

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Special Work Session on Tuesday, February 15, 2022, 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
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher
Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Brian Hagen
City Engineer Bruce Westby
Public Works Superintendent Grant Riemer
Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
Finance Director Diana Lund
Fire Chief Matt Kohner
Police Chief Jeff Katers
Communications and Events Coordinator Megan Thorstad
IT Manager Jason Fredrickson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kuzma called the City Council Work Session to order at 6:22 p.m.

2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

2.01: Discussion Regarding the Process to fill the Pending City Administrator Vacancy

Administrative Services Director Lasher presented the proposal to fill the pending City Administrator vacancy after the submittal and Council acceptance of City Administrator Ulrich's letter of retirement at the last meeting. She stated City Administrator Ulrich's last day will be May 6, 2022. She stated in her experience, most cities outsource recruitment for a City Administrator, which is her recommendation, contrary to prior statements she had made. She stated that she is really busy at this time with HR and City Clerk duties including recruitment for eight positions, redistricting, and elections. She stated she attempted to obtain five proposals from firms and so far has received two which were offered for consideration.

City Administrator Ulrich added that he thinks this is a good job to consider recruitment for. He noted that both firms offer an additional search if the candidate is not successful. He also felt that it increased the probability of finding a candidate that is to the liking of the Council and will be someone that will stay with the City for quite a while. He felt hiring a consulting firm would be a good investment as they would be more objective, give good advice as to who would be a good candidate, and help with hiring someone in a timely manner.

Councilmember Riley asked how would this get a bigger, broader pool of candidates. He wanted to ensure to find as many qualified candidates as possible.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that in the proposal it states that they develop the position profile, they recruit through advertisement and direct contact. She assumed that the firms that do this frequently have a list of familiar candidates that they can reach out to, something she would not have the capacity to do.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that it seems that from a job market standpoint, that a position like this doesn't come up very often and asked if the market was known for this, and if there are a couple of openings or several.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she is aware that there are several cities including New Hope and Robbinsdale.

City Administrator Ulrich added that it has been a more dynamic job market lately so similar cities such as White Bear Lake who just filled a position are in the same situation as Ramsey, there has been quite a bit of movement recently.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he believed working with an agency would be a smart move for this task because the role is different. He added it is more difficult to hire a boss and stay objective about it. He added a third-party resource is well versed in this and had a broader audience.

Mayor Kuzma commented that finding someone who will work well with the Council and also has a feel for the needs of the City would be more easily handled by someone else. He agreed with outsourcing.

Councilmember Specht commented that it wouldn't hurt to see what could be found themselves and if a good pool of applicants couldn't be found then going to this step of going through a firm. He stated he was happy with the hiring of Brian Hagen.

Mayor Kuzma replied his concern would be the timeline with May coming up fast. He didn't think there would time to try both approaches.

Councilmember Heineman asked what control would the Council have if recruitment was outsourced as far as the requirements, where the applicants are coming from. He didn't want to outsource the control over the type of candidates that are found. He didn't want an applicant eliminated because the agency has control over the Council. He asked if they could set certain

requirements with the outsourcing agency including education, someone familiar with the area. He asked if they were allowed to dictate that because he would not want that lost if they were to outsource.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied one of the attachments lists the timeline. The first step says the kickoff meeting and interviews with the City Council and others to be interviewed such as department heads to draft the recruitment profile and finalize other details. In both cases DDA and Mercer Group are flexible as far as their proposals state, so yes. As far as establishing minimum qualifications, the position profile is updated. She offered to send the job description out so the Council could see the minimum qualifications and responsibilities. If there is any feedback or revisions, if a firm is hired, they would incorporate those revisions and recruit based on what the Council is looking for.

Councilmember Heineman replied he would like to see that. He asked if the minimum qualifications were based on the last time this position was posted.

Administrative Services Director Lasher confirmed that, adding it has not changed.

Councilmember Heineman commented this is something he would like to see reconsidered. He stated that a lot of things have changed, there are accreditations now and courses. He didn't want anyone eliminated from consideration because they are one step down from the education level or something of that nature. He agreed with Councilmember Specht that they are giving up control by outsourcing. He stated the last process that they went through was good and he supported replicating it.

Councilmember Howell commented that she was hoping the criteria could be developed together tonight as far as what has been looked for in the past and then fine tuning that, rather than being sent back. She wanted to come to a consensus in what they are looking for. She wanted to take a more broad approach to the position to include someone that is more business-minded because, she stated, the City is essentially a big business. She also felt emphasizing people who are familiar with Minnesota law as being important.

Councilmember Heineman asked what method the other cities are using, if they are hiring a firm or going internally.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she received an email from the HR Manager from the City of New Hope who was interested in receiving copies of her email proposals as they are looking to outsource. Stillwater and Becker have outsourced as well. The City of Shoreview just filled their position and they used Mercer. Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she knows the HR Director, who is very particular but gave good reviews of the Mercer Group. She stated she wasn't aware of any city that is recruiting internally.

Councilmember Heineman replied his only concern is that if they have a select talent pool and they have been working with multiple different cities and the members of that pool that are the top talent have been moving to other areas, either they are going to have to continually refresh the talent pool with qualified candidates or essentially Ramsey may get the leftovers. He would be

interested on how many applicants they have or if an applicant would have applied for four positions before. He recognized that there is a different fit for every city, but he would not feel comfortable interviewing a group of people who have interviewed for a different position and lost the position in different cities and having that be the only selection available.

Mayor Kuzma commented that he thought consideration should be taken for recruitments that are needed right now that Administrative Services Director Lasher has to take care of. The City Administrator position is the most important one and is something that needs careful care in the approach. He supported outsourcing as the best bet regardless of the talent pool that could be found, which could be similar to what could be found if it was done internally. A firm may give opportunity to recruit outside as well. He stated between the two, he recommended the Mercer Group.

Councilmember Specht asked if the Council would have an interest in hiring an Interim position who would work with Deputy City Administrator Hagen to cover duties if a candidate couldn't be found.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she was wondering if it would be helpful to arrange, at the next Council Work Session, interviews with the two firms to ask questions of them directly.

Councilmember Howell replied from her perspective it pushes out everything another week, so if time is an issue. She asked wouldn't it make sense to start working on what the Council wants tonight. She stated she thought Administrative Services Director Lasher did a nice job last time, and if that was taken along with the calendar provided by the firms and adjusting accordingly for what the Council needs, that the Council could save tax payer money and come up with the credentials that are wanted for candidates for this position.

Mayor Kuzma replied that making a decision tonight whether doing it internally or outsourcing could be done. He stated if they are outsourcing, the Council could look at the job description before it is sent out to the firm and a meeting takes place, that would be adequate.

Councilmember Riley commented that with this being the number one position in the City, the importance of it deserves the outside source that has expertise. He noted that the process of hiring the Deputy City Administrator was good. He continued that in looking at the eight positions that need to be filled at the same time, the workload that is being taken care of internally is maxed out. He stated he would be comfortable going with one of the two firms but would like to know more about them through a quick interview.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the two only do this level of executive, or if they do deputy or other public sector positions. He stated the recruiters that he knows have a broad pool to work with so they are not always picking from the same pool, as Councilmember Heineman pointed out.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied that is a great question. The websites for the two firms show past and current recruitments, which is a lengthy list and includes several City positions at different levels.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied, based on the number of current vacancies, he wondered if it would make sense to have a recruiter on retainer, depending on how the work load ebbs and flows.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced an example from one of the proposals about a lot of details about Stillwater, and asked if that is something the firm would be working with Administrative Services Director Lasher to get information for.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied in the past she has been concerned about paying a firm and the internal resources being used when that money was being paid, she felt it should have gone for them to do the work. She stated the first phone call she made was to DDA and he stopped her when she was talking to him, that she had mentioned that she had done a lot of the work, that that is not how it works, that they pull information on their own from websites but if they can't find information they ask. The Stillwater profile was put together by the firm.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it is given to someone on Staff to proof.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she assumed so. She referenced the Mercer timeline where it is says "final recruitment profile including all graphics to the City Council for review and approval." She stated that is slated for March 18, 2022 to March 22, 2022.

