

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, March 12, 2019, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau  
Councilmember Nadine Heinrich  
Councilmember Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Melody Shryock

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
Finance Director Diana Lund  
City Planner Chloe McGuire Brigl

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:37 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Discuss Possible Changes to Dog/Cat Licensing Requirement in the City of Ramsey**

Police Chief Katers reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if eliminating this program would reduce staff time.

Police Chief Katers agreed that the time to run the pet clinics would be reduced, but there would still be staff time spent on animal containment. He estimated that about 250 people attend the pet clinics, and the main reason for attending those clinics is to receive the shots, which can be provided through other local providers. He stated that there would be a budget reduction for eliminating the pet clinics and registration process.

Councilmember Shryock asked if there is a cost for the pet clinics aside from staff time.

Police Chief Katers stated that the department contracts with a local pet clinic and there is no charge for that, but the people that attend then pay the provider for the shots. He believed that the residents pay a reduced rate because of the volume of people attending but was unsure of the cost.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she appreciates the information that was provided in the case and tends to favor eliminating the need for licensing animals. She asked for input on revamping the policy.

Police Chief Katers replied that there are two specific ordinances that would need amendment or elimination if the process is eliminated. He stated that elimination of the licensing/registration would not impact the regulation of dangerous dogs.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would favor eliminating the need to license dogs. He explained that if there is a rule, it should be enforced and if it is not enforced, it should be eliminated. He stated that perhaps the licensing/registration process could be eliminated but the pet clinic option could remain, as it appears many residents take advantage of that service.

Councilmember Shryock asked when the pet clinics are typically held and suggested that perhaps that be combined with another City event.

Police Chief Katers replied that the clinics are typically held in the spring, March and April. He agreed that the clinic could be combined with another event, but noted that it would have to fit with the other type of event since people would bring dogs.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed that perhaps it is not worth doing the licensing/registration process anymore as there are other methods of pet identification available. She also agreed that perhaps the pet clinic could still be held and reduced from two events to one event, because of the high number of residents participating.

Police Chief Katers noted that the pet clinics have been held at a variety of locations but most recently the clinics have been held in parks and that has been a good fit. He stated that he could speak with other City staff members to determine other options for the clinic to streamline the process.

Councilmember Kuzma agreed that he would eliminate the need to make registration of animals mandatory. He suggested that perhaps a better option would be to use the City newsletter to educate residents on the options available for animal identification including the use of chip technology.

Councilmember Shryock referenced the chip technology and stated that she had her cat chipped but then received a renewal notice, so perhaps not all the chips are active if that membership expires.

Police Chief Katers replied that the department scanner is able to read a variety of manufacturer's chips and agreed that each manufacturer has its own type of service that it offers. He stated that most people will return a pet to its owner if there is identification on the animal, which does not involve City staff.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that perhaps the pet clinic be held at the dog park, to highlight that amenity.

Police Chief Katers replied that Elm Crest was chosen because of the availability of bathrooms and other facilities.

Mayor LeTourneau asked and received confirmation that the budget for this line item was \$9,200 and contains the containment services, licensing and pet clinic. He stated that the ordinance serves one purpose, related to identification and reuniting.

Police Chief Katers stated that if the department is aware of the owner, or there is identification, the animal would be returned to the owner rather than forwarded for containment.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it seems that the largest cost savings would be reducing the number of containments. He stated that perhaps this is more of a marketing issue and less of an ordinance issue. He stated that if the ordinance could be marketed more and there was more compliance, there would perhaps be less containment.

Police Chief Katers stated that some type of identification would be helpful; it would not necessarily need to be licensing or registration.

Councilmember Shryock stated that theoretically that would make sense. She explained that people that would have licenses on their pets are more likely to be mindful of the location of their pets. She noted that if there is a stray or nuisance animal, perhaps that resident is not as concerned and would be less likely to license. She stated that if the ordinance is not going to be enforced, there is no need for it and education would be a better option. She noted that articles in the newsletter could encourage people to have a tag on their dog collar with a name and address. She stated that people less likely to comply with a license might be willing to simply put a collar and tag on them.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if the cost for containment can be charged back to residents.

Police Chief Katers confirmed that if a resident picks up their animal, that cost of containment is charged back to the resident. He noted that there are cases where the animal has been abandoned or is not picked up and the cost then is absorbed by the City.

