

**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 13, 2021, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Mark Kuzma  
Councilmember Ryan Heineman  
Councilmember Chelsea Howell  
Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
Councilmember Chris Riley  
Councilmember Dan Specht  
Councilmember Matt Woestehoff

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood  
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
Deputy City Administrator Timothy Gladhill  
City Engineer Bruce Westby – attended remotely  
Communication and Events Coordinator Megan Thorstad  
I.T. Manager Jason Fredrickson

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:31 p.m.

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Review Final Draft Strategic Communications Plan**

Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for details on the events listed on the content calendar.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad commented that the tool is used for brainstorming and includes events the City hosts each year, other events the City could have a tie to, and other events the City posts information about.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she prefers to see events more relevant to the City. She recognized that during slow times the City may choose to look outside of that. She commented that there are a lot of parks and trails in Ramsey and perhaps a bike safety event or information could be helpful.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad moved to the action items and welcomed any questions, concerns, or comments.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the last item in section one and asked if the City already has a newsletter editor.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad confirmed that there is a newsletter editor and explained that the new item added is that there is an internal review committee.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that there were some errors in the last few years and therefore a senior management staff team reviews the document before it is sent out.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the creative communications committee and commented that seems redundant. She commented that she does not want to create more work and meetings and would prefer to remove that item and instead focus on the other tasks. She believed the internal review committee would be sufficient.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that his original comment was related to having a quarterly check in with the goal that the group would be strategic. He commented that it appears the internal review committee is intended to proof and catch errors.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad stated that it was her understanding that the groups would be separate, and the communications committee would contain external members, such as a City Council member, in order to gain additional perspectives.

Councilmember Howell commented that she agrees that this seems redundant and would prefer to try out the internal review committee.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed that a communications committee would not necessarily be required and would create additional work. He stated that if desired, there could be a one-time focus group to provide additional input.

Councilmember Specht stated that Anoka has two different Facebook sites, one that promotes different events and another one for the actual City. He believed the secondary site was Discover Anoka.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad stated that the City has an events promotion packet and policy and provided details on how someone can submit their event information and the methods in which the City could publicize that event.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that Discover Anoka is a separate entity, a business coalition, whereas this policy is aimed at community events. He stated that idea could be reviewed by the EDA, is desired.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is language in the policy related to nonprofit events versus businesses.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad confirmed that there is separate language applying to businesses and nonprofits.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that the City of Blaine has a separate website run by the City, managed by the community development department, and advertises businesses.

Councilmember Heineman commented if the City went that route, he would find it helpful to use the City social media to advertise the new site that advertises businesses.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that perhaps the EDA should consider that suggestion.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that it could be added to the plan and tasked out to the EDA and community development as it would be more related to economic development.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad asked for any input on the website refresh and social media strategy.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the intent of using the word relatable in regard to City messaging. She believed the other descriptive words would cover the intent.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad commented that those were themes and terms that came up quite often in the Council survey that was completed. She commented that relatable is important in terms of community engagement as it attempts to bridge the gap between government and residents.

Councilmember Specht commented that there is a balance between humor and relatability and asked if there would be a desire to remain professional or mix in some more lighthearted things.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad stated that she has attended several trainings and it has been stated that humor can be an effective strategy, therefore she attempts to sprinkle in tasteful jokes that keep things lighthearted while remaining professional.

## **2.02: Discuss Building Access System for the New Public Works Campus**

I.T. Manager Fredrickson reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Heineman asked and received confirmation that public works and fire station one currently uses hard keys. He asked if there are security cameras outside of each entrance and/or whether cameras would be implemented with the proposed access systems.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson replied that there are no security cameras at either of those campuses but with the implementation of a new system that feature could be tied in. He stated that with the existing system the cameras are recorded on a separate system. He noted that security cameras would be implemented with the new public works system.

Councilmember Heineman asked if there would be cameras in the future that would not be tied into the system.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson confirmed that he would suggest the cameras tie into the existing system and be housed on the existing server.

Councilmember Riley asked if there is a time when upgrading should occur for the existing server or whether the new system should simply be added. He asked if there were any security concerns with being cloud based.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson commented that the criteria to review other systems came as part of a different project, which was to explore if there was a possibility to eliminate hard keys for park buildings and use mobile credentials, which these systems would allow for. He stated that the existing system has no ability to do that and there is no interest from Honeywell to look into those upgrades. He stated that there are minor frustrations as to what can be done to the system and there are no upgrades/updates available. He stated that in regard to cloud security systems, he does not have any major concerns as the data is backed up in another manner.

Councilmember Riley asked what would happen in terms of access if the technology goes down.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson stated that when the internet goes down, the power to grant access or provide access remotely is removed but the system would still continue to operate with card access and upon scheduled times. He stated that the only time the system would go down completely is if power and generator power went down.

Councilmember Howell asked if there would be hard key access at all.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson confirmed that would still be available.

Councilmember Heineman commented that one advantage to this type of system is that keys are not needed and if an employee is terminated their access could be terminated, along with eliminating the cost of lost keys. He stated that seems to provide a cost savings along with productivity savings. He asked if there have been any instances of lost keys and where locksmiths have had to rekey a door.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied that they have rekeyed once, but it has not been a large concern. He stated that they do not provide the last paycheck for seasonal employees until their keys are turned in.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she recalls a rekeying for the Elmcrest buildings. She asked if this system would apply to City park buildings as well. She stated that the case does not seem to mention the parks buildings.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson replied that the system would allow the City to connect the park buildings even though there is no internet at those locations. He stated that at this time they are

focusing on the existing system but there would be a possibility to connect the parks buildings in the future if desired.

