

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, November 23, 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
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan
Finance Director Diana Lund
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Communications and Events Coordinator Megan Thorstad
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher – attended remotely
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Senior Planner Chloe McGuire Brigl
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Communications Quarterly Update - Q3 2021

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad reviewed the 3rd Quarter Communications Update, including the months of July, August and September 2021. The Council had requested quarterly updates as a part of the Communications strategic plan that was approved in March 2021.

Mayor Kuzma asked if the website was due for refreshing soon.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad confirmed it is due in 2022.

Mayor Kuzma commented that he has received feedback that the website is difficult to navigate and asked if tracking is being done on complaints regarding navigation.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied the reviews have been mixed. Some people have said there is too much content on the homepage but when content has been simplified by the Communications Department, then the feedback is that more is wanted. She stated she will need to work with the IT department to resolve this issue and when the redesign of the webpage happens, the Council will have input.

Mayor Kuzma commented that the web design company would likely have suggestions as far as popular designs.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad agreed.

Councilmember Musgrove commented on the postings by QCTV that only dates are included, but nothing that identifies content so each one would have to be looked through to find a specific topic. She questioned if that skews the posts, the number of times people go to the post, because they are going to check something specific, but have to watch all of it because no title is included. She felt it would be helpful in getting more accurate feedback.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the second chart in the case and asked if it is the second quarter, the second presentation that has been done. She also asked if an Excel format could be used to have information on the side for comparison from one quarter to the next over the year. She felt if comparing in that way, trends would be easier to determine and the City would get better feedback on input.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad agreed.

Councilmember Specht questioned if searches could be followed through to where it ends up to ensure the search results are relevant.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied she would need to follow up with the IT Manager. She believed they tracked how long a user viewed the site but the reason behind it is unknown.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the issue with QCTV will probably change and be better in the near future because QCTV is switching to a YouTube channel for distribution. He noted YouTube typically has better descriptors which should improve material going forward, although archived material won't be redone. He replied to the search question commenting that if the site is set up for Google Analytics, visitor flow and routing should be a possibility.

Councilmember Riley commented that he frequently hears feedback regarding a lack of notification and stated that tracking what is being done is helpful but it doesn't seem to address the lack of notification issue. He asked if ideas could be generated to increase notification and communication.

Councilmember Heineman commented, to Councilmember Riley's point, it is very inexpensive to boost posts on Facebook as a way to increase communication. He felt this would be a way to add due diligence.

Councilmember Specht stated they do boost some posts.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied that Facebook posts have already been boosted. Traditionally, posts are boosted if event information or job postings are included and consideration is taken as to which posts are boosted due to budgetary considerations. She felt it could be worth more discussion.

Councilmember Heineman replied that should be sufficient, that it shows a good faith effort to push information.

Councilmember Specht commented that he follows the City of Elk River for comparison and to gain ideas. He stated that one idea he gleaned was a posting with a summary of the City Council meeting the following day with highlights of items that had passed. He wondered if any of the Councilmembers would be open to doing something similar for Ramsey.

2.02: Discussion and Update of 2022 Budget/ Levy

Finance Director Lund stated the property tax statements were mailed in the past couple of days. She has received just two calls from residents. One was a question about the franchise fee and the special assessments. The other was about property taxes. She was unclear if there was general acceptance of the new structure or if the statements haven't been looked at yet.

Finance Director Lund stated that the 2022 Budget and Levy is due for final adoption at the next meeting, which is on the December 14, 2021 agenda. The purpose of tonight's discussion is to determine the final levy amount and budget. She reviewed the Staff report.

City Administrator Ulrich highlighted the memberships and events that the City sponsors, stating these are more discretionary.

Finance Director Lund stated that the purchase of four printers has been postponed to 2023. It doesn't impact the tax levy but it did reduce the budget and the corresponding funds.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the membership information and asked about funding for Youth First, North Metro Mayors Association, and the Manufacturing Cohort. She stated Anoka pulled the Youth First funding because it was felt that other programs were more directly related to their residents. From previous discussion, the City does a cash contribution of \$1,500 but there are also in-kind contributions in the form of rental. In 2019, that amount was around \$47,000. She mentioned funding comes from the Gambling Fund, but wondered if there were updates from Staff on the in-kind contributions and questioned how the Council felt about it.

