

Councilmember Williams said the Plan twice refers to no big box stores but said if one came forward today she would approve it and is not comfortable with that vision. She said the community wants a big box store like a Target.

Chairperson Bauer said big box stores are more interested in Highway 10 locations.

Councilmember Williams suggested removing the big box reference entirely.

Chairperson Bauer said their intent was that the Plan needs to include more than just The COR and that it be realistic as big box stores will more likely locate on Highway 10 than The COR.

Community Development Director Gladhill said staff will work to find a better way to phrase the statement or include a reference on the map instead.

Councilmember Shryock said she would like to see a road map and flexibility so when we remove some verbiage and review modular developments or districts or zones they can be moved around. She said she would like to see more timeless architecture references so development does not become outdated.

Councilmember Johns agreed any development will be market driven but said the importance of the Plan is to help create what development is driven to Ramsey.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood said the Parks Board liked the Interim Plan as it incorporates a future parks plan that will help market The COR. He said the Board will further review the Plan in May and that their feedback will be shared with the Council.

The consensus of the Council was to continue with the process as outlined for the COR Interim Development Plan.

2.02: Receive Update on Park Dedication Credit Discussion for Riverstone Addition Located Near Bunker Lake Boulevard and Puma Street; Case of Capstone Homes (Project No. 17-106)

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the staff report, noting the purpose of this case is to receive an update on a request for Park Dedication Credit as part of the proposed Riverstone Addition. He explained the Council is not being asked to make a final decision but to hear an update on recent progress and talking points in advance of official review in May and June. He reviewed the key policy topics, including the Master Parks Plan Update, the existing parks CIP, the Riverstone Addition Policy Document, the Planned Unit Development, housing goals, and other development scenarios. He said staff is seeking policy direction for park dedication credit stating the developer is requesting \$475,000 as credit to create a smaller pocket park maintained by a homeowner's association (HOA) with a trail connection as part of Lake Itasca Greenway. Community Development Director Gladhill said staff has held discussions with the developer regarding their request and said if approved this action would have impacts on the future Lake Itasca Park whether reduced or delayed improvements.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reinforced trigger points when the project would start, stating \$29 million of park/trails have been identified with \$2 million in the park trust fund that should be focused instead on community parks, splash pad and other items in The COR that would also serve this subdivision.

Councilmember Riley asked if we suggested pocket parks to the developer.

Community Development Director Gladhill said the pocket park was part of the developers' proposal and felt its value was a success of the project.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood said it is common to have private amenities in similar developments.

Stephen Bona, Capstone, thanked staff for their work on this busy project, stating they are working towards an August groundbreaking. He said the park stems from a firm belief that 293 lots of mid-density housing guided and zoned R-2 with 1,000 residents will need greenspace and parks for the children. He said the regional park will be a great amenity but a closer park is needed as the regional park is half a mile away. Mr. Bona said necessity is not the issue just how we get there and with exposure from Highway 10 this will be a highly visible, unique and special neighborhood. He noted the \$483,000 will be credited back over time and that the HOA will maintain the park so it will not be a burden on the park system. He said Capstone is paying over \$1 million for infrastructure to be extended to the property which is not typical and that they cannot absorb both. He said they have changed their original proposal and outlined a small green area that has been removed at \$200,000 to make this happen and have one acre of lots that will not have homes to provide more open space. Mr. Bona said the park will cost over \$200,000 just to provide space which will be an improvement with City funds. He noted that Capstone is making a large financial commitment to open space already in the plan but that they are unable to do so without working with City. He said they love the site and said the benefits of housing price between \$260,000-\$350,000 results in having high end homes without being custom which is good.

Councilmember Shryock inquired about land value plus improvements.

Mr. Bona said they are proposing vacant land value of \$25,000/acre as unimproved land cost and additional improvements would be the playground, pavilion and landscaping.

Councilmember Kuzma inquired about the preliminary budget.

Community Development Director Gladhill shared the budget for a total of \$300,675.23, with the public trail at \$182,234.99 for a total of \$482,910.22.

Councilmember Shryock asked if there is an additional requirement on Alpine Drive for a trail.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood said the Greenway as proposed and supported by staff would include a 14-foot footprint and offer land dedication credit off the top and that the Greenway would "t" into the northwest road but not include any additional trail on Alpine Drive.

Community Development Director Gladhill said Puma Street will have a pedestrian crossing trail constructed by the City's infrastructure project.

Councilmember Johns asked for cost clarification.

Community Development Director Gladhill said the cost would be \$1.1 million.

Councilmember Shryock said she does not recall allowing credit for improvements and property.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood said this would be a precedent for park dedication more than the minimum for private amenities. He said the public interest is land but the park would remain private with a public easement. He said this would also set precedent for future developers.

Mr. Bona said the reason for the request is because this is the largest neighborhood ever to be built in Ramsey and with so many units they are only requesting one acre. He said they understand the precedent but felt other developments could not justify a request.

Councilmember Johns said she is concerned about the precedent and others wanting to do that at Itasca Park for broader benefit for others to use. She said she might be open to land incentives but not the improvements.

Councilmember Kuzma said he liked the Capstone project and understood that space was important but was concerned the HOA will not survive and suggested providing a bond to ensure maintenance.

Mr. Bona said he understood the point but said we have so many units paying such a small amount the HOA will be established right way. He said ideally the City would own the park and we would maintain lawns, including replacing equipment in 20 years.

Councilmember Riley said Harvest Estates wanted a small park for 300 houses and we choose this a neighborhood goes in without a park.

Mr. Bona reiterated they would not be able to do the project as proposed due to the offsite infrastructure costs.

Councilmember Shryock said she was excited about the project but said the precedent would be bad and if the park does not happen can open space be counted through ponding.

Community Development Director Gladhill said open space requirements can be reviewed with the PUD and could count as an amenity, adding other aspects can be reviewed to refine costs.

The consensus of the Council was not to support the request from Capstone Homes for Park Dedication Credit as part of the proposed Riverstone Addition.

Councilmember Williams requested the Parks Board convene to reevaluate the City's pocket parks policy.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Noted.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None.

5. ADJOURNMENT

Acting Mayor John LeTourneau adjourned the Work Session meeting.

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Cathy Sorensen
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.