

**PLANNING COMMISSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Planning Commission conducted a worksession meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2019, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Bruce Anderson
 Commissioner Cheri Gengler
 Commissioner Torrey Johnson
 Commissioner Eric Peters
 Commissioner Gary VanScoy
 Commissioner Matt Woestehoff

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
 City Planner Chloe McGuire Brigl
 City Planner Chris Anderson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Bauer called the regular meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

None.

2.01: Discuss 2020 Planning Commission Work Plan

Community Development Director Gladhill reviewed the staff report including reorganization of the community development staffing assignments and review of the Strategic Plan developed by the City Council. He asked the Planning Commissioners to brainstorm three to five ideas for the Commission for the upcoming year. He determined that signage was an overarching theme for the group.

Chairperson Bauer commented that there have been a number of variances requested and approved by the Commission and therefore believed that the Commission should review if the size limit should be increased. He noted the other changes that may be necessary to handle specific signage for Highway 10 signage.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the question for the Commission would be whether it would like to continue to review those sign requests as they come in or whether they would prefer those approvals to be handled administratively.

Commissioner Anderson commented that the Commission has already agreed that large signs would be appropriate along the railroad corridor. He noted that the businesses he has spoken with have expressed difficulty in finding signs of the appropriate size and placing those in the allowed locations. He asked if there should be thought to allowing higher signs on multi-story buildings.

Commissioner Woestehoff stated that he has a different perspective as he believes that less signage should be allowed along Highway 10 and would prefer to preserve a more natural character for Ramsey.

Community Development Director Gladhill commented that one method to achieve that objective would be to encourage shared signage along the highway corridor.

City Planner Anderson noted that there are different standards in The COR compared to other commercial/industrial districts. He asked if the interest of the Commission would be specific to The COR or across all commercial/industrial districts.

Commissioner Woestehoff stated that he would like to see the different zoning districts mapped out more and suggested that perhaps Highway 10 become just one district on its own.

Commissioner Anderson commented that this is a topic that should be discussed as a group and perhaps better ground rules should be developed for The COR specifically.

Community Development Director Gladhill moved to the next topic of housing, accessory dwelling, and affordable housing.

Commissioner Gengler stated that she would be interested in what could be done in terms of policy to help encourage more affordable housing in the community. She stated that Ramsey has so many different types of housing available and she would want to ensure that the community remains open to providing housing for everyone.

Commissioner Woestehoff agreed and noted that many developers state that affordable in the in \$200,000's range, which is not typically considered affordable.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the City Council will be studying the topic of housing and this feedback will be helpful as there has been some pushback from the community related to multi-family housing. He stated that the issue of "she-sheds" and accessory dwelling units is a trend that the group could tackle as well.

Commissioner Anderson commented that it would be helpful to have better communication between the Boards and Commissions to ensure that the groups are working cohesively. He commented that it would also be helpful to have a method to provide updates to the public on the activity of the Planning Commission and other groups.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that the City has begun updating its website to become more user friendly and has been posting more updates to its social media as well.

Commissioner Anderson recognized that it is hard to coordinate everyone to meet together from different Boards and Commissions but noted that it would be helpful to have an annual or bi-annual joint meeting of the different Boards and Commissions to provide updates on the activity of other groups.

Commissioner Woestehoff commented that perhaps a better idea would be to attend some of the meetings of the other Boards or Commissions.

Commissioner Anderson explained that when you attend a meeting of another group, you are attending as a citizen and are not provided with an opportunity to speak, whereas a joint meeting would provide an opportunity for open discussion between the groups.

Commissioner VanScoy commented that the open houses have been very helpful for the residents and the developers.

Commissioner Gengler recognized that staff sends out notifications as required but there are still a lot of comments from residents stating that they were unaware of the topic.

Community Development Director Gladhill noted that residents can sign up for development alerts through the City website. He moved to the topic of zoning for religious uses.

Chairperson Bauer stated that he would like to review the zoning districts to determine which zoning districts would be appropriate and to ensure consistent regulations throughout the different districts where that use is allowed. He stated that he does not like the use of interim use permits and would prefer to allow the use as a conditional use.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided additional input on why the uses is allowed as an interim use currently and confirmed the topic could be added to the work plan. He asked for input on the administrative/procedural items.

Chairperson Bauer stated that there should be a review of the ordinances that receive a lot of variance requests to determine if adjustments should be made to the ordinance itself rather than continuing to issue variances.

Commissioner Woestehoff stated that perhaps use of the consent agenda would be helpful for items that simply need approval of the Commission and would not require discussion.

Commissioner Anderson stated that he would like some additional notification from staff on potential upcoming projects which would allow the Commission members to visit the site if desired.

Community Development Director Gladhill provided input on the 60-day review period allowed by the City. He noted that staff has been attempting to bring projects forward onto the radar of the Commission earlier through the use of concept plans and sketch plans. He provided additional input on the use of PUD's and that process.

Commissioner Gengler suggested that perhaps a statement be shared when the meeting begins or as a written statement for attendees related to the desired code of conduct. It was noted that perhaps the statement could be shared on the screens prior to the meeting beginning.

Commissioner VanScoy referenced the shared parking desire for The COR and noted that it does not seem that the City is following that policy and therefore that should be reviewed to determine if its still appropriate. He provided additional details related to his comments regarding density and net density.

City Planner Anderson provided additional input on density transitioning. He also provided input on the street names in Ramsey and different spellings used.

Community Development Director Gladhill referenced the topic of food trucks and provided input on the related staff discussions thus far.

Chairperson Bauer commented on the desire to perhaps review the City's development scale to ensure the City remains competitive with other surrounding communities.

Commissioner Woestehoff stated that the discussion of Franchise Fees should continue, although recognized that may not be under the Planning Commission.

Commissioner Anderson stated that it would be helpful if the staff report for cases reference the applicable section of City Code.

Community Development Director Gladhill summarized the topics that will be a focus for 2020: administrative policies, signage, parking, zoning for religious uses, housing and accessory structures, density/density transitioning, and communication. He stated that staff will use this information to create a draft work plan for the Commission to formally approve.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission adjourned at 6:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Gladhill
Community Development Director

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.