

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby  
Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood  
Administrative Services Director Colleen Lasher  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak  
Streets Supervisor Shane Turner

**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: Attorney-Client Privileged Discussion of Litigation: PSD Holdings, LLC v. City of Ramsey - Closed to the Public**

City Administrator Hagen stated that they will be moving to closed session to discuss the litigation of PSD Holdings, LLC v. City of Ramsey.

The City Council Work Session moved to closed session at 5:31 p.m.

The City Council Work Session moved to open session at 5:53 p.m.

**2.02: Discuss New Personnel Request for Full-Time Public Works Administrative Assistant**

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the Staff report concerning the request for a new full-time public works administrative assistant. He highlighted the need for this administrative assistant and discussed the budgetary impact of this position. He stated that he would like to start recruiting for this position right away.

Mayor Kuzma stated that when they removed the interim part of his role it seemed as though everything was going well and being managed well. He thanked City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby for coming forward with this request.

Councilmember Specht said that he sees the need for this role. He asked if the City will be adding a lot of other positions this year and how all of these things will fit into the budget.

City Administrator Hagen stated that this is the only new 2023 Staff addition that is expected to happen. He added that there might be new positions needed in Community Development and finance next year. He guessed that there would be, at most, five new positions next year.

Councilmember Specht reiterated that he is for this new role but wants to make sure it will fit into the budget.

Councilmember Riley stated that there was an overall savings in Public Works when City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby took over. He clarified that they would be building in this increase for next year.

Councilmember Musgrove appreciated that City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby was looking at different departments where these funds could come from. She added that there is a built in increase for the water treatment plant. She noted that looking at the job description she is not sure how one person will be able to handle all of the responsibilities. She asked where this person would be throughout the day to do all of this work.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that there are a lot of duties for this position and that he would like for this person to sit at the front desk at Public Works. He stated that all onboarding and training would be introduced on the job.

Councilmember Specht stated that the grant could bring in some funds as well.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked what the year two costs will be.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that the costs are in the packet and they do include insurance.

Councilmember Howell stated that she would be curious what the added expense would be to house this person at Public Works.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that they have been looking at options for where this person would work from without adding much of a cost. He stated that the desk where the current Administrative Assistant sits is open to everything and where people walk by which is not the most efficient for work.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with hiring for a new full-time Public Works Administrative Assistant.

### **2.03: Considering Public Art Opportunities**

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the Staff report concerning pursuing more opportunities for informed public art. He stated that there are aspects of this that was discussed at the Strategic Planning meeting. He asked Council for feedback and direction on the Public Art Plan and Policy, Whimsical Sculptural Carving of Two Oaks at Sunfish Lake Park, and the Women Veterans Memorial.

Mayor Kuzma stated that we would like to talk about the Ramsey Foundation.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that there was an \$8,000 pledge for public art.

Jill Johns stated that she was the treasurer of the Foundation and the \$8,000 has been reserved for public art and the Foundation is ready to help fund this. She stated that a big tie in for this is working with Economic Development and the Foundation came up with the focus of the next few years to be public art. She noted the importance of creating beautiful art pieces, not only for residents, but also for businesses. She shared that she has done some traveling to other cities and has found beautiful examples of the type of art that they are wishing to bring to Ramsey. She added that the Foundation is prepared to help with the community engagement side of this and would love to have a booth at Happy Days and at the Art Fair. She emphasized the importance of these art features within the City. She stated that this can also help set up for grant opportunities in the future. She added that the Foundation is committed and have the funds available to assist.

Councilmember Howell asked if they are considering this public art to be more sculptures or if they are open to anything that would enhance the City.

Ms. Johns stated that it will depend on how the plan shakes out, as this will be a City plan.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there was someone in mind to do this art.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that for the public engagement aspect of this it is important to hear from the public on what kind of art they would like to see in the City. He added that there is not a capacity to develop this at the Staff level, which is why they would be utilizing the funds from the Foundation. He stated that this would align with Council's desire to have a policy in place for some of these decisions before they arise.

Councilmember Howell asked the tax revenue of St. Paul and how much they are investing in the arts program.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that he was not sure but assumes it is a large amount.

Councilmember Howell noted that she loves art and sees the importance. She added that she does not see a huge call from residents for more public art. She stated she would not want this to

become publicly funded art, she would prefer to see privately funded art where the City provides space for this.

Ms. Johns agreed and stated that other cities do this and there are many examples of this. She reiterated the importance of putting a plan in place for this and then the City can look at requests that come forward on a case-by-case basis.

