

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY BOARD
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

On Monday, July 2, 2012, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Mississippi River Conference Room at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Michael Max
 Board Member Bob Bentz
 Board Member John Enstrom
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Larry Lewis
 Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent: Board Member Thomas Stodola

Also Present: Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson
 Council Member Randy Backous

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Max called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson introduced Mr. Rob Kuehn who initiated a possible multi-partner prairie restoration concept project within utility corridors.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Valentine to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Max, Board Members Hiatt, Valentine, Bentz, and Lewis. Voting No: Board Member Enstrom. Absent: Board Member Stodola.

Further discussion: Board Member Enstrom stated he voted no due to not receiving the agenda until right before the meeting.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson questioned if anyone else did not receive notification that the agenda was available.

After some discussion, Board Member Enstrom clarified he is not able to access the agenda through the website but does receive the email notifications. He requested receiving the agenda and minutes directly via email.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson questioned going to the website versus using the link in the email. Discussion ensued regarding accessing the agenda and the minutes before meetings and differences were compared in where the link directs.

Chairperson Max suggested removing the link from emails if everyone cannot access.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated he will look into the issue and make possible changes.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated June 4, 2012

Motion by Board Member Bentz and seconded by Board Member Valentine to approve the regular meeting minutes dated June 4, 2012.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Max, Board Members Bentz, Valentine, Enstrom, Hiatt and Lewis. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Stodola.

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Prioritizing Items on Work Plan

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report. City Council approved the 2012-13 work plan with one addition based on the last work session. He reviewed the plan for purposes of prioritizing. He also noted Mr. Kuehn's concept project of recreating prairies within utility corridors.

Mr. Kuehn introduced himself and provided pamphlets for Board review. He suggested coming up with some general framework for the project. He also discussed knocking down of trees in his backyard and the potential environmental issues pursuant.

Board Member Lewis questioned if there was any pushback from the GRE.

Mr. Kuehn stated many groups have a stake in this and that GRE has not dedicated anyone to work on it. He suggested an independent web person or a third party bring in graphics, which would illustrate the plants that would go in as well as the process. The biology of monarchs and how to do plants would also be noted.

Board Member Valentine questioned any corporate roadblocks.

Mr. Kuehn replied it did not sound like that; right now it sounds like the current problem is dedicated resources.

Chairperson Max asked the scope of the project, the geographical area.

Mr. Kuehn provided a brief overview noting that when it starts it just expands.

It was discussed to define an area within a public park so they have some control over it, but yet it would be open to the public. Several possible sites were noted.

Board Member Hiatt questioned the timeline.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson replied probably a few growing seasons to fully establish.

Mr. Kuehn suggested a small area monarch station and thought within two years for blooming, which includes one season of clean out.

Board Member Valentine questioned using packets of seeds.

Mr. Kuehn replied a lot of landowners would be using a small portion of their yard, whatever fits.

Discussion ensued regarding the time to prepare the land.

Board Member Hiatt suggested the Expo in spring as a kick-off point.

Board Member Enstrom stated he was opposed to the power line project, which caused several trees to be removed. He commented soil needs to be taken into consideration since some plants grow in different mixes of soil and the seeds need to be right. They also would need to have some type of replenishment plan and suggested a penalty for non-replacement.

Mr. Kuehn named a few groups, such as garden clubs, that could be a part of the project.

Board Member Bentz questioned if controlled burns would take care of the weeds. He asked about using a high temperature torch.

Various Members noted that any controlled burns would require approval from the Fire Department.

Board Member Bentz asked about a standard list of plants. Discussion ensued regarding milkweed and monarch dependence on it.

Discussion ensued regarding possible areas that would be a good test plot.

Chairperson Max asked about Scouts doing volunteer work.

Mr. Kuehn expressed concern that the City like to have the area on each side of the path mowed in the parks and this destroys the land because mowers move around and introduce the weeds to new areas.

Chairperson Max commented it was best practice some years ago to make it look clean and neat. He mentioned one possible concern that may be voiced would be bugs crawling on individuals if it was not mowed.

Council Member Backous noted he will bring up the issue to the Parks Supervisor.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated it may be a tough sell not giving a “maintained” appearance. He added they would need to educate the public.

Board Member Bentz stated they still need some semblance of maintenance for safety concerns.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson requested the Board to prioritize items on the work plan. Consensus was to move this project to the top of the list. He asked for direction on the other items.

Discussion ensued regarding prioritization of the work plan items.

Board Member Bentz asked about guidance for the water conservation program.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson suggested he coordinate with the interim city engineer to address the program.

With consensus, Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated the Board will be focusing on community awareness with web developments and structuring the demonstration project of monarch gardens. He asked if there were other items in the next month or two to be addressed. The Board agreed they have enough projects to start within the next few months.

Chairperson Max suggested moving the date of the expo separate from the tree sale, maybe in fall. He suggested an agenda item at the next meeting for the Board come up with a date.

The Board thanked Mr. Kuehn.

5.02: Consider Website Improvements and Information for Newsletter

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report. He noted the did-you-know for the website and for the newsletter. He briefed the Board on the ins and outs of the newsletter and indicated he will build in links based on work session recommendations. He requested the Board provide direction on topics, noting newsletter articles are due at the end of July for the upcoming issue.

