

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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a City Council Work Session on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Mayor Ryan Heineman  
Councilmember Kirsten Buscher  
Councilmember Michael Olson  
Councilmember Eric Peters  
Councilmember Chris Riley (attended remotely)  
Councilmember Dan Specht  
Councilmember Shanna Stewart

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen  
Planning Manager Todd Larson  
Economic Development Manager Sean Sullivan  
City Attorney Fritz Knaak  
City Clerk Katie Schmidt

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2. TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION**

**2.01: Review of CorTrust Bank Site Plan and Acquisition of Property in the COR**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the CorTrust Bank site plan. He shared that this item was being brought forward again for the new Council to consider.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan reviewed the project for the new Councilmembers.

Dean Suchy, CorTrust Bank, came forward and shared that they had made a few changes to the proposed plan since this was last brought to the Council. He noted that there were concerns with the drive-thru, which they have now decreased to two drive-thrus. He added that they would also likely look to sell the small retail parcel to another developer.

Councilmember Specht said he does not have any concerns with CorTrust Bank itself; however, he does have concerns with this being a very prime spot within the City and that this bank would take up a lot of space on the lot and would limit what could be on the smaller parcel.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that they have worked with the bank and they are looking at pushing the building right up against the road and this would limit how the lot can

be laid out. He said this building will have a one-and-a-half story look and will look much better than the daycare and the other buildings in the area. He noted that he thinks the bank would fit perfectly in this location. He shared that the bank has spent around \$80,000 to get this in front of the Council as they want to be here in Ramsey.

Councilmember Olson shared that he sees a bank as an anchor for a city and he thinks CorTrust Bank having a prime location in the City is appropriate. He asked what kind of traffic is caused by a bank. He noted that most people do a majority of their banking on their phones.

Mr. Suchy explained that the traffic at a certain bank depends on its location. He said some banks have pretty steady traffic and others do not. He stated he could not use any other locations as a reference as all locations are different. He noted that the most similar location would be the Anoka location, and he could get some traffic numbers and report those back to the Council.

Councilmember Riley stated that this is a local business that very clearly wants to be in Ramsey and has brought this forward again showing their determination. He added that they have made many changes to their original plan including moving an exit and having a plan for the excess land that will be held. He shared that he supported this in the past and will continue to support this now.

Councilmember Peters added that he believes this would be a great addition to Ramsey, especially with the apartments and other housing developments in the area within walking distance.

Councilmember Buscher asked what CorTrust thinks they will be able to bring to the City.

Mr. Suchy said that one of the things that they can bring to the table is that they are very involved in the communities that they serve. He stated that CorTrust has been around for almost 100 years so they can also bring stability as a family-owned bank.

Councilmember Stewart asked what the checks and balances will be on the retail space to ensure it matches the aesthetics of the bank and the hotel.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan explained that they have strict development standards in the COR that ensure that the buildings in the area meet the architectural standards of the COR. He stated that the retail space will have to be used by a business that fits within the COR framework.

Mayor Heineman shared that he agrees with Councilmember Specht on this as the COR is the prime location within the City and once it has been developed, it is pigeonholed with what they have developed. He added that he has not heard from residents that they want a bank in the COR; however, he has heard that they want restaurants, retail spaces, and shopping. He asked if the Council will have any say in what goes into the retail space.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan said that they would not be able to regulate what kind of business would go in this space as any business that is permitted within the COR zoning district could go in this space. He explained that they could put a restrictive deed that could disallow

potential uses; however, they would have to list out every use they would not want to see in this area.

Councilmember Stewart said that even though the space will be small, there would still be room for a restaurant.

Councilmember Olson asked if the restrictive deed is something that could come from the City or the property owner.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan said it would come from the City when they would deed the property to the property owner. He shared that they have looked at the City keeping this land; however, the thought process is that the bank will be putting in all of the infrastructure for access to the site and the City would not spend any money on the infrastructure.

Councilmember Riley noted that having a restrictive deed would give the City some more control over what the retail space on the property would be; however, that is not his preference.

Economic Development Manager Sullivan asked if the City would be able to retain the smaller lot that would be used for retail space.

Planning Manager Larson said they would just have to find some kind of business that could fit within the space as there are no minimum lot sizes in the COR.

Mr. Suchy stated they would prefer for the City to keep the smaller lot as they are not in the development businesses and would not want to worry about the smaller lot.

Councilmember Buscher asked Mr. Suchy if there is any kind of establishment they would not want next to the bank.

Mr. Suchy shared that any kind of restaurant would be ideal in this space and there are not any types of establishments he would not like to see.

The consensus of the Council was to direct Staff to continue to work with CorTrust Bank to work through the land use application process and replatting the land for the City to retain the smaller parcel.

## **2.02: Discuss Council Organization**

City Clerk Schmidt reviewed the Staff report concerning the Council organization and determining the committees, boards, authorities, or other groups to which Councilmembers will be appointed, as well as the appointments for the official newspaper, approval of the annual contract with TimeSavers Off-Site Secretarial Service (TOSS), and appointment of legal services.