Councilmember Specht brought up when the snow plows were painted and how much kids in the community enjoyed that.. He agreed that the aesthetics of the City are important. He stated that he would not like to see money from the budget used to fund the art.

Mayor Kuzma stated that if the Foundation can provide the funds then they can look for opportunities and can fundraise for particular projects.

Ms. Johns shared that she attends the Elmcrest Art Fair every year and every year it continues to grow and the turnout is great at the event.

Councilmember Musgrove thanked Ms. Johns for coming out and sharing this with the Council. She reiterated what she shared at the Strategic Planning meeting, that roads need to be emphasized. She stated that art is good for the City; however, there are other things that could use City time and funds at the current time.

Mayor Kuzma clarified that this would not be something that would fall on City Staff, it would be outsourced.

Councilmember Riley shared that every time something is built or rebuilt there is an opportunity to add some art features.

Councilmember Howell shared that she loves art but the City has been far behind with roads that she would rather see this program start slow rather than bringing in the plan right away to be spending revenue and Staff time.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood mentioned that there would be some Staff time involved in this.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood shared that one way to move forward is for the Foundation to have a booth at the art fair or at other community events to get feedback from the community on their thoughts on public art.

Councilmember Musgrove said that is a good idea; however, it would get a biased outcome by asking people at an art fair if they value art. She asked if there could be a booth at other City events. She shared that she appreciates art but the City currently has other priorities.

Councilmember Howell suggested soliciting wealthier members of the City to help fund some of these projects.

Ms. Johns stated that they will be doing fundraising but the plan and the support of the City are needed priority to going out to fundraise.

Councilmember Olson expressed the importance of art in a society. He agreed that the City can support the plan but have it funded by private parties or business. He stated that he would be in favor of supporting a plan if it was more of a plan of seeing how this would develop while not committing time and money to the plan as a City.

Ms. Johns stated that this is why they need a plan as it would be more difficult to seek outside funding without the support of the City.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there was a consensus to continue with the \$8,000 donation.

Councilmember Howell stated that she is concerned with this dollar amount as it is a very small amount. She said she would like to see more structure surrounding this before they move forward with the donation.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if someone comes to the City now wishing to donate a bench or a sign at a park, what does the City do now if there is no plan in place. She agreed with Councilmember Howell that this seems slightly premature considering the other priorities of the City.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained the current process and that there was a recent request for a bench and Parks and Recreation Specialist Martinez-Flynn worked on this. He shared that, from Staff's perspective, it is acceptable to put a pause on this, although it is a very nice opportunity for public engagement.

Councilmember Specht shared that his only concern is with timing. He stated that Staff is overwhelmed at this time and would not want to throw this on Staff.

Councilmember Riley suggested putting a reasonable timeline on this.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood to discuss the desired timeline.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood shared he anticipated that this would stretch out over the next year. He said that Council could respectfully tell the Foundation that they are interested in public art but would like to see this develop further.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood requested direction on the two oak trees at Sunfish Lake Park, which died a few years ago. He stated the Parks and Recreation Commission recommended to Council that they consider authorizing that there be the subject of two chainsaw sculptures. He stated that the cost for removing the trees would be \$5,000 and the cost for chainsaw art is \$8,400.

Mayor Kuzma asked if there was a funding source for this.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the funding source would be in the park trust fund.

Councilmember Specht asked what the sculptures would be of.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the sketches are in the packet.

Councilmember Musgrove asked Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood if there were still four different options for this as was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the sculpture will have different things on each side.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would like to have more discussion on what options could be for the sculptures. She asked if the sculpture would be blue.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood said yes.

Councilmember Musgrove added that naturally coloring would blend more in the park.

Councilmember Howell stated that she is not in favor of publicly funded art and would prefer a more naturally colored sculpture.

Councilmember Specht stated that he would like to see different designs in the sculptures.

Councilmember Musgrove added that the natural colorings would endure more over time. She stated that she is undecided with her support.

The consensus of the Council was to table this discussion.

### **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 6:55 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.*

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a Closed Session on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kuzma called the Closed Session of the City Council to order at 5:31 p.m.

**2. COUNCIL BUSINESS**

**2.01: Attorney-Client Privileged Discussion of Litigation: PSD Holdings, LLC v. City of Ramsey - Closed to the Public**

Hoff Barry Attorney Justin Templin discussed the lawsuit being brought against the City by PSD Holdings.

**3. ADJOURNMENT**

The Closed Session was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Brian S. Hagen  
City Administrator

ATTEST:

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Katie M. Schmidt  
City Clerk

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*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*