Councilmember Musgrove noted if the Council did it in house and posted the job opening, they wouldn't have to do that and could save that in the timeline. She thought Councilmember Howell was saying it could be tweaked. She asked if there are things in the proposal, such as a profile, versus putting out a job offer and going through the candidate with an internal metric for not having them move forward for interviews. She stated that would save time. She referenced page ten, point two on the Mercer proposal which reads there is a two-year off limits statement which talks about not recruiting candidates from a client organization for two years after completing a search assignment without full agreement of the client. She asked for an explanation and if candidates would be eliminated because they have already had an option to work with the group at another opening. She asked if she is reading it correctly.

Mayor Kumza replied, he understood it to mean, if whoever is hired didn't work out and wanted to go back to one of the other candidates they don't do that directly.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied the way he reads it is if Mercer places a City Administrator with Ramsey, they will not actively recruit a Ramsey employee for other postings for two years.

Councilmember Heineman commented it is like a non-compete clause.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed.

Councilmember Musgrove added for that position to another city.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated it protects Ramsey from Mercer recruiting their Staff for two years.

Councilmember Specht commented if they were in a contract with Stillwater they wouldn't be able to recruit Tim if they were in that last round with Ramsey, so it could go both ways. He would still like to try to do it internally before investing money into it, even if it would mean hiring an interim, then they could see what people are interested in. If after a few weeks they aren't getting the quality candidates needed, it would push the time back a bit but he felt the short timeframe would be worth the savings.

Mayor Kuzma asked for a show of hands vote for going in-house versus outsourcing.

The majority Council vote was to do an internal recruitment.

Councilmember Heineman stated that recruiting is big and the elections are big also so anything outside of those two things that are taking Administrative Service Director Lasher's time, if resources could be allocated to that so she could focus on these things and do them well would be appropriate.

Administrative Service Director Lasher replied, not at this time, there is a lot going on.

Mayor Kuzma stated for the record that he feels like outsourcing recruitment should be done but was willing to give it a chance and see how it goes. He has concerns about overloading.

Councilmember Howell asked if development of what they are looking for is going to be done together or is Administrative Service Director Lasher going to be sending out what has been done in the past and send feedback.

City Administrator Ulrich recommended using the current criteria used and have it on the Work Session agenda for next week.

Councilmember Riley commented that he didn't support the idea of throwing it out and see what happens, because this is not a try, it is a do. If it is going to be done internally, it has to be done right. He stated it shouldn't be do it internally and see what happens and then find out if it could be done another way, it has to be done right. He reiterated what Councilmember Heineman said, if there are duties that need to be reallocated then this Council has made the decision that needs to happen.

Administrative Services Director Lasher replied she takes a lot of pride in recruiting. She stated she didn't want to outsource when recruiting for Deputy City Administrator Hagen and she was glad they didn't as she is happy with the outcome even though it was a tremendous amount of work. She stated that going into recruitment after Tim left, they had decided that they would interview everyone who met the minimums because everyone has a different opinion. She believed they did 21 first interviews and that was a tremendous amount of work and Staff resources. She stated they will have to talk about how to manage that as there were evening interviews and was a lot to manage with phone calls, scheduling and questions. She stated that the number one suggestion in an effort to streamline the process is to try to not interview 21 people. As far as redistricting and the elections, there is not a lot of room for making mistakes. She stated

she wanted to do an excellent job for both. She stated she would commit to doing her best but she has one Deputy Clerk and one HR Assistant and they are both maxed. She repeated she will do her best.

Mayor Kuzma commented that hearing the distress in her voice. He asked if there was reconsideration into looking at an outside firm.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that if it is going to be done in-house that the Staff needs to be trusted to eliminate candidates. He thought that was a fair trade off for everyone's sanity and time. He thought the first round could be between five and ten. He thought it was a completely fair ask of Administrative Service Director Lasher and Staff to put some trust in them to get the Council a good pool to start with and then go to second round together.

Councilmember Heineman agreed with trusting Staff to narrow the pool so it is not at 21 but then giving Council the opportunity to look at the applicant pool and see if there is someone they are interested in. If there is a Councilmember and second, that would have a max of three candidates. He recommended aiming for eight candidates and a Councilmember and a second could nominate somebody that doesn't make the list that way, if the Council could still go back to the constituents and say they participated. To Councilmember Riley's point, Councilmember Heineman stated it is not a try, that they can do it in-house and do a good job.

Councilmember Howell suggested the Council needed to sit down and determine the criteria rather than patching it together. To Councilmember Heineman's point, she noted including a candidate that was not originally if two Councilmembers agree, that is a good point. She stated having the opportunity to look at resumes, she was able to catch anomalies in a resume and eliminate a poor candidate.

The consensus of the Council was to recruit internally.

2.02: Annual Planning Session

City Administrator Ulrich facilitated the Annual Planning Session. He stated that last year a lot of time was taken reviewing the strategies and a check up on the mission, vision and values so they will do the same tonight. He stated he wanted to focus more on a strategic level and at the end of this, they will have some strategies and things they want to accomplish. Staff will go back and fill in some tactics on how to achieve those strategies and bring those back for a second Work Session in the evening similar to what was done last year, and more if needed.

City Administrator Ulrich started the session with having the members brainstorm for a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) or stretch goal for the organization. He stated this may influence some of how they look at strategies or tactics moving forward. He noted it is important as it creates a huge long term target or goal and energizes an organization and focuses its people, rallying them to common causes and leading them through a process of transformation. He gave examples of other organizations including Google, Tesla, SpaceX, the City of Anoka and the City of Chaska. He stated that the City of Chaska has been successful in using "Best Small Town in Minnesota" as their motto, which has gotten them a lot of positive publicity. He stated one of the strategies

deals with identity so he thought it would be good to take a few minutes, as elected and appointed leaders in the community, to say what the BHAG or stretch goal for Ramsey is for the next decade if all the barriers are removed. He stated they are not going to adopt this, it is for brainstorming to see what the vision is. If something really resonates maybe they would build on that with some strategies they are creating. He gave the Council five minutes to write on a piece of paper and then will share in a round table.

Councilmember Specht stated in reading a document from 2017 from the University of Minnesota, it said “Welcome to Ramsey, the Gateway to Greater Minnesota.” He stated he thought they are a great gate both with people coming to the cities and then to Greater Minnesota so they were a gateway city.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she put down “Best North Metro City to Live”. She heard residents talk about how they can go anywhere in any city and get what they want but they come back to Ramsey where it is peaceful and quite without all the hustle and bustle. And then the same thought concept of “Ramsey Get Away” where they can get what they need but can come home to our city.

Councilmember Heineman stated he wrote facilitate innovation and synergy between the City of Ramsey businesses and residents. The idea behind that is Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood, his idea of taking the park and making it into a venue for weddings, looking at what can be done with the Ramsey Sports Complex that there are so many ways that we can facilitate between the City of Ramsey businesses and residents to create a really good city experience, whether that is Kitchen Table sponsoring a softball league at the new Sport Center and the City of Ramsey supporting it. He stated that should be the goal, to facilitate innovation and synergy at all levels.

Councilmember Howell stated hers came from a Councilmember in Burnsville. It was a five-year project of hers to create a commission to go through City Code and work on updating it and reducing unnecessary code. After five years she accomplished that goal and they have that going on over there. She stated she would love if that could be done here.

Police Chief Katers stated his is a little self-serving but “A Safe Place to Live, Work and Play” or “A Safe Place to Call Home”. He explained safety is the key.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated his was “The Ideal Place to Work from Home.” He explained that is an appropriate task right now that is probably going to remain for a while. That helps with the stay in a place of peacefulness, good parks, and other resources without building apartments all over the place. He thought it helped to provide some of the balance the City strives for.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated his may not be aspiration or audacious enough but is still a stretch goal in that it would be beginning the first phase of the water front, creating the park, providing the fill for the northwest quadrant, and in the down town and establishing the splashpad as a destination for residents city-wide and in the region and in so doing delivering more traffic into The COR.

IT Manager Fredrickson stated that like Mark, he is thinking in his own little box, but he was thinking smart city technology, such as sensors on light poles that can detect varying daylight cycles, monitor traffic and provide light when required or dim light when it's not required. Barcelona is a good example and London who provides 3G throughout their city.

Councilmember Riley stated he would like to see The COR developed to its full potential with restaurants and shopping.

Mayor Kuzma stated he liked "Ramsey Get Away" or "Ramsey North" indicating a nice bedroom community where people want to be there.

Deputy City Administrator/Community Dev. Director Hagen stated his is quite simple and very broad but can be interpreted many different ways: be a City others strive to model themselves after.

Fire Chief Kohner stated his was focused on the residents of Ramsey, "Ramsey Where Residents Matter". He explained the small town feel with big town attraction, maintaining the voices of the residents.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she struggled between two. The first is: to be a City that has the healthiest and happiest people, a place to live and work through acceptance and inclusion of its people no matter their walk of life. The other was in the Ramsey Resident concept of to get help or to give help and to grow that concept. There is a lot going on with people that doesn't meet the idea. There are some that can do more to help people and there are those of us who need help and are afraid to ask.

City Engineer Westby stated his goal was simple, to have the safest and smoothest streets in America.

Finance Director Lund stated she was going to focus on the finance side. Her goal is to have a triple A bond rating and it would be "A Little City with a Big Rate."

Public Work Supervisor Riemer stated his goal was on the public works side which is to actually finish the river crossing that has been talked about for 60 years.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad stated hers is about reaching in to the history to help establish an identify: honor our history to establish an identity as a Minnesota City.

City Administrator Ulrich stated his was "Outdoor Capital of Minnesota and the Gateway to the Great North." He stated in the past they have identified that this is one of the highest holders of fishing and hunting licenses and recreational equipment in the State. They have the Game Fair and plenty of open spaces so his focus was on the outdoors. He stated these were all wonderful ideas and asked if there were any commonalities or ideas that want to be moved forward.

Councilmember Heineman commented that he liked Councilmember Woestehoff's because he felt it is simple but implies that they have done a lot of things to incorporate that. We are the Best Place to Work from Home", means they have good infrastructure, good restaurants, good retail

experiences. They don't necessarily have all of that yet but that goal can't be achieved without bringing in more retail, developing The COR, and things of that nature.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if they could see that on the entryway sign to the City. "Best Place to Work From Home."

Councilmember Heineman replied it is catchy enough and makes you wonder what that means, which then makes you investigate it and then realize there are a lot of good reasons to move to Ramsey.

Councilmember Specht asked if there should be concern about manufacturing in The COR, they were hearing from the presentation of the State of City, the need for employees. He thought it was also a great place to work for the manufacturing companies and didn't want to put any wedges in that. He stated other than that he understood the concept too.

City Administrator Ulrich asked for other observations or comments.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she liked the "Ramsey Getaway" just tying the work whether at home or manufacturing, play where we enjoy the parks and neighborhoods and live. Tying in the Mayor's ideas as the "Great North Metro City" and the Chief's idea of being a safe city.

Councilmember Specht commented that he liked the "Ramsey North," he liked that little phrase because it makes him think of the outdoors, the easy way to summarize the thoughts of what would be done up north such as fishing and hunting.

City Administrator Ulrich commented those were wonderful ideas and asked that they keep those in mind when thinking about strategies and tactics for the next couple of years of how to accomplish some of those things. He stated if they wanted to circle back to developing a motto for the City they can do that in the future.

City Administrator Ulrich reviewed the Core Values including: Ethics and Integrity, Fiscal Responsibility, Cooperation and Teamwork, Open and Honest Communications, Excellence and Quality in the Delivery of Service, Treating People with Respect and Fairness, Adaptability and Continuous Learning. He stated that some of these are how they operate or strive to operate as an organization. He stated the Vision is to be a secure, citizen-driven, collaborative community that respects the balance and connectivity between its unique urban, rural and natural environments. The Mission reads: to work together to responsibly grow our community and to provide quality, cost effective and efficient government services. He noted the Mayor has used that in his State of the City addresses, it still resonates pretty well. Goals and Imperatives include: financial stability, balance the rural character and urban growth, connected community, smart citizen-focused government, and an effective organization. He asked if those still worked well. Balancing rural character and urban growth was seen a lot during discussion as they were going through some of the review and developments. Connected community and transportation and trail construction and things like that. Smart, citizen-focused government talking about some of the ways to engage the community. An effective organization, which is the internal stuff, how do they best work together

as a team both Council and Staff, Council together and Staff together and how do they make sure they are effective.

Mayor Kuzma thought it should also be mentioned that each and every one of those has been dissected and have been through the years to get to this point. A lot of time has been spent on this.

City Administrator stated the balance of rural character and urban growth was the last one that was added, they had the other four before that but as they went through the Comprehensive Planning effort for the 2040 Planning, this came forward as something that was added as a main goal and imperative for the community. He asked if anyone thought any of them should be changed, if they want to adopt more or get rid of one.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that for the urban character one, that it should read “a balance of suburban growth” as opposed to urban growth, he thought it would better categorize it.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there are quantitative numbers that go along with urban versus suburban.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied that generically speaking there are, he didn't know what they are, but didn't feel that the Council would ever let Ramsey get to an urban category as they would need way more people. He thought it was more about the feel of that sentence. Changing it to suburban softens it a bit and he knows there are people in Ramsey who would never want it to be an urban city. He thought suburban is a better descriptor of what they are trying to balance. Technically they are suburban.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what that meant.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied under 30,000.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed adding that is what they have spoken and planned as a vision.

Councilmember Specht suggested it just say “balance of rural character and growth.”

Councilmember Musgrove stated grow could mean anything.

Councilmember Heineman thought it should say suburban, that parts of the City are very suburban and parts are very rural.

Councilmember Specht agreed that made sense.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she knows they use the mission, vision, values and strategies a lot, the values are integrated in the all of those statements, the mission, the vision, the objectives and the strategies. She stated there could be a million values. She asked operationally what is the purpose of having the statement of the values when the mission the vision and the objectives and the strategies capsulates that. That is what she knows is used often when communicating, when

doing projects, when making statements about different things that are being done in the community. She stated she didn't see the values stated as often.

City Administrator Ulrich replied those are used internally, maybe more so than externally, when operating as a Staff together, that is why they are hanging on the walls in every conference room. It is a way of doing business and are promoted with the job descriptions when looking for employees, they attempt to hire for these attributes and values. These are standard and says these cares are important. There aren't 20, there are a few, but are things that have been identified in the past as being important.

Mayor Kuzma stated the question, does the Council want to change it read "a balance of suburban growth."

