

**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 9, 2018, 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 Chris Riley
Councilmember Melody Shryock (arrived at 5:37 p.m.)

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama
Information Technology Manager Jason Fredrickson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Strommen called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discuss Council Organization

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen noted that this item will move forward to the consent agenda at tonight's regular meeting and therefore any desired changes should be discussed.

Councilmember Riley stated that the Union has been the official newspaper of the City and is no longer available for free online. He stated that therefore the newspaper of the City is no longer available for free to Ramsey residents. He noted that he did call to complain, as a Ramsey resident, but is unsure that there is another alternative.

Mayor Strommen asked if the legal notices of the City are still available outside of subscription. She stated that she is also not satisfied with that change.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he could write a formal letter from the City on the issue.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that perhaps verbiage be included in the letter to address the comment from the Mayor regarding the access to legal notices.

The consensus of the Council was to move the appointments forward as recommended.

2.02: Rum River Hills Development Proposal

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

Councilmember Shryock arrived at 5:37 p.m.

Tom Gamec, Rum River Hills, stated that the residents near the 167th node are appreciative of what the golf course is attempting to do. He stated that the golf course renovations would occur first with the housing project to follow. He stated that Tom Anderson is working with the bank regarding financing as well as the details for the development of housing. He stated that the housing products would vary from multiple family housing to single-family housing. He noted that over the years the business has left the 167th node and the residents in that area are happy with the possibilities that this additional housing could bring to the retail node.

Councilmember Kuzma noted that in the past a contention was the sewer line, which has been resolved. He noted that the underpass is also a hot topic and asked why the City should pay the entire cost of that item.

Mr. Gamec replied that the underpass would be used not just for golf traffic, but for pedestrians to cross the roadway as well.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he believes that is a cost that should be considered by the developers as he is not sure that he could agree to the City funding that element 100 percent.

Councilmember Riley noted that the EDA recognized that exact point and would want to see the cost shared. He noted that a cost share analysis was also recommended to see the ratio of benefit that would be provided to all residents in that area outside of just the golf course.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he is thrilled to see the changes the plan has made over the years and the opportunity that could bring. He stated that he would also want to see the cost benefit analysis to determine if the City could contribute towards a cost-share or subsidy. He stated that he would also want to see the benefit that would be provided to the golf course to determine if incentives would be appropriate. He stated that he would be in favor of completing the cost benefit analysis to move forward.

Mr. Gamec replied that the cost for the underpass is estimated at \$600,000 and it would be difficult to move forward on that element without contribution from the City.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that it would be hard to make that decision without seeing the cost benefit analysis.

Mayor Strommen agreed that the cost benefit analysis would be the next step.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama agreed that the cost benefit analysis would look beyond tax dollars earned versus spent to look at the big picture elements as well.

Councilmember Riley asked if this would be considered a business subsidy.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that the City works with developers on trunk sewer lines and therefore that would not be a subsidy. He stated that the underpass cost-share may not be a subsidy because park funds were used for Elm Crest. He stated that road costs are also negotiated with developers and therefore these discussions may occur outside of a typical business subsidy. He stated that the developer has been made aware that the City would want to review finances in the same manner that would be done for a business subsidy, even if a traditional business subsidy is not used.

Mayor Strommen noted that the cost benefit analysis will provide more details on who will benefit from the infrastructure and therefore will determine whether a business subsidy would be appropriate.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama noted that the financials of the golf course could be reviewed at this stage in the process, rather than later, if the Council desires.

Councilmember LeTourneau commented that if the review is going to occur eventually, perhaps it would be best to do that element now. He asked if there is a current timing for the project.

Mr. Gamec replied that Mr. Anderson is working with developers. He noted that the tunnel is a main cost element that puts the project on a tipping point of interest.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he wanted to ensure that the golf course is aware of the length of time that would be needed to review all elements of the request in the manner discussed.

Mr. Gamec confirmed that he is aware of the time that would be needed.

Mayor Strommen noted the land use item within the staff report, noting that the traffic study is not listed in the cost estimates. She asked who would be responsible for intersection improvements, should those be necessary.

Mr. Gamec stated that the 167th node has been concerned with the traffic and possible stop light. He stated that comments have been made that it is a danger in crossing that roadway, even currently. He noted that he has spoken with the current businesses in the 167th node and some

have even mentioned that they would be willing to share in the cost because of the benefit that would be provided to them as well.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with a cost benefit analysis and review of the financials of the golf course.