Mayor Kuzma asked for details on the camera system and whether that would be connected, or if the existing system would continue to be used.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson replied that the Honeywell system that the City has does not tie into the cameras and staff would propose to continue to use that separate system rather than tying the systems together at this time as it would simply cause an additional cost that is not necessary.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the system quotes seem similar and stated that there seems to be a cost savings to moving to the cloud. He asked if two factors would be a requirement for either system.

I.T. Manager Fredrickson commented that the current access to the door system includes himself, I.T Support Technician Kubat and the facilities team and provided additional details.

It was the consensus of the Council to support moving forward with PDK.

### **2.03: Review Date for Annual Planning Session**

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the staff report.

Councilmember Heineman commented that he will be on 30-day military orders and therefore would be available remotely.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the date as proposed in the staff report.

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

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

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the future topics calendar.

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

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill noted that the property owner for the abatement case on tonight's regular agenda reached out to at least one Councilmember stating that they would like to speak tonight, so that item will be removed from Consent to provide that ability. He provided background information on the property and the code enforcement history. He noted that the property owner felt they were being treated unfairly and provided three other properties in the area in violation, noting that staff was not aware of those properties and code enforcement will be following up on those properties as well. He noted that this property owner does not dispute that the property is in violation, noting that staff has been working on the case since 2019 and this is the first response from the property owner. He noted that an extension could be considered now

that the property owner has responded. He reviewed the amount of staff time that has gone into this case.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that if there are results in bringing cases to the Council, perhaps cases should escalate to the Council sooner in an attempt to reduce staff time.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill confirmed that is included in the new process, noting that this case began before that time. He provided additional details related to the possible extension length, estimating two to four weeks would be sufficient.

Councilmember Musgrove asked why an extension would be considered when the property owner has not been working with City staff as of this time.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that it sounds like there are health issues and the property owner did reach out. He stated that the extension would allow time to work through a plan and for the property owner to comply.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for details on touring the public works facility.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that is still on the agenda for some time in May, as the concrete would be poured.

Councilmember Riley referenced case 7.07 on the regular agenda. He stated that the case contains no information and asked for input on the intention of the case.

Councilmember Heineman stated that during the initial vote on the resolution there were questions asked of the City Attorney that he does not believe were sufficient and wanted to clarify and/or address those items with the City Attorney.

Councilmember Riley asked if Councilmember Heineman felt the best approach was at a Council meeting rather than by talking to the City Attorney in person.

Councilmember Heineman commented that he believes this would be helpful in an open meeting setting because of the current environment, the questions the community continues to have, and to ensure proper legal advice is being provided.

Councilmember Howell commented that this case received a lot of attention in the media, noting that headlines and content do not always match facts. She did not believe all the comments made by the City Attorney were accurate and that the residents should have the opportunity to have these questions asked in an open meeting.

Councilmember Heineman commented that there was a notice of action brought forth in regard to the resolution that was adopted, and he has questions for the City Attorney related to the League of Minnesota Cities. He stated that the City Attorney is supposed to represent the City and Councilmembers and if his advice is not in the best interest of the City and City Council, or if it is

biased, he would like to flush that out. He commented that there were errors in the statements made by the City Attorney, which he discovered instantly through his own research.

Councilmember Specht commented that he received a message from a resident related to the Northfork Meadows item on the Consent Agenda asking whether a timeline could be put in place that would require construction within a certain period after grading occurs.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill commented that unless the property is City owned, the City cannot dictate when construction occurs. He stated that the grading agreement would ensure that if the developer does not complete grading, the City could complete that through use of the escrow that would be held. He stated that it would be routine for the City to allow the developer to move forward on mass grading prior to construction. He stated that there are many measures in place that protect the residents from the area remaining bare dirt. He stated that the developer is not going to move forward with the expense of mass grading if they are not planning to move forward on development. He stated that the schedule hopes to complete grading in the end of spring/beginning of summer and then to move forward with infrastructure and begin home construction later this year.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she spoke with City Administrator Ulrich earlier about an item she wanted to pull from Consent but did not. She stated that her question was related to the on-call duty officer compensation item and stated that while she does not have an issue with the compensation, during previous discussion there was a request for information on the funding and she did not notice that as part of the case. She stated that the case mentions a transfer of excessive general funds. She stated that those funds are distributed based on the City policy and she would like to have more information and discussion in the future related to the policy and distribution.

City Administrator Ulrich confirmed that policy and process for allocation of year end funds will be on a future meeting agenda with a presentation by the Finance Director.

Mayor Kuzma commented that this year was an outlier in that there were additional funds at the end of the year due to the receipt of CARES Act funds.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that the City will also be receiving funds from the American Relief Act this year and the Council should expect to have discussion related to how those funds should be used.

City Administrator Ulrich noted that there have not been any issues in Ramsey due to civil unrest and noted that Ramsey provided assistance to other communities as requested.

## **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Kurtis G. Ulrich  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
Deputy City Clerk

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