

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

On Monday, April 2, 2012, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Trott Brook 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: Vice Chairperson Thomas Stodola

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Max 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 Hiatt to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY BOARD MINUTES

Board Member Enstrom stated that he would like the March meeting minutes amended to reflect his concern with the transmission line clearance work goes beyond just the tree clearing, it is also very concerning to him the amount of pesticide/herbicide treatments that are being applied.

Motion by Board Member Bentz and seconded by Board Member Enstrom to approve the regular meeting minutes dated March 5, 2012 as amended to reflect Board Member Enstrom's concern related to pesticide/herbicide use.

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

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson suggested it may be beneficial to have the new members introduce themselves.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he's lived in the area for thirty-two (32) years. He summarized his past work experience and stated that his background is in music education. He stated that he admittedly has some learning to do related to the environment but is excited to be serving on the board.

Board Member Valentine stated that he spent seventeen (17) years with the Pollution Control Agency (PCA) and now is involved with environmental consulting work. He's been in the community now for about twelve (12) years and is interested in politics ranging from the local to international levels.

Board Member Lewis stated he's been in the community for about twenty (20) years now and is in the printing business.

Chairperson Max stated that he thinks that everyone should introduce themselves a bit and he'd continue on. He stated that he's been in Ramsey since 1987, has been involved with various boards and/or committees at various levels and has been a part of this group since it was initially formed as a task force.

Board Member Bentz stated that he's been involved with the Board since its inception and his education is in chemistry and physics.

Board Member Enstrom stated that he lives in northern Ramsey on the border of Nowthen. He's been in Ramsey for thirty-five (35) years, operates an organic farm and has a monument on his property dedicated to the veterans of the Iraq war.

Councilmember Backous stated he's been in the community since 1988, volunteers where he can, is obviously serving as a Councilmember currently, and thinks highly of this Board.

POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

Case #1: Environmental Expo Event

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report.

General discussion ensued about potential improvements that could be made to future expo events.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he likes that idea of incorporating it into the Happy Days event somehow.

Councilmember Backous stated that he thought it could possibly coincide with the annual kick-off of The Draw concert series and farmers market events. It could be held on a Saturday or Sunday in The Draw along with the initial farmers market, which could then be shifted to its traditional day of Thursday.

Board Member Valentine asked if the expo focused mostly on local businesses or is there a presence of state agencies as well. He stated that many of the state agencies also have outreach programs that could be included in the event.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that state agencies have been invited in the past ranging from the National Park Service and MNRRRA to DNR.

Board Member Lewis stated that Lord of Life might be a site large enough to accommodate both the Business Expo and the Environmental Expo in one location. He thinks that it makes a lot of sense to consider joining the two events into one.

General discussion ensued about the tree sale component of the event. Generally, the discussion included considering separating the tree sale from the expo event, especially now since it is all done through a pre-order program, which is a significant change from past years.

Board Member Enstrom stated that without new homes being constructed, the demand for new trees has declined.

Councilmember Backous asked if the City's facebook page had been used to promote the tree sale.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that it was used to let folks know that the tree sale info was available through the City's website.

Councilmember Backous suggested placing the tree list and pricing right on the facebook page and then folks could share it with their friends.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he could do that this week.

General discussion ensued about whether there was a fee to be an exhibitor at the environmental expo.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that there was not a fee to be an exhibitor and the reasoning is that this is more of an educational format. If a fee were charged, he believed that many of the exhibitors would no longer participate. In that regard, it's different from the Business Expo because there, the intent is to promote businesses and they participate in the hopes of drawing in new customers.

Councilmember Backous stated that he believed there could be a tiered fee structure where for profit businesses would have a fee, whether it was for the Environmental Expo specifically or if the two events were combined, and the fee would be waived for not-for-profit companies and organizations.

Board Member Lewis stated that he had attended a beekeeping class through the U of MN, which was booked solid and that that might draw some interest.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he's had Gary Reuter from the U of MN attend the event in the past as well as the MN Hobby Beekeepers Association. But, like many volunteer groups, they are stretched pretty thin and haven't responded to the invite for this year's event.

Councilmember Backous inquired about geocaching and whether that may be an exhibit to explore. He suggested contacting the local geocaching group to see if they may be interested.

Chairperson Max asked the new members if they'd looked at the EPB webpage yet.

None of the new members had had a chance yet to view the page.

Councilmember Backous asked what the Board's booth was going to include.

Board Member Bentz stated that he liked the reuse or recycling topics.

Board Member Lewis suggested getting feedback from citizens about topics they think the Board should work on.

Chairperson Max suggested a focused question could be posed to attendees to get feedback.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the Board has in the past solicited feedback from attendees in various formats.

Board Member Bentz stated that the Board typically has their approved work plan posted somewhere within its booth.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he thinks the expo could be a tool to get ideas for future work plans.

A general discussion ensued about the structure of the Board including the requirement of having an approved work plan and how the Board could possibly be more effective, especially if good ideas come up during the year that are not reflected on the approved work plan.

Chairperson Max stated that the Board could maybe approach other Boards/Commissions to see how the EPB could help with them.

Councilmember Backous stated that the work plan should be fluid to allow the Board to work on various topics if they arise during a year.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that that would be great, but as outlined in City Code, the Board is subject to a Council-approved work plan.

Councilmember Backous stated that as the Council liaison to the Board, if there are new ideas or topics that come up during the year, they can be brought to him and he can relay that information to the Council for consideration.

The Board then discussed the concept of a very simple survey that could be offered during the expo. The survey could be as simple as two questions: (1) Are you a Ramsey resident and (2) What would make Ramsey better for you and your family?

Board Member Enstrom suggested that it should include a third question which focused on how long they have lived in Ramsey.

After some discussion, there was consensus that the length of time someone had been a resident wasn't critical because whether somebody lived here for 30 years or 6 months, they are still residents of the community and their opinions should be weighted the same.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he could try and put together a recycling display board that highlighted materials that can and cannot be recycled curbside. He said that he staff's a booth at the North Suburban Home Improvement Show each year that focuses on curbside recycling and they use a similar type of display which always seems to draw people in. This might be especially good now with the new types of plastics that can be recycled curbside.

The Board liked that idea and asked Mr. Anderson to proceed with it.

BOARD/STAFF INPUT

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson informed the Board that he staffed both a recycling booth and a forestry booth at the North Suburban Home Improvement show, which was held at the Andover Community Center. There was a good turnout and a lot of good questions both related to recycling and to trees.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson reminded the Board that the spring recycling day event is scheduled for May 5, 2012 and provided a brief summary items and pricing.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson informed the Board that the City's Community Forest Bonding grant application had been approved, which means that a mini arboretum will be established in North Commons.

Board Member Enstrom stated that the state is trying to control Emerald Ash Borer with traps and wanted to know if Ramsey could get some and the City would do the monitoring.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the City has worked with the Department of Agriculture in the past, offering up trap trees as a way to monitor for EAB. He

said he could check with the Department of Agriculture about locating some traps in Ramsey but that the City would not do the monitoring, that would be under the jurisdiction of the Dept. of Agriculture.

Chairperson Max mentioned that there's an eagle's nest along Highway 10, just east of the Lowe's store.

Board Member Bentz mentioned that there are now LED street lights available and inquired if the City may consider utilizing them.

Councilmember Backous stated that he believed that Connexus Energy was starting to use them in certain situations.

ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator