

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
CITY OF RAMSEY  
ANOKA COUNTY  
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The City of Ramsey Economic Development Authority (EDA) conducted a regular meeting on Thursday, February 10, 2022, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:     Chairperson Michael Olson  
                          Member Chelsee Howell  
                          Member Rachal Johnson  
                          Member William MacLennan  
                          Member Chris Riley  
                          Member Jim Steffen (via Zoom)

Members Absent:     None

Also Present:         Sean Sullivan, Economic Development Manager  
                          Brian Hagen, Community Development Director/Deputy City Admin

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Olson called the Economic Development Authority meeting to order at 7:30 a.m.

**2.     APPROVE AGENDA**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan requested to add an item to the agenda as Item 4, Proclamation for Scott Cords Day.

Motion by Member Riley, seconded by Member Johnson, to approve the agenda as amended.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Howell	aye
Member Riley	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Steffen	aye

Motion carried.

**3.     CONSENT AGENDA**

**3.01:   Approve Meeting Minutes Dated January 13, 2022**

Motion by Member MacLennan, seconded by Member Johnson, to approve the January 13, 2022, minutes as presented.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Steffen	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	aye

Motion carried.

#### **4. PROCLAMATION FOR SCOTT CORDS DAY**

Chairperson Olson stated that the Ramsey City Council adopted a proclamation recognizing Scott Cords, who passed away unexpectedly on January 27, 2022. He read the proclamation aloud which designates this day as Scott Cords Day. He noted that the EDA left an open seat where Scott would normally be sitting. He stated that in the one year that he knew Scott, he became a friend and mentor and will be deeply missed. He paused for a moment of silence in Scott's memory. He stated that a framed copy of the proclamation was delivered to Mrs. Cords.

#### **5. EDA BUSINESS**

##### **5.01: Consider Purchase Agreement and Right of Re-Entry Agreement for Lot 4, Block 1, Riverside West; Case of Reliable Holdings, LLC (Portions may be closed to the public)**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Motion by Member Johnson, seconded by Member MacLennan, to recommend to City Council to approve the Purchase Agreement and Right of Reentry Agreement for Purchase Agreement for Lot 4, Block 1, Riverside West, subject to City Attorney review.

Further discussion: Member Riley commented that he is excited about this, believes it would be a good fit for the area, and also keeps a Ramsey business in Ramsey. He invited the applicant to address the EDA. Rob Twedt, applicant, stated that he hopes to move forward quickly. He stated that his current property is being taken by the County and therefore they are on a timeline. He stated that it will be nice to get more space and have less congestion on the property. Member Riley stated that he is glad to see a Ramsey business staying in Ramsey.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Steffen	aye
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Member MacLennan aye  
Member Johnson aye  
Chairperson Olson aye  
Member Riley aye  
Member Howell aye

Motion carried.

**5.02: Consider Recommendation of Lease Structure for Dynamic Display Billboard with iDigital Media**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Member MacLennan asked if the Champlin billboard is the same size and height as what would be proposed.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that the Ramsey proposal would be for a vertical board rather than a horizontal board. He commented that it would be similar in size to the Champlin board, just taller rather than wider.

Member MacLennan stated that he believed there was previous discussion that political ads only be allowed during a certain timeframe.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that there are limits on campaign advertisements as regulated by the legislature.

Member Johnson asked if the company owns/leases the billboard in Champlin.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that the Champlin sign is owned by Blue Ox Media.

Member Johnson stated that while she understands that political ads generate income, she would prefer to see Ramsey business advertisements and current events.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that political advertising would be included in the non-Ramsey advertisements. He stated that there is a block of advertising designated towards Ramsey businesses, if Ramsey businesses choose to advertise.

Chairperson Olson invited the applicant to address the EDA.

Paul Hilt, iDigital Media, stated that the Federal Highway Administration recommends a message duration of eight seconds. He explained that would mean each ad would have a stationary period of eight seconds. He noted that typically across the nation they use seven seconds for the duration. He stated that they have 600 billboards across five states, 125 of which are digital, ranging in duration from six to ten seconds. He stated that Minnesota allows a six second ad hold time.

Chairperson Olson asked what drives the decision for message duration.

Mr. Hilt explained that different elements that are used to make that determination including speed. He stated that they would prefer a seven second duration for this sign. He noted that it is their goal that Ramsey businesses have the first ability to purchase ads. He stated that in terms of political ads there are regulations as to when those can be allowed and those would only be available to users if there is available space on the sign. He stated that they have allowed the City of Ramsey to advertise on their board in Saint Cloud and Northern Market as part of the proposed lease package. He commented that they are a partner with the City, advertising for local community events and working with local high school student.

Member MacLennan asked if the ads would be proportionate or whether there are different sizes.

