

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, September 27, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Members Absent: Councilmember Ryan Heineman

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby  
Police Captain Tim Frankfurth  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
Planning Manager Todd Larson  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak  
City Clerk Katie Schmidt

**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: Charter Commission Update**

City Clerk Schmidt reviewed the Staff report and provided an update on the Charter Commission seats. She shared that one of the nine seats expires at the end of this year and the individual holding this seat has expressed interest in being reappointed. She explained Staff is looking for clarification on actions to take moving forward. She stated she could list the options for Staff.

Mayor Kuzma asked her to do so.

City Clerk Schmidt read the options to Council, which were as follows: submit the incumbents reapplication materials, or submit the incumbents reapplication materials and all applications received in the two recruitments earlier this year, or submit the incumbents reapplication materials, all the applications received in the two previous recruitments earlier this year, along with any new applications received since beginning the soft advertising. She stated Staff is also open to other actions as the Council sees fit.

Councilmember Musgrove asked City Clerk Schmidt to repeat the first options.

City Clerk Schmidt repeated that option one is to submit the incumbents reapplication materials.

Councilmember Riley stated he is in favor of option one, only submitting the application materials of the incumbent wanting to be reappointed.

Councilmember Musgrove agreed with Councilmember Riley. She added she liked the way the ad was worded stating it was for future openings.

Councilmember Howell agreed with Councilmembers Riley and Musgrove.

Councilmember Specht also agreed with the other Councilmembers.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated he is moderately indifferent; however, after reading the policy under the incumbent application process, he stated that the piece discussing the incumbent letter of intent forwarded to the judge at the same time as new applicants needed some clarification. He shared he is fine with option one; however, he also sees how option three could be beneficial as there could be better candidates and option three leaves it up to the judge to decide rather than the Council just pushing forward another incumbent.

Mayor Kuzma stated he is in support of option one.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with option one.

## **2.02: Senior Housing Partners/Lord of Life Church site - 14501 Nowthen Blvd NW.**

Planning Manager Larson reviewed the Staff report and shared that representatives of Presbyterian Homes, Senior Housing Partners, and Lord of Life Church will present their plan to create a number of housing styles on the church land. He requested feedback from the Council to help the Staff put together plans on this project.

Jon Fletcher, Presbyterian Homes, gave a presentation on the proposed project with Lord of Life Church. He asked Council for their feedback.

Councilmember Specht asked if Presbyterian Homes had looked at the land across the street on Nowthen Boulevard to possibly incorporate that land into this plan as well.

Mr. Fletcher said Presbyterian Homes has been watching that land and at this point, it is not a part of their plan.

Councilmember Woestehoff thanked Mr. Fletcher for coming to Council and the community so early in the process. He thinks this could be a very interesting project for the City.

Mayor Kuzma asked about the lot sizes.

Mr. Fletcher stated this has not been determined; however, the homes themselves will be approximately 1200 square feet, which would result in around six units per acre.

Councilmember Musgrove shared she used to work at Presbyterian Homes and knows how great they are and she is excited for the potential this project has. She reiterated Councilmember Woestehoff's point that she is glad Presbyterian Homes started this discussion so early. She asked if Mr. Fletcher could share some concerns of information that has already been discovered in terms of this project, such as traffic.

Mr. Fletcher referenced the site map and showed that the church could potentially have four access points, two off of Nowthen Boulevard, one through a public road on Northside Drive, and one off of St. Francis Boulevard via a driveway to a parsonage for the church. He shared one of the initial opportunities to think through is how to not cause high density housing traffic to flow through the single family home and townhome developments to the north. He shared that it makes sense to try to reorient as much traffic as possible south towards the signalized intersection to alleviate pressure on County Road 5 or Nowthen Boulevard. He added that sound mitigation efforts will also need to be worked through. He stated they will be doing a sound study on the property. He noted there is some topography on the site that may allow for some natural benefits, but at the same time this is still something that they will want to take a look at. He added that they want to maximize the greenspace of the area. He stated these are the three feedback points that have been shared so far.

