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

The Ramsey City Council conducted a regular meeting on Tuesday, September 8, 2026, 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
Councilmember Dan Specht
Councilmember Shanna Stewart

Members Absent: None

Also Present: City Administrator Brian Hagen
Planning Manager Todd Larson
Community Development Director Stephanie Hanson
City Attorney Amanda Johnson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Heineman called the regular meeting of the Ramsey City Council to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mayor Heineman.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

3. PRESENTATIONS

3.01: Presentation Proclaiming September 17–23, 2026 as Constitution Week

Mayor Heineman read a proclamation recognizing September 17–23, 2026, as Constitution Week. He noted that September 17, 2026, marks the 239th anniversary of the drafting of the United States Constitution and called Constitution Week an opportunity for citizens to reaffirm

the framers' ideals and protect the freedoms the Constitution guarantees. He presented the proclamation to a representative of the Anoka Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Ms. June Anderson, representing the Anoka Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, thanked the Council for the proclamation and explained that the DAR is a nonpartisan service organization dedicated to patriotism, preserving American history and heritage, education, and recognizing those who served in the military. She explained that DAR members trace their ancestry to individuals who fought for or supported the American cause during the Revolutionary War. She discussed the Constitution, the structure of the federal government, the rule of law, the Bill of Rights, and freedoms of religion, speech, assembly, protest, and the press. She encouraged citizens to protect those freedoms and referenced Benjamin Franklin's warning that the nation would remain a republic only if its citizens could keep it.

3.02: Anoka County Sheriff's Office Drone Assisted Response and Automated License Plate Reader Pilot Project

Sheriff Brad Wise presented Anoka County's Safe County Initiative, a collaborative public-safety program combining Drone Assisted Response with an expanded Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system. Developed through the Anoka County Joint Law Enforcement Council, the initiative would coordinate the Sheriff's Office and the County's ten municipal police departments while addressing privacy concerns. Under Drone Assisted Response, dispatchers could launch drones when calls are received rather than waiting for officers to arrive, allowing law enforcement and fire personnel to obtain earlier aerial information about an incident.

Sheriff Wise explained that ALPR cameras capture still images of vehicles traveling on public roadways and compare license plates with law-enforcement hot lists, assisting with stolen vehicles, criminal investigations, missing children, and vulnerable adults.

Sheriff Wise emphasized that Minnesota law places significant restrictions on both technologies, including prohibiting law-enforcement drones from using facial recognition or carrying weapons and limiting the information ALPR systems may collect and how it may be used to track individuals. He acknowledged that privacy concerns are legitimate and emphasized the need to balance effective public-safety tools with safeguards against misuse. The Safe County Initiative would operate as a one-year pilot beginning with the first drone launch, anticipated in December 2026 or January 2027. Participating agencies would report to their communities on uses, outcomes, and problems during the pilot, allowing elected officials, law enforcement, and residents to evaluate whether the program should continue.

Police Chief Bluml expressed support for the initiative and indicated that Sheriff Wise had accurately summarized the program. He explained that law enforcement continually evaluates available technologies and costs to determine which tools provide reasonable value and the best service for residents while maintaining community safety.

Councilmember Buscher thanked Sheriff Wise for attending both the Council meeting and the earlier Work Session and appreciated the opportunity for Councilmembers to discuss the program in greater detail. She said it helped to understand how long the technologies have been used and how the proposed program developed. She expressed confidence in Sheriff Wise, Police Chief Bluml, and the personnel of both departments. She acknowledged legitimate privacy concerns but believed the technology's benefits, combined with safeguards and Minnesota's regulatory requirements, supported the pilot program. She encouraged residents with questions or concerns to continue communicating with the Council, Police Department, and Sheriff's Office.

Mayor Heineman acknowledged receiving numerous messages from residents concerned about the initiative and indicated those concerns had not gone unheard. He described himself as generally supportive of smaller, more limited government and recognized concerns about surveillance and the potential for technology to be misused. He observed, however, that modern society already contains significantly more intrusive technologies through smartphones, wireless systems, and other devices. He did not believe license plate readers that have existed for decades, monitor public roadways, operate under State regulation, and assist in locating missing persons and vehicles were the appropriate place to begin reducing technology used by government. He remained concerned about infrastructure that could someday facilitate unconstitutional search or seizure. Still, he expressed confidence in local law enforcement and believed the current technology provides a valuable public-safety tool. He welcomed continued discussion with residents regarding the issue.

4. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

5. CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- 5.01: Receive Cash and Investment for Period Ending August 31, 2026
- 5.02: Note the following Boards, Commissions and Meeting Minutes:
 - Planning Commission – July 23, 2026
 - Environmental Policy Board – June 15, 2026 – No Meeting
 - Economic Development Authority – June 11, 2026
 - Park and Rec Commission – June 11, 2026 – No Meeting
 - Public Works – June 16, 2026 – No Meeting
- 5.03: Approve the following Meeting Minutes:
 - 1) City Council Work Session dated August 25, 2026
 - 2) City Council Regular Session dated August 25, 2026
- 5.04: Approve Business License Applications

- 5.05: Approve Five-Year Agreement with Axon for Police Body-Worn and Fleet Camera Systems
- 5.06: Authorize the Advance Purchase of Fire Vehicle Tablets
- 5.07: Adopt Resolution #26-210 Approving Cash Disbursements Made and Authorizing Payments of Accounts Payable Invoicing Received During the Period of August 20, 2026, through September 2, 2026
- 5.08: Adopt Resolution #26-196 Approving Partial Payment No. 6 to H+U Construction Improvement Project #25-58; The Waterfront Waterplay Park Improvement
- 5.09: Adopt Resolution #26-201 Awarding Construction Staking Contract for 2026 MSA Overlay Improvements, Improvement Project #26-02
- 5.10: Adopt Resolution #26-202 Approving Local Affordable Housing Aid Loan (LAHA) to Elevate Hope House
- 5.11: Adopt Resolution #26-204 Approving Final Plat of North Brook Meadows
- 5.12: Adopt Resolution #26-206 Declaring Costs to be Assessed and Calling for a Public Hearing on Proposed Assessment for Past-Due Charges on Municipal Utility Bills (which may include water, sewer, street lighting, recycling, storm water charges and penalties incurred) and Current Services
- 5.13: Adopt Resolution #26-207 Approving Purchase Agreement for Sale of Tract A, Registered Land Survey No. 249 to 6781 Properties, LLC
- 5.14: Adopt Resolution #26-208 Declaring Development Agreement Satisfied and Authorizing Release from Property – Amsterdam Extension Second Addition (8227, 8297, and 8367 Bunker Lake Boulevard NW)
- 5.15: Adopt Resolution #26-211 Approving the Final Plat of COR Seven

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

6. PUBLIC HEARING

None.

7. COUNCIL BUSINESS

7.01: “Rum River Retreat” - Preliminary Plat and Variance Request for 17400 and 17650 Erkium Street NW (Project No. 26-106); Case of Sundance Woods, LLC

Planning Manager Larson presented the proposed Rum River Retreat development, consisting of approximately 61 acres zoned Rural Residential. The preliminary plat would create 15 lots, including 14 new homes and one containing an existing home, with lots ranging from approximately 2.69 to nearly nine acres. Two eastern lots would be approximately 185 feet deep rather than the required 200 feet and therefore require a variance. He explained that Erkium Street would be reconstructed to City standards. At the same time, a new segment of 177th Avenue would serve nine homes and terminate temporarily at the western property boundary to allow for a potential future connection. The approximately 1,100-foot dead-end roadway is

expected to generate 141 daily vehicle trips and 14 afternoon peak-hour trips, well below the threshold requiring a traffic study. The Planning Commission recommended approving the lot-depth variance, which would preserve mature trees and avoid additional grading otherwise necessary to meet the 200-foot requirement.

Planning Manager Larson also reviewed environmental considerations, including oak forest, floodplain, wetlands, and proposed tree removal, noting that the Environmental Policy Board recommended approval and that tree removal would remain below the allowable limit. Staff recently identified concerns about grading at the southern end of Erkium Street, where constructing the turnaround could require two substantial retaining walls approximately 10.5 feet high. Staff requested additional time to explore alternatives and determine how to address future maintenance responsibility, including a possible assessment agreement with affected homeowners.

Planning Manager Larson therefore suggested that Council could consider the variance separately while delaying final action on the preliminary plat until the retaining-wall issue is resolved.