Councilmember Specht agreed that it is something that should be monitored. He stated he is on the Board and felt Ramsey residents participate and benefit from the program. He replied to the question about in-kind contributions, stating that the free rent will be ending soon.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that the space does provide free rent; it was a building purchased through right-of-way acquisitional funding so any revenue has to go back into that program. He explained the City chose not to charge Youth First rent but the program does pay utilities.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he has received a handful of calls as Councilmember Specht's alternate to get to know the organization better. He agreed it is worthwhile in terms of the investment, especially with Anoka pulling funding. He was in favor of keeping it.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that city contributions are different.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked how much Anoka was contributing.

Councilmember Specht replied \$15,000 a year.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the North Metro Mayors Association and questioned the benefit to the City.

Mayor Kuzma replied that it is very important. He stated he attends the meetings and reported that he learns what is going on in other cities and is able to network with other mayors, which is important to him and worth being a part of.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that the fee was reduced this year and questioned why that was.

Mayor Kuzma replied the fee was reduced to promote participation.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that in 2019, the City belonged to the Association of Metro Municipalities, now called Metro Cities. This group represents all metropolitan communities and deals with legislation and issues that involve metropolitan communities. He noted it was diverse because it included inner city communities and cities all across the metro. He stated the North Metro Mayor's Association fills the gap of being the interest group for the north metro area so being part of this group of 20 communities gives them more influence in legislation that targets the north metro area.

Councilmember Musgrove questioned letters being sent and if that is a part of being a member of the Association.

City Administrator Ulrich explained if it is an item that is on the agenda, typically they add their support. With the Highway 10 project, for example, they support funding for that project. If it was something that was not in line with the Council's priorities, it would be brought back to the Council.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the Anoka Chamber Manufacturing Cohort and expressed disappointment on the feedback regarding what was happening. She didn't feel an objective business plan was being obtained, didn't see growth, support, or help for businesses. She referenced the recent Anoka Chamber of Commerce flier which says Mr. LeTourneau is the director of manufacturing but she thought it was a separate thing from the Anoka Chamber of Commerce. She was confused about what was being paid for as a manufacturing cohort, which she believed to be separate from the Anoka Chamber but it seems he is actually the manufacturing spokesperson for the Chamber. She questioned the funding, the objective plan, and the value the City was getting from the program. She wasn't sure she could support it when it comes up even though it is in the budget and wanted to see more objectivity and impact statements.

Councilmember Howell concurred with Councilmember Musgrove and shared her concerns, noting she wanted tangible results from programs in the community. She referenced an email with an update that was the same as in February, which she felt lacked tangible examples of impact so she didn't support it.

Mayor Kuzma replied there was one company in which the Cohort had helped with an employee shortage.

Councilmember Heineman commented that he also voted against it due to lack of impact and he still had questions.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the budget is set and this is an EDA decision. He would rather see it in the budget and have the EDA deny it, than to hear a case that would support continued funding and have to then find the money.

Mayor Kuzma replied that it may be reasonable to ask Mr. LeTourneau to provide more information for justification. He supported keeping it in the budget.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if it was paid on a calendar year.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that it is typically for a one-year duration but invoices have been received at various times throughout the year. Invoices have been paid through the first month or two of the year when invoices are typically received to be processed. He noted that invoices are brought into EDA to start, the EDA makes a recommendation and ultimately, the City Council decides whether or not to fund it.

City Administrator Ulrich commented his point was that it is typically a mid-year decision.

Councilmember Riley suggested, with this being a budgeting process, that it be left in and when it does come to the Council if more information is needed, those questions get answered. Then, decisions would be based on the answers.

