

**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 14, 2016, 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  
Councilmember Kristine Williams (arrived at 5:45 p.m.)

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Human Resources Manager Colleen Lasher  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Patrick Brama  
Public Information and Events Specialist Nichole Wenberg

**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: Policy for Recruitment, Application, and Interview Process of Appointing City Board and Commission Members**

Human Resources Manager Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen asked how a term would become out of alignment.

Human Resources Manager Lasher provided an example from the past that occurred with the Environmental Policy Board. She stated that ideally the City would prefer for between one to three terms to come to term at once and no more than that.

Mayor Strommen stated that if it was just the once situation she did not see a need for the additional language as the language could appear to state that the City frequently changes the terms to realign.

Human Resources Manager Lasher noted that the Charter Commission language has been removed in the draft policy as those appointments are made by the Chief District Judge. She noted that she hopes to bring this before the Council for formal adoption at the next meeting.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the Council has any power to make a recommendation to the District Judge for the Charter Commission.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that it is her understanding that the Council could submit a letter to the judge supporting or not supporting a candidate.

Councilmember Riley stated that he agrees that the changes work well and was in favor of not making incumbents go through the entire process to reapply.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked if there is any desire for the Council to conduct an interview process of the Charter Commission candidates as a first step before the appointments are made.

Mayor Strommen stated that the Council would not be a part of the formal process but could do that as a side step, noting that all candidates would still be able to apply to the judge.

Human Resources Manager Lasher noted that if that is desired, the interviews would be done on a different time frame as those appointments are made on a calendar year cycle.

Councilmember Riley stated that while he would like to see qualified individuals on the Charter Commission, in his opinion it is not the position of the Council to be involved.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed that it would be best for the Council to remain uninvolved as the Charter Commission is meant to be a system of checks and balances with the Council.

Councilmember Williams arrived.

## **2.02: Discussion Regarding the Process for the City Administrator's Annual Review**

Mayor Strommen provided background information, noting that she had asked for this discussion to occur to ensure that the current process is working smoothly and everyone is getting what they need out of the process as set up.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that this is just a discussion on the process used to review the City Administrator's performance and is not a discussion of his job performance as that would be done in a closed session. She reviewed the staff report.

Mayor Strommen asked whether the current process regarding the review criteria is working well or whether the Council would want to be more involved and have the criteria more finely tuned for the year.

Councilmember Johns stated that she would be in agreement with further discussing the review criteria.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he would like a more comprehensive review of the professional development plan, noting that perhaps something similar to the 360 tool could be used to do that. He noted that the tool would help to identify strengths and weaknesses noting that the information could then be used to build the work plan. He stated that the tools do not have an additional cost and would provide additional information.

Councilmember Riley stated that in the past there was more focus on the plan but noted that the process has evolved as the Council did not believe that was as important. He noted that the effort put into that a few years prior developed the plan which the Council is satisfied with. He stated that it appears that the tool would be helpful.

Mayor Strommen stated that she was disappointed with the lack of comments from the Boards and Commissions, noting that perhaps the tool was not working well and that is why they were not providing their feedback.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that he likes the idea of a new tool that would be geared more towards development. He noted that in regard to the Boards and Commissions perhaps some are not providing input because they do not really have much interaction with him and therefore they do not feel comfortable commenting. He stated that perhaps he should be engaging those folks more than is currently done. He thanked the Council for their participation in the process and for taking the time to complete the surveys.

Human Resources Manager Lasher stated that she would develop a list which she will bring back to the Council to review.

### **2.03: City of Ramsey Street Banners**

Public Information and Events Specialist Wenberg reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if staff has considered looking for a sponsor, noting that the theme could appear on the top with a sponsored by section at the bottom.

Public Information and Events Specialist Wenberg stated that she did not originally consider that option but noted an example in New Hope where the banners were designed by college students and credit was given at the bottom.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would want the City to have control over the design and theme but noted that a section on the bottom could specify sponsored by and the name of the local business, which would assist with funding.

Mayor Strommen asked the goal of the banners.

Asst. City Administrator/Economic Development Manager Brama stated that this item was brought before the Council because of the request for further discussion. He noted that this

discussion could be postponed and brought forward with the communications program in order to make a more coordinated effort. He noted that at this time there is not a goal specified.

Mayor Strommen stated that she could think of ideas such as branding or identification of areas but noted that she would not be interested in investing funds without a goal. She stated that the goal would need to be identified and it would need to be determined if this would be the best method to reach that goal.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that the broader picture is the image for the community and where the efforts need to be focused in order to create that image. He stated that, in his opinion, the Highway 10 and 47 corridors would be the primary objectives, noting that other priorities would then fall under those. He stated that while the banners are important he would view those as a second or third level opportunity.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she does see the banners could be used to identify a place and assist with branding but was not sure that this was the right time. She believed that there is more work to do before this discussion should occur, such as identifying areas and locations for banners.