The consensus of the Council was to make the change.

Councilmember Riley commented that the division should also be changed to suburban.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the word "unique" suburban should be kept. Council consensus was to keep it.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that the purpose of the word "unique" is that the City is a suburban, rural and natural environment. He stated there should also be a comma after the word rural.

City Administrator Ulrich stated there are nine strategies: 1. identify and implement operational efficiencies; 2. promote economic growth and development; 3. create a positive image for residential neighborhoods, business districts and key corridors; 4. improve the safety of mobility and transportation corridors; 5. connect the community through parks and trails, capital improvements along with recreational programming; 6. spotlight sustainability and efficiency through public facilities investments; 7. strengthen and enhance our identity, brand and image; 8. Improve the City's communication; and, 9. improve or sustain high organizational morale. He asked if these are good strategies, bad strategies, things that should be changed.

Councilmember Specht commented that he thinks they could incorporate something Councilmember Howell was talking about regarding reducing or streamlining ordinances and asked if that is one of the organizational strategies to improve laws that are held. He asked if this would be a place for that as one of the strategies to focus on.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that might fit under number one but it could be broken out so it might say, for example "minimize regulation to increase efficiency or burdens on residents and tax payers," something along those lines. "Minimize regulations" and add a qualifier. If that is important it could be added to the list to make it an even ten.

Councilmember Specht replied he is open to feedback. He thought it was ironic to add a strategy to reduce something else.

Councilmember Howell commented that she liked it when Governor Dayton had everyone send in archaic laws, she loved it. She stated she used to work in food back in Indiana and there were laws on the books that wouldn't allow even cooked alcohol in confectionaries, stuff left over from prohibition. She stated that she had spoken with the Chief who had indicated some of the code was from the 1970's, that some of the code is that old.

Police Chief Katers replied he believed that a lot of it was 1978, borrowed from another city. He stated he believed that is the history of it, that it is full of things that are no longer relevant to this century.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed and added that one of the reasons to do it is to increase transparency and understandability because he thought that often times it gets missed by officers as well as residents. He stated that perhaps it is a change in improved city's communication or there is something with that in terms of transparency or ease of regulation. He thought there should be a strategy around all of those things together.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested breaking the top strategy into two parts and then capture what he is talking about in the last phrase "increasing accountability and transparency through decreasing regulations."

Councilmember Woestehoff offered "optimizing regulations." He thought that the first one had a lot going on in it and seemed to be mostly around internal operations. He stated that he agreed with it on its premise but it is a long sentence and could use an extra comma.

City Administrator Ulrich stated they have "increase transparency and improve accountability by optimizing city regulations."

Councilmember Howell added "and reducing city code."

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed but said they are basically the same thing because you can't optimize without reducing but he understood her point.

Councilmember Heineman commented that optimizing is what the word used to make both parties happy versus deregulating or additional regulation. He liked the word optimizing because it makes everyone happy, there are certain people who would not be happy with deregulation.

City Administrator Ulrich suggested the word streamlining or simplifying.

Finance Director Lund commented that a word that keeps coming to her mind is common sense.

City Administrator Ulrich asked how that would be used.

Finance Director Lund replied "a common sense approach."

Councilmember Riley asked if the word modernize belonged in that sentence if it goes back to 1978.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied that is a fair observation.

Councilmember Heineman offered modernize and streamline.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if they needed optimize and streamline.

Councilmember Heineman replied both optimize and streamline wouldn't be needed.

City Administrator Ulrich stated "to increase transparency and accountability by modernizing and streamlining regulations".

Councilmember Musgrove commented that in some of the strategic meetings in the past Tim has been able to type it out so they could see the changes. She asked if there is anyway they could have some of that. She stated she thought it might be helpful to be able to see it and say and not have to rewrite it later and come back to us again.

City Administrator Ulrich replied he could go to slide show and go to the space document.

There was a 15-minute break

City Administrator Ulrich commented that they have "Ramsey will be a secure citizen-driven collaborative community that respects the balance and connectivity between its unique suburb, rural, and natural environments." He stated under goals and imperatives, "financial stability, balance of rural character and suburban growth, connected community, smart citizen-focused government and an effective organization." These are the strategies: 1. Identify and implement operational efficiencies, cost savings and additional funding sources, 2. increase transparency by modernizing and streamlining regulations, 3. promote economic growth and development, 4. create a positive image for residential neighborhoods, business districts and key corridors; 5. improve the safety of transportation corridors; 6. connect the community through parks and trails along with recreational programming; 7. spotlight sustainability and efficiency through public facilities and infrastructure investments; 8. strengthen and enhance our identity, brand and image; 9. improve City's communication; and, 10. improve and sustain high organizational morale. He stated that is the top ten and asked if anyone wanted to change anything.

Councilmember Specht asked if there was an interest, as the example Councilmember Howell gave of Governor Dayton saying any outdated laws send them in, to open it up to the Ramsey public and said here is a link to the regulations. He commented that it might be fun to see what they get and if there are any outdated stuff that could be submitted and mechanisms that would get through.

Councilmember Heineman commented that he is all for it.

Councilmember Riley replied that may be a tactic under this.

Councilmember Specht agreed.

Councilmember Riley continued, that may be how you get to that new streamlining, that may be talked about coming up.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the last one which reads “improve and sustain high organizational morale” and asked if “and retention of employees” could be added.

City Administrator Ulrich asked for comments on that.

Councilmember Woestehoff continued that he thought it is important as a Council to state to the Staff that they want them to stay here if it is a good fit for them, that would be the point in adding it.

Councilmember Musgrove replied she thought that improving and sustaining the morale is what keeps the retention so it is somewhat redundant. She thought it could be worked toward as a goal but questioned it as a strategy because people retire or make decisions to go to different jobs which would count against them.

Councilmember Riley commented that he liked the sentiment but questioned “sustain high organizational morale” because he wasn’t sure they have high morale now as there is a lot of turnover. He stated he would like to strive for high organizational morale and retention.

Councilmember Musgrove responded to Councilmember Riley’s point, that the “high” is determined by, as Administrative Services Director Lasher had stated it, a category of choice in internal feedback.

Administrative Services Director Lasher elaborated that when they conduct employee surveys, which are over due to a lack of resources right now to do it, it would be to maintain or exceed 70% level of satisfaction with leadership. That was one component of that.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if that helped in clarifying that.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed that was one of the outcomes. He stated now it reads “strive for high organizational morale and retention.” He asked how that sounded.

Councilmember Heineman commented that it sounded good but reiterated that he tends to think of himself as more fiscally conservative but he voted for cost of living increases and supporting Jason with the new hire because he wants high morale. He stated that he would rather ask a City Staff that feels like they are compensated well and are trusted to look into the budget and find things to cut, than to cut their budget and try to do it himself. His goal is to have high morale and if there are other ways to reach it, he suggested they be honest with each other and if it is partially because of retirement or other things, that are possible, he would like to have an open conversation to see what that looks like. He stated he supported that goal. He didn’t know if “high” as a measurement or “higher” which is not so tangible. Regardless he would like to find out how the Staff can be supported in order to push things through that they want to push through.

Mayor Kuzma asked City Administrator Ulrich to repeat that.

City Administrator Ulrich read “strive for high organizational morale and retention.”

Mayor Kuzma stated he liked that.

City Administrator Ulrich stated they will go with that for now, it can be changed later. He asked if anyone else had anything to add.

Councilmember Heineman asked if they will go into tactics at some point based on these.

City Administrator Ulrich replied they will, adding he will review last year’s tactics and how they got there. He asked if Council was ready to move on.