Mr. Paul Olson, 5750 177th Avenue NW, raised concerns regarding the proposed 1,100-foot dead-end street and the City's interpretation that it is temporary and therefore not subject to the City's 600-foot maximum. He referenced a 2006 development proposal involving the same property in which, according to his research, the City required variances for roads exceeding the 600-foot limitation even though future road connections were contemplated. He questioned what ordinance provision exempts a temporary street or cul-de-sac from the 600-foot maximum, what ordinance or factual distinction justified treating the current proposal differently from the 2006 proposal, and what legally enforceable easement, agreement, funding mechanism, or deadline ensures the proposed road will ever connect through his property. He explained that his family owns the adjoining 35-acre property and has no intention of selling it. He believed that describing the road as temporary when it could remain a dead end indefinitely created a public-safety concern because the neighborhood would have only one point of entry and exit.

Councilmember Buscher requested that the City Attorney or staff respond to the attorney's letter included in the Council packet on behalf of the neighboring property owners.

City Attorney Johnson explained that staff was aware of the letter and had provided a similar letter to the Planning Commission. She explained that staff considers the roadway temporary based on its physical design rather than any specific deadline for future extension. Unlike a conventional permanent cul-de-sac with lots arranged around the bulb, the roadway terminates at the property boundary and is intentionally designed to continue into the adjoining property. She explained that staff therefore did not consider the 600-foot cul-de-sac limitation applicable. She further noted that the requested lot-depth variance requires Council to determine whether practical difficulties exist and that Council has discretion when applying those criteria. Councilmember Buscher asked when staff determined the roadway should be considered temporary.

Planning Manager Larson could not identify an exact date but explained that staff discussed it further after the Planning Commission packet was published. Staff considered whether the proposal represented a true cul-de-sac or good forward-looking planning intended to preserve future access to adjoining developable properties. Staff ultimately concluded that the roadway differed from a conventional permanent cul-de-sac because it was deliberately designed for potential extension.

Councilmember Buscher asked how the current proposal differed from the City's handling of the property in 2006.

Planning Manager Larson indicated he had not reviewed the plans from the 2006 proposal and therefore could not answer.

Councilmember Buscher indicated she would not support approving the application that evening. She wanted additional information regarding the earlier proposal and believed the unresolved retaining-wall issue also meant the application was not ready for final Council action.

Councilmember Riley confirmed that staff did not consider the proposed roadway a cul-de-sac and therefore did not believe the 600-foot maximum applied. He was uncomfortable approving the preliminary plat while the retaining-wall issue remained unresolved and did not want the City assuming responsibility for maintaining large retaining walls. He also said describing the roadway as temporary did not provide certainty about when, or whether, it would ever be extended, and noted the condition could effectively remain indefinite.

Councilmember Stewart believed the development appeared well planned and designed to minimize unnecessary tree removal. Based on her real-estate experience, she noted that temporary road endings can remain for decades until neighboring properties eventually develop. She recognized that Mr. Olson intends to retain his property but observed that ownership and development circumstances could change in many years. She believed preserving the road alignment would facilitate orderly development if that occurred. She supported the overall project but questioned why Council was being asked to consider the proposal before the retaining-wall issue had been resolved.

Councilmember Specht asked staff why the application was being presented to Council before the retaining-wall matter had been resolved.

Planning Manager Larson explained that the application and supporting materials were already included in the Council packet, and staff anticipated neighboring residents might attend the meeting. Rather than cancel discussion after residents had made plans to participate, staff believed it would help Council review the proposal, identify additional concerns, and provide direction. In contrast, staff continued working on the retaining-wall issue. He added that the City's 600-foot roadway standard originated when fire engines carried about that length of hose and struggled to maneuver on dead-end streets. Modern Ramsey fire equipment and required turnarounds address many of those concerns. He noted that several existing City streets exceed 600 feet, including Bauer's Drive, which extends approximately one mile. Staff would be willing to prepare an ordinance amendment if Council wished to reconsider or clarify the 600-foot

standard. He confirmed that the City had adequate time under the application-review deadline to postpone action.

Councilmember Olson indicated the explanation of the historical basis for the 600-foot standard changed his perspective somewhat. He asked whether the development could be redesigned to create another road connection rather than the proposed extended dead-end configuration.