Councilmember Specht shared he liked the concepts of this project as well as the senior living and transitional living aspect of the project. He definitely sees the need for this type of single level senior housing.

Mayor Kuzma also likes the idea of transitional housing for 55 year olds and up.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the 6 units per acre for the single level homes. She asked Planning Manager Larson if he could convert these numbers for the R-2 district.

Planning Manager Larson said the R-2 district is fluid and is in the four to seven unit per acre range and a lot can be done with it.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if these were 55-65 foot lots.

Mr. Fletcher stated those would be the smaller R-1 lots at the highest end of the density.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated one of the challenges that had been mentioned was the zoning of this particular parcel and he thinks this could be an instance where a PUD may make sense rather than blocking off the land and rezoning it. He asked Planning Manager Larson how a PUD would get calculated.

Planning Manager Larson shared the quick calculation that they came to by maximizing each zoning area would yield over 380 units. He shared he did not do a calculation on the yield of the minimum density of these areas.

There was a consensus of the Council.

### **2.03: Receive Updates and Provide Direction on Ramsey Gateway Highway 10 Improvement Project**

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby reviewed the Staff report about the design and aesthetics of the Highway 10 improvements. He stated that Josh Shields, the Principal Landscape Architect from Bolton & Menk was present this evening and has a presentation for the Council.

Mr. Shields gave a presentation on the timeline, public feedback from the open house, and aesthetics for the project, including bridge features and landscaping.

Councilmember Specht asked about the turnout from the open house and asked how many people were in attendance.

Mr. Shields stated he was not sure of the numbers of attendees both in person and virtual, but could find out for the Council.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked about the under edge bridge lighting and if it was on the deck by the sidewalk or if it was underneath pointing downward.

Mr. Shields stated that it was discussed back in April that it would be on the top part of the sidewalk, not underneath. He added there was more concerning this later on in his presentation.

Mayor Kuzma asked if the lights would be able to change colors.

Mr. Shields stated this can be talked about later on.

Councilmember Musgrove asked where the bench areas would be.

Mr. Shields stated this will also be discussed later on in the presentation.

Mayor Kuzma asked how hard it would be to incorporate some sort of a river design into the underpass as Ramsey is between two rivers; he sees that this would give the City some identity.

Mr. Shields said he could bring this back to the design team to work on some options.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for clarification that this would be added to Armstrong and incorporating it into Ramsey and Sunfish or just on Ramsey.

Mayor Kuzma said he is just thinking about the new bridges. He added he does not know what the process would be to change this.

Councilmember Musgrove shared she thinks it would be good to just do this on Ramsey otherwise there will be two bridges with one identity and another one that is separate.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked about the lack of vegetation and if there is a tree plan included in this.

Mr. Shields stated this is something he would like to get the Council's feedback on later on in his presentation. He continued his presentation and discussed the plan for the bridge aesthetics for the bridge over Highway 10, including losing the decorative details and just having the metal mesh.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she liked this idea as it makes the bridge look different. She noted the bridge over Armstrong is gray and she likes the black better. She asked if black could be done on Ramsey Boulevard and keep the gray for Sunfish and Armstrong Boulevard. She stated in the picture the black makes it stand out.

Mr. Shields said he can ask about this and get back to the Council.

Councilmember Riley asked if the concrete would be stained the same color.

Mr. Shields stated it would be matching what is at Armstrong. He shared it is a standard MNDOT color which makes it easy for maintenance to repair. He continued his presentation discussing adding a medallion on the Ramsey Boulevard bridge and the different visual experiences for motorists and pedestrians. He also discussed the lighting ideas and concepts that he mentioned previously, including the discussion that had been had in April around adding the lower lights on the piers.

Mayor Kuzma stated he still did not like the idea of the taller lights.