City Administrator Ulrich referenced the “Identify and Implement Operational Efficiencies Strategy” stating there are six different tactics to achieve that. 1. Evaluate the Current Funding Source for Pavement Management Program. He stated that is something that is done by the Council. 2. Implement a work flow tool. He stated a budget was done for 2021 so that is something that could be put back on the table and maybe, they were looking for some way to improve cost savings through improved work flow, processing applications for example, as was done with electronic permits but nothing was adopted through the budget process. That was not accomplished. 3. Consider refinancing debt to capitalize on low interest rates. He stated they were able to do that with one of the debt loans which was City Hall, a million dollars was saved over the term of the loan so that was a success when it was completed. They still have a pretty low interest rate.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there were any other debts that could be restructured this coming year.

Finance Director Lund replied no.

City Administrator Ulrich continued, 4. Consider better social media management platform. He stated this was something to manage their social media, something like HootSuite would probably get a broader distribution of the message across platforms. He stated some work has been done with QCTV in that area, but as far as budgeting for additional software or staffing for that, it wasn’t accomplished in 2021. He stated if there is a need to continue something along that strategy it should be talked about. 5. Improve the Employee Union Contract Negotiations, he felt this was highly successful and thanked the Council for their input to get the process moving quicker. He felt it was pretty efficient. He gave credit to Administrative Services Director Lasher for shepherding that process. All of the employee contracts approved on time for three years so it should be something that serves the City well for the next three years, be predictable and not be subject to negotiation each year which will help. 6. Consider an Interactive Module to Enhance Customer Experience to Quickly Find Information. He stated that 2022 is what that subscription reads so website updates are going ahead in 2022 along with some other communication information, which has been established as a part of reporting to the Council this year. That will be important as the website is reviewed, different ways that citizens can plug in to the information that is being distributed. He stated he will stop here at the strategy, which was broken apart, there

is another tactic in here under another heading that addresses the code. Simplification, primarily with the Planning Department, he will get to that but in terms of operational efficiencies, anything that should be added here, if ten strategies that are on the board are agreed upon, input will be taken tonight plus Staff will do some brainstorming on potentially different ways to achieve those strategies for the Council and bring those back for additional discussion. He asked if there was anything that popped up under this category for anybody.

Councilmember Riley commented that maybe it falls under number six, but he knows of people very interested in the website as City Administrator Ulrich had mentioned and there are techy people in the room, he asked if a committee could be created to study or come up with what is being looked for, if that would be helpful.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied that is part of the discussion next week at the Work Session. The creation of a one to five person committee will be discussed to oversee the redesign of the website.

Councilmember Musgrove offered for consideration one of the things discussed at the Public Works Committee, operational efficiencies by catching issues on the front end of plans and developments versus on the back end. She didn't know if that was something that could be put in as a goal because she believed that Staff is going to work on that and will be able to accomplish that. She thought City Engineer Westby may be able to add input but just working on definitions of things such as a sound wall is a sound wall, not just a wall or a fence. Descriptive terms and making sure that descriptions of the wall isn't just the wall but in relationship to other areas like the roadway. It was talked about in Public Works and she thought this might be a category for that but wasn't sure.

City Engineer Westby replied he was thinking about what the tactic would be called.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he agreed but that one of the hard things in making it a tactic is it is hard to calculate that, how many things were caught versus how many were missed. In looking at some of the tactics it is pretty clear which ones are complete and which are incomplete, those are pretty clearly defined. What is talked about is more ambiguous in terms of its outcome. He agreed that it should be a part of what is being done but as City Engineer Westby pointed out, he didn't know how to phrase it or track it.

City Administrator Ulrich stated what comes to mind for him is to review and analyze the process for reviewing developments so that they have taken a look at the process and how is that proven to eliminate mistakes at the tail end. He thought a review might be the tactic, that they are going to sit down and take a hard look at the process, how to get from the start to the finish and what things could possibly be improved. He asked if that is what Councilmember Musgrove was asking about.

City Engineer Westby asked if the tactic would be improve the development review through a process and improve a development review team communication or something to that effect, he wasn't sure how to phrase it.

City Administrator Ulrich replied it is about a reviewing process to seek improvement. He asked if that is generally the concept it can be word-smithed a little bit.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if this would fit under this strategy.

City Administrator Ulrich confirmed this, adding as they had talked about it is trying to look for efficiencies and eliminate mistakes on the tail end.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked Staff, in terms of questions that Staff receive from residents are there common categories that, as a part of the website or other forms of communication that are sent out, are there common things that need to be better communicated to residents that a tactic should be clearly identified around to say they are going to focus on the top ten issues that phone calls are about. He wasn't sure what that looked like from a day to day standpoint.

Communications and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied as someone that handles communication and also fills in for front end duties answering phones, there are common questions that come in. She stated that in meetings they have strategized ways that could be done by simply creating a cheat-sheet where all departments can help fill in the blanks. That it is a one-stop shop. Speaking for her department, they have to have a general knowledge of everything that is going on. She continued that they are responsible for answering the questions, the caller is passed along to the experts, but they are that first voice or representative for the City so there are ways that can be done.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied his point in bringing it up in this particular section is that it overlaps with the communication side of things, and can we make it easier for people to answer their own question and not take up Staff time.

Councilmember Specht commented it goes back to the most common things searched on the website, to make sure that is easily answered.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that it seems like primarily the website, is the priority, to improve the website to answer the most common questions efficiently.

Mayor Kuzma added navigation.

Councilmember Specht replied if there are 30 questions about a thing, make that a bigger thing in the *Ramsey Resident* on the front page, if it is an easy answer or put it on the front page of the website to be proactive. He asked if that is the idea.

Councilmember Woestehoff confirmed this.

City Administrator Ulrich added that part of that is trying to use resources to identify what the most commonly asked questions are. The research system can be used. He asked for other efficiencies or cost savings that they wanted to add.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented for about the last year and half the Park and Rec Commission has been unanimous that they are open to or would like Staff to look at unnecessary mowing and turf grass maintenance in the interest of cost savings so that could be a tangible tactic to explore. That is being done right now in respect to Rabbit Park. He stated it should be quantifiable to put a cost to mowing and reducing mowing expenses.

Councilmember Specht commented that there is discussion about playground replacement, noting some funds are in the bank to maybe do more than one park a year until it is caught up as long as the funds are available.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that is being looked at too.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if the suggestion is to include accelerating the park improvement program as a tactic and asked if there are ways to make improvements to neighborhood parks.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that in the Parks and Rec mindset they clearly heard the message from the Council that they want to work on restoration of the parks and any cost savings that would go towards speeding up that process is already built into that as well as using some of the savings in some parks to make bigger improvements in more regional parks. She thought it might be covered in the parks maintenance plan.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood agreed, adding that Council just passed a playground replacement policy in September. They are trying that out and seeing how that fits and it seems to be working in that they had consensus on the meeting last Thursday that there is a way to do two parks instead of one. It may not need to be a tactic.

City Administrator Ulrich replied they are in a good place with that and asked if everyone was comfortable with that. There was consensus.

Councilmember Riley commented that they are speaking about operational efficiencies and cost savings and there is a new public works facility that has had those words used a lot. He asked if there is anything that could be measured that would produce operational efficiencies or cost savings. He stated they have a huge investment that everyone is happy with but it would be great if it could be quantified to show that they have done something else with it.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that is a great idea.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer commented that right now one of the biggest things coming up is the bids on the salt shed that will move them closer to where they are right now. Another thing they are doing is loading the salt trucks now because in the building there isn't high humidity so it won't lock up. If they know a snowstorm is coming it saves an hour or hour and a half in the morning, they can be ready to go right now. They start at 2:00 a.m. and trucks can be ready to out by 2:15 a.m. or 2:30 a.m. Right now that is one of the bigger ones. Also the fueling station now, as soon as that is up and running, that will save time so they are not going to gas stations. Everyone can fuel up in the morning or at night when they come in. Those are the two biggest ones now and the truck would be the third.

