

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

On Monday, February 6, 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: Vice Chairperson Thomas Stodola
Board Member Bob Bentz
Board Member John Enstrom

Members Absent: Chairperson Michael Max

Also Present: Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairperson Stodola called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

CITIZEN INPUT

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Board Member Bentz and seconded by Board Member Enstrom to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chairperson Stodola, Board Members Bentz and Enstrom.
Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Max.

APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY BOARD MINUTES

Motion by Board Member Enstrom and seconded by Board Member Bentz to approve the regular meeting minutes dated January 9, 2012.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Vice Chairperson Stodola, Board Members Bentz and Enstrom.
Voting No: None. Absent: Chairperson Max.

POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

Case #1: Establishment of 'Mini Arboretum' in North Commons

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Enstrom stated he was opposed to seeking grant funding to plant trees. He stated that the City needed to learn to live within its means.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that there is no required matching component for this grant.

Board Member Enstrom stated that he thought that Connexus should be responsible for purchasing and installing all the trees because of all the removals they've done along their transmission lines.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that Connexus had not done anything illegal with regard to their vegetation management practices. While people may disagree with their practices, they have easements that were obtained lawfully and they have the right to remove vegetation within the easement areas. The City cannot require them to participate in this project.

Board Member Enstrom stated his displeasure with finding out about this grant opportunity with less than two weeks before it was due.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he was not aware of this opportunity at the time of the Board's January meeting. He stated that this was the first opportunity to apprise the Board of the grant round. He continued by stating that City Council authorized Staff to apply for this funding at their January 24, 2012 meeting.

Board Member Enstrom stated that he believes that even if Connexus cannot be required to participate, the City should shame them into participating.

Board Member Bentz stated that he did not believe that made any sense as Connexus is a large employer within the City and they do a lot of work with other environmental aspects such as energy efficient lighting, alternative forms of energy etc.

Board Member Enstrom stated that if the adjacent neighborhood wanted to see trees planted so badly that they should purchase the trees themselves or they should apply for the grant themselves and the City's only involvement should be to develop the planting plan.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that they would not qualify as an eligible recipient of this funding and therefore cannot apply for it themselves. Also, since the City would use the grant money for the purchase of trees and utilize volunteers, including the neighborhood residents, it seems like there would be little if any difference in cost for the City.

Board Member Enstrom stated he thinks this should be developed as a memorial park in which residents pay for and install trees over time. He doesn't see any need to apply for funding to plant trees at that location.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that this project seemed to accomplish many things and that he thought it was a win-win for everybody. He said that it addresses a desire of the adjacent neighborhood to see some improvements there, establishing a

mini arboretum is an action item of the Board's work plan, it would include ongoing education with signage, and City Council has already authorized staff to pursue this funding. He stated that he was bringing this to the Board's attention for informational purposes and to receive any suggested feedback on species.

Board Member Enstrom again stated his opposition to this project.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that his opposition has been duly noted but it seemed contradictory to the Board's work plan. If he's opposed to the establishment of a mini arboretum, he may wish to consider making a motion to remove that from the work plan.

Board Member Enstrom stated that he's not opposed to the work plan item; he just opposes applying for grant money to plant trees at this site.

Vice Chairperson Stodola asked Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson if he had noted Board Member Enstrom's concerns in the minutes.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he believes he has. He stated that he tries to capture the basis of discussions at every meeting and if there's ever any concern that the minutes aren't representative of a discussion, prior to approving those minutes, Board Members can request amendments.

Vice Chairperson Stodola asked Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson if there was anything more he needed from the Board related to this case.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that there was nothing more unless there were any comments about species.

There were no specific comments regarding species and consensus was to move on to the next case.

Case #2 Environmental Expo Event

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Enstrom provided an update about a possible birding component for the expo event. Promoting the event was going to be critical. He has a tentative confirmation from national birding expert Mike Freiburg to lead multiple bird walks at Board Member Enstrom's property the day of the event. Nikon would cover the travel expenses for Mr. Freiburg, but to do that, there needs to be a retail component also.

Board Member Enstrom stated that he has a tentative commitment from Joe's Sporting Goods for the retail aspect of the birding component. He also stated that Mike Freiburg has agreed to come back to the Municipal Center to give a presentation.

Board Member Bentz asked if the presentation should focus more on birds from Minnesota or from around the world.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he thought it might be best to start with at least those birds common in the upper Midwest and then expand out to more exotic species.

Board Member Enstrom stated that no pets would be allowed on the bird walk. Also, he would need an insurance waiver from the City if this were to be on his property. He also mentioned that while much of the Nikon equipment is fairly costly, Nikon is offering \$500 rebates through the first part of May, which might help convince people to buy something.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated he was a bit concerned about the event getting somewhat stagnant. The addition of the Business Expo was supposed to create some synergy and help grow each event. While there is some benefit with promotion for instance, for the Environmental Expo to grow, it really should be branching out to energy efficient products, septic systems based on the large number of them in the community and both of these fields are more interested, and rightfully so, in the Business Expo because they see it as a possible way to get new customers. He suggested that this year's event may be the last as a stand-alone event and that it may be time to explore other ways to get these messages out to the public, maybe combining with the Business Expo or a component of Happy Days.

Board Member Enstrom stated that there would need to be promotion for the event and that should include both the Anoka Union and Star News. He would explore getting something in other publications also.

Board Member Enstrom stated that there should be some sort of handout outlining what types of wildlife may be seen, things to bring (tick spray, bug spray, camera, etc) and that this should be made available ahead of time.

General consensus was that there could be bird walks at 6am, 7am, 8am, 9am and 10am and then the presentation could be at either 11am or 11:30am.

Vice Chairperson Stodola stated that he had a chance to speak with the manager of Lowes and has gotten confirmation that they can participate in the event with their build and grow wooden kits. They would just need a number of expected kids so that they can order the kits.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson asked if it would have to be at a specific time or just throughout the day. He also stated that, like with the birding component, he's hesitant about setting expectation levels too high.

Vice Chairperson Stodola stated that he would continue to work with Lowes on this component of the event and would follow up with Mr. Anderson so that the info could get into the newsletter.

BOARD/STAFF INPUT

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he did meet with Staff from Coon Rapids and Anoka last week to discuss a possible joint expo event. They approached the County with the idea but did not receive any positive interest. So, for the time being, we were going to approach the North Suburban Home Improvement organizers about the possibility of incorporating the environmental/sustainable type of expo into that event.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that there are two applicants that have indicated an interest in serving on this Board, amongst others as well. So, even if the two Board Members whose terms are expiring are reappointed, and these two new applicants are appointed, there would still be one vacancy, at least as it stands now.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that with EAB now being confirmed in Shoreview, he and the Natural Resources Technician in Andover have decided to offer another EAB workshop. The workshop will be held March 29 at the Andover City Hall. More information will soon be available through the website.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Bentz and seconded by Board Member Enstrom to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator