

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, June 27, 2017, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Sarah Strommen  
Councilmember Jill Johns  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Chris Riley (arrived at 5:35 p.m.)  
Councilmember Melody Shryock

Members Absent: Councilmember John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Kristine Williams

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby  
City Planner Chris Anderson  
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama  
Information Technology Manager Jason Fredrickson  
Elwyn Tinklenberg, The Tinklenberg Group  
Greg Damron, CivicPlus  
Jaime Shannon, CivicPlus

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:33 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: City of Ramsey Website Redesign Update, Recommendation, and Demonstration**

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Riley arrived at 5:35 p.m.

Greg Damron, CivicPlus, introduced himself noting that his company has been in business for 20 years and has designed over 2,600 websites. He explained that they only work with governmental entities.

Jaime Shannon, CivicPlus, provided examples of other municipal websites that they have created for cities of similar sizes. She highlighted features which allow users to sign up for mobile/email alerts. She stated that the attention span of users is very short, six to 11 seconds and therefore it must be easy for users to find the information they need. She stated that the “how do I” drop down menu makes it easy for residents to find the page they need within the website without having to know which department handles that duty. She noted that a search bar within the website also makes it easy for users to find the information they are looking for.

Mr. Damron stated that they try to make it easy for users to find the information they need through multiple options, so they can choose the option they are most used to using.

Ms. Shannon stated that more pictures and less text also helps to draw people in and keep their attention. She highlighted a City events calendar noting that each department can update their own events which will then load into an overall calendar with the same formatting. She provided details on the ease of uploading information and pictures to the website for City staff members. She provided additional details on how an online forum can be set up on the website in order to gather information from residents and then noted that a select staff person can be set up to receive the forum information. She stated that analytics for online surveys can also be provided. She stated that the website can be set up to accept reservations for amenities such as park shelters, with each amenity linking to its own calendar and able to accept e-payments to complete the reservation.

Mr. Damron stated that all of the features available for the website can also be made available for the City’s intranet, noting that just as residents can reserve park facilities, staff can reserve conference rooms through the intranet. He stated that everything that they use for the site is ADA compliant and mobile responsive. He stated that the City would also have the ability to create an app but noted that he would not necessarily recommend that as the entire site is mobile responsive and therefore the only benefit to an app would be the ability for push notifications.

Ms. Shannon highlighted another city website that features a scrolling newsfeed with items from each department that bring you to the specific department page when clicked on.

Mr. Damron provided an example of a department header. He explained that most companies will create a subsite for each department but noted that his company can carry forward the same type of dropdown menu and features as the homepage but specific to each department.

Councilmember Kuzma asked how the past archives and history would be handled.

Ms. Shannon stated that there is a document center and archive center that would be created in order to be searchable on the site.

Mr. Damron stated that they would also optimize the current content. He explained that they will condense the eight-sentence paragraph into two or three sentences. He stated that they make it simple to update, using the example of an employee that receives a promotion and noting that the title can be updated in one place and it will automatically update that title in each of the locations that title appears.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that it seems that the onboarding process is six to eight months.

Mr. Damron stated that the typical timeline is 16-26 weeks and they have never missed a go live date because of something that they have done. He noted that sometimes there are delays in receiving necessary information from departments, which can push the timeline slightly.

Ms. Shannon stated that website security is one of their priorities. She noted that it is a proprietary system that is hosted in a tier two facility and they have never had a breach of information. She stated that they monitor 24/7 because they manage local government websites.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if there is backup.

Ms. Shannon stated that they have three redundant data centers around the country.

Mr. Damron stated that you will never have to call the company with a security problem, the company would be calling you. He stated that they created and manage the Ferguson, Missouri website and that did not get hacked or go down during that incident.

Councilmember Shryock asked the benefit of having an app.

Mr. Damron stated that if you have multiple products (Civic Engage, Civic HR, Civic Rec), you can manage all of the products within that one app.

Ms. Shannon stated that as a resident if you have signed up for “notify me” you will get a push notification when the City updates a notifying item.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the package would include the app.

Mr. Damron stated that the package the City has been quoted does not include the app but that could be added if the City desires.

Mayor Strommen stated that this has been a great demonstration. She confirmed the consensus of the Council to select this vendor based upon what they have seen tonight. She asked staff at what point the Council will be brought in to give some update.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson stated that they are just getting the Civic Engage package. He noted that the City can select additional aspects if they would like.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that he has tracked the questions tonight and can bring some information back to the Council along the way.

## **2.02: Update on WiFi Service**

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson reviewed the staff report. He noted that he has begun to research the dead spots within the City Hall and confirmed that there are funds available through QCTV to address the problem.