Councilmember Specht shared that two different residents had approached him concerning Doctor Barth who had poor experiences with him and did not want him to be associated with the City.

Councilmember Riley noted that Doctor Long, the City's previous physician, was his physician before he retired. He shared that he asked Doctor Long's opinion on a new City physician after his retirement to which Doctor Long suggested Doctor Barth.

Mayor Heineman asked if this role would hold any authority or if it is just advisory.

City Clerk Schmidt shared that the Health Authority does have some authority when it comes to abuse cases; however, she is not sure if they have ever needed to call on this person for anything of that nature.

Councilmember Peters added that he has taken his children to Doctor Barth since he has lived in Ramsey and he has never had issues with him.

Councilmember Buscher asked if alternates are able to attend all meetings even if the primary person is present.

City Clerk Schmidt said yes.

City Administrator Hagen said that anyone can attend any of these meetings.

Councilmember Riley shared that he would like to remain as Acting Mayor as he has served as Acting Mayor for many years, and it has been the tradition that the most senior member of the Council serves in this role.

Councilmember Olson explained that he expressed interest in serving as Acting Mayor when he first joined the Council; however, there were others who were interested as well. He said he would enjoy the opportunity to serve as Acting Mayor.

The consensus of the Council was to give Councilmember Riley the role of Acting Mayor.

Councilmember Olson said he would like to switch his seat on the EPB with Councilmember Peters for his seat on the Public Works Committee.

The consensus of the Council was to appoint Councilmember Peters to the EPB with Councilmember Olson as the alternate, and to appoint Councilmember Olson to the Public Works Committee with Councilmember Peters as the alternate.

City Clerk Schmidt shared that no one expressed interest in serving on the Highway 10 Commission; however, this Commission has not met in a long time and they can readdress this if there is need for involvement in the future.

Mayor Heineman shared his interest in serving on the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council due to his background with the military police.

Councilmember Stewart also expressed interest in this appointment; however, she said she would give it to Mayor Heineman.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she was approached by Sheriff Wise to serve as the alternate for the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council.

The consensus of the Council was to appoint Mayor Heineman to the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council with Councilmember Buscher as the alternate.

Councilmember Buscher shared that Eckberg Lammers does not work with the Attorney General's Office on the Clean Slate Act to help people get expungements and would like to amend the contract to make Eckberg Lammers work with the Attorney General's Office on this.

City Attorney Knaak said there would be no reason that the Council could not make this request.

Councilmember Buscher shared that she worked with Eckberg Lammers in the spring with their post-conviction relief and they would always state that they do not participate in the program.

City Attorney Knaak added that they could raise this as an issue with the courts. He noted that they seem to be operating under prosecutorial discretion and they could express the importance of their willingness to participate in the Clean Slate Act rather than amending the contract.

Councilmember Riley stated he is supportive of moving forward with Eckberg Lammers; however, he does not understand the details of what they are discussing and would like more details at a later date.

Councilmember Specht said Eckberg Lammers has done a great job working with the City and does not think the agreement needs any changes.

Mayor Heineman noted that he would like to hear from Eckberg Lammers why this is something that they do not participate in before making it a requirement of them. He suggested they approve the contract as is and direct Staff to reach out and ask this question and bring back more details to the Council.

The consensus of the Council was to approve the contract with Eckberg Lammers and direct Staff to ask the firm why they do not participate in the Clean Slate Act.

City Attorney Knaak noted a correction to the contract with Holstad & Knaak. He shared that the contract states that anything over 10 hours monthly will be billed at a flat rate, which has never happened since he has been with the City.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the remaining one-year appointments as proposed for the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Planning Commission, and the Twin Cities Gateway Board and the remaining two-year appointments as proposed for the Anoka County Fire Protection Council, the Lower Rum River Watershed Management Organization, the Quad Cities Cable Communication Commission, and the Economic Development Authority. There was also consensus to approve the contracts with TOSS, the *Anoka County Union Herald*, and the legal services.

### **2.03: 2025 Legislative Priorities**

City Administrator Hagen reviewed the Staff report in regard to the City's 2025 legislative priorities.

Councilmember Riley shared that the taxation from the transportation department is without any benefit to the City. He noted that asking to be added to the Metro Mobility service area is just an ask to include the City in something they are already paying for. He said he would like to see this item moved up on their list of priorities. He added that the hospital moratorium is not a local issue and when it was brought up to a State Senator, he was not aware that there was any hospital that was being looked at for Ramsey, showing that it is not a local issue. He stated that he does not think this item needs to remain on this so they can focus on other items with more importance.

Mayor Heineman agreed with removing the priority of lifting the hospital moratorium.

Councilmember Specht stated the only reason he would be in support of keeping this legislative priority is because of someone who had come forward with the idea of opening some kind of medical facility in Ramsey.

The consensus of the Council was to move forward with the proposed list of 2025 legislative priorities with the removal of the item for lifting the hospital moratorium.

### **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 Major  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*