Councilmember Howell shared she liked the flush rectangular box lights.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked how far the lights were off of the ground.

Mr. Shields stated he would have to double check; however, he assumes it is at least 12 to 18 inches off of the ground at a minimum so that the light has good coverage and is considerate of maintenance needs, such as deicing.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby what is used to clear snow and ice from the sidewalks on Armstrong Boulevard

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby stated he believes a brush is used.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there was any lighting on Armstrong Boulevard currently.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby said no.

Councilmember Woestehoff said he does not particularly like the post lighting; however, it could give a flag mentality that would allow for City branding on Ramsey Boulevard. He still thinks the lower lights would work better.

Mr. Shields shared he can try to set up a meeting with MNDOT and can ask what vertical elements could be used.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there has been any feedback from other cities that use these lights.

Mr. Shields said he can gather some examples. He has used these lights on public buildings which presents the same concerns of where to place the lights while being cognizant of maintenance and using LED lights.

Councilmember Musgrove stated she likes the lighting pictured.

Councilmember Specht agreed with Councilmember Musgrove.

Councilmember Riley asked if the Council liked these features at Ramsey Boulevard, why not also put them at Sunfish Boulevard

Mr. Shields shared it is possible to do at Sunfish Boulevard as well.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if Councilmember Riley wanted to put the medallions and the lighting on Sunfish Boulevard as well.

Councilmember Riley thinks that both should be added over to Sunfish since they are both being built right now.

Councilmember Musgrove added she likes the idea of adding the lights to Sunfish Boulevard as a safety feature. She added she thinks the middle bridge, the bridge at Ramsey Boulevard, needs to have the most attractive visual aesthetics.

Councilmember Specht noted that the City could also give the Jasper and Alpine bridges the lighting and visual appeal so it would be even on both ends.

Councilmember Howell agreed with Councilmember Musgrove to just have the medallions on the center bridge at Ramsey Boulevard

Mayor Kuzma asked if the Council could see an option for these.

Mr. Shields said he can get some more information on this and get back to the Council for further discussion. He added that he thought about doing different colors for the medallions and the railings.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted he liked the subtlety of having the medallions be the same color as the railings and he thinks the Council is overthinking how much residents will care about this. He sees the point of making Ramsey Boulevard the focal point. He would like to take the

opportunity to put the medallions on both bridges; however, he does not know if any of the residents will truly notice that Armstrong Boulevard will not have the medallions.

City Administrator Hagen asked if it was possible to remove fence areas and add them to Armstrong Boulevard.

Mr. Shield said he will ask the design team about this. He continued his presentation by discussing the lighting and what MNDOT allows. He stated he was not sure if there was interest in a wash over the brick columns. He guessed that this could even be a fixture mounted onto the retaining wall. He asked if the Council had any input on providing light to the exterior facade at the TH10 facing pieces.

Councilmember Riley said if the City of Ramsey could be written on there he would see value in these lights, without that he does not see the value.

Councilmember Musgrove stated this is a cool feature.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there is a safety reason to have these lights.

Mr. Shields said no it is more of an aesthetic visual. He said looking at other bridges around, most are ambient, not many are directional. He will ask MNDOT what is permissible and what has been done in other areas. He added he is looking for feedback from Council on what he needs to advocate for with MNDOT when he meets with them.

Councilmember Riley stated he believed there was discussion previously about adding the City of Ramsey verbiage to these bridges and were told no, yet other examples were brought up that it would be allowed. He asked Mr. Shields if displaying the City of Ramsey on the bridges was a hope.

Mr. Shields said it was a slight chance. He stated it had been advocated for before and after the discussion. The cities that currently have that type of display were done before MNDOT changed their policies. He added that some things that will be done on Armstrong Boulevard are different for similar reasons because of the changed policies. He shared another thing that would fit into this is that there is not a lot of real estate on the bridges themselves to easily incorporate the messaging piece.