Mr. Hilt reviewed some of the different advertising choices. He stated that unless businesses work together on an ad, each turn would have one full ad. He stated that a business could choose to have their ad come up every few times in the rotation.

Chairperson Olson asked if this would be a revenue generator for the City.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan confirmed that this would generate revenue for the City, anticipating about \$60,000 or \$70,000 annually based on the seven second duration and all ad slots being purchased.

Member MacLennan asked if the revenue is earmarked for something.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that the revenue has not been earmarked as of yet and that decision would be made by finance and the City Council.

Motion by Member Johnson, seconded by Member MacLennan, to recommend to City Council to approve the Lease Structure for Dynamic Display Billboard with iDigital Media as presented, subject to City Attorney review.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Steffen	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	aye

Motion carried.

Motion by Member Olson, seconded by Member Johnson, to provide comments to the Planning Commission and City Council an ad display duration interval of seven seconds and the approval of the sign spacing outlined in the draft ordinance.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Howell	aye
Member Riley	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Steffen	aye

Motion carried.

### **5.03: Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce: Manufacture Cohort: 2021-2022 Renewal**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Pete Turok, Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce, expressed condolences on the passing of Scott Cords, noting that he had spoken with him many times over the past several years and his presence will be missed. He stated that 30 percent of Ramsey residents work in manufacturing, which fits perfectly into the cohort. He provided background information on the manufacturing cohort, how it was created and how it has evolved since that time.

Member MacLennan referenced the grant and asked if there was a reason only two companies participated.

Mr. Turok stated that the opportunity was for businesses with 20 employees and two Ramsey businesses took advantage. He stated that the grant maxed out immediately with businesses that participated. He stated that they work with the school district to develop curriculum and to start thinking about manufacturing. He stated that the dual training grant is for an existing employee to help train them to a higher level. He stated that they hope to continue the program.

Member MacLennan agreed that manufacturing is a huge industry, especially for Ramsey, and is often overlooked by students. He believed this would be great to continue.

Member Johnson asked the type of training.

Mr. Turok replied that the business put forth the candidate and the technical college creates the curriculum for that. He stated that traditionally businesses had to apply to the program, but the cohort was allowed to request the grant on behalf of the businesses. He stated that applying for grants take time and resources that some businesses do not have. He stated that the cohort is excited to step in and be the catalyst for that grant.

Member Riley commented that he is excited about the grant and that there have been questions and answers about what has been done by the cohort. He appreciated the work Mr. Turok is doing and believed that this is helpful for Ramsey businesses.

Chairperson Olson asked what would constitute participation by a Ramsey business.

Mr. Turok stated that showing up at one meeting would qualify as participation. He reviewed some of the topics that are discussed at meetings noting that the 26 listed Ramsey businesses have participating in one way or another.

Member Howell stated that there are 20 slots for the grant and asked if any of the other 18 slots are taken by other cities.

Mr. Turok clarified that the slots are taken by businesses, not cities. He confirmed that the other slots are taken by other businesses within the region that participate in the cohort.

Member Howell asked the number of slots left.

Mr. Turok replied that all the slots were filled immediately which is why they would like to apply for another grant.

Member Howell asked how many cities contribute into this effort.

Mr. Turok replied that the City of Anoka and City of Ramsey make annual contributions.

Member Howell asked and received confirmation that Mr. LeTourneau is a contract employee. She stated that if Mr. LeTourneau is able to provide the services needed to make the cohort successful through the cohort, why it would be run through another company (CO2). She stated that it typically costs a company more to do it in that manner rather than directly working as a contract employee or through a 1099.

Mr. Turok replied that CO2 is hired to do multiple services for the Chamber of Commerce and not just the cohort duties. He reviewed some of the services that CO2 provides, noting that it is a shared effort between the Chamber and cohort.

Member MacLennan referenced the 20 businesses participating in the grant and asked how that was decided.

Mr. Turok replied that it was a first come first serve basis, as the Chamber did not want to make decisions on any other basis.

Member MacLennan asked how businesses that are not currently participating in the cohort would find information on this program.

Mr. Turok replied that they do reach out to businesses with mailers. He stated that they advise businesses of meetings and explained that they do not require businesses to be a member of the Chamber to participate in the cohort. He commented that they meet every other month, meeting in different locations.

Member MacLennan asked if that meeting information is available on the Chamber website.

Mr. Turok replied that it is not currently, but it should be.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan recognized the difficulties of meeting in person during COVID and asked how that impacted the meetings.

Mr. Turok stated that they attempted to meet via Zoom but have returned to in person attendance. He noted that in person participation is beginning to increase and they will continue to offer Zoom participation for the time being.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided details on the manufacturing signing day that the cohort previously facilitated with the school districts and Anoka Technical College for students, recognizing that could not occur during COVID. He hoped that would return once COVID allows for.

