

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, February 24, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor John LeTourneau
Councilmember Nadine Heinrich
Councilmember Mark Kuzma
Councilmember Jeff Menth
Councilmember Debra Musgrove
Councilmember Chris Riley
Councilmember Dan Specht

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor LeTourneau called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:38 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: 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)

Administrative Services Director Lasher reviewed the purpose of this case and recommended that the Council go into closed session to complete the annual performance review of the City Administrator.

RECESS AND RECONVENE

Motion by Councilmember Kuzma, seconded by Councilmember Specht, to recess the meeting to Closed Session at 5:40 p.m.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor LeTourneau, Councilmembers Kuzma, Specht, Heinrich, Menth, Musgrove, and Riley. Voting No: None.

The meeting reconvened to Open Session at 6:27 p.m.

2.02: Review Housing Plans and Policies

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill reviewed the staff report.

Mayor LeTourneau asked for details on the history of how the overall development plan was developed.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that 20 years ago Ramsey did not have a variety of housing stock and therefore the younger and older populations had trouble finding housing. He stated that there was a goal then to provide a variety in the housing stock. He stated that the plan for The COR was developed in order to manage the City's growth, concentrating density and retail development in order to create a downtown area to allow other areas of Ramsey to remain more rural. He provided details on the over two-year process that occurred to develop the plan, noting that numerous updates have occurred during reviews.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that two years ago there was a course correction that occurred, updating the plan as to the development that occurred and the development that the market was allowing.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill confirmed that the plan has reacted to market corrections, with two large revisions that have occurred over the years.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if the interim development plan was going to be reviewed by staff and potentially updated, as the last update occurred in 2017.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that is the direction that staff would like. He noted that the interim plan was used to update the plan and to assist in the Comprehensive Plan process.

Mayor LeTourneau asked for details on the update that Councilmember Heinrich would like to see.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced the vision statement and was unsure if that language is clear for residents. She noted that she also composed an email with additional questions that have been answered by staff.

Councilmember Menth referenced the business survey that was recently completed and asked if the business community has expressed that the housing needs for their employees is, or has been, met. He stated that if the City is going to feed its business community, it needs to ensure that there is sufficient housing available.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill replied that housing affordability is becoming an issue and therefore there is some degree of a need for affordable housing. He agreed that workforce development and housing are linked issues. He stated that overall there is a need for additional housing based on the economic growth.

Councilmember Riley commented that there have been consistent comments that the City is building too much multi-family housing. He stated that he would like to see a pause on multi-

family development in order to give some time for retail and restaurants to develop and provide more of a balance in The COR.

Councilmember Specht stated that the City has done a good job in providing a variety of housing options and agrees that there should be a pause in apartment development. He stated that perhaps focusing on a mix of single-family and medium density would continue to allow for a variety in the housing market.

Mayor LeTourneau asked the availability of a medium density product in The COR and overall community.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill provided additional details on housing that would be considered medium density. He identified areas that would be available for medium density development within The COR as well as areas that are proposed to be developed with a similar product. He stated that using a moratorium is a very short-term opportunity to conduct study and analysis, most likely a one-year period.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that the plan was designed with the highest concentration of density in, or close to, The COR with density continuing to decrease as you move outside of The COR. He asked where the medium density housing could occur within The COR and how that would help the City reach its goal for population that will bring in the retailers. He stated that The COR is about 80 percent built out for the concentrated population goal, which is finally bringing in attention from retailers. He stated that he would be afraid that putting a pause on the development would also put a pause on retail attention. He stated that overall .4 percent of the acreage in the City will be multi-family housing.

Councilmember Kuzma asked if the City has met its commitment with the Metropolitan Council for the train station and ramp.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill explained how the City secured its rail station. He stated that pausing would most likely not cause an issue but agreed that changing the land use map could bring attention from the Metropolitan Council. He noted that the main focus is within one mile of the rail station because of the walkability and access to the rail station.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would not support pumping the breaks. He stated that this should continue to remain market driven, noting that developers want to build the apartments close to the rail station. He commented that there is not that much land left for apartment type development within The COR. He believed that Aeon would like to come back and build their second building and would want to be able to support that action.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she is comfortable with the word pause as she continues to hear from residents that they do not want to see more apartments in The COR. She commented that she understands the link between population and retail, but residents do not seem to care and would like the development of apartments paused. She stated that it would be nice to have some of the retailers come in to provide a balance.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he accepts the word pause in this context but does not want to see it stopped. He stated that there is a lot of history and information as to how the overall plan was developed and believed that the Council could become better champions of the plan after further review. He stated that he is able to explain to residents the purpose of concentrated housing because of his knowledge on how the plan was developed and the work that went into it.

City Administrator Ulrich recognized the lack of time and noted that this item could come back to the Council at the next worksession.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that all of the apartments that have been built are full, therefore there is demand.

2.03: Discussion Regarding Section 2-156 of the City Code – Boards and Commissions

No comments. Please Note: this agenda item was not discussed.

2.04: Discussion Regarding Paid Parental Leave

No comments. Please Note: this agenda item was not discussed.

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 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt

Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.