

RETTMAN'S RAMSEY REPORT
Special Edition
October 7, 2011

Dear District 3 Resident:

Due to the volume of calls, emails, correspondence and personal contacts I have received on the VIKINGS STADIUM ISSUE, I am giving you this update. I hope it will be beneficial to you. If I, or my staff, can be of assistance to you please call us at 266-8360, send an e-mail to janice.rettman@co.ramsey.mn.us or send a note to us, Room 220, City Hall/Court House, 15 West Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55102.

To ALL who have contacted me regarding the Vikings' Stadium:

Thank you so very much for sharing with me your comments, thoughts, insights, opinions and passion regarding the proposed Vikings Stadium at Arden Hills and the proposed Ramsey County involvement.

I am sending this letter to everyone as an updated letter to you similar to the one I sent in May 2011. I am also providing links and/or files for your review.

By resolution (2-15-11) (vote 6-1 Rettman), Ramsey County became an active player in the effort to finance and construct a new stadium for the Minnesota Vikings professional football team. The vote was to "study" the current bill(s) in the 2011 legislature that provide for a number of options under which the state and a local governmental partner could finance their portions of the cost. On 2-15-11 I stated I would not support a Ramsey County sales tax increase and/or Ramsey County property tax increase for the Vikings stadium at Arden Hills. (agendas and minutes) (<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/home/index.htm>).

Two members of the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, along with several Ramsey County staff and consultants, have continued negotiating with the owners of the Vikings and have proposed that the local portion be paid with a .5% general sales tax in Ramsey County.

The Ramsey County Board has NOT had an official vote on imposing the sales tax on the Ramsey County Vikings Agreement (12 pages) (<http://www.co.ramsey.mn.us/home/index.htm>) (Vikings Updates) You should also note there is no language that the Vikings cannot sell out or have to pay back any dollars if they leave town. However, there IS language stating and requiring the county in perpetuity paying annually into the on-going maintenance and operations funds in addition to the construction bond proceeds.

While the sales tax may appear to be an easy way to generate money, I believe there are additional financing options for both the state and the county that are being taken out of discussion or granted to the Vikings without the benefit of public review. Equally I believe that Benefit-Based Financing Options offer a much better financing option than the 1/2 percent Ramsey County-only sales tax.

In other words I believe that those who use it pay for it. Those who benefit pay for it.

Some of the benefit-based options I have looked at include parking revenue, advertising, parking lot naming rights, and a stadium food and beverage surcharge. I believe these options help create the benefit-based financing plan the governor, some legislators, and many citizens have sought and I wholeheartedly agree with. They also could provide sufficient revenue to pay for the county's portion without a Ramsey County only sales tax increase.

However, these options are currently NOT in the "Pay Playbook" at the legislature nor in the Ramsey County and Vikings proposals. For example, all of the parking revenue right now will be in the Vikings financial score sheet. (See Charlie Walters "Don't Print That" from the Saint Paul Pioneer Press, May 15, 2011).

NOTE: Currently the Vikings do not receive the parking revenues at the MetroDome. Instead Minneapolis has a Municipal Parking Ramp Fund. I suggest strongly the County and/or the State should have that same revenue option.

<http://www.minneapolisismn.gov/finance/docs/2012budgetTraffic&ParkingFundNarrative-2012.pdf>

I shall attach a word doc of the "pay play list" I have suggested/shared as alternative funding for the State and the County with some legislators and the Governor's Office. However, the traction of a sales tax in Ramsey County still is in the forefront of the legislator's and Governor's office as well as the Vikings and the two Ramsey County Commissioners have been unwilling to allow these options to provide funding for the County.

As of today, it should be noted that the majority of Ramsey County Legislators have stated they do not support a Ramsey County Sales tax increase. It should also be noted, that over the summer, a majority of the municipalities in Ramsey County have taken a stance against the Ramsey County Sales tax increase including Saint Paul and Falcon Heights (the two communities I represent all or part of).

The most recent copy of the legislation that I have seen (attached file dated 5-26-11; H.F. 1411, Section 19 Subdivision 10, page 26) on the Viking stadium precludes a vote of the residents of Ramsey County and leaves it as a simple vote by the Ramsey County Board on the aforementioned agreement in paragraph 5. I will do my best to insist that prior to that vote there be a public hearing for residents and businesses to be heard.

Equally, the legislation does not preclude the TCAAP site from becoming a TIF (Tax Increment Financing) site which would essentially limit any tax relief being realized for 20-30 years as a TIF would allow all proceeds to be used only on the site. There has been limited discussion on the environmental costs that could be borne by the County and State and Federal Government. In addition, the chain of title responsibilities and legal responsibilities must be made transparent should unknown contaminants be found or legal challenges pursued. This is critical.

I have recently received and am attaching the AHATS application approved by the Audubon Society a few years ago regarding the species found @ the TCAAP site and which has co-existed with the National Guard beautifully for years. There are

rumors that a new road for game day is potentially in that area. The habitat and environment must be protected.

The Met Council has also hired Himley-Horn and Associates to evaluate the Ramsey County/MN Vikings proposal for constructing a stadium on the Twin Cities Army Ammunitions Plant at Arden Hills. The contract can be viewed at (<http://www.metrocouncil.org>.) That report is due October 10, 2011.

The Ramsey County Charter Commission is asking to put on the 2012 ballot a change to the Ramsey County Home Rule Charter. The language is Shall Ramsey County be prohibited from using any revenues, including those raised by taxes or bonding, to fund or assist in funding a Major League Baseball or National Football League sports team or stadium?

I am strongly in favor of the Vikings staying in Minnesota. I also believe the Vikings should pay no less than 60% of the financing including infrastructure improvements and negotiate so that any local or state partner shares in the revenue to be generated. In addition, any contract or term agreement sheets must include language that all jobs created and retained, including construction and service jobs at the stadium, must pay living wages and benefits.

My request is that you encourage the Legislative decision-makers and the Governor to keep these mechanisms in or amend any legislative bill(s) to include them as the stadium plan moves through the process. Specifically, for example, Ramsey County should be permitted to collect all revenue from stadium parking facilities and memorabilia in lieu of the sales tax increase which is much of the "new money" in the move to Arden Hills. With the inclusion of these financing items we can have a thoughtful and thorough discussion at the local level before choosing the best revenue source for Ramsey County citizens should the location be at Arden Hills.

Thank you again.

Janice Rettman
Ramsey County Commissioner, District 3
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