City Administrator Ulrich summarized that the question has two points, one quantify the savings that are being experienced now and then see what other savings can be found and publicize that to the public. He thought they had made a pretty big deal that this is going to make things more efficient and to communicate that.

Councilmember Riley replied that would absolutely add value.

Mayor Kuzma added to have less time to go to all the different places, that has to be a big factor.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer stated the cost savings right now, they just took a tank of a load of fuel, for gas they are paying \$3.00 per gallon as compared to \$3.28 at the pumps now so they are saving almost 30 cents a gallon just by having their own pump instead of going out into the public.

City Administrator Ulrich stated he has “quantify cost savings and optimize public works efficiencies and communicate these efficiencies to the public.”

Councilmember Musgrove thanked the Staff for completing 50% of them already on there. Two of them look like they were under budgeted so that is why there were incomplete. She commented to Councilmember Riley’s point with the public works ongoing savings that is recognized as well. She didn’t know how that would be put under a strategy and record it but thought it was good for communicating that to the public. She stated it could be added to the communication strategy and asked if that is what Councilmember Riley was referring to.

Councilmember Riley replied just identifying savings are great but also communicating it is the other part.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if at this point, it should be under communications because the facility is already built and it will be realized more as time goes on and more data is gathered.

City Administrator Ulrich explained that what was found last year in going through this, is that a lot of the tactics overlap in the different strategies, which is good. It covers communication but there also is a cost efficiency piece of this if more inefficiencies are continued to be looked for with this new building. It can be under either one or both and that can be decided later. He stated they are ready to move on to the next strategy.

Administrative Services Director Lasher stated she has one idea that is on the minds of Administrative Services Staff every day and has to do with providing public service to the County in the license center. Because of where the receptionist sits, she is the focal point. They are very busy and have a very cumbersome check-in process so people can’t just pop in and ask a question. She noted that Pam or whoever is covering the front desk is an Anoka County License Center employee who is not trained and facing a lot of frustration from customers who want them to answer questions. She stated Staff can answer some of the questions but don’t know how to do those jobs so it creates a lot of frustration because a customer comes in and doesn’t realize they are not County employees. They just want to know if they can get their tabs or their passport or

their marriage license and see the people piled up in there, and the City of Ramsey is funding that. She recognizes it is a great service to citizens who come in to this public building but she would like to talk about a strategy somehow to get them to maybe pick up a phone and have it ring, that it doesn't go in to their que and they are on hold forever. She didn't know if there was a way to do that, if a phone could be put at the front desk that goes right to them and they have to answer it or what the tactic would look like. She stated year after year they are paying for the County services.

City Administrator Ulrich replied he has it down as "seek support from Anoka County for front desk staff services." It was something that was being working on prior to the pandemic. They had agreed to provide some staffing at one time. It can be sorted out later but that is a good tactic to put on the board.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there is an opportunity to move where the receptionist is in the building so that the front desk isn't the destination for some of those conversations. He suggested the second floor.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that may be contrary to the lease agreement, they have a pretty highly visible retail location now. Moving them was talked at one time but he felt that the second floor may cause as many problems because sending a ton of traffic through the remainder of the building might be just as problematic. Different entrances or moving them around was talked about in discussions but weren't very fruitful as he recalled. He stated there is a logistic issue with traffic. If you get here during the day and the first of the month, you can't get through there.

Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad commented to that point, that is one of her department's most fielded questions.

City Administrator Ulrich stated they will capture something with Anoka County to improve the license center and improve the impact to the Staff. He asked if there was anything else on that strategy before moving forward.

City Administrator Ulrich stated economic development is a highly successful area for them. Economic Development Manager Sullivan did a great job. Today he is not feeling well enough to be here. Business went on, it was actually the whole development team including engineering, community development, and the planning staff all work with economic development to make sure these things happen. He stated they had extraordinary growth in the industrial sector with a fair amount of retail space considering Armstrong West, Gigi's Salon, The Autoparts Store all contributed to retail which was a pretty good addition with more to come. Events through the EDA were successful, the business expo, business appreciation day. There were also some virtual activities during the pandemic. Business visits were a success for Economic Development Manager Sullivan and the EDA with 41 business visits conducted in 2021 so getting the calls to the business community was a real plus. Manufacturing employment base is continuing to grow. The metrics were met in terms of industrial construction square footage with 50 square feet. He guessed the estimate was set low for the year but that 50,000 square feet per year was what they were aiming for. That was exceeded and will next year also if all goes well. 5,000 square for retail puts them on pace for 2021, 2022 and probably 2023 as well based on projects that are in the

works. He asked if anyone thinks they should take this off the table and continue business retention expansion efforts for retail are pretty well scoped out and will continue with those metrics as stated, unless there is a need to change those. They are realistic, comfortable growth but if they can exceed them they will but a lot of that is market dependent so they don't control that. He asked for thoughts on economic development.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the wording that reads "stable base of local employers representing the largest opportunity for future growth of jobs and tax base." She asked if that is a tax base for the City or the State.

City Administrator Ulrich replied no, it is for the City and the other taxing jurisdictions, the County, School District that the taxes are collected at the County level.

Councilmember Musgrove replied she was thinking of taxes on the products and sales tax but he is talking about property taxes. City Administrator Ulrich confirmed this.

City Administrator Ulrich stated there are a couple of other tactics under Economic Development, to consider strategic infrastructure investments to prepare more shovel ready parcels. He stated they continuously do that part of the efforts in economic development, The Armstrong West retail and the extension of Third Street is under consideration at this point so that is the latest economic development effort. Riverdale Drive was also extended on the south side at Hwy 10, the project will be under construction next year so that will also develop some additional commercial lots along Hwy 10. There is a lot going on as far as infrastructure still. So Armstrong is the project that is actively being worked along as well as Riverdale Drive. They will continue to do that and open up new areas for development as the market demands.

Councilmember Specht asked if there was anything specific that had to be done for the dome or is that more the key outcome when it is done.

City Administrator Ulrich replied part of that is the Third Street construction but the dome for the Anoka-Ramsey Athletic Association, he didn't know if there is anything specific that should be added in regard to that.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied from a specific standpoint he thought it would be interesting point of discussion about digging a big hole and filling it so that the area in The COR is more shovel ready in terms of a build standpoint as well as the park. That he could see in there but he also didn't know if that is a 2022 completion. He deferred to others for that.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated he thought the wording "consider strategic infrastructure investments to prepare more shovel ready parcels" has already got that covered. He stated that the EDA and Public Works Committee were also already asked by direction of the City Council on moving forward in getting fill for what is called the northwest quadrant so it is in play under the existing action.

City Administrator Ulrich replied part of that might combine the completion of the water park feature. He thought they were on track there. He stated the other tactic under economic

development was to complete a comprehensive City code audit and update. He stated it gets a little bit to what was talked about with modernizing regulations and eliminating unnecessarily regulations to streamline things. He stated this was primarily for city code and zoning code. He stated on the last agenda there were ten ordinances that change different components including the accessory dwelling units, the animal ordinance and the home occupation ordinance, were looked at and fit into that. He didn't know if there was a full comprehensive review done but they hit the high points and did a good job of getting those to the Council. He asked if anything should be added under that.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she thought it would be great to have a list of those that were gone through. She could remember four but thought for residents to see what City Staff worked on and were able to accomplish would be good. City Administrator Ulrich replied that is a good idea.