Councilmember Heineman commented he is okay with leaving it in but he wasn't okay with waiting until this comes back around to the Council again before it gets talked about. He suggested being more proactive in getting answers instead of pushing it to next year.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that the Council did discuss it last year when it was passed. She requested an update, one wasn't automatically provided, noting it would be appreciated having a business plan that gives more objective information.

Councilmember Specht commented that there are things the Council could do to get more substantial numbers. He suggested doing a survey of the manufacturers in Ramsey or getting a list of manufacturers that were impacted this year or in past years. He asked for confirmation that was the kind of specifics being requested.

Councilmember Musgrove gave an example from the update that listed "delivery on a workforce training grant" but was lacking specific information about how many people were helped, time frame, or dollar amounts. She felt more information should be provided to inform decisions on continuing to spend money. She noted the Anoka Chamber Manufacturing Cohort has been receiving money for years and she has never seen anything objective come from it. She would like to be able to justify to the residents how money is spent and how it is benefiting the community.

Councilmember Heineman referenced the update and compared it to a poorly written resume. He would like to see more specifics as well, things like numbers, turn over, and placement rates for interns. He thought this information could be found; he just didn't know where it was. He didn't feel he could support it if it comes back around but wasn't sure about taking it out of the budget today either.

City Administrator Ulrich replied he will go back to the contractor and ask for more specific information.

Councilmember Heineman referenced a list he found to be vague, noting each item could have three or four bullet points of explanation to provide details of timing, companies involved, and how many hires were obtained from it.

Councilmember Howell commented that a grant wouldn't be acquired if the submission was so vague but the questions the Council has warrant answers, which they have tried to get in the past.

Mayor Kuzma commented it is fair to ask for more information and if it doesn't come back, then it would be fair to defund it.

City Administrator Ulrich brought a few items to the Council's attention, noting that Family Promise in Anoka County made a request for \$3,000 and the last time they were funded was in 2017 so they are not included in this year's budget. He explained their mission is helping families move from homelessness to housing independence and they have been established in the area for quite a while. A request is also pending from Anoka Area Ice Arena Association. He noted that Family Promise is funded out of the General Fund and the Anoka Area Ice Arena Association is funded from the Gambling Fund. He stated this can be addressed in January.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the Family Promise program and asked what are the distinguishing factors for what is funded from the Gambling Fund versus the General Fund.

Finance Director Lund explained that to be eligible for Gambling Fund, it needs to serve youth.

Councilmember Specht asked if the Gambling Fund was going to be used for playgrounds as well.

Finance Director Lund confirmed this.

Councilmember Woestehoff questioned what the fund balance was for the Gambling Fund.

Finance Director Lund replied at the end of 2022, the estimated balance was about \$377,000 and factors in continuing to fund the Anoka Area Ice Arena.

Councilmember Woestehoff questioned from a cash flow perspective, how the Gambling Fund gets replenished.

Finance Director Lund replied they have Anoka County Ice Area, Anoka-Ramsey Athletic Association, the Hockey Association, and payments from the Ramsey Lions.

Councilmember Woestehoff questioned if the \$100,000 designated for parks can sustain being funded out of the Gambling Fund for the year.

Finance Director Lund confirmed this and noted, as an example, the Ramsey Lions for 2021 is projected to make around \$90,000 that will be submitted this year. She has them averaged at \$60,000 per year going forward.

Councilmember Specht commented that a topic for future discussion could be funding more than one playground per year to complete updates if funds are available.

Mayor Kuzma questioned if the Council wants to fund the \$3,000 per year for the Family Promise program.

Councilmember Specht commented it is a very good organization but there are a lot of good organizations and questioned what the vision was, if they focus on Youth First or start committing a few thousand dollars towards different programs.

Councilmember Heineman asked what service Family Promise provides.

City Administrator Ulrich replied the program works with local churches and provides temporary homeless shelter to families in need.

Mayor Kuzma stated he would be in support of the \$3,000.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he would rather fund Family Promise at \$5,000, than the Anoka Area Chamber Manufacturing Cohort. He recognized they are from different funds but he was looking at the overall dollar amount.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced Youth First and commented that the program helps keep kids active and out of trouble. She felt the hockey program in Anoka served a lot of Ramsey students so she supported finding a way to divide the money, whether it goes to Family Promise or another organization, but didn't want to see too many things being supported. She suggested starting to focus on the Alexandra House, which is a very worthy cause that helps families. She noted Youth First also helps a lot of youth in the area. She was more in support of the hockey program than the Family Promise program because churches may be able to support that program.

Mayor Kuzma asked for a show of hands to support or not support Family Promise program for \$3,000.

Councilmember Specht commented his concern is that there are a lot of good organizations in the area that are looking for support and it is difficult to say if there will be more.

City Administrator Ulrich stated the history decisions on which groups to fund relates to which groups directly benefit City operations. Alexander House is used extensively by police in terms of domestic violence. Youth First gets to kids first so they don't become a drain on public services later in life so those two meet that criteria. He agreed with Councilmember Specht that there is a long list of organizations that would like to be funded.

Councilmember Heineman agreed with City Administrator Ulrich that what is currently being funded are those that help the community. Family Promise is an excellent charity but is being funded by tax-payer dollars. He would rather the community have a choice to support charities instead of the government.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked Police Chief Katers how much of a problem homelessness is in Ramsey.

Police Chief Katers replied that officers do encounter it, mostly on the southern end of Ramsey. In regard to youth, he wasn't sure what the numbers are, but knew there may be a lot of young adults who are separated from their parents and live at friend's houses or in their cars. With this organization, church space is used to house people on a short-time basis. He explained the Police Department had some concerns about housing people because it is a different use for a church.

Mayor Kuzma again asked for a show of hands.

The majority consensus of the Council was to not fund the Family Promise program.

Finance Director Lund asked for further comment and consensus on the budget.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the personnel requests and asked if reclassifications were done for equity opportunity because there was an opening, or qualification.

City Administrator Ulrich replied it may be a mix of all of the above. With Community Development it was an extra opportunity, education, and experience. The Engineering position was to move the Engineering Tech forward to Senior Engineering Tech to retain him. The promotion is to take advantage of someone who has accumulated additional hours of certifications and experience and is in a position to be promoted based on the work he is doing and the work he is capable of doing.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer gave a history from January 1, 2021 to January 1, 2022, noting he has seven new people in his department. One was a new hire, two people retired, and four people moved on to the private sector because of different opportunities. He feels the two people he has selected for the positions will be able to take the department forward. He doesn't want to lose them to another opportunity because they are well qualified for the positions. The person going for the Street Supervisor, currently pretty much runs the Street Department. The other person to move up into leadership is an excellent mechanic and operator who is training the crews. He doesn't want to lose them and that is the reason for the promotion requests.

Upon inquiry by Mayor Kuzma, the Council consensus was that they were comfortable with the levy.

2.03: Review of 2022-2031 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)

Finance Director Lund reviewed the staff report. She stated the recommendations that were made at the last meeting were to push the park project out to the supplemental, painting of the water towers was set to two separate years, and the Ford Explorer is no longer a hybrid. If the Council is in agreement with the CIP as presented, the public hearing can be scheduled for December 14, 2021. She asked the Council for any more recommendations.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for confirmation that when both the parks supplemental and the CIP are listed, both are moving forward as one process even though they are separated. She commented that she appreciated the work that has been put in so far and the discussion that has gone on. With the general CIP, she has some concerns with the Parks CIP. She referenced the Parks CIP 2130 and noted that eight projects for 2021 were moved to 2022. She understood that everything can't be done but felt there were some things that have been in the CIP for quite a while that haven't been moved forward. She stated in Councilmember Heineman's absence, she filled in at the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting where there was good discussion. The Parks and Recreation Commission was doing a good job of looking at the different projects' funding, how to make it match up, and potentially even having increases in fees. She didn't want to get into details but shared a question from a Commissioner who asked about the number of projects, the funding available, but nothing has happened. The answer was given that there was too much work to do in cleaning up Alpine Park. She didn't feel the Parks and Recreation Commission got an answer that was helpful. She recommended that the Council goes to an RFP for the aeration of Sunfish Lake because in the same meeting, they were told there was too much work. If that had been said about the Public Works building or the Water Treatment building, that isn't an appropriate answer. She asked why some of the projects aren't moved along. She stated the other one is Elm Crest signage, noting she does not know how much time it takes to design a sign and

get it done. She stated the River's Bend Park sign was taken down and asked if it could be added to 2022 signage plan or if it was built into another plan. She wanted to see some projects done and suggested there be an RFP for the Elm Crest signage.

Mayor Kuzma asked if the signage Councilmember Musgrove requested was in the budget.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied, with respect to the signage at the River's Bend Park, the idea was that a community entrance monument was at Bunker and 47th which was taken out by a car, so those two would be put together. He noted Staff has been going through the City's sign guidelines and when estimates were put together, they were surprised at the amount so Staff was redesigning something more modest. The sign was going to be replaced when the intersection improvement project was completed, which just happened. He explained the idea was to do River's Bend at the same time. Regarding funding, the River's Bend sign would best be funded by the Parks Maintenance Fund also known as the Capital Maintenance Fund because that was an investment the community already made but needs to be replaced. At Elm Crest Park, there was discussion about economic improvements with Community Development that maybe it's a larger sign. The question was about if the sign was only for the park or for community benefits. The sign scheduled for the Draw was brought to City Council and was projected because of the cost. During that time, different sign guidelines were adopted which were very expensive. He stated he would be happy to move all three projects forward, get estimates, and have City Council give direction on the design and how best to proceed.

Finance Director Lund referenced the Park and Recreation Commission meeting and stated that the topic of the increase in park dedication and trail maintenance fees was on the rates and charges. The rates and charges are on tonight, and that was not presented to the Council at the introduction, so she was wondering if Council was in agreement with the Park and Recreation Commission's proposal that the park dedication go on residential properties for cash from \$3,500 to \$4,050 and the trail development fee increase from \$1,000 to \$1,150.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided some background. He explained that each year, the recommendation is brought from the Park and Recreation Commission to City Council before the introduction is done for rates and charges. That had been done in October, more information was requested, that is why it wasn't addressed but was tabled until November. The Commission suggested that these two rates represent about 15% increase for residential, with no increases for commercial or industrial, and recognizing that the rates hadn't been recommended for any increase since 2018. He noted it seemed modest from the Commission's perspective. He stated the list and scope of the projects to fulfill the needs as projected in the CIP are huge and far out pays the park dedication fee that is being collected. That was the basis for the recommendation, for what the Commission thinks is a modest increase of about 15% covering the past three years.

Councilmember Riley commented that he doesn't consider 15% a modest increase but it is already going forward and he thinks it should stay where it is. He would like to hear more about this, why that may or may not be a good number.

Councilmember Specht commented that he would not be in favor of increasing the fees and thinks development ought to be encouraged.

Councilmember Howell asked how the City's rates compare to the City of Andover.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied he can look at the Commission's agenda and get that information. He stated some of the adjacent communities were near similar, some were higher, and he believed Andover may have been higher. It gets difficult to tell because some communities are requiring developers to put all trails in their costs while other communities, like Ramsey and Andover, have trail fees and some communities don't have trail fees. He explained that was a part of the discussion with the Commission last Thursday and there are other variables as well. He noted Elk River has part of the revenue from the liquor store go back into the parks so there is not a very good comparison.

City Administrator Ulrich interjected that it is clear the Council wants to hear more about this so it will be kept off the agenda tonight and brought to a future work session when more details can be discussed.

Councilmember Specht agreed stating he would like to hear more details and determine how to bring the current parks up to standards.

Councilmember Heineman commented he was a part of the meeting where rates from surrounding communities were discussed and Ramsey's rates were low in comparison even with the 15% increase.

