

**PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Public Works Committee conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Chris Riley
 Councilmember Debra Musgrove
 Councilmember Matt Woestehoff

Also Present: City Engineer/Public Works Director Bruce Westby
 Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood
 City Administrator Brian Hagen
 Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Riley called the regular meeting of the Public Works Committee to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was none.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to approve the agenda, removing Item 5.1 and postponing that to the next meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Musgrove and Woestehoff.
Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve January 17, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Councilmember Musgrove noted that Brian Hagen was not present at the meeting and should be removed.

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to approve the following minutes as amended:

Regular Meeting Minutes dated January 17, 2023

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Musgrove and Woestehoff.
Voting No: None.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

~~5.01: Receive Presentation on CSAH 5 (Nowthen Boulevard) Corridor Traffic Study~~

Item postponed to the next meeting.

5.02: Review COR Analysis Update

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided an update on the status of the COR analysis update.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided more information on the waterfront excavation and mass site grading of undeveloped land which could be funded through TIF. He provided more information on wetlands and potential mitigation.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked the balance of that TIF District, acknowledging that there are other eligible improvements that could be done with those funds as well.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided clarification on eligible and ineligible TIF expenses. He stated that the City is currently working with Ehlers to update the analysis on the TIF District and eligible balance. He hoped that work would be done before this moves forward to the City Council.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for clarification on the wetlands.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan identified the higher value wetlands that would require more mitigation efforts. He also provided additional background information on the changes made in 2016 to the wetland rules.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the wetland marked in teal is part of the stormwater pond/area and whether that would remain in place with development.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that is an incidental wetland and could be moved.

City Administrator Hagen commented that the wetlands marked in red are historic whereas the wetlands marked in blue are created/incidental and could be filled.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided more details on potential development, where access could be provided, and the different concepts that could be considered that would keep/eliminate different wetlands.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that this comes down to the ultimate priorities. He stated that the waterfront is a completely worthwhile investment for this entire area and will spur more development. He stated that perhaps the fill could be moved to a site so that it is available for the developer to use in the future.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that dirt piles can be stored but then there will be questions from residents if it is left for long periods of time. He stated that fill is needed in the entire area, not just the holes to bring it up to grade. He stated that there has been development interest that does not move forward because of the unknowns with the cost for fill and potential wetland impacts. He stated that the Council needs to determine how much it is willing to spend, and when that should occur in order to spur development.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that in terms of priorities, he would think the Council would want to move all the soil that needs to be moved right away, even if they do not move forward with the infrastructure improvements because of the cost of mobilization and dewatering.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed. He stated that if they can make investments and improvements that benefit future development, perhaps the developer is willing to invest more. He stated that he would like to see a path where the developer takes on more costs as well. He stated that if the hotel, Aldis, and the waterfront improvements are completed, that will most likely spur more development. He believed that parcel 46 will be a problem for a long time and therefore the question is whether that is left for the future.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the scenario that the City completes the dirt work and makes parcel 46 into a development ready site, keeping wetland two, and asked if the City would be reimbursed through higher sale purchase of that property. She stated that she would support that scenario.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the road has been shifted south and therefore that creates more space for housing than previously discussed in the concept of mixed use. He stated that if the wetlands are not able to be filled that would reduce the number of housing units that could be created. He stated that there will need to be discussion as to how many housing units would be needed to make a residential development feasible.

Councilmember Woestehoff noted that it would then seem that in order to keep the wetlands in what they would assume would be residential development, it would need to be an apartment to be feasible.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that it would not need to be an apartment and could be attached or detached townhomes, depending how the roads are laid out. He noted that a portion of the site could be an apartment in order to reach the number to make a project feasible.

Chairperson Riley commented that they have been waiting for the wetland delineation in order to make these decisions.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the results turned out worse than they were expecting in terms of mitigation.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the City sells wetland credits.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the City has 1.7 acres in banked credits available. He explained that those credits can be used for road projects to mitigate impacts as well.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that those credits have been saved for years in anticipation of these projects.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that the last time they checked, the cost per acre for wetland credits was \$128,000. He stated that some of these wetland become expensive because one acre of mitigation would have a financial cost of two acres of credits. He stated that the waterfront is only going to be dug once and therefore anything the City does not do at this time will be a future cost of a developer.

Chairperson Riley asked for input on priority.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided details on the hotel project and proposed access points. He stated that the profile of Zeolite needs to be determined so that access can be properly created. He noted another site with development potential, as well as the waterfront that would require realignment of Center Street. He believed that those roadway improvements should be considered.