Councilmember Specht commented that it comes back to the idea and asked for feedback on providing a link to city code for people to bring forward to be addressed. Councilmember Heineman replied he supported it.

Councilmember Woestehoff concurred and added he would like to get direction from Staff regarding common points of confusion. He stated that one that comes up is decks or other structures but felt there are others.

City Administrator Ulrich summarized "solicit public and Staff guidance for modernizing and streamlining City codes."

Councilmember Musgrove asked if number nine is considered complete or ongoing.

City Administrator Ulrich replied it would be ongoing but the addition would be to outreach to the Staff.

Councilmember Riley added "and will update responsible parties."

City Administrator Ulrich moved on to the next strategy: Create a Positive Image for Residential Neighborhoods and Business Districts and Key Corridors. Tactic: Consider a Proactive Multifamily Property Management Program and Crime Free Multifamily Housing Program. He stated the Chief did some initial research on that which was halted due to Covid.

Police Chief Katers stated that overall he thought this was a great crime prevention program. One issue that came up in the research is that this would not work voluntarily but it has to be in an ordinance for rental properties. Some cities have phases, requirements for different housing types, and education about the program. He highlighted that it is a crime prevention program endorsed by the Crime Prevention Association. It is very hard to quantify the outcomes but the cities and rental properties that have it like it a lot. He stated that criminals are currently not a federally protected class so they can be discriminated against for housing but there have been challenges to that. Because crime isn't wanted in the community it can be used as a way to discriminate on housing. He thought this is a good program but to do more work on it he would need an ordinance

requiring it of the rental properties upon issuance of the rental license. It could be addressed in the future.

Councilmember Heineman asked how criminals are defined.

Police Chief Katers replied there is sample language or an allowable lease agreement. He stated that there is recommended language relating to felony convictions and person related crimes but there is flexibility. He stated that the Minnesota Crime Prevention Association has a model one.

Councilmember Heineman asked if it is up to the discretion of the housing authority as with an aggravated assault conviction from ten years ago.

Police Chief Katers replied they would have to write specifics in there. The thing to be careful about is that it not be based on calls for service. He stated that one way it can be done is with criminal convictions. He would have to look at how criminal is defined.

Councilmember Riley stated there are three key outcomes with two different focuses and asked if they should be separated into different action items.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed it really is two separate tactics. One is more property maintenance and the other is controlling tenants.

Councilmember Howell asked if there is anything preventing property owners who have rental properties from implementing this on their own without an ordinance.

Police Chief Katers replied they could do this on their own but he has heard that it is most effective to enforce it. He added it is a selling point for the business.

Mayor Kuzma summarized that consensus was to keep it in.

City Administrator Ulrich introduced the next tactic to: Create a Volunteer Program to partner with local community members that create opportunities for the community to own cleanup projects and spotlight those in communications. He stated not much was done on that other than individual efforts by volunteers who were recognized. He commented better focus could be required and trying to leverage volunteers who want to help the community. He asked for feedback on revisions.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer commented that there are quite a few civic groups in the adopt a park area.

Mayor Kuzma added there are recycling days for people to be a part of.

City Administrator Ulrich stated that back to the adopt a park people, it comes back to communication and valuing resident contributions more.

Councilmember Specht commented that he follows other cities' Facebook sites and Elk River seems to have a volunteer of the month recognized at a City Council meeting. He asked for feedback on adding that.

City Administrator Ulrich replied he thought that was a good tactic and asked for comment.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that volunteers who could be spotlighted wouldn't have to be just those volunteering at parks but could include those groups or people who clean streets, drains or have and maintain rain gardens. She stated sometimes rain gardens can get funding from the Lower Rm.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that they will look at community-wide recognition for community members who volunteer.

Mayor Kuzma asked about adding pollinators.

City Administrator Ulrich replied he thought there would be a wide variety of people.

Councilmember Specht asked if this would be a way for groups to get their names out there. He stated that in the past groups could come in to lead the Pledge of Alliance at City Council meetings.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he got a vest from Public Works when he did a street clean up. He asked if there were resources that could be borrowed or given such as trash bags or vests. He suggested that then it would be easier to track when clean ups are going on.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied that when people call in there are twenty or thirty vest that are loaned out to groups and trash bags are given and collected. He stated that if there is a better way to advertise that would be good.

Mayor Kuzma suggested it could go in the *Ramsey Resident*.

Councilmember Riley added the website and Facebook.

City Administrator Ulrich commented that maybe the new staff member in Parks and Rec could look into it.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated he spoke to the Rec Specialist today about creating Earth Day weekend clean up. April 22, 2022 is on a Friday so it would be issued as a challenge where people could pick up anywhere in the City with free vests and bags. There could be a prize drawing for five gift certificates for participants.

City Administrator Ulrich replied recognition is really important. He asked if there were other comments for the Strategy of Creating a Positive Image. He stated that in the last couple of years they have been focusing on that and hopes it is making an impact on neighborhood cleanup.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that it was talked about at the Public Works meeting to have a tactic to ensure proper signage and monument signage throughout the City as something that is achievable. For example, signage is need on 116 and 47. He continued that that helps to create a positive image and branding for the City.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that one of the things talked about early on is there are a list of several nodes that need signage. She thought it was a part of the development of The COR to identify Ramsey in those areas.

City Administrator Ulrich wrote “to improve City monuments and signage throughout the City to improve identity.” He stated that is a high cost item with park signs costing around \$5,000 but is a program that the City could adopt in 2023.

Councilmember Riley suggested adding a monument sign denoting Ramsey on East Hwy 10.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that that gets into the current highway construction and the Ramsey Gateway project and the details of adding street lights and a monument sign. He stated those decisions will come back to the Council. He thought that would be a great suggestion.

Mayor Kuzma added the roundabouts should be looked at also.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked when the population was going to be updated on the sign.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied that it is added on top of the old one so it isn’t a big deal, the only one that has trouble is way down in the ditch with a 25-foot ladder. He stated that eventually MNDot will do it but they could do it if they have an official number.

City Administrator Ulrich moved on to the Strategy: Improve the Safety and Mobility of the Transportation Corridor. He stated there were three tactics. The first is Complete County Road 5 Corridor Study. He stated that the County is currently in the process of doing that so the budget impact is unexpectedly low for the City as the County took on that project. They are doing that work right now and hope to have a study completed by June 2022. The second tactic was to Advance the Ramsey Gateway Plan. He stated that is the Hwy 10 project and will require more planning. The third tactic is to Update Priority Street Light Program and Pedestrian Safety Plan. He stated that project has been initiated by the City.

Mayor Kuzma suggested adding Metro Mobility.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if this would be a good place to state maintaining the roads, the PMP. City Administrator Ulrich replied yes, that is a good place for that.

City Administrator Ulrich summarized “Implement Pavement Management Plan.”

Councilmember Musgrove commented on the last point which reads “secure funding for Hwy 10/169 Plan” and commented that she thought they should try to find a way to promote businesses through the construction.

City Administrator Ulrich wrote “support access and signage visibility for local businesses during construction.”

Councilmember Specht asked if code enforcement could be lightened during construction to simplify things for the businesses.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that was talked about and a soft hold was placed on code enforcement along Hwy 10.

Deputy City Administrator/ Community Dev. Director Hagen commented that he liked the idea of promoting access to businesses particularly when the interchanges are shut down.