Mr. Turok agreed that it is a great idea and creates great positive energy for the students. He stated that they have worked to change the mentality that manufacturing is a dirty place, noting that those businesses are clean, provide good income, and career opportunities. He stated that Anoka Hennepin School District has been a great partner that has been excited about the partnership and has made changes to its curriculum. He stated that it brings the idea to students and parents that four-year college is not for everyone and there are other opportunities out there.

Member Johnson asked if the City could assist with posting meeting details and increasing awareness for the cohort.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that the City does link to the Chamber website and believes that it would be best to have that remain as a separate entity. He stated that he does receive emails from manufacturers that he can then link with the manufacturing businesses and cohort.

Mr. Turok stated that there is information about the cohort on the Chamber website, and they can easily add meeting details. He stated that Mr. LeTourneau does email businesses about the meetings.

Member Howell referenced CO2 and asked if anyone else at CO2 provides services to the Chamber outside of Mr. LeTourneau.

Mr. Turok was unsure. He stated that they contract with CO2 to get the work completed that they need, and that work is completed. He stated that whether that is completed by Mr. LeTourneau or other employees is not a concern of his.

Member Howell asked if the Chamber goes out for RFP to determine if the pricing is competitive.

Mr. Turok replied that they have not.

Member Howell stated that is one concern that she has as to why the contract is run through a firm rather than having Mr. LeTourneau as a contract employee. She referenced a grant awarded to DecoPac in 2017 and asked if the cohort was instrumental in that.

Mr. Turok replied that he does not have the specific details on that. He stated that from the standpoint of a dual grant, he would guess that in 2017, DecoPac did that themselves.

Member Howell stated that it is also a concern that cohort is providing a service that a business could do itself. She stated that it seems that Ramsey businesses are able to do these things themselves and therefore she will not be supporting this action.

Mr. Turok thanked the EDA for the opportunity to have a discussion today.

Member Johnson recognized that some businesses could do those things themselves, but others cannot as applying for a grant is extremely challenging. She stated that many Ramsey businesses are still small and do not have those resources. She stated that she would like to see contributions from all cities that have participation in the cohort but recognizes that there is value provided by the cohort.

Member MacLennan agreed with the comments of Member Johnson. He stated that he deals with a lot of businesses that are overwhelmed and do not have the extra time. He commented that anything that helps those businesses provides assistance.

Member Riley stated that the goal of the EDA is to help businesses and at least 26 Ramsey businesses have been involved with the cohort. He stated that a contribution of \$5,000 provides a great return on the small investment.

Motion by Member Johnson, seconded by Member MacLennan, to recommend that the City continue its \$5,000 contribution to the Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce Manufacturers Cohort.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Steffen	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	nay

Motion carried.

#### **5.04: Consider Creation of an Economic Development Facebook Page**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan presented the staff report.

Member Johnson stated that she understands the purpose of not allowing public comments, as one negative experience from someone does not necessarily need to be shared. She stated that younger people use Instagram much more than Facebook and therefore if this is going to be done, it should be a dual account.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan confirmed that staff could look into that.

Member MacLennan agreed that it would be important to reach out to the younger crowd as well. He stated that the ability to not have public comment is important, noting that posts often get ugly on the Ramsey Community Facebook page.

Member Steffen stated that he understands the intent. He stated that the City of Ramsey Facebook page already has 5,600 followers and advertises for EDA events. He stated that he would prefer to stay with that method rather than creating more work to get less attention.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan agreed it would be more work but stated that it would also allow posts to be more targeted. He stated that perhaps some Ramsey businesses are not following the City page because of the general posts that do not apply to them. He stated that if it is not successful, they could take the page down. He stated that there was a company that the City completed a spotlight on and there were a number of residents that did not have a positive experience with the business and therefore provided negative comments. He stated that this would be a way to highlight businesses without allowing opportunity for people to provide negative comments. He stated that he does not feel strongly that they have to pursue this option, as it was just an idea.

Chairperson Olson stated that his wife has a social media business and in order to have an effective social media presence requires constant effort, otherwise it would go dormant. He believed that the time needed to make it successful may be underestimated. He stated that he does see value in going to social media as tentacles from the City website, with the City website remaining as the main information source. He stated that allowing comments can be dangerous, but perhaps there is an ability for someone to provide a comment or reach out through messenger.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that he would include his contact information on the page and could also include a representative from the EDA if desired. He stated that the goal is not to provide communication, but not to facilitate discussion in a public manner.

