

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, April 23, 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  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby  
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:40 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Discuss Lawful, Non-Conforming Status and Potential Enforcement Action for 15415 St. Francis Blvd NW**

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Dave Niles stated that many of the items shown in the aerial have been removed and he has attempted to downsize to improve the street view but is also very busy and therefore vehicles are brought by tow truck often. He stated that he enjoys doing business with residents of the community.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that if the business is going to grow, that would be allowed, and would also provide an opportunity to trigger site improvements.

Councilmember Riley stated that it would be helpful if the property owner could be proactive in cleaning up the property.

Niles stated that he started working to cleanup the property last fall, removing about 40 vehicles from the site, but is also running his business at the same time so the process is taking longer.

Councilmember Musgrove thanked the property owner for attending tonight. She stated that it is always helpful if a property owner is willing to work with the City. She referenced the aerial photographs and believed that it would take longer than 14 days (the length of time between violations/citations) to complete the desired actions. She stated that this is a busy time of year for the business and asked if the City could be flexible with the timelines.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that there is an extension allowed within the citation policy, which could provide up to 30 to 45 days. He noted that if additional extensions are needed after that time, the Council could approve an additional extension.

Niles stated that he does need an area for his business to store vehicles. He stated that he would not be opposed to putting up a fence to provide screening.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the property owner can bring in a request that would show parking areas and fencing, noting that the parking area would need to be improved and not just grass or dirt parking.

Mayor LeTourneau suggested that the property owner bring forward a schedule of improvements that could be approved and followed.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the first step would be for staff to complete a site visit, which would allow staff to have further discussions with the property owner to help in creating that plan.

Niles confirmed that he would be willing to participate in a site visit with staff.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she went to meet with Dave recently to learn about his business. She stated that it is a longtime business of the community and the property owner appears to be willing to work with the City to continue to make progress. She stated that the property owner needs to be able to cooperate with staff to determine how he can comply with City regulations and still run a successful business. She commented that the 14-day timeline is a very short length of time. She believed that 21 days would be a better length of time to begin some type of progress.

Niles stated that it is helpful that the snow has melted so he can once again work on cleaning up the property.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it will be important to work to develop that schedule of improvements for the property, whatever that length of time may be, and then the items on the list should be completed within the set amount of time agreed upon.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that having a set schedule for improvements will be important. She stated that there are businesses in Ramsey that have been here for a long time and therefore

will take a longer period of time to fall into the regulations, compared to a new business that could perhaps resolve an issue in a quicker fashion.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he is concerned with the illegal business use, specifically the rental business.

Niles stated that he would like to continue with the U-Haul rental as that is a source of income for him. He noted that it also provides a good service to the residents in Ramsey.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if that issue could be resolved with a business license.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that type of business is not allowed within the current zoning of the property. He stated that the auto repair business is allowed under the non-conforming use clause, but the U-Haul business would require a change in zoning if the Council desired that use for the property.

Councilmember Riley referenced a listening session that occurred about Highway 47 and the desired look for the corridor. He stated that perhaps staff could have a discussion with the property owner to provide the knowledge of the process that would be necessary if they would like to request a change in zoning for the property.

Councilmember Heinrich asked when the City became aware of the U-Haul business.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided background information on the City's knowledge of the U-Haul business. He stated that there is a resolution on the agenda for the regular meeting tonight that would create the framework for this moving forward. He believed that the proposed language would provide the desired flexibility but noted that staff could also pull that item from the agenda to allow additional time and discussion.

It was the consensus of the Council to pull the item from the regular agenda tonight to allow additional time for the property owner to work with staff to create the desired schedule for improvements.

## **2.02: Discuss Staffing for the Administrative Intern**

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the intern would be used for the Ramsey Foundation events.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that being a liaison to the Ramsey Foundation is within the job function for the Recreation Specialist. He noted that the Recreation Specialist role and duties would be first priority and the administrative services would occur after that.

