

**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 23, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen
Councilmember Jill Johns
Councilmember Mark Kuzma
Councilmember John LeTourneau
Councilmember Melody Shryock
Councilmember Kristine Williams

Members Absent: Councilmember Chris Riley

Also Present: Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby

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: Discussion Regarding Participation in the Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) Phased Retirement Option (PRO)

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen stated that the State has a post retirement option, which sounds similar to the PRO, which allows employees to retire and then return to assist with the transfer of duties, mentoring of the new employee, and assist with special projects. She stated that it is a really effective option.

Councilmember Kuzma asked what impact there would be if the program ends in 2019.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that the decision would be up to PERA.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that it sounds like a nice program that the City could offer to staff and would not have an additional cost but would actually provide a savings.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she also agrees and asked if there is any feeling whether the program would be extended.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that although the program can be labor intensive for PERA, there has been a lot of positive feedback from the cities that have used it and therefore those comments might outweigh the additional labor required by PERA.

The consensus of the Council was to participate in the Phase Retirement Option through PERA.

2.02: Update on Request for Proposals (RFP) Process for Towing Contract

Police Chief Katers reviewed the staff report. He noted that a recommendation for a proposal would come back before the Council on June 22nd. He stated that he will mail directly the RFP to the four past vendors but noted that additional proposals could be received.

2.03: Update on Pollinator Habitat Initiatives and Restoration at the Lake Itasca Trail

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma received confirmation on the time and date of the planting event.

Mayor Strommen stated that this will be great to get people out to the site.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that about 270 monarch coloring sheets were provided to Ramsey Elementary. He stated that the fourth graders are going to color the sheets which will become the backdrop at the signing event. He noted that this event will also serve as an educational opportunity to show people an example of sustainable landscaping.

Councilmember LeTourneau suggested that the Environmental Policy Board are notified of the event as well.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that the EPB did recommend approval of the project at their meeting the previous week but agreed that a reminder for the event would be helpful.

It was also suggested that the Park and Recreation Commission, the press, and QCTV be invited to the event.

Councilmember Shryock asked if the City had involvement in the Connexus beehive event.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that he believed that City Administrator Ulrich attended a workshop on the topic. He stated that it is an emerging trend to create landscaping of that nature near solar gardens.

Councilmember Shryock noted that the City has to approve beekeeping licenses for residents and asked if a similar license would be needed for this activity.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the City did not receive a license application but the beehives are there.

Mayor Strommen stated that she believes that it was a multi-agency project which involved the Pollution Control Agency as well.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked if staff knew the number of beekeeping licenses in the City.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that he would have to run a report. He explained that the license is new, as is the trend.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Mayor Strommen noted that the budget process will begin in about a month.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that last fall a member of the Ramsey Lions spoke at citizens input to ask how they could donate a bench at Central Park. He stated that the Lions have purchased a very secure and durable bench to install at Central Park and a small concrete patio will be installed around the bench to offer protection. He stated that the bench will be dedicated to a former longtime member that passed away and the dedication event will occur on June 7th. He stated that the National Lions Governor will be attending the event as well. He stated that the Lions have been longtime contributors to many causes within the City and have been a great community partner.

Mayor Strommen asked staff to send out an email reminder for the event.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama provided an update on recent economic development activity. He stated that the process has begun to consider using TIF to assist with the PSD project. He stated that Adrenalin Sports has also been speaking with both developers within the future business park and there seem to be plans to create two buildings along Highway 10 which would be a great addition to the corridor. He stated that a party continues to show interest in the City owned property in the northern portion of the future business park and is working with staff to develop a purchase agreement.

Councilmember Shryock stated that Youth First is working to expand their programming. She noted that the organization currently serves Ramsey, Anoka and Andover and will be expanding to service Coon Rapids as well. She stated that the organization will be expanding their summer programming to provide programming every week during the summer.

Patrick Surma stated that since the intersection of 161st and Armstrong has been improved the noise from the traffic has decreased. He stated that the speeds along Armstrong and 161st have increased and noted that the crosswalk in that location needs to be improved. He suggested a better lighting system, noting that the stop signs should be ringed with flashing lights. He believed that the City should be proactive to prevent a tragedy as the area has become more developed.

Police Chief Katers agreed that is a busy intersection. He noted that lighting has been installed and as people see the lighting more they become used to it and it is not as efficient. He provided an example of a HAWK system which is used in another City but noted that is very expensive. He did share concern with the congestion and speed of traffic in that area. He stated that the City can do their part in terms of enforcement. He noted that staff can also speak with the County to determine if improvements can be made for the crosswalk. He stated that he has directed his staff to patrol the area of 161st and Variolite because of the concerns with traffic speeds.

Mr. Surma suggested a pushbutton crosswalk that would trigger the lights, rather than having the lights on at all times as that would alert drivers only when people need to cross. He stated that ringing the stop sign would also help people to see the stop sign.

Mayor Strommen noted that the Public Works Committee should further discuss this topic. She stated that perhaps they could also publish an article in the City newsletter to publicize safety as the community continues to develop.

Councilmember Shryock stated that the intersection of 161st and Armstrong would be a good candidate for a pedestrian triggered signal to stop traffic when people need to cross. She stated that way it would not continually stop traffic, only as needed.

Councilmember Kuzma cautioned that once a speed study is initiated it would be out of the hands of the City and the speed limit could be raised at the decision of the County.

Councilmember Williams stated that perhaps this conversation be revisited in terms of Central Park, noting that perhaps there is a unique way in which those concerns could be addressed in the overall planning process for Central Park.

It was the consensus of the Council to have the Public Works Committee further discuss the topic.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich

City Administrator

ATTEST:

Jo Ann M. Thieling
City Clerk

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.