City Administrator Ulrich commented for clarification in response to Councilmember Musgrove's questions, he didn't get a summary if any or all of those items would be moved up and asked for direction. He noted aeration and signage were proposed and asked if those would be moved up and funded from the Parks Maintenance Fund.

Councilmember Howell asked if it would be possible to see multiple price points for the signage so there are options.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed this. He added that discussions should include Community Development because the entrance monument has been worked on for Bunker and 47.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he would support moving the items earlier in the CIP with the understanding that it is a guiding document that doesn't require commitment. He would support getting things done as soon as possible.

Finance Director Lund asked whether they are under the year 2022, noting projects have to be approved by Council and there is one meeting left in 2021.

Councilmember Musgrove commented she wasn't sure that is stalling projects, to the Commission's point, given that there is revenue, it just seems like progress isn't happening when some things are getting done while other things on the CIP keep getting delayed over and over.

Finance Director Lund asked Councilmember Musgrove if she was okay with the projects being slated for 2022.

Councilmember Musgrove confirmed this.

2.04: Consider Soliciting Quotes for Park Improvements at the Proposed Trott Brook Crossing (Sotarra) Subdivision

City Administrator Ulrich commented that Councilmembers Howell and Musgrove requested that this item be brought to a Work Session to discuss direction to Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood to get three quotes for a complete renovation and restoration of the farmhouse and barns that are a part of the Sotarra Project that will be given to the City as park dedication.

Councilmember Howell commented that the EDA has been discussing the cost of a basic renovation of the Ramsey Town Hall. Estimates were around \$100,000. Regarding the historic buildings, she expected estimates would be much higher, so if the developer didn't give them to the City, he would have to pay for demolition. She didn't want tax payers to get stuck with a significant and unexpected cost and thought it would be nice to get the information up front to have an idea of what it would cost to take on buildings that need significant work.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed with Councilmember Howell that the rehab for the donated buildings is going to cost the City. She asked for confirmation that the donation decreases the park dedication fee for the developer.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied the developers are not getting any credit for park dedication but for the land that is high ground against land dedication. He noted 50% park dedication was credited for all the land that was underneath the powerlines and there was no consideration for the buildings.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the park dedication fee pays for the building rehab.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that the project probably has merit. His early estimates were if there were 3,000 square feet of building to renovate, including fire suppression and electrical, and if it was \$100 per square foot that's about \$300,000. He noted the final phases of the proposed Trott Brook Crossing would pay in excess of \$300,000 in park dedication toward the latter phases and better estimate numbers would be needed. He has asked the developer for access to the buildings for analysis, noting that two months ago, a home inspection was ordered on the dwelling, which was just received.

Councilmember Musgrove commented she has a copy of the Municipal Plaza North probable construction costs. She stated if something could be put together that is similar for probable

construction cost estimates, then the Council could know what they are looking at for the three buildings. She felt that was important before accepting the donation of the buildings so the City knows what the costs might be.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested hiring a professional engineer or architect to do a feasibility study, noting an objective would have to be defined to determine the cost estimates.

Councilmember Heineman commented it would be good to take a proactive look at what the buildings could do as far as a venue, as a wedding site for example. He supported doing a cost/benefit analysis to determine if it is going to be worth putting in the work on the buildings and looking not only at what renovation would cost but also what revenue could be generated. He noted if it could be used as a wedding venue, it could be pretty profitable.

2.05: Consider Request to Study Cost of City Parks and Trails Maintenance and Operations

City Administrator Ulrich stated this case was brought up by Councilmembers Howell and Musgrove requesting a detailed and itemized expenditure list from Parks in regard to the operations and maintenance of the parks including turf maintenance, trails, and the park system. In discussion with Staff, costs are not itemized currently but activity costs are generalized so recreating some of the numbers is not something Staff has done and would be difficult. He explained that estimating could be done although not as accurate and detailed as requested.

Mayor Kuzma questioned whether this is something the Council wanted Staff to spend a lot of time on and is it necessary.