2.03: New City Website Project Update – Structural Elements

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

Councilmember Kuzma stated that this is an improvement from the last review. He stated that he struggles with the search bar in the middle of the photograph as he feels that detracts from the first impression people get. He stated that he would rather see the logo in one top corner and the search bar in the other top corner, but noted that has been recommended against.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson confirmed that the consultant recommended placing the search bar in the middle or top right.

Councilmember Shryock noted that she likes the option with the logo in the middle, except for the photograph being greyed out. She asked and received confirmation that the search bar will follow on each page.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson replied that the search bar can be placed on the top menu bar on the furthest right position.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked for more detail on the recommendation to place the search bar in the middle of the photo.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson stated that the reason for the placement of the search bar in the middle is to mimic a Google search page, which people are familiar with. He noted that the intent is to make the initial visit of someone easier as they could search for the item they are looking for easily.

Councilmember Shryock asked if options would be returned on an initial search or whether it would bring the person to that page. It was noted that options would be provided. Councilmember Shryock stated that could be confusing and therefore she would not in favor of placing the search bar in the middle.

Mayor Strommen noted that she first looks at the dropdown menus to see if the item she is looking for is listed, and if not, she then goes to the right to the search bar. She stated that she likes the search bar to be in the top right, to make it easily accessible and easy to find with the rest of the menu options.

Councilmember Johns suggested that information on the specific photo be provided in a hover over option or with text, rather than bringing you directly to a photo gallery.

Councilmember Riley asked if there is a count of what people currently view on the website and if these are the most used buttons.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson stated that these are the buttons recommended by staff. He noted that once the site goes live, they will have analytics and can adjust the buttons if needed.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that staff would be a good resource for the likely most used features.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that there seems to be consensus to move the search bar. He stated that perhaps a tagline be added under the City of Ramsey logo.

Councilmember Riley noted that a tagline would be a whole different discussion.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that the City does not currently have a tagline and therefore it would require some careful thought. He stated that element could be added in the future.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson stated that the logo and text for the City name would need to be shadowed in order for viewers to be able to clearly see the text, and to remain ADA compliant. He noted that it would not be a dark picture when viewing the image live.

Councilmember Shryock asked if the screen could be placed just behind the text and logo rather than the entire photo.

Councilmember Johns stated that she prefers to not have the City name and logo in the middle of the photo. She suggested a larger border on the top of the page with the City name and logo and just leave the photo without text.

Mayor Strommen suggested that staff take the comments made and determine the best options.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama summarized the consensus of the Council to move the search bar to the top right of the top menu bar and to review the options for the logo. He noted that if the logo box only could be shadowed, the Council would be comfortable with placement in the middle of the photo, but if the entire photo would have to be shadowed, the logo should be moved to the top.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if the Council is comfortable that this can continue to move forward with the consultant's timeline.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that the deadline for the big picture design is the 28th. He suggested that the comments be incorporated into a mockup and then sent to the Council via email for consensus to determine if this can move forward on the timeline.

Councilmember Shryock asked if there would be extra expenses if the project moves outside of the timeline.

Information Technology Manager Fredrickson stated that there is an agreed upon timeline in the contract and therefore any delay in the timeline would cause additional costs.

Councilmember Riley stated that he cannot believe that this process has taken this long already. He stated that it is ridiculous that the City could incur additional costs and staff should avoid additional costs.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he wanted to raise the point that the group needs to make a decision in order to move forward. He noted that the website will be much improved and will be similar to what many other cities have. He agreed that he did not want to cause any unnecessary delays. He stated that at some point staff may want the discretion to move forward and not continue to come back to the Council to make changes.

Mayor Strommen stated that this is only the second time the Council has looked at this and the last time they could not get a real sense of the mockup. She stated that there were changes that needed to be made. She stated that the Council has weighed in on appropriate items and therefore it could be up to staff to work out those details. She stated that the initial reaction that people will get from visiting the website should be a concern of the Council. She noted that once the elements the Council should provide input on are worked out, staff could then work out the remaining details with the consultant.

Councilmember Johns noted an inconsistency between the use of Ramsey and City of Ramsey on different parts of the website and suggested that one be chosen over the other.

2.04: Discussion Regarding the Annual Performance Review of the City Administrator, an Individual who is Subject to the City Council's Authority – May be Closed to the Public

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Motion by Councilmember LeTourneau, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to close the regular portion of the meeting to closed session at 6:30 p.m.

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

The meeting returned to open session at 6:48 p.m.

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 6:53 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.