City Administrator Hagen stated that this study looked at this area as a whole. He noted that Veterans Drive would have the right-in/right-out created with the Highway 10 project and the remainder of the site is up to grade and is in essence shovel ready. He stated that most of the benefit would be in the western side of the COR and around the waterfront area.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that this study provides a lot of information and more tasks than could be done in one year. She asked for details on the number of priorities that could be accomplished. She agreed that if the hotel is coming in and wants to access off Zeolite, that should then be a priority. She also agreed that Center Street should be a priority because of the waterfront. She stated that if the digging and fill for parcel 46 is also included, that would be three big projects and asked if that would take multiple years.

City Administrator Hagen stated that priority one would focus on this year and TIF eligible expenses. He asked and received confirmation that the TIF funds would need to be spent by November. He stated that they should choose projects that they can complete this year before winter. He noted that the waterfront improvements would be TIF eligible.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that it would be helpful to know which expenses are TIF eligible and which ones could be completed. She noted that this is a lot of information and a lot of projects and having that additional information would help to create priorities.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that any new road that will be constructed would be TIF eligible. He stated that putting utilities under the road would be TIF eligible. He noted that the majority of the expenses would be TIF eligible with the exception of park improvements and road overlays. He stated that currently the TIF will expire in November 2023 and therefore they need to focus on that work. He stated that if the TIF is extended, they could review more but would agree to focus on Zeolite and Center Street because those developers are here now. He stated that the next process could be to develop plans and specifications for Center Street and Zeolite. He stated that they could also haul the dirt across Zeolite now, before it is constructed.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that this is a lot of material to move and asked if it would be achievable. He noted that perhaps the grading plans could be created, and a dewatering contractor secured because that project could take about six months to complete. He stated that this would not be a small-scale dewatering project.

Councilmember Musgrove asked how long the approval process would be for wetland mitigation if the fill is moved and one or more wetlands are filled.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that with the developer interest in the area, it would be helpful to hear from developers to find out more information on whether a project would be financially feasible with the wetland there. He stated that when they work through the process with a contractor, they could include some of that work as add on's because they may not have time to get through the WMO process.

Councilmember Musgrove did not recall approving credits as part of the WMO process.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby explained that other entities are involved in the review, but the ultimate review would be done by the WMO.

Chairperson Riley commented that it seems the priority would be to move the dirt and focus on the two roads.

Councilmember Woestehoff agreed but asked what would be feasible to complete by November as it is already February.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that the street design could be completed under that TIF window to tee that project up for the next year. He noted that would keep the projects moving.

Chairperson Riley asked if there is design needed for the excavation.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided an update on the plans that are available and additional design work that would be needed, noting that it could be completed in under two months. He stated that if the wetlands are not in the initial phase, they would probably be fine with the volume.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if lot C would be filled or whether that would be a developer task.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan provided details on the hotel project, noting that the developer assumes they would bring in their own fill at this time.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that there are two areas where less fill could be needed if the City sold the dirt, or the City could use the dirt itself.

Chairperson Riley commented that it seems the priority would be excavation and moving the fill and then Zeolite and Center Street as feasible.

City Administrator Hagen asked for details on Ramsey Parkway as that is kind of a cut through and near the waterfront.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if Ramsey Parkway would be fourth on the list.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan replied that he would agree for the western arm of Ramsey Parkway and reviewed different development potential in that area.

City Administrator Hagen noted that it would be helpful for the TIF District to be extended.

Chairperson Riley asked if there has been an all staff meeting on this topic to ensure everything is being considered.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that they are going to have a meeting to discuss that, and what could be completed within the TIF window.

City Administrator Hagen confirmed that once the information from the analysis is completed, they are going to have a staff meeting to determine what could be done.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if the available TIF funding is \$2,000,000 or \$20,000,000 or whether there is any sense of the available balance. He stated that if the available balance is less than the cost to move the dirt, that may change his opinion.

City Administrator Hagen stated that if the goal is to have the COR pay for itself, they need to determine if that is feasible. He stated that some of the development that has come was not anticipated. He stated that the analysis will provide those more accurate numbers so they can make those decisions.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that the Sapphire development did not use TIF funds and was not in the TIF projections but will generate TIF funds for the next 20 years. He stated that there are some scenarios that he provided on potential development and the impacts that would have on TIF going forward that will be included in the Ehlers presentation. He estimated between \$2,000,000 and \$12,000,000 that may be unallocated depending on what development is projected and what comes. He stated that if the Waterfront is excavated and the dirt is placed and

that is all that could be done, that still creates 20 acres of land that could be ready for development therefore there are benefits created by only moving the dirt. He noted that also begins the Waterfront project, which is important.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the soil boring chart was included and shows that this dirt that would be excavated would be excellent fill, so that is a known factor.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the status of the TIF extension request to the legislature.