Councilmember Howell explained the turf and trails information request was made to get an idea of what the expenditures are. She compared it to a large corporation where expenditures are tracked for specific projects, noting information could be included such as mowing so many hours and so many hours on trails, so when more trails are added, it could be known what it would cost in man hours and other expenses. She felt having this information would help the Council understand better, noting she struggles with vague numbers.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied getting information about mowing and snow removal could be done with the use of GPS to determine time and cost. Determining the information on park repairs could be a little harder because the timecard is set up to be more general and tasks are not itemized. With the Street Department, items like street maintenance, stormwater, snowplowing, and sign work could be divided out. He stated general numbers and estimates could be given but more specifics would have to be determined and implemented going forward.

Councilmember Specht commented it sounds like a good part of a bigger discussion at a Work Session with questions about projects in the CIP and getting more information about expenditures in the parks now. Also, discussion about using funds to get more playgrounds updated. He felt a bigger Work Session discussion on the parks and what could be done to support the Parks Department could be beneficial.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that it goes back to the discussion raised during the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting about concerns with not having enough money for the projects and not being able to move forward with projects because of staff time. She felt it would be helpful to know what is contracted out, what is done in house, where the costs are, and how the Council can look forward. She stated there was a disconnect in the discussion held by the Park and Recreation Commission related to park dedication fees and trail fees because that money is available but things are not getting done, so maybe more funding was needed. She stated it would be nice to have more information so the Council can make more informed decisions about if the costs are projected out sufficiently enough to cover the increase in parks, park maintenance, and trail maintenance. She noted part of park maintenance funding comes from the Gambling Fund. She stated some things that the Parks and Recreation Commission held a healthy discussion on were the need to be able to increase that to fully fund the items in the CIP.

Councilmember Riley stated it was a good idea, noting that periodically, there have been issues about maintaining parks to the level the Council wants. He stated this could help the Council make decisions in identifying priority jobs, change priorities on tasks, or potentially increase staffing, if needed. As part of the Park fee discussion, he would like to know how park fees can be used. He didn't feel that in regard to park maintenance issues, having park funds that are coming in on new buildings could be used but he did not know what the flexibility would be. He stated this sounds like a large job and wanted to ensure Staff had ample time to get it done.

RECESS

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, Seconded by Councilmember Riley to recess the meeting until after the regular City Council meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Kuzma, Councilmembers Musgrove, Riley, Heineman, Howell, Specht, Woestehoff. Voting No: None.

Mayor Kuzma recessed the meeting until after the regular City Council meeting at 6:55 p.m.

RECONVENE

Mayor Kuzma reconvened the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

2.06: Consider Offer to Sell Portion of Outlot A of the Elmcrest Sanctuary, Anoka County, Minnesota (Portions may be closed to the Public)

City Administrator Ulrich stated this case pertains to a sale of real estate and recommended that discussion be held in a Closed Session to consider an offer and counter offer.

Motion by Councilmember Woestehoff, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to recess to Closed Session at 7:22 p.m.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Kuzma, Councilmembers Woestehoff, Musgrove, Heineman, Howell, Riley, Specht. Voting No: None.

The meeting was reconvened to open session at 8:39 p.m.

City Administrator Ulrich summarized the discussion during the closed meeting, stating that direction from the Council was given to Staff to continue with negotiations on the proposed purchase of property in the Outlot A of the Elmcrest Sanctuary.

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 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by Joni Helmeke
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a Closed Session on Tuesday, November 23, 2021, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Kurtis Ulrich
City Attorney Fritz Knaak
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the Closed Session of the City Council to order at 7:23 p.m.

2. COUNCIL BUSINESS

2.01: Consider Offer to Sell Portion of Outlot A of the Elmcrest Sanctuary, Anoka County, Minnesota (Closed to the Public)

City Administrator Ulrich introduced the item to consider the offer and counter offer for the sale of the real estate.

The Council discussed negotiation strategies and gave direction to staff.

3. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to adjourn the Closed Session.

Motion carried.

The Closed Session was adjourned at 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kurtis G. Ulrich
City Administrator

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