Councilmember Riley would like to see this for the image of Ramsey.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed and shared that Dayton's bridge is a good example of this. He does not see that it needs to be super extravagant, just a small accent would be nice.

Mr. Shields continued his presentation and discussed the corridor opportunities, including lighting, benches, trees, roundabouts, and noise walls.

Councilmember Riley asked if the noise walls are required or if the City is asking to put them there.

Mr. Shields shared he believed it was through coordination with MNDOT in terms of location and they will be situated near residential properties. He said he believes it is a remediation aspect.

City Engineer/Interim Public Works Director Westby shared that residents in these areas received surveys and responded that they would like the noise walls.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked about the mowing and maintenance in the roundabout and if the mowing will be done by the City.

Mr. Shields stated this will be an ongoing discussion between the City and the County.

Councilmember Woestehoff added that being drought friendly and easy to maintain would be best.

Mr. Shields concluded his presentation by talking about the cost of the project and giving examples of the aesthetics cost participation. He noted that maintenance responsibility for the aesthetic features still required discussion between Anoka County, Ramsey, and MNDOT. He assumed the City would be pulled into these discussions accordingly. He then discussed project dollars, which are not the same as the cost participation. Since there are many different funds on this project they would apply the percentages of costs to each bridge to give an idea of the allowance to pay for these items. benches, some lighting and trees would be considered non-participating. which would require discussion between City and County to determine the level. Lastly, he showed the aesthetic elements of level C which will fall into the cost participation piece.

Councilmember Musgrove asked about the benches and trees and stated there were markings on Ramsey Boulevard but not Sunfish Boulevard. She asked if that was because these would only be on Ramsey Boulevard and not Sunfish Boulevard.

Mr. Shields said that nothing was proposed for Sunfish Boulevard, partly to make Ramsey Boulevard more pronounced and partly how it aligns with some of the other trails. He stated that he could look at adding this to Sunfish Boulevard if there was interest.

Mayor Kuzma thanked him for his presentation.

Councilmember Specht asked about the timeline for the plans.

Mr. Shields stated he believed they were shooting for middle of November to have the 90% plans. He wanted to check with the design team on some of the questions that came up as well as some of the information from MNDOT.

There was a consensus of the Council.

#### **2.04: City Operating Hours During All Staff Meetings**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the staff report and discussed the two all Staff meetings each year. He added each event is approximately an hour to an hour and a half. He stated the attempt to

reduce service levels to a bare minimum in the departments to allow as much Staff as possible to come together for these meetings.

Councilmember Riley thinks this is a perfect job for the City Administrator to make a decision.

Councilmember Specht agreed.

Mayor Kuzma shared he would like to have at least someone covering the phones.

Councilmember Musgrove supports this decision. She added that she had recently made a call to a business and was told that all staff were in a meeting so this situation does happen and she thinks if people are aware of it and know that the meeting is going on the issues can be minimized.

Councilmember Howell agreed to maybe just have someone monitoring the phones in case something big were to arise.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked when the next meeting was.

Administrative Services Director Lasher shared the next all Staff meeting was Tuesday, October 25.

There was a consensus of the Council.

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

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

Noted.

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

City Administrator Hagen shared that Councilmember Musgrove noted a case on the Planning Commission meeting for amending the abatement ordinance and requested that go to a work session which will be brought to the next meeting.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there would be a fourth night for the public movie.

City Administrator Hagen stated there was a movie this Friday that was rescheduled from Happy Days and the movie scheduled after Happy Days has been moved off the schedule for this year.

Councilmember Musgrove shared she would like to have a discussion around the League of Women Voters and the City's participation in regards to public and non-public participation. She stated there were inconsistencies on whether the public was allowed or notified or not. She wanted to have a discussion on how to best utilize this situation. She thinks people have always looked forward to this and since COVID there has been limited participation. She wants to make sure there is a consistency with this moving forward.

**5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian S. Hagen  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
Deputy City Clerk

Drafted by Ava Rokosz  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*