City Administrator Hagen stated that it is at the revisor's office with many other bills and is drafted to be an amendment rather than a new bill. He stated that if the City also has a plan and is ready to act, as they are developing, that will also help at the legislature. He stated that once they have this information, they will be requested committee hearings.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that if it would be helpful, the Council could call members of the legislature.

City Administrator Hagen summarized the priorities and next steps as confirmed by the consensus of the Committee.

Councilmember Musgrove requested more bookmarks to be inserted to make The COR Analysis document easier to navigate.

5.03: Review HY-10 Ramsey Improvements Feasibility Study

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the status of the HY-10 Ramsey Improvements Feasibility Study.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that generically that makes sense. He asked if option two is cheaper because it does not include land acquisition and asked if that would connect to the driveway for the new West Armstrong Retail development.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby confirmed that there would be a drive access into that street.

City Administrator Hagen commented that the cul-de-sac would redo what exists today.

Councilmember Woestehoff referenced the proposed concrete walk, noting that there is very little and asked if the developers would take on additional portions along their undeveloped parcels.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby confirmed that to be correct.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that staff wanted to ensure a connection from the ARAA dome to the COR and it was not yet determined if additional sidewalk would be needed, depending on what development occurs. He noted that there might be something planned

to go along Armstrong and did not necessarily think it was planned to have sidewalks fully throughout this area.

Councilmember Woestehoff commented that he would support the sidewalk connection to the COR but also the north/south connection because of the new homes in the vicinity. He noted that perhaps kids will be biking to the dome in the summer. He confirmed the segment he would be thinking of would be along Ferret.

City Administrator Hagen noted that there is not sidewalk or trail along the south side of Bunker, and he would not want to promote a mid-walk crossing. He stated that there is trail on the east side of Armstrong, along with stoplights to allow safer pedestrian crossing. He noted that additional sidewalk could be added as it seems to make sense.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she does support the safe crossing for pedestrians to get to the COR. She asked if the parcels are zoned commercial or COR.

City Administrator Hagen stated the east of Ferret is COR and west is E-3.

Chairperson Riley stated that the EDA discussed the ponding and asked if there would be a reason to go larger on the ponding if ARAA does not want to participate.

City Administrator Hagen stated that they looked at that extensively and the dome project was the largest component and wants to provide ponding onsite, therefore larger regional ponding would not provide the same benefit.

Chairperson Riley asked for details on assessment. He asked how the City would justify assessment for the project when it has removed assessments from other road projects.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that the City does have a special assessment policy and the ability to assess. He noted that does not address the question of justification.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he does not feel it prudent for Ferret Street or 146th as it exists, but where the new road is created, that could have assessment opportunity because it is a new road being created. He also acknowledged that new extension would benefit that entire area. He stated that he most likely would not want to assess for the project.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that right-of-way will need to be acquired to make that connection.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that she would support putting in the road and not assessing the existing properties but perhaps deferring an assessment for future development of parcels. She stated that this would be a City led project that provides value for future development.

Chairperson Riley asked if that would be possible.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that there can be a deferred assessment and provided a past example. He stated that staff could further explore that potential.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that if the City is trying to secure right-of-way for no cost, it would be difficult to add on a deferred assessment.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the right-of-way would need to be purchased.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that there is some easement, but not a road easement. He noted another deferred assessment situation, noting that although finance does not prefer that method, it has been used in the past.

Chairperson Riley commented that there could be some merit to the deferred assessment concept.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby commented that it seems there is agreement in connecting to Bunker Lake Boulevard.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan asked if the group is comfortable building the project this year.

Chairperson Riley asked if engineering could handle that task.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that Bolton & Menk is working on the plans currently and is at 90 percent completion. He stated that plan development is being funded through the PIR fund and the funding for the road project is yet to be determined, which is why there were discussing the possibility of assessment. He stated that it seems there is consensus not to assess the current properties.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the assessment could be used in negotiation for the purchase of right-of-way.

City Administrator Hagen confirmed that could be done, explaining that otherwise the parties would just be handing checks back and forth for the different costs.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that it would be worth it to determine what an assessment might look like and compare that to the purchase of right-of-way costs. She stated that she would be interested in seeing the full option for the project, but also narrowed down to just the new portion of the road.