Chairperson Max commented that some items, such as water conservation, would be late for a fall newsletter issue.

Board Member Bentz noted fall is the second planting season.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson suggested for the November/December issue having an article on buckthorn and to inform owners that November is a great time to easily identify buckthorn since it holds its leaves and stays green much longer than most other deciduous trees/shrubs.

Chairperson Max asked who the people would be contacting. He suggested a pseudo name that could be recognized regardless of who is on the Board.

Board Member Enstrom suggested they get the Board name out to the public.

Board Member Lewis asked about the direction of the column and how it would be used. He suggested naming species in the park, a more general overview to reach a larger audience.

Board Member Valentine questioned who is responsible for all newsletter content and suggested having a variety.

Chairperson Max noted the Parks and Recreation Commission has the same forum as the Board.

Council Member Backous stated that he thought that due to budget cuts the newsletter may only be published four times per year now instead of six.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he believed the charter required the newsletter be published at least six times per year.

Council Member Backous confirmed after reviewing the charter that it does have to be published at least six times per year.

Board Member Bentz asked about the newsletter going back to lesser paper.

Board Member Enstrom suggested brief overviews in the column and then refer to the website for more information.

Council Member Backous questioned using QCTV to promote the Board and some of this information.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated QCTV is always looking for segments. He noted they could get the Board name out there this way. Discussion ensued regarding previous QCTV usage.

Board Member Bentz expressed concern the website does not get updated often.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson detailed the website front page but noted staff time constraints. He suggested providing relevant points in the newsletter and then direct the reader to the website. He should have access shortly to make changes.

Discussion ensued regarding possible changes for the website as well as front-page issues.

Board Member Bentz suggested adding a visitor counter to see the number of views.

Board Member Bentz asked about a standard template so Board Members can submit items.

Council Member Backous stated the newsletter is expensive and the ads do not to make up for the cost.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson asked for subject matter for the column.

Board Member Enstrom suggested assigning one member of the Board to each newsletter, to write the article and submit for that particular letter.

Chairperson Max suggested having a common voice for all the articles.

Board Member Lewis asked about proofreading.

Board Member Valentine suggested they map out one or two good ideas for the season and ask for a volunteer member to write the column.

Discussion ensued what is the best direction to proceed with writing the column.

Chairperson Max suggested for November to write about the Recycle Your Holidays program for recycling holiday lights and then about Christmas tree disposal for the January/February newsletter.

Discussion ensued regarding possible newsletter topics.

Board Member Hiatt suggested for the first issue define the Board and what they are doing, maybe an introduction from the Chairperson.

Board Member Lewis suggested setting a format and possible logo for easy recognition of the column.

Board Member Enstrom suggested catering to advertisers, such as waste management, on the column page.

Board Member Hiatt questioned improving recycling efforts and tying it into the introduction within the column.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson noted the information could discuss the State's new recycling goals and the County's new Solid Waste Management Master Plan and how they are working toward them.

Board Member Hiatt suggested he work on the recycling piece and Chairperson Max write the introduction.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson asked for writings to be emailed to him by the end of July for review at the August meeting.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson cautioned the Board regarding editing. Consensus was the articles will be discussed at a meeting.

Board Member Lewis recommended having a dedicated space for the column in the newsletter.

It was the consensus of the Environmental Policy Board to have this as a standing item to be discussed at every meeting.

5.03: Recycling Enhancement Grant Opportunity

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report. He noted the County has made available a recycling enhancement grant opportunity, up to \$50,000 with no match. The County is interested in seeing three or four regional recycling drop off centers throughout the county and with that in mind, the City has submitted a proposal to develop non-site specific plans for a drop-off recycling center that could be used as a footprint for any community considering this type of project. This topic was touched on at the City Council Work Session during the Work Plan discussion. Due to the application deadline, the proposal has already been submitted but the City Administrator suggested getting feedback from the Board and if there wasn't support then the proposal could be rescinded.

Board Member Valentine questioned a budgetary commitment for setting up and continuing with a program such as this.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson noted the proposal was for plan development only and would not commit the City to construct anything.

Board Member Valentine asked about framing a budget.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson noted it is part of the proposal. There may also be additional funding beyond the SCORE monies from the County to possibly assist with some construction costs and possibly for staffing also.

Board Member Bentz asked about private company comments.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated they would work with haulers and the City would receive revenue from selling materials collected. There would be a cost for certain items to be dropped off.

Board Member Bentz questioned where the place would be built due to potential loudness and the smell.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson noted that if it were ever constructed a likely location would be adjacent to public works.

Discussion ensued regarding items that could be dropped off.

Board Member Bentz questioned the SCORE dollars.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson explained the allocation of these dollars and that the grant would not impact SCORE funding.

It was the consensus of the Environmental Policy Board to take advantage of the grant.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Valentine to support the grant for feasibility.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Max, Board Members Hiatt, Valentine, Bentz, Enstrom and Lewis. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Stodola.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- Logging Festival

Board Member Enstrom stated he will be hosting a logging festival on his property and will have more information at the next meeting.

- Work Session

Chairperson Max thanked everyone for coming to the work session as well as to the City Council meeting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Cheryl Felix
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.