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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: None

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Police Chief Jeff Katers  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood –  
attended remotely  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor LeTourneau called the regular meeting of the Ramsey City Council to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor LeTourneau.

**2. PRESENTATION**

**2.01: Presentation Proclaiming September 17-23, 2020 as Constitution Week**

Mayor LeTourneau read the proclamation declaring September 17-23, 2020 as Constitution Week.

**3. CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**4. APPROVE AGENDA**

Motion by Councilmember Menth, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to approve the agenda as presented.

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

## **5. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Kuzma, to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- 5.01: Approve the following Meeting Minutes:
  - 1) City Council Work Session dated August 25, 2020
  - 2) City Council Regular dated August 25, 2020
- 5.02: Approve Rental Licenses
- 5.03: Adopt Resolution #20-193 Approving Cash Disbursements Made and Authorizing Payment of Accounts Payable Invoicing Received During the Period of August 20, 2020 through September 3, 2020
- 5.04: Adopt Resolution #20-185 Proclaiming September 17-23, 2020 as Constitution Week
- 5.05: Adopt Resolution #20-191 Declaring Costs to be Assessed and Calling for Public Hearing on Proposed Assessment for Past-Due Charges on Municipal Utility Bills (which may include water, sewer, street lighting, recycling, stormwater charges, and penalties incurred) and Current Services Rendered
- 5.06: Adopt Resolution #20-192 Approving Snow Storage Agreement on City Owned Land
- 5.07: Adopt Resolution #20-194 Approving Underwriting Service Agreement for Small Business Relief Grant Program
- 5.08: Adopt Resolution #20-195 Ordering Assessment Roll and Calling Assessment Hearing for Improvement Project #20-04, Puma Street Improvements
- 5.09: Adopt Resolution #20-196 Approving Letter of Support for Metropolitan Council Clean Water Fund Request for State Fiscal Year 2022-2023
- 5.10: Adopt Resolution #20-197 Approving Amended Petition and Waiver Agreement for Municipal Water and Sanitary Sewer Connection to 7600 163<sup>rd</sup> Lane NW

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

## **6. PUBLIC HEARING**

None.

## **7. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

### **7.01: Adopt Resolution #20-171 Accepting Bids and Awarding Contracts for Bid Package #1 and Alternate #1 for the New Public Works Facility**

Public Works Superintendent Riemer reviewed the staff report and recommendation to adopt Resolution #20-171 accepting bids and awarding contracts for Bid Package #1 with a base bid amount of \$6,138,361 and including Alternate Bid #1 in the amount of \$441,938 for a total of \$6,580,299.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it is unusual to have this type of bidding competition and low bidders.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied that he believes that COVID has slowed down the commercial side of construction and therefore there is more interest from those contractors.

Motion by Councilmember Menth, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to Adopt Resolution #20-171 Accepting Bids and Awarding Contract for Bid Package #1 for the New Ramsey Public Works Facility, Improvement Project #20-07.

Further discussion: Councilmember Kuzma asked RJM to come forward and discuss why it is a good time to go forward with alternate bid #1. Curtis Sell, RJM, stated that there would be cost efficiencies in completing the alternate bid into the original build, as the cost to complete an expansion in the future adds additional costs. He noted that there would also be a schedule efficiency in completing both of those elements at once. Councilmember Musgrove asked when the Council will see updated sketches for the building. Mr. Sell stated that bid package #1 contains the larger denser portions of the project and the architect is working to complete bid package #2, which contains more of the design details.

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

#### **7.02: Review Sketch Plan for Riverstone South; Case of Capstone Homes**

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill reviewed the staff report and asked the Council to provide feedback to the developer as part of the plan development for the next stage in the process known as Preliminary Plat. Preliminary Plat is the most crucial stage in the subdivision process. It was noted that the City has broad policy discretion as the request requires the approval of a Zoning Amendment and possibly a Comprehensive Plan Amendment due to lot sizes and densities.

