

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, February 14, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:     Acting Mayor Chris Riley  
                            Councilmember Chelsee Howell – attended remotely  
                            Councilmember Debra Musgrove  
                            Councilmember Michael Olson  
                            Councilmember Dan Specht  
                            Councilmember Matt Woestehoff

Members Absent:     Mayor Kuzma

Also Present:         City Administrator Brian Hagen  
                            City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby  
                            Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood  
                            Planning Manager Todd Larson  
                            City Attorney Fritz Knaak  
                            Police Chief Jeff Katers  
                            Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Craig Swalchick  
                            Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson  
                            City Clerk Katie Schmidt

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2.     TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01:   Discussion on Rental Licensing Inspections**

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick reviewed the Staff report in regard to proactive rental licensing inspections as part of the Crime-Free Housing plan. He shared that Ramsey has over 1,000 apartment units and over 500 single family and townhomes. He explained that a proactive inspection program will prevent residents from having to file complaints in order for fixes and repairs to be completed. He discussed the benefits for not only the residents but also the landlords.

Acting Mayor Riley asked how often they anticipate inspections to take place for all housing.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick stated that they would have to dive into this and it would be dependent on inspectors time. He gave examples of inspection schedules in other cities.

He said that they would want to highlight the troubled areas and the areas with good landlords to determine the areas that would need more frequent inspections.

Acting Mayor Riley asked if this would be done in conjunction with the Crime-Free Housing Plan.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick said he would like to work together with Crime-Free Housing as a team.

Councilmember Specht asked he they anticipate needing to hire more inspectors or if this will be outsourced.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick stated that it would be wise to hire another inspector as this would allow for someone to be devoted to the rental housing inspections.

Councilmember Specht said that he is in favor of this, as long as there is Staff in place to carry this out effectively.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick stated that the building inspection department would be completely separate from what happens with the rental inspections. He reiterated the importance and benefit of having a full time person on these rental inspections.

Councilmember Musgrove thanked Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick for all of the information he has provided. She asked if he could continue to provide new numbers as the process moves along. She asked about the cost in regard to the license fee. She thinks that funding would need to be discussed before bringing on another inspector. She does not want the inspectors to take on too much of the role that residents should be doing, such as first contacting their landlord.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick stated that he always asked residents if they have spoken to their landlord or management when he is out for a rental inspection and they almost always say that the issue has been reported and nothing has been done about it.

Councilmember Olson asked if the inspections would be on a schedule and there would be no surprise visits.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick said yes. He shared the goals of setting meeting times with landlords, who by law have to give notice before entering a property for an inspection.

Councilmember Olson asked about the scheduling for less problematic and more problematic areas and if this will be written into the code.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick explained that this will require future planning and discussions.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if part of this is also to enhance the inspection of multi-family units, initially or at renewal, and asked if multi-family units are inspected annually.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick explained that the renewal license is for every three years. He stated that these rental inspections coincide with fire inspections.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if there are some efficiencies as of cost for these multi-family units.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick said the financial aspect will be gone through in the future. He stated the goal that the fee burden is covering the cost of the safety inspections and the time that police, fire and code enforcement would be involved.

Councilmember Specht asked how Airbnb's relate to this as short term rentals.

Zoning Code Enforcement Officer Swalchick explained that these short term rentals are required to be licensed and they would be treated the same as a single family home.

There was a consensus of the Council.

## **2.02: Review Highlights of Certain Cost Savings Resulting from the new Public Works Facility.**

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the Staff report and all operational and cost efficiencies related to the new Public Works building. He thanked the Council for investing in this building.

Acting Mayor Riley asked if there was a total dollar value of these cost savings.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that some of the numbers are unquantifiable so there is no official total. He said that if the Council would find it beneficial they can run some numbers.

Councilmember Musgrove said it is great to see these cost savings. She asked if there was any training that was needed to accommodate the in house repairs that are now done. She also asked about the spacing of the crane.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that the crane travels to the end of the bay and can be moved. He discussed the current mechanic that does most of the repairs and said he is great at what he does, so there has been no extra training involved in this.

There was a consensus of the Council.

## **2.03: Discuss Council Organizational Terms on Boards and Commissions**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report and provided updates on the previous discussion regarding the Ordinance language for Councilmembers serving on the EDA. He shared Staff's recommendation to have the EDA terms coincide with the Council terms.

Councilmember Musgrove shared that her understanding was that the EDA term already coincided with Council terms. She thinks that this is a good idea.

Councilmember Olson agreed that this is a good move to make the terms more clear.

Acting Mayor Riley said that making this clear is the most important.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if State statute sets the EDA terms and if the Council could potential update the length of terms for non-Councilmembers.

City Attorney Knaak explained that the Council cannot change these terms.

The consensus of the Council was to make EDA terms for Councilmember coincide with their Council terms.

City Administrator Hagen noted that Councilmember Musgrove requested a further discussion on the terms of other boards and commissions terms.

Councilmember Musgrove reviewed the boards and commissions that have two year terms and asked if Council wanted to keep these terms or break the two year appointments up more.

Councilmember Specht said it would make sense to leave them at two years since that is the length of the election cycles.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed with Councilmember Specht that the terms should stay as two year terms. He stated that the bylaws for these organizations may require two year terms. He added that it takes some time to get used to being on these boards.

Acting Mayor Riley suggested clarifying which boards and commissions have two year terms.

There was a consensus of the Council.

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

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

Noted.

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

None.

### **5. ADJOURNMENT**

The Work Session of the City Council was adjourned at 6:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian S. Hagen  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
City Clerk

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