

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, January 10, 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
Councilmember Melody Shryock
Councilmember Kristine Williams

Members Absent: Councilmember John LeTourneau

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
City Clerk Jo Ann Thieling
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby
City Planner Chris Anderson
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama
City Attorney Joe Langel

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:32 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Receive Presentation on Resilient Communities Partnership

City Planner Anderson reviewed the staff report.

Mike Greco, AICP, Director of Resilient Communities Project, reviewed the mission and program objectives of the Resilient Communities Project. He explained that city staff is busy and this allows cities to complete projects that they do not have enough staff time to complete and also provides students with real world training in the field they are studying. He noted that this also provides an opportunity for the program to use the experience and knowledge they gather from one community to develop tools that can be shared with other communities and on other projects. He explained the process and the model that is followed for communities that are asked to submit a full application. He noted that cities identify 10 to 30 potential projects, with project leads identified and RCP matches each project with one or more University of Minnesota courses. He explained that the project leads, faculty, and RCP staff collaboratively clarify and

scope projects that students will undertake and identify and engage community partners and stakeholders. He stated that project length depends on the project and could be one semester or one academic year to complete. He explained why the model works and noted that projects should be part of the City work plan and not newly created projects, as they do not want to create additional work for City staff. He talked about the RCP staff matchmaking process between City staff and faculty to ensure that the project and course are a good fit together. He stated that multiple students or teams can work on projects and therefore are able to provide different perspectives and a range of ideas. He stated that RCP encourages frequent communication to ensure that projects remain on the right track. He stated that there is engagement with local residents, businesses, and organizations to create a buy-in. He noted that everyone involved in the process has “skin in the game” as the City has a financial investment as well as the investment of staff time, while faculty has their own accountability and students are working to earn a grade. He reviewed some of the community partners that RCP has worked with in the past four years as well as the number of courses and students that have been involved. He reviewed some of the different benefits that are provided to community partners, faculty, and students.

Councilmember Kuzma asked the cost to be a part of the program.

Mr. Greco stated that it would depend upon the number of project submitted. He stated that the base cost would be \$40,000 if 10 to 20 projects are submitted and then there would be a cost of \$2,000 per project that is matched, meaning that if a total of 20 projects are submitted and matched the total cost would be \$80,000.

Councilmember Riley asked the timeline on the projects.

Mr. Greco explained that the partnership with the City of Brooklyn Park ends in May and therefore if Ramsey is selected RCP would begin working with staff in June and students would begin work with the fall semester in September.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if ten projects must be submitted or if less projects could be submitted.

Mr. Greco noted that at least 10 projects would need to be submitted to justify his salary and the payment for a graduate student. He stated that 10 to 20 projects are manageable.

Mayor Strommen noted that a list of potential projects was included in the Council packet to provide some examples that could be chosen from the current list the City has but does not have adequate staff time to complete. She stated that originally, she thought the cost seemed high, but noted that this is work that City staff or consultants would be paid to complete anyways and therefore would come from the professional services budget line item. She noted that this will also provide a broad area of expertise to complete these projects.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that these are students that do not have real world experience and asked how the City can be certain that the correct level of expertise is used to complete the project.

Mr. Greco stated that RCP ensures that students and faculty are matched correctly and students are evaluated to ensure that they are far enough along in their level of studies to complete the projects. He noted that the faculty members are involved throughout the process and noted that the element of redundancy also comes into play. He explained that perhaps two different classes are working on the same project and therefore if the first class does not excel on the project, the second class is also completing the same work. He acknowledged that you would not be able to build something designed by a student because they are not a licensed engineer but noted that the students are provided innovative ideas and multiple perspectives and areas of expertise that could assist in the project. He noted that typically the focus is on data collection and other elements of the project.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she participated in a similar program when she was in college and enjoyed it. She stated that this not only provides mentorship opportunities for students but it also provides innovative ideas from the students and multiple opinions and perspective that the City would not normally receive. She stated that she is excited, should Ramsey be chosen.

Councilmember Riley stated that he believes it is important for students to gain real world experience but asked how the City would ensure that they do not receive a solely academic response.

Mr. Greco stated that when they are matching projects, they are very clear with the students and faculty to advise them of the results that the City is ultimately looking for. He stated that if at the end of the project, the City is not satisfied with the results, RCP will pay a student that worked on the project to use the data to provide the results that the City desired. He stated that because the end result is shared with cities and made public on the RCP website, students put much more effort into their work.

Mayor Strommen shared an experience that she had working on a consultant project through the business school and noted that it was the most memorable part of her graduate studies. She stated that it is helpful to transition from classroom thinking to applied real world experience.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that students push themselves because the information is going to be shared and because they are gaining the experience.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he was not thrilled with the option in the beginning but found this presentation helpful. He asked how helpful staff believes that this project would be.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that certainly staff needs to hit the sweet spot to ensure that they are not submitting too many projects that it overburdens staff or too few projects where the investment does not provide the full benefit. He suggested that a fair amount of time is spent to identify the potential projects and the right number of projects are selected. He stated that there are projects the City has identified which would be helpful to have assistance with data collection and analysis.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained a potential utility project that was discussed this morning that could benefit from GIS data collection that could be done by students to create a mapping database. He stated that there are several projects that would add value and would supplement the time staff would spend on the project. He noted that this would also provide a benefit to students that will eventually hold positions in these fields and the City could potentially work with.