Member Johnson commented that at different times of the year businesses would offer different specials and perhaps businesses could submit their information to be shared on the EDA page.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that he would lean towards not doing that as it would be difficult to provide direct advertising for a specific business. He stated that the City offers advertising through the *Ramsey Resident* at a set price. He noted that he also does not want to create that additional work for staff to sift through requests to create advertisements for the Facebook page.

Member Riley stated that he does not have a strong feeling on this but would lean towards using the City Facebook page more. He stated that he would think residents would like to hear more about the business community and the City website already has an established following.

Member Howell agreed with members Riley and Steffen. She stated that if this does go forward, she would ask that the value be measured to determine if there is more participation. She stated that perhaps the City page continue to be used, boosting business information.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that currently there is only one staff member that can post to the City page and noted that another option would be to recommend that Economic Development staff be allowed to post to the City page in order to highlight economic development.

Member MacLennan agreed that it could be helpful to have the ability for Economic Development staff to post on the City page. He stated that if it does move forward, he would want to ensure it does not overburden staff.

Motion by Member MacLennan, seconded by Member Johnson, to recommend that the EDA presence be enhanced on the City Facebook page and to allow EDA staff to add content.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Howell	aye
Member Riley	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Steffen	aye

Motion carried.

## **6. MEMBER / STAFF UPDATE**

### **6.01: Receive Update on Parcel 46 Development Status**

Economic Development Manager Sullivan reviewed the staff report and provided an update on the development status of Parcel 46. Currently Parcel 46 needs fill, wetlands need to be mitigated and stormwater ponds might need to be reconfigured.

Chairperson Olson asked the depth of the water feature.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that he was unsure of the depth but acknowledged that it would be deep.

Chairperson Olson asked how a water feature would be maintained to ensure algae does not grow.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that he also does not have that answer.

Member Riley commented that there are plans for what this eventually look like, noting that the Council has reviewed concepts for the future of this area which could include a splashpad. He stated that this area would collect stormwater but would also be a water feature.

Member MacLennan commented that it would seem to be similar to the water feature in Champlin which keeps water moving and provides a good aesthetic.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that staff has received positive feedback from the business networking event and provided an update on that event.

Member Riley stated that perhaps there be an informational case in the future highlighting partial and full takings for the Highway 10 project and to discuss if there is a role for the EDA to minimize impacts on businesses.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that perhaps someone from the lead agency could make a presentation to the EDA and based on that discussion it could lead to direct recommendations from the EDA.

Member Riley commented that construction in Ramsey is still a ways out so there is not a strong urgency, but he also would not want to wait too long.

Chairperson Olson agreed that timing would be an important element.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator Hagen agreed that it would be helpful to find out about easements and therefore perhaps it would be appropriate to bring it forward in the next few months. He recognized that properties will be impacted in some fashion.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that the EDA has approved the purchase agreement for Parcel 50 and provided an update, noting that the City is working with the County to determine access options. He stated that there will be a requirement for a turn lane from Ramsey Boulevard and believes the developer will request a cost-share for that in the future, noting that would be worked out in the development agreement. He stated that the developer does have two tenants that would be ready to go once those details are known.

Member Steffen asked for an update on PACT Charter School and RGH.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan stated that PACT Charter School is looking at a site adjacent to Central Park at this time and anticipates a site plan application coming forward in the near future.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator Hagen stated that PACT has submitted a request for a Comprehensive Plan amendment and rezoning, as the parcel is currently zoned for residential use. He stated that a sketch plan has also been submitted for review that will go before the Planning Commission on February 24<sup>th</sup>, with a public open house to take place prior to that meeting.

Member Steffen asked if that is a Katherine Drexel site or whether that would include some City owned land.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan confirmed that it is a site owned by Katherine Drexel and therefore would need to be split in order to accommodate for both the church and school use. He stated that in regard to RGH, the City has been working with a commercial grocer on the site and has received a preliminary site plan that staff has provided feedback to the developer. He stated that once a location is determined that would not make the remnant parcels unusable, they would move forward with site plan.

Member Riley stated that it would be a good idea to provide a presentation to the EDA on the potential sports dome in the future.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that is very early in the process and therefore it would be premature to bring that to this group. He stated that once that is further along in the process, the association would likely be able provide a presentation to the EDA.

Member Riley recognized some zoning and ordinance changes that were adopted by the Council recently and asked staff to provide an update.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator Hagen provided an update on recent ordinance and zoning changes that were made in anticipation of future requests.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Member MacLennan, seconded by Member Johnson, to adjourn the meeting.

A roll call vote was performed:

Member Steffen	aye
Member MacLennan	aye
Member Johnson	aye
Chairperson Olson	aye
Member Riley	aye
Member Howell	aye

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Economic Development Authority adjourned at 9:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sean Sullivan  
Economic Development Manager

ATTEST:

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Wendy Schlueter  
Economic Development Administrative Assistant

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

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