Councilmember Riley stated that he brought this issue up because a resident brought up the issue to him. He stated that it was brought to him at the Christmas tree lighting that the main street is not decorated, noting that other cities have banners along their main street. He stated that he was impressed with the cost as he thought the cost would be higher. He agreed that perhaps the timing is not right as the Highway 10 and 47 corridors are important, but noted that he is not seeing anything getting done in those areas.

Mayor Strommen stated that perhaps the Council should have another discussion regarding the streetscaping for that main street. She noted that a goal would still need to be identified to determine if banners is the right answer and fit for the streetscape.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he likes graphics and the banners would project a sense of pride in the community. He stated that in his opinion the cost looks high and he believed could be lowered to provide a low cost option to make the main street look nicer. He stated that he would be happy to share some knowledge with staff.

Mayor Strommen stated that she would like the Council to be clear on what is trying to be achieved. She noted that if the focus is streetscaping, then the Council should review examples from other cities to determine the look they are attempting to define for the area and how best to reach that goal.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there are sections of the streetscaping that have been completed as development has been completed and noted that as development continues to be completed the streetscaping will be filled in. He acknowledged that the streetscaping is scattered and noted that perhaps banners would be a good idea to tie that all together in the meantime. He agreed that a theme would need to be identified in order to tie in the banner with the brand of the

City. He used the example of Anoka which has a theme that identifies with their image and has placement throughout their concentrated downtown area.

Councilmember Riley stated that if there was a way to do the banners along Highway 10 or Highway 47 they would be more effective but acknowledged that there is a specific place where the banners could be deployed.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he would like an opportunity to talk about streetscaping, not only along Sunwood but also what could be done along Highway 10 and Highway 47. He noted that once those plans are developed then a priority could be set for those corridors. He stated that the broad concept would provide the consistency, theme and design.

Councilmember Shryock stated that if that is done now there may be more focus on Happy Days and the holidays and that could evolve into the remaining parts of the year. She stated that there should be something that ties the City together so people know they are still in Ramsey and other elements that identify certain areas of the City.

Councilmember Riley stated that while that sounds like a good idea, he was concerned that this would turn into a two-year discussion and nothing is done.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that perhaps it would be a good idea to bring in a professional landscaper and/or design consultant to assist in this development.

Mayor Strommen confirmed the consensus of the Council to have a broad discussion regarding streetscaping in a timely manner.

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

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

Councilmember Kuzma stated that perhaps signage in the City should be discussed as some signs need repair and/or updating.

Councilmember Williams stated that having the streetscaping discussion will help the City with the desired beautification process along Highway 10 and Highway 47.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there will be insurance funds collected for the sign that was damaged at the corner of Highway 47 and Bunker Lake Boulevard and the Council would need to determine whether they wanted to replace the sign and the type of sign that they would want in that location.

Councilmember Riley stated that in his opinion the sign should be bigger and better than it was previously.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she believed that in the past discussions regarding a pedestrian bridge, there was talk about signage and believed that perhaps the signage would be done in stone and would be visible from Highway 10.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that the oil trains have picked up again and noted that he would like to have a worksession regarding safety and disaster protocol as there is a new Fire Chief.

Mayor Strommen stated that it is helpful for the Council to do a periodic review.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that staff is in the process of updating the Emergency Management Plan and once complete a presentation can be done to the Council. He advised that at the next meeting Community Development Director Gladhill will be making a presentation regarding the housing stock.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked and received confirmation that the presentation would be made at the regular Council meeting so that the presentation would be broadcast.

There was a discussion of the Council regarding the disconnect residents see between what is developing in The COR and what the original focus for that development was.

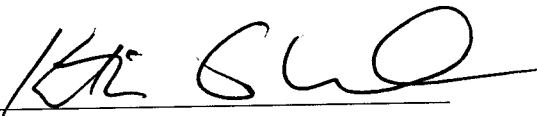
#### 4. MAYOR / COUNCIL / STAFF INPUT

None

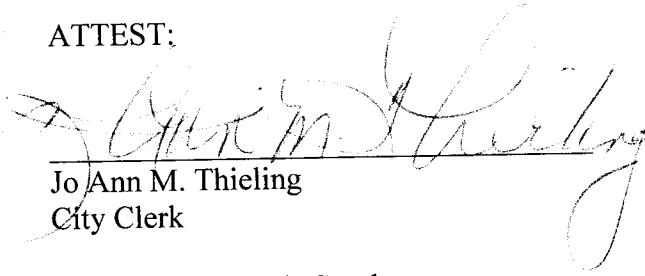
#### 5. ADJOURNMENT

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:42 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.*