Chairperson Riley stated that the City has eliminated assessments first with the franchise fee and then changing that to being on the tax roll, therefore he would feel uncomfortable assessing for the road project.

Councilmember Musgrove acknowledged that point but stated that with development the cost of roads is assessed.

Chairperson Riley stated that he could entertain the idea of assessment for the new road, but not reconstruction of the existing road.

City Administrator Hagen identified the parcels that would be assessed under that scenario because the other parcels have access to roads.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that he would prefer to move this project forward this year to ensure people are not driving on a dirt road to reach the dome. He commented that it would be similar to his concerns for other roads leading to parks that draw outside users as that sets the tone of a road in poor condition to access a great park. He stated that he could not imagine that the City would gain much in assessment of a few parcels and compared that to the low value that would be gained for those properties to have that access.

Councilmember Musgrove asked how the new road related to PACT and the new school being built. It was noted that PACT was not assessed for that project.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that fixing Ferret Street is not caused by specific development as it already exists and the City is just improving it, similar to the PACT scenario.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the time and energy it would take staff to determine what an assessment would be, to determine whether that task is necessary.

Chairperson Riley asked if staff could easily decide whether or not an assessment would make sense.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that staff could put their best effort forward as there is good data available for comparison of Sunwood Drive. He noted that staff could make an educated guess.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan commented that running sewer and water down the road increases the value of the land significantly. He stated that is being done throughout the entire area. He noted that without the utilities he would argue that the dome could not be built as it would require a large septic system without that.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby noted that the utilities cannot be run without redoing the road.

City Administrator Hagen noted that he would estimate the right-of-way acquisition would be very similar to the assessment cost.

Councilmember Woestehoff appreciated the thought of saying the City needs the land to build the road and uses that as a negotiation, saying that if the land is provided there would be no assessment for the project.

5.04: Recommend City Council Approval of Plans and Authorization to Advertise Bids for 2023 Crackseal Improvements

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the staff report and recommended City Council approval of plans and authorization to advertise bids for City Improvement Project #23-08, 2023 Crackseal Improvements.

Chairperson Riley asked if Bowers Drive is a six that is trying to limp along.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that they did do some targeted mill and overlay last year. He stated that Bowers Drive is not currently proposed for a reconstruction or overlay.

Councilmember Musgrove asked the average number of miles done per year.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westy replied that each year about 15 to 25 miles.

Motion by Councilmember Musgrove, seconded by Councilmember Woestehoff, to recommend City Council approval of plans and authorization to advertise bids for City Improvement Project #23-08, 2023 Crackseal Improvements.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Riley, Councilmembers Musgrove and Woestehoff. Voting No: None.

Chairperson Riley asked if a similar case would come forward for spray patching.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that staff is currently developing the proposed plan for spray patching. He noted that a mill and overlay would be more cost-effective on some roads. He explained that spray patching does not hold up for more than one or two years.

6. COMMITTEE / STAFF INPUT

6.01: Staff Updates on Improvement Projects and Items of Interest

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided an update on improvement projects and other items of interest to the Committee.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there would be value to holding several open house meetings on the same night or combining them.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby replied that the project details are specific to the street and therefore they would not combine them together, but they do attempt to schedule some for the same night, just at different times. He confirmed that he could provide the Council with the list of open house meetings if they would like to attend for projects within their ward.

Chairperson Riley noted that the 180th drainage issues is not on this list.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that he spoke with the property owner last week and alerted them that once the plans are ready in one- or two-weeks staff would speak with the property owner before bringing it forward to the Committee. He noted that he will update the corridor study on the calendar and will bring that forward in March or April depending on County availability.

Councilmember Woestehoff asked if it would be feasible to add a flashing crosswalk near the elementary school.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby stated that he did not see that mentioned in the study presentation provided by the County.

Councilmember Woestehoff stated that many families park across the street and walk over and that will increase next year with Franklin closing and additional students being added to Ramsey Elementary.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided additional details on the elementary school segment of the road, noting that it is not well addressed but is mentioned in the CSAH 5 study.

6.02: Review Future Topics Calendar

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby reviewed the future topics calendar.

Chairperson Riley commented that he would like to see dates added to some more items.

City Engineer/Public Works Director Westby provided additional details on the status of certain items and stated that he will assign dates when possible.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Woestehoff, seconded by Councilmember Musgrove, to adjourn the Public Works Committee meeting.

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the Public Works Committee adjourned at 7:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Westby
City Engineer/Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.