Councilmember Specht asked if the Comprehensive Plan identifies a trail connection to the end of Bowers Drive.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that there has been some discussion on the MRT trail and where it will connect. He noted that the discussion is focused more on Riverdale Drive rather than running that trail through the Bowers Drive properties. He stated that staff will continue to work with new developments in order to secure segments near the river.

Mayor LeTourneau noted that the MRT extends past Bowers Drive to the west and is not proposed to go down Bowers Drive at this point. He noted that there is a full access onto the trail from Bowers Drive. He asked if the Council is required to make any decisions about the secondary road access tonight.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that tonight they are looking at whether there is general consensus to move forward with the plan development as proposed. He stated that they

would like direction on the Bowers Drive connection but noted that the decision could be changed prior to adoption of the Preliminary Plat.

Councilmember Riley asked if these would be the same lot sizes as Riverstone North.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill confirmed that these would be the same lot sizes and would be very much a mirror image of the development, with the exception of the removal of one of the product types.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for details on Riverdale Drive and the history of the layout on the sketch.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill provided background information on the access planning study that was completed in 2014 by the City and MnDOT, noting that study showed Riverdale Drive consuming some of the first few lots. He provided additional details on the proposed layout for Riverdale Drive which was developed by the developer working with the input of the Bowers Drive residents to find an alignment that worked well for everyone involved.

Mayor LeTourneau provided an opportunity for members of the public to provide input.

Jeff Johnson, 14540 Bowers Drive, referenced the Bowers Drive survey and asked at what point the Council would automatically move ahead. He asked if the decision has already been made on Bowers Drive. He stated that the residents have not been given any data from public safety on how much safer the neighborhood would be with the additional access. He stated that when you open up a cul-de-sac that increases opportunity for crime as that creates another way for people to access and exit the neighborhood. He stated that this road has been around for about 80 years and noted that there has not been one time since he has lived at his home where EMS has not been able to access the homes on Bowers Drive. He stated that there is a difference between a need and a desire. He stated that connecting Bowers Drive to Capstone would substantially increase the pedestrian traffic on Bowers Drive, which is a narrow road that is not lit by streetlights. He stated that providing this connection is attempting to solve a problem that does not exist and would instead create more problems that need to be solved, which would destroy the reason people purchased homes on that road. He stated that people that purchased property on Bowers Drive chose to live there and do not need the City to calculate their risk levels. He stated that if the residents on Bowers Drive felt threatened, they would not have purchased their properties. He commented that residents do not leave Bowers Drive, they seek property on Bowers Drive. He did not think it appropriate to include or make assumptions about the people that did not respond to the survey. He commented that the residents of Bowers Drive do not want the connection and did not believe there is anything wrong with keeping those neighborhoods isolated rather than connecting them. He did not think that putting a secondary access onto Bowers Drive would solve any problems and instead would create additional problems.

Mayor LeTourneau thanked Mr. Johnson for his input.

Mr. Johnson stated that at the last planning meeting he asked for information as to what would be required for the Bowers Drive residents to stop this process and he has not received that information.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that staff is still determining that but recognized that the voices of Bowers Drive have a high impact.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that it is clear that Mr. Johnson does not want a road and asked if he would support a narrow trail with breakaway barriers that could be used by emergency vehicles.

Mr. Johnson stated that once that is developed, people will use that as a trail and the pedestrian traffic will come from Capstone onto Bowers Drive. He confirmed that his concern is related to the increased pedestrian traffic and safety concerns with that activity.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what Mr. Johnson would believe to be a workable option.

Mr. Johnson stated that he would like to see the data that proves this would make that neighborhood safer as the data currently shows that the secondary access and increased pedestrian traffic would make the area more unsafe.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the mention of 50 foot and 100-foot setbacks.

Mr. Johnson noted that the original planning meetings for Capstone referenced a 100-foot setback, but those original 12 homes were setback 50 feet instead.