It was the consensus of the Council to direct staff to review an option that would eliminate the requirement for pet licensing/registration and instead focus on marketing other pet identification methods.

## **2.02: Discuss Community Sign Options for Highway 10 and Highway 47**

City Planner McGuire Brigl reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked the amount of money that was received from insurance from the damage that was done from the accident at the location on Highway 47.

Community Development Director Gladhill estimated that the City received about \$7,500. He stated that sign was pretty low quality and it would be a cost of about \$25,000 for the planned design which is much more durable and sturdier.

Councilmember Riley stated that the Council has discussed this multiple times. He asked if the question is on dollars, as the design has already been chosen. He stated that the Highway 47 sign needs to be replaced and thought the Council already chose a good design. He stated that he is comfortable with the direction they have been going and the cost estimate of \$25,000 to \$40,000.

Councilmember Musgrove asked and received confirmation that the proposed location for the Highway 47 sign would be the same. She asked if the landscaping would be included in the cost, noting the ongoing maintenance that would be needed. She stated that perhaps less landscaping would be an option to save funds.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated that landscaping would be labor intensive as hand watering would be needed. He stated that in the past the sign was not metered and if lighting is going to be added that would need to be metered and would have a cost of about \$15 per month.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the landscaping would not have to be added. He stated that it is a well-lit intersection and therefore the City would not have to light the sign. He stated that the County is currently in the process of developing plans to improve this intersection.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she agrees with the prior Council that chose this design option for the sign. She agreed that the ornamental flowers and plantings, or anything that would need more maintenance should be eliminated.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would like to see some spot lighting for the sign, rather than internal lighting.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she would assume that this sign would not be within County right-of-way and asked if the concern would be that the sign would need to be moved for equipment.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that perhaps the City can work with Speedway to have the sign located on private property to minimize the impact on the sign.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he would hate to spend any money on a sign until staff is aware of the plans of the County for the intersection. He stated that it appears there is consensus on the design, with the addition of spot lighting and elimination of landscaping.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that perhaps solar lighting could be utilized.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that if you use solar lighting, there would need to be an estimate on the life expectancy of the equipment. He asked if the same thought process would apply to Ramsey Boulevard, as the City is currently not sure of the plans of Highway 10 and that interchange.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed that there will be a grade separation and that sign could then be eliminated in the future.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the sign could be relocated but agreed there would be a cost.

Councilmember Shryock stated that the City has already been through one rebranding and this appears to be another rebranding. She agreed to not do anything major with the sign because of the interchange that will come along with Highway 10. She noted that it will be some time before the Highway 10 projects moves forward and perhaps some updating could be done on the sign in the meantime. She asked if the Ramsey Boulevard sign should be a COR sign.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he hates The COR and would like to go back to the City of Ramsey. He explained that if someone is not from the area, they do not know what The COR is.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that there is more brand value associated with the City of Ramsey compared to The COR. He agreed that it does not add enough value to use The COR in branding and the message should be consistent throughout the city.

Councilmember Heinrich agreed that there is tremendous value in recognizing the whole city. She explained that there are people in the northwest area of the city that do not understand The COR.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that residents in other areas of Ramsey can feel isolated and would rather open it up to the entire city.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she does like the idea that the sign could be repurposed to use what is there while it is there.

Councilmember Riley agreed with the comments of Mayor LeTourneau that this would be a gateway sign for the City of Ramsey.

Councilmember Shryock explained how The COR came to be and compared that to Riverdale in Coon Rapids. She explained that The COR is within Ramsey and identifies a location rather than a community. She stated that there is already an entrance to Ramsey sign that would identify the City, whereas the Ramsey Boulevard sign would identify The COR and the businesses within.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that this exact discussion has come up in every strategic planning discussion. He stated that the consensus that he gathered previously was to primarily focus on the City of Ramsey as the lead, with the other identifier to be secondary, such as The COR.

Councilmember Riley referenced the price range on the Highway 10 monument sign and asked for details.

City Planner McGuire Brigl stated that she reached out to different sign companies and received three quotes from three companies. She stated that two companies were very comparable, while one company came in much lower than the others did.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that when you receive a low bidder and the other bidders are comparable, that has to be considered. He noted that if you choose the lowest bidder perhaps there are additional change orders or costs that come in the future because there are not construction drawings.