Planning Manager Larson explained that the Planning Commission had considered the same issue. Depending on the direction in which another roadway was routed, it would either encounter Trott Brook and require a permanent cul-de-sac or terminate at another neighboring property and create essentially the same situation while waiting for that property to develop.

Mr. Olson clarified that future extension through his property would mean the current development's preferred road layout could effectively dictate the future layout of his property. He also disagreed with characterizing the 600-foot standard as archaic, explaining that he believed Ramsey fire engines carry approximately 600 feet of large-diameter hose and noting that the proposed development is not within a hydrated area. He maintained that the roadway length therefore remains a legitimate safety issue.

Motion by Councilmember Buscher, seconded by Councilmember Riley, to table the matter.

Mayor Heineman supported allowing staff additional time to resolve the retaining-wall issue. He thanked Mr. Olson for his concerns. He recognized his right to determine the future of his property while also recognizing the current property owner's right to develop property consistent with City requirements. He acknowledged that development of large or historic open properties can be difficult for neighbors but believed the proposed lot sizes were appropriate for the area. He emphasized the importance of applying City standards consistently.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, and Specht. Voting No: Stewart.

City Attorney Johnson requested clarification regarding whether Council also wanted staff to prepare possible amendments to the City's cul-de-sac regulations. She noted that the current Code contains limited language defining cul-de-sacs and that the 600-foot requirement functions as a development standard rather than a definition.

Councilmember Buscher supported reviewing additional language to improve the Code generally but did not want a new definition created specifically to determine the outcome of the pending Rum River Retreat application.

Council directed staff to bring back proposed language for consideration, with a Councilmember observing that the frequency with which variances are granted may indicate it is time to reconsider the underlying standard.

7.02: Adopt Resolution #26-186 — Approving a Conditional Use Permit for a Restaurant with a Drive-Thru at 14340 Ramsey Boulevard NW (Scooter's Coffee)

Planning Manager Larson presented Harlow Beckett Enterprises' request to construct and operate a Scooter's Coffee with a drive-through at 14340 Ramsey Boulevard NW, immediately south of Casey's near Sunwood Drive. The approximately 0.89-acre property is zoned COR-3 and guided Mixed Use. Restaurants are permitted, while the proposed drive-through requires a Conditional Use Permit.

Planning Manager Larson explained that access would be provided through an extension of the shared driveway from Sunwood Drive because Anoka County will not permit direct access to Ramsey Boulevard. The proposed 664-square-foot building would include employee parking, a small customer patio, and counterclockwise drive-through circulation. The site provides stacking for ten vehicles, exceeding the six spaces required by City Code, and includes a bypass lane that could accommodate a second drive-through lane if needed. The Planning Commission recommended approval.

Planning Manager Larson explained that the building would be approximately 50 feet from Ramsey Boulevard rather than meeting the COR-3 district's 30-foot build-to line. The applicant therefore proposes an ornamental fence along the frontage to establish the required street edge. A pedestrian connection would provide access between the walk-up window and the multi-use trail along Ramsey Boulevard. The building would primarily feature brick and fiber-cement siding and would comply with applicable design requirements.

The applicant's representative participated remotely and indicated he was available to answer questions. Council had no additional questions.

Motion by Councilmember Specht, seconded by Councilmember Peters, to adopt Resolution #26-186 approving a Conditional Use Permit for a restaurant with a drive-through located at 14340 Ramsey Boulevard NW.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

8. MAYOR, COUNCIL AND STAFF INPUT

City Administrator Hagen announced upcoming meetings and events.

Councilmember Buscher clarified that FRA refers to the Fire Relief Association and encouraged residents to support the organization even if they could not participate in the golf event. She noted that the Fire Department is seeking additional turnout gear so each firefighter can have a second set. She explained that having a second set would allow contaminated gear to be properly cleaned between calls and could help reduce firefighters' exposure to carcinogens and associated

cancer risks. She encouraged residents interested in helping to contact the Fire Relief Association.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Councilmember Peters, seconded by Councilmember Olson, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Mayor Heineman, Councilmembers Buscher, Olson, Peters, Riley, Specht, and Stewart. Voting No: None.

The regular meeting of the City Council adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian S. Hagen
City Administrator

ATTEST:

Katie M. Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Sue Osbeck
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.