Police Chief Katers appreciated Mr. Johnson's position. He stated that his comments related to public safety remain the same for any neighborhood noting that he prefers two points of access for all neighborhoods although he recognizes the uniqueness of Bowers Drive. He stated that he cannot provide statistical information of what may happen in the future and can only provide input on what could happen. He stated that there could be multiple situations that could cause the current access to be closed, therefore public safety prefers to have two points of access in order to get people in and out of a neighborhood.

Mr. Johnson stated that everyone that lives on Bowers Drive is aware of the risk they took in purchasing their property and they are not asking for that secondary access. He stated that cul-de-sacs are safer than any other road in terms of crime. He stated that he has not been provided with any information that has proven that two accesses would make the residents safer.

Police Chief Katers stated that his standard response for a development is to have two accesses. He stated that he is familiar with the cul-de-sac studies, noting that those were small areas in Minneapolis and therefore that is an urban area versus a rural environment and that study only took into account burglary and not the other crimes or situations that could exist.

Councilmember Specht thanked Mr. Johnson for his input and recognition of property rights. He stated that he has heard of informal surveys that have been completed with more response.

Josh Fuhreck, 14573 Bowers Drive, thanked Capstone for their efforts on this project. He stated that overall, this is a good project and the developer has given consideration to the unique forestry environment that exists on the property. He stated that overall, he supports the project, but he does not support the Bowers Drive connection. He stated that the public safety concerns mentioned have an extremely remote possibility of occurring. He noted that if the connection is provided to allow the additional pedestrian traffic on the narrow roadway of Bowers Drive, that would create a much more likely and real safety concern. He stated that it would be very unlikely that a tree would fall, and an emergency situation would occur at the same time, noting that has not happened once in 80 years. He stated that the City's survey was extremely slanted, mentioning only the City points and a statement that said if you do not respond we will assume you favor the connection. He presented a survey of 85 homes, noting that 60 residents responded in opposition of the connection to Bowers Drive. He asked the Council to consider the survey he presented rather than the survey completed by the City.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what the area between the homes is right now.

Mr. Fuhreck stated that currently it is a strip of land between two homes and one would assume that the land belongs to one of the two adjacent homes. He confirmed that the area is not mowed or maintained.

James Wadey, 14447 Bowers Drive, stated that he is one of the homes adjacent to the proposed access connection. He echoed the comments of the previous two speakers. He stated that when he purchased his home two years ago there was no indication that there would be a road and it was shown as an outlot. He stated that they asked Capstone the plans for the outlot and there was never a mention of a road connection. He stated that they signed the survey in opposition of the road. He agreed that the pedestrian traffic is already heavy with Bowers Drive residents and opening the secondary access would bring additional security concerns. He stated that there are a number of studies that show opening up a cul-de-sac has a detrimental impact on burglary. He commented that the City was never transparent through the channels he had available when he purchased his home about a potential road connection.

Carol Larson, 14480 Bowers Drive, stated that she has lived on Bowers Drive for 56 years and has seen a lot of changes. She stated that she appreciates that they have been isolated from a lot of the changes in Ramsey. She noted that she anticipated that there would be development on the Capstone property and Riverstone South and therefore does not object to that development. She stated that she does object to placing a roadway between two homes that were not alerted to that possibility. She stated that those homes would lose all privacy and they would have chosen other lots would they have known that. She stated that she has submitted several things to the Council in written form. She explained that if you go down Bowers Drive in the winter the driveways are plowed but the snow is yellow and brown because of the dogs in the area and did not want to see additional dogs being walked on the road. She commented that vehicles travel on Bowers Drive and adding additional pedestrian traffic would seem to be the opposite of increasing public safety. She believed that the one access should be provided from Highway 10.