Councilmember Shryock referenced the Ramsey Boulevard sign and noted that she would be in favor of updating that sign.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it seems that Ramsey is getting to a point of maturity where wayfinding signs on the highway will direct customers to businesses within Ramsey.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that if the tenant panels are removed from the City sign, there would be pushback from the business community. He stated that there are requests from additional businesses that would like to be included on the sign. He noted that perhaps the City charges for placement on the sign.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she favors the City of Ramsey over The COR. She stated that when people see The COR sign on Ramsey Boulevard, it does not provide direction on where to go.

Councilmember Shryock stated that directionally this is becoming more complicated than it needs to be. She stated that she is not opposed to changing the sign to the City of Ramsey; she was just asking if the subheadings were still going to be used or eliminated. She believed that the City is a ways off from the highway wayfinding signs and believed that the Ramsey Boulevard sign will help bring people into the businesses.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the sign could focus on City of Ramsey and then a subpanel could state COR business district, or retail district, as that would help to bring in customers.

Councilmember Riley asked if tenant panels will become outdated when more retailers come in.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the City continues to receive requests for large tenant panel signs from the private market. He stated that if there was a true shopping center, the shopping center would build a sign with tenant panels.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she would prefer for the City to have the signs and charge for tenant panels to create consistency with locations in key sectors.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to defer the large tenant signs to the future when there is more demand for that. He confirmed the consensus of the Council to update the Ramsey Boulevard sign to focus on the City of Ramsey branding, with tenant panels and a business district identifier.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that for the entrance sign he would prefer a two-sided dynamic sign for marketing.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there are public/private partnerships available for dynamic display signs and provided examples.

Councilmember Kuzma asked where this budget would come from for a dynamic display.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that TIF District 14 would most likely be used.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would prefer for the City to retain control over the content.

Councilmember Riley agreed that he would want the City to control the message rather than have advertising.

Councilmember Heinrich appreciated the option but agreed that she would prefer for the City to retain control over the messaging. She stated that the price is tough to accept. She stated that she has never been a fan of dynamic display signs and has not talked to enough residents to gain their input on the topic to provide an opinion.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that when the City had a working dynamic display sign there was a lot of contact from church and other civic organizations that wanted to advertise their events, in addition to City sponsored events.

Councilmember Shryock stated that if the City does choose dynamic display, there should be a policy on what the City can advertise for the community and prioritization.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that if there was a dynamic display sign that could bring in additional people for events like the farmers market.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that perhaps a smaller dynamic display is chosen.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there is a broad range of capability for dynamic displays, ranging from simply letters to full color and pictures.

### **2.03: Discuss Public Works Facility**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Mayor LeTourneau asked if the Highway 10 access planning would require acquisition of the public works space for the shoefly.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the shoefly option has almost been eliminated because of the additional costs. He stated that the City did already purchase a site for the new public works campus.

Mayor LeTourneau asked whether now is the time to address this issue.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that in the past he has been against moving forward on the project because he was unsure how the project could be funded. He explained that in the last year his understanding has changed on why this is needed for the growing community. He stated that he would be interested in moving forward to identify the best alternative for financing.

Councilmember Heinrich thanked Public Works Superintendent Reimer for taking her on two tours of the public works building and explaining the needs. She agreed that this should be planned for. She stated that she would support looking into the funding options for this to move forward.

Councilmember Shryock stated that she agrees that this should move forward and would agree that staff should investigate other financing options that could change the burden on bonding.

Councilmember Riley stated that he would also be interested in using the money the City has as well. He stated that he appreciates the options being considered but stated that an interest only loan is typically only chosen when someone cannot afford something. He stated that he would be interested in utilizing the landfill fund.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed that having the office in the trailer is not the safest option and public works is running out of space. She liked the idea of staff being creative in funding.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the consensus of the Council to continue to move forward with direction for staff to continue to investigate options for financing. It was noted that no decisions have been made and the Council is very interested in reviewing options that would allow this to move forward.

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

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

Councilmember Riley stated that he would like to have additional discussions on the west end of Highway 10.

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

None.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*