### **2.03: Update on Past Legislative Session and Other Transportation Related Legislative Activity**

Elwyn Tinklenberg, The Tinklenberg Group, provided an update on recent legislative action. He stated that the work that has gone on within the community from staff and the Council has made a huge difference to make people understand why these rail crossing projects are so important. He stated that they were not able to get in the House or Senate bonding bill for the crossings. He commended Senator Abeler for his efforts and his willingness to assist but noted that both Senator Abeler and Representative Whelan had other priority items that they were working on as well. He provided additional details on the process that was followed to get language added specifying that any excess funding from the Hanson Boulevard crossing would be used for another priority project, which would be Ramsey. He stated that was done within the last two hours and the only reason that happens is because of the work the community has done. He stated that \$1,500,000 was included in the Hanson Boulevard crossing for Ramsey and it is equally important that the funds be made available to Ramsey rather than waiting for the Hanson crossing to be completed before releasing the remaining funds for Ramsey.

Mayor Strommen asked at what point the County can specify the portion of the funds that Hanson Boulevard will use and declare the remainder surplus that can be used for Ramsey.

Mr. Tinklenberg stated that Hanson Boulevard has already received additional funds and he believes that the County can move forward and determine funds that will be surplus and can be used for Ramsey. He also advised of additional funds that may be available for work near the Armstrong interchange. He stated that Representative Hortman would also like a list of projects that can be available for the next legislative session, which is good for the projects along Highway 10. He stated that it was an interesting session that opens the door for what can be done in the future.

Councilmember Riley asked what the Council needs to do.

Mr. Tinklenberg stated that the discussion tomorrow will be important as there were a lot of people that were not in the room when the last-minute legislative discussions were occurring. He stated that it will be important for the elected officials to be a part of the discussion with the County.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that tomorrow the meeting is for the Highway 10 Working Group. He stated that they have a clear agenda and talking points set.

Mayor Strommen stated that it is important for all of the folks at the meeting tomorrow to get into the loop on what the funds are meant for and noted that the discussion on timing and when Ramsey can have access to the funds will most likely occur in a separate meeting with the County. She thanked Mr. Tinklenberg for his continued efforts.

**2.04: Consider Options for Proposed Plat Known as Northfork Meadows Located Near Puma Street and Alpine Drive; Case of Paxmar (Project #17-126)**

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen noted that the discussion tonight should focus on whether the City is willing to entertain more conversation to this and not alternative plans.

Councilmember Riley asked why staff would prefer a PUD rather than changing the zoning.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the PUD is a change to the zoning but it also allows flexibility for other items.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that if the density was able to be figured out for Capstone, he would not have a problem with this but would like to see a wider street.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that with Capstone was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan with massaging at the edges while this would be a change.

Kent Roessler, Paxmar Development, stated that they are a local developer and brought this request to staff. He stated that the problem with this is the infrastructure and the investment that would be needed for Puma Street. He stated that they went back to the drawing board and came up with a version that would allow them to fund \$800,000 in infrastructure. He stated that all the units, single family and townhomes, would be involved in the homeowners' association. He stated that there are several users interested in this site. He stated that they develop single family lots for home builders. He stated that Ramsey is an up and coming community and builders want to build products in the community. He stated that this would add multiple builders, up to six, to build products in Ramsey. He noted that the problem is that in order to fund the \$800,000 on Puma investments, you cannot do a straight R-1 development without reaching \$400,000 homes. He stated that they would like direction from the Council on whether they should invest the funds to move forward on this process or not. He stated that they would like to be here and work with the City.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the developer would be willing to work with the neighborhoods, noting that this is an extraordinary step to change the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that if the developer is willing to work with the neighbors, hopefully they can develop a compromise as it moves along.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that they should try to do work with the existing residents in the area. She stated that she is supportive of the option to work with different builders and would like to see a different transition option.

Councilmember Johns echoed the comments regarding the public process and density transition.

Councilmember Riley stated that he is absolutely interested in working with the developer and looking at different options for density transition. He stated that they are probably aware of what the neighborhood thinks and therefore that should be fairly short.

Mayor Strommen stated that she shares the concerns regarding density transition but also has a concern that in the past when Ramsey was going through a housing boom and did several Comprehensive Plan amendments, the Plan became kind of a non-plan. She stated that she is interested in remaining true to the essence of the plan but also keeping that fluid when necessary. She stated that she is not interested in reopening the wounds of the community in the constant changing of the Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Shryock stated that perhaps through this process it would be helpful to have comparison drawings of what could occur under the current zoning and what would be proposed. She stated that helps to remove the fear of the unknown and provides a comparison.

Councilmember Johns stated that she agrees that the public process piece is important to not just the adjacent neighbors but the community as a whole as this would be a change to the Comprehensive Plan.

Mayor Strommen stated that it comes down to whether you can rely on what the Comprehensive Plan says, noting that she has experience with a piece of park land that no longer became park land.

Additional written comments were received from Stephen Bona, Capstone Homes, Inc. and Mary and George Tafoya, 15130 Kangaroo Street NW, Ramsey, after the agenda was published. Those written comments are attached to be a part of the permanent record for this case.\

The consensus of the Council was to continue the discussions and to include a public process.

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

#### **3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar**

Noted.

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

None.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:58 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.*