Councilmember Riley stated that one of his original concerns was that this would require a lot of staff time but was happy to hear that this will actually help staff.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that this will require some staff time.

The consensus of the Council was to direct staff to submit the full application to RCP.

2.02: Discuss Council Organization

City Clerk Thieling reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen highlighted the only two changes in terms of Council appointments for Committees.

The Council did not have any issues with the information as proposed.

City Clerk Thieling pointed out a couple of staff changes and provided that the organizational resolution included in the work session agenda is on the Consent Agenda of the regular City Council meeting this evening for adoption.

2.03: Update on EDA Discussion RE Strategy for Marketing and Selling City Owned Land

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

Councilmember Williams stated that her concern is that CBRE also represents Anoka for their property around the train station as well as Big Lake and Monticello. She explained that therefore the City is not being marketed as a unique opportunity. She stated that the EDA and staff will help to craft an RFP and therefore needs the input of the Council. She stated that the EDA needs the Council to help articulate the expectations and the concerns that they may have.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that his thought was when the City brought CBRE in there would be more progress because of the size of the firm. He stated that he would support allowing the EDA to continue to work on this.

Mayor Strommen stated that she is encouraged with the idea of a master developer, specifically whether the City has to market parcel by parcel or whether a master developer could come in to develop the entire area and therefore the City could get out of the land sales game.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she agrees with Mayor Strommen but was concerned that a master developer may not have the same vision the City does. She stated that she likes the different options and being able to pick and choose elements. She was not sure the level of control the City could have with a master developer but did like the idea of the City getting out of the constant discussions regarding property.

Mayor Strommen stated that she would share those concerns but believed that there is groundwork that can be done to ensure the City's issues are addressed.

Councilmember Riley stated that he joined the Council four years ago, in an attempt to help the City get out of the land sale game and yet here they are four years later. He stated that he would support anything that leads to the desired outcome noting that the City does not have the development and marketing experience that a developer would and therefore he would prefer the master developer route.

Councilmember Shryock asked the proposed timeframe for this process.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that there are many factors involved and provided examples, such as whether multiple RFP's should be created and to review the different options available. He stated that the target would be to have this completed in six months but noted that there is a potential that additional time would be needed.

Councilmember Williams provided details of the contract extension that should be considered.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that if the City states that they only want to extend the CBRE contract for six months, that could give them the impression that they are looking elsewhere and perhaps they will not put the same amount of effort in. He asked what would occur if the City did not sign a contract.

Mayor Strommen noted that it could also motivate CBRE to increase their performance levels.

Councilmember Williams stated that CBRE has offered the shorter contract extension as it is not uncommon for a landowner to take a step back and review their options. She noted that CBRE is a large firm that has multiple departments that could do a majority of the options the City is reviewing. She noted that CBRE would most likely think that the City is reviewing their options to further craft their desired outcome.

The consensus of the Council was to direct the EDA to continue their work.

2.04: Legal Update re Koenig v. City of Ramsey, Assessment Appeal, Anoka County District Court (This discussion is closed to the public)

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he can call City Attorney Langel to provide an update via conference call as he has not yet made it to the meeting because of the road conditions.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Shryock, to adjourn the meeting to Closed Session at 6:35 p.m.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Strommen, Councilmembers Riley, Shryock, Johns, Kuzma, and Williams. Voting No: None. Absent: Councilmember LeTourneau.

The Regular Session reconvened at 6:50 p.m.

2.04: Legal Update re Koenig v. City of Ramsey, Assessment Appeal, Anoka County District Court (This discussion is closed to the public) – continued

City Administrator Ulrich noted that the Council received an update on the Koenig v. City of Ramsey case with City Attorney Langel present via telephone and advised that the Council provided direction to staff.

3. TOPICS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION

3.01: Review Future Topics/ Calendar

Councilmember Kuzma asked if there is a penalty for after the fact permits, as he would like a penalty charged so that it further discourages residents from completing projects without applying for a permit.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that there is a statute that allows a municipality to charge up to double the fee. He stated that staff can complete research on the topic.

Mayor Strommen noted that often in her experience contractors are not including pulling a permit in the cost and she has had to specifically tell the contractor that they will need to pull a permit.

Councilmember Shryock noted that perhaps an article could be included in the *Ramsey Resident* as an educational element on the topic.

4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

City Administrator Ulrich noted that the joint Lower Rum River Water Management Organization will be held on March 8th or March 22nd, as they are still awaiting confirmation from the City of Anoka. He noted a potential strategic planning session.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:55 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.