Administrative Services Director Lasher provided additional details on the availability of the new Administrative Intern and his start date. She noted that the Recreation Specialist previously

served as an Administrative Intern and therefore has the knowledge and skills necessary to fill the gap.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that it appears this option will allow the necessary tasks to be filled until the new Administrative Intern can begin and come up to speed in a budget neutral manner.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she does like the creativity of staff to use an existing staff member to fill the “gap”. She stated that she is unsure that the Administrative Intern is necessary and therefore struggles with the decision. She stated that there appears to be overlap between the Administrative Intern and Communications Specialist positions. She noted that she also struggles with how the employee would compartmentalize the duties for each position. She stated that she did not approve the budget for 2019 and is concerned with adding additional staff members and the impact that will have on the budget. She stated that she has also heard comments from residents that while Happy Days is a great event, it does not have to be done to the level or cost that it currently is.

Councilmember Shryock asked and received confirmation that an Administrative Intern has been hired, but cannot start until May, which then created funds in the existing budget that can be used for this purpose. She also asked and confirmed that these additional hours would not qualify the employee for benefits.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed that this work would be in the budget for the Administrative Intern position. She explained that the Recreation Specialist currently works Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and therefore she would complete the Administrative Intern duties on Monday and Wednesday.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that if the new Administrative Intern is going to come on board in May, why is this proposal scheduled to go through September.

Administrative Services Director Lasher explained that while the new Administrative Intern would hopefully come on in May, it would take some time to bring that employee up to speed. She noted that the Happy Days activities are also going to be expanded and therefore this would be a manner to assist in that process without paying overtime for a full-time employee. She confirmed that she would be monitoring the payroll bi-weekly to assist in scheduling and ensure that the item does not go over budget.

Councilmember Shryock stated that as long as the work falls within the budget constraints, she would accept the proposal.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that this would not be a new hire and this employee is already trained to assist in this event. He stated that this will also be a method to prevent full-time staff members from accruing overtime. He stated that the Happy Days festival is important to the City and he would support this action.

Councilmember Riley and Mayor LeTourneau confirmed that they would support the action.

It was the consensus of the Council to allow the Recreation Specialist to supplement in the Administrative Intern position as described, as long as the activity remains within the approved budget for that position.

### **2.03: Review Options for Cleanup Project Cost Share for River Walk Village; Case of Village Bank**

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if there is flexibility for the developer to go to 12 lots rather than 14 lots. He also asked if the bank would be willing to cost-share.

Don Kveton, Village Bank, replied that they will still lose funds on this project either way and therefore they need the 14 lots. He stated that thus far they have lost \$700,000 on the project over the years. He stated that if this project does not move forward, they will not attempt another project. He commented that they believe the residential product would be a better fit over industrial. He stated that they would not be interested in cost sharing further.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for details on the contamination.

Wade Carlson provided details on the contamination on site and how that will be removed and how the site will be treated. He stated that although the site is contaminated, with these improvements the site could meet a restricted residential standard.

Councilmember Shryock stated that it would be beneficial for consideration that this property is next to the Mississippi River. She stated that the residents in that area have expressed concern with the number of lots and therefore she would support reducing to 12 lots. She stated that she agrees that the lot needs to be cleaned up. She stated that she would like to see the cleanup costs shared between different entities, such as the City, County and State. She cautioned against the City spending the funds to cleanup the site solely.

Councilmember Riley applauded the effort of the applicant and agreed that applying for grants would be a good route. He stated that the Council already agreed to some lenience in the number of lots, allowing possibly up to 14. He stated that he would not support the dollar match for the grants coming from the City.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that it is her belief that this is an appropriate use for the Anoka County Housing Redevelopment Authority (ACHRA) funds.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that it is fairly common for cities to become involved with the cleanup of a contaminated site and therefore it is not an unusual activity.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that this project would be doing a good duty in cleaning up the site. He applauded the applicant's ability to identify the grants, as that seems to be a good solution. He agreed that the ACHRA account would be an appropriate source of funding that he would

support. He stated that this development would help to build the community, cleanup the site, and contribute to the tax base.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that if the grant funds are not obtained to clean up the site, it most likely would remain contaminated.

Mayor LeTourneau agreed that the City could also ask if the County would be interested in participating in the cost-share.

### **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 6:55 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.*