City Administrator Ulrich moved on to the Strategy to Connect the community through Parks and Trails Capital Improvements along with Recreational Programming. He stated there are two tactics under this strategy. The first one is Establish a Funding Plan to Complete Parks Capital Replacement Improvements. He stated that was talked about earlier and is on track. The other is Implement and Spotlight the Recreation Programming Plan. He stated that is somewhat on hold due to staffing turn over but it is back on track now with the new hire.

City Administrator Ulrich moved on to the Strategy to Spotlight sustainability and efficiency through public facilities and infrastructure investments. He stated they continued with the development of the water supply treatment which is on track to be completed in October 2023. They will continue with that. The second tactic was to Consider Local Open Space Preservation Funding, if initiated by Ballot Referendum. He stated they would need to have a ballot question as it would need to be started by mid-August.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for details about how that is implemented. She thought there was funding and how to recognize different areas and if they are inventoried with an associated cost because it says there is a high impact on the budget.

City Administrator Ulrich replied if there was a referendum specifically for that it would cover the expense but asked if she was asking for more about this program before it gets put on the budget. He offered to get her that information about how it works and answer her questions before August.

Councilmember Specht asked if there is an ongoing conversation about people renting open spaces and would the County want to expand or talk about other spaces that are filled up every day.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that one thing that could be considered is reconfiguring where the center is. They took the virtual library out and stated if there is interest in putting in a public library, that would be a County item. He stated there are some big capital maintenance items that are coming due with the building being 15 years old. The floor in the front needs maintenance.

Councilmember Riley suggested along with maintenance that efficiency upgrades could be considered at the same time.

City Administrator Ulrich moved on to Strategy to Strengthen and enhance our identity, brand and image. He stated the zip code is still on there.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if it is accurate they have to wait until 2026 for a detailed update.

City Administrator Ulrich replied yes, they have a policy that a City can only formally request a zip code every ten years so that is the window of opportunity.

Councilmember Riley commented on the fact that half of his mail is addressed as Anoka doesn't speak well to Ramsey's identity, that and the fact that they are trying to create themselves as a City that isn't five miles west of Anoka.

City Administrator Ulrich asked if there was any interest in looking at a solar installation as it is becoming a thing were some cities are covering all the roofs.

Councilmember Woestehoff replied if it saves money.

City Administrator Ulrich stated it is an idea for a capital investment he has seen cities make. He stated under this strategy they had their first holiday light challenge which went ok for a first effort.

Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad commented there were 15 homes, which was pretty good considering Champlin had 19 and have been doing it for a while.

City Administrator Ulrich commented one thing that was seen at the Chamber address where they did the State of the Cities is that Anoka and Coon Rapids have increased their holiday lights with shooting fireworks from the roofs. He stated a winter festival would fall under this category if there is interest.

Councilmember Woestehoff suggested an ice fishing contest.

Councilmember Musgrove asked what the feedback was from residents on the holiday lighting and how many people participated in the voting.

Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied she could get that information. She thought the feedback was good. There were questions about the voting period which was primarily a staffing issue at that time.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it was hundreds of votes.

Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied she thought it was in the 60's or 70's.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if it was primarily promoted on the website. Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad replied the website and social media. She thought the October 1, deadline was missed to get it into the November/December newsletter.

Councilmember Riley commented that they have events that are well attended like Happy Days, the concerts in the park, the business expo, and asked how those could be used to build identity and brand.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed that they have really good events. He stated that the tree lighting went really well from a participation standpoint. He thought it is hard to compete with Anoka when they do Halloween. He thought they did things well but could do better. He wondered if the recreation specialist could help with that. He thought having a quantifiable goal such as participation is interesting.

City Administrator Ulrich wrote “capitalize and grow existing community events” that could be built upon. He stated the concert series did well even through the pandemic.

Parks and Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that what they are trying to have a companion recreation piece relative to the concert series to extend the event into the evening for families. They have art in the park which is every other week. This year they are considering a car show and an inflatable water slide in July.

Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad stated that Ramsey doesn’t have a Communications Coordinator, there is a Communication and Events Coordinator. What that means is that from May to October a large portion of what she does is focused on one event for the community. That isn’t to say that she is dropping any communication tasks but is maintaining them. She hears the Council saying communication is important and using events to market the community and define the branding is also a priority. She stated that in terms of what she does, it seems like there is more than one person can meet expectations.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that a tremendous amount of resources are put into Happy Days and Communication and Events Coordinator Thorstad is primarily responsible for that. He stated privatizing Happy Days has been discussed instead of making it a City event they could hire a food truck like Anoka does but that puts the responsibility for success on another.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that some of this might naturally occur as the City continues to grow in The COR and some of the branding may develop more. She gave an example of developing something around the City park with the splash pad when it is completed. She thought signage is a big thing coming into Ramsey as far as identity. She stated that The COR hasn’t been built out yet and there is more retail land available which will add more defining identity.

City Administrator Ulrich agreed that there isn’t quite the critical mass in The COR. One thing Anoka has that Ramsey doesn’t yet is the downtown business group which sponsors a lot of the events.

Councilmember Musgrove commented Ramsey doesn’t have their LGA either.

City Administrator Ulrich stated he added growing existing events. He moved on to the Strategy: Improve City's communication. He stated a report was added for the Council and a periodic update is done for all the media. Social media has ready metrics along with QCTV data.

City Administrator Ulrich moved on to the Strategy: Improve and sustain high organizational morale. He stated one tactic is the Telecommuting Policy which needs to be looked at. Another tactic is to Consider additional Employee Events which they would like to be expanded. An ice cream social was held last summer but more community events, wellness and events for Staff. The last tactic was Completing Employee Survey which the last one was completed in 2020 so that is due again. He stated there is good trend data on the existing survey which has been done four times.

City Administrator Ulrich summarized they went over the core values, the mission, vision, a few minor amendments, the imperatives, the tactics. Revisions will be brought back to the Council. He reviewed the parking lot list of future events and the culture idea items

Councilmember Riley commented on the partnerships stating two things that are possibly going on. Pact Charter School is building and possibly putting in a football stadium that could be interesting for the City to participate in some way or utilize. Also talk of the dome and the plans for that would be huge for the City, not that the City would need to be involved in its development but could offer help that would be mutually beneficial. He wasn't sure where that fits but may belong in this action plan as far as partnership.

City Administrator Ulrich replied Pact Charter School was a foundational elements to The COR and they continue to grow. They could also fit into the City's identity and brand in terms of high school teams and tournaments. It all fits in well and those strategic partnerships will be put in.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the parking lot item of completing streetscape plans for key corridors and commented that it may be an opportunity to have some new guidelines for Hwy 10 post construction since it is the gateway to the City and perhaps any new developments have new guidelines for development.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that is the same topic that she brought up that is in the parking lot, a list of the key node areas.

City Administrator Ulrich replied this would be good timing for the Planning Commission to take a look at that, the development guidelines for 10. With the new highway coming through it should improve the look and quality of all kinds of development as people want to invest money in their buildings because of the frontage road.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if anyone has driven through Anoka and seen the lights on the bridge. She asked if it was possible to do that in the future on Ramsey and Sunfish.

Public Works Superintendent Riemer replied he would have to talk to MNDOT.

City Administrator Ulrich stated it is on the agenda to come back to Council to discuss the design for the bridges at Sunfish and Ramsey so LED lights could be considered.

Councilmember Specht commented that another thing Anoka does it to leave the white lights up year-round on that stretch. He questioned if any of Ramsey's white lights could be left up.

City Administrator Ulrich replied that gets into enhancing and beautifying The COR and where is money best spent. He thanked everyone for the great discussion and stated it will be summarized and brought back to a Work Session.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The Special Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 9:33 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.