Councilmember Specht asked if the City gets involved when there is sale of property next to a City owned property.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that the City cannot control the information shared by a realtor when selling a property. He explained that the City obtained that outlot in order to reserve that corridor for the future, therefore the area was not signed as a future road. He stated that perhaps the people that purchased those homes were not alerted to the possibility of a roadway connection in that location.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he feels there are two separate issues in this case, the development plan, and the road connection to Bowers Drive.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that this is the opportunity for the Council to provide direction to the developer on the plan development for preliminary plat. He stated that perhaps the decision is not ready to be made on the road connection. He noted that this is the first time the petition has been presented to the City and the Council could direct staff to work towards a compromise or could take that option off the table all together. He confirmed that there is time to explore the Bowers Drive connection further at a future point.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that it sounds like the City owns the outlot currently and asked if there would be a possibility to provide the connection in the future.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill confirmed that the decision could be made in the future if desired, noting that the intent has always been to reserve the corridor.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that he would recommend that the lot be reserved, and he would not support a road connection at this time because of the large opposition to the issue. He noted that the City would always have the ability to pursue that in the future.

Mayor LeTourneau confirmed the standpoint of Councilmember Kuzma to table the road connection at this time but still reserve the outlot and an outlot from Capstone in order to preserve that ability in the future.

Councilmember Specht stated that he likes the overall plan and additional tree preservation. He also agreed that the connection to Bowers Drive should be removed at this point.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the cul-de-sacs proposed in the development would meet the standards of public safety.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that every development project goes through a development committee that includes representation from all City departments and noted that as designed staff is not concerned with the cul-de-sac sizes proposed.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there has been discussion to having a third access to Riverdale near the 40-foot lots.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that there is an undetermined development area in the future that is identified with a stub road. He stated that staff feels that the two access points is sufficient and adding additional access points would cause conflicts on the access road.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there would be any special easements on the property, such as a conservation easement.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that the protected area would be conveyed to the City and the City would own that property in fee title to prevent confusion and conflicts that have occurred in other neighborhoods that used conservation easements.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed that she would like to see the development move forward and would also support removing the road connection to Bowers Drive.

Councilmember Riley stated that right now they are focusing on the process of listening to residents. He stated that there is also a process of listening to the Planning Commission, public works and public safety who have all said that connection is necessary. He stated that one of the goals of the City is to have a connected community. He stated that he would support this development moving forward without the connection but would want to circle back to that potential connection in the future.

Councilmember Menth stated that if the Bowers Drive connection is eliminated that would leave two access points into the proposed development and asked if that would be considered sufficient.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill confirmed that would be deemed sufficient for the new development.

Councilmember Menth commented that the statement is often made that a decision is made before they walk into the room and noted that tonight the residents that spoke changed his mind on this issue. He stated that he listened to the four residents tonight and they persuaded him. He stated that he would like to hold onto the right-of-way but keep Bowers Drive the way it is. He stated that the residents of Bowers Drive do not want that connection and the Council is supposed to represent the residents.

Councilmember Kuzma stated that perhaps when the curbs are installed there be a curb cut in that location, which would allow public safety to go through that area.

Assistant City Administrator Gladhill stated that even if there is not a road connection, staff would still like to use that corridor to place a hydrant in that location. He stated that the decision does not need to occur today, but staff will continue those discussions.

Councilmember Specht stated that he likes that a consensus was reached. He noted that if it were his decision completely, he would even favor selling that land to an adjacent landowner that may be interested.

Mayor LeTourneau stated that he was fond of hearing the statement from Councilmember Menth related to the fact that residents often believe that the Council has made up its mind before entering the room. He stated that many times in his years on the Council he has thought that the Council was in agreement on a topic because of the information from staff but that has changed on multiple occasions because of the input from the public. He stated that he also supports the consensus of the Council tonight to support this development moving forward as proposed without the connection to Bowers Drive at this time. He thanked Capstone for continuing to work with residents and listening to their input throughout this process. He commended Capstone for preserving additional trees and bringing forward a solid project to the community.

Mr. Johnson thanked Capstone and the members of the Council and City staff for hearing the residents tonight.

## **8. MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT**

City Administrator Ulrich announced upcoming meetings and events.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilmember Riley, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 8:32 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.*

A recording of this meeting is available for viewing online at [www.qctv.org](http://www.qctv.org) <<http://www.qctv.org>>. Recordings are available for 36 months after the date of the meeting.