

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

On Monday, July 1, 2013, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Rum 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 Larry Lewis
 Board Member Tara Prendergast
 Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent: Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Thomas Stodola

Also Present: Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Chris Anderson
 Development Services Manager Tim Gladhill

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Max called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated June 3, 2013

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Bentz to approve the regular meeting minutes dated June 3, 2013.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Draft 2013-2014 Work Plan

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that in reviewing the information, the tree sale is trending in the wrong direction and did not believe that it would be beneficial for the Board to continue with that event. He stated that if the Board wishes to continue with the event, changes would need to be made and more participation from the Board would be required, but stated that the percentage of sales to Ramsey residents does not appear to merit continuing.

Chairperson Max stated that although he understood the merit behind discontinuing the tree sale, he thought it a bit ironic that the tree sale would be discontinued at the same time the Board is expressing the intent for the City to lead by example and be more environmentally proactive.

Board Member Bentz suggested selling trees in the fall during the Expo rather than holding it in the spring.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the logistics of having the trees onsite at Happy Days would prevent that from occurring. He noted that perhaps a local nursery would want to sell trees with a voucher system during the Business Expo. He stated that if the Board would like to further discuss the tree sale the language should be included in the Work Plan.

Board Member Valentine stated that he understood the irony but suggested that the program be reviewed under the overall context and noted that energy may be better served in another area.

Chairperson Max stated that perhaps it would be best to not hold the tree sale for the next year or two and focus efforts on other areas that could then create a demand for a future tree sale.

Board Member Lewis commented that while he would not rule out the tree sale as dead, he would postpone discussions until early winter.

Community Development Manager Gladhill discussed the Housing Assistance Policy and the process of review by the Planning Commission and City Council prior to tonight. He asked that the Board review the best management practices and provide input. He stated that the intent tonight was simply to request that the Board add the item to their Work Plan. He noted that additional guidance would be provided in the future. He also provided an update on the Strategic Plan and noted that a presentation should be forthcoming.

Chairperson Max questioned the difference between this and overall landscape issues.

Community Development Manager Gladhill provided examples and noted that the policy would apply citywide but would also address projects that exceed the minimum standards in return for financial assistance from the City. He stated that the City does not have a large pool of money to assist in housing developments and noted that the funds that are there should be used to assist in the creation of a shining star of the type of development the City would like to see. He estimated that work would begin by the Board in one to two months and noted that this should be a quality project. He referenced the Strategic Plan and commented that the City Administrator and Mayor

are working together to develop a Communication Plan to introduce the Strategic Plan. He stated that there are a number of goals identified in the Plan that would tie into the work completed by the Board.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the agendas for the near future will be very full and noted that the Work Plan would most likely be reviewed by the City Council at a regular meeting rather than a Work Session prior to a regular meeting. He stated that it is likely that the Mayor and City Administrator may want to meet with the Board directly to present the Communication Plan for the Strategic Plan.

Chairperson Max suggested that an item should be included on the Work Plan that states the Board will continue public outreach via the City newsletter and QCTV. He also believed the tree inventory should be included as an implementation project.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson confirmed that the Board was comfortable with the four categories and the language used. He noted that the Board is somewhat limited in the amount of work they can take on with 12 meetings per year. He noted that it would be the decision of the Board whether to present the Work Plan to the Council prior to the Communication Plan presentation.

Chairperson Max stated that perhaps it would be beneficial to have discussion by Subcommittees for specific topics in the future. He stated that he did not think it would matter when the Work Plan was presented to the City Council.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that while he would prefer to meet with the City Council at a Work Session, which would not be possible in the near future, but agreed that it would not hurt to present earlier.

Board Member Lewis questioned if a copy of the Work Plan could be sent to the Council in a packet form for review prior to the presentation from the Board.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that he would forward the document to City Councilmember Letourneau and ask if he would be comfortable distributing that information to the Council. He stated that the plates of the Council are pretty full and was unsure of the amount of time the Councilmembers would have.

Development Services Manager Gladhill noted that the City Attorney should review that possibility to ensure open meeting laws are not violated.

Board Member Bentz stated that from experience he would say to present the information to the City Council at a regular meeting, as much discussion is not had at Work Sessions for this item, and noted that if the Council felt further discussion was warranted they could direct the item to a Work Session.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that perhaps he can speak with the Council Liaison and have him enter the draft Work Plan at a regular Council meeting and enter the document into the record at that time, with the possibility of a Work Session in the future.

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Valentine to approve the 2014 Work Plan as discussed and present the Work Plan through the Council Liaison at the next City Council meeting for review and input.

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

5.02: Review Draft Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report and briefly reviewed the draft version of the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan for the benefit of newer Board Members that have not seen the information. He also reviewed the proposed presentation for the Council that had been prepared in the past. He noted that it is difficult to detect the Emerald Ash Borer early and there are no natural predators. He advised that there is ongoing research to determine a better method of treatment and identification. He noted that a number of items included in the Plan are already being implemented; highlighting the tree inventory that still needs to be completed. He provided additional information on the many benefits that would be provided through a tree inventory and explained the definition of street or boulevard trees to be City maintained trees. He stated that unlike other species, when Ash trees die they become very brittle very quickly which is another unfortunate side effect of having a large inventory of Ash trees.

Board Member Bentz stated that perhaps the action should begin now rather than waiting for the bug to get here.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that many of the items have already been implemented.

Board Member Bentz questioned why quarantine is not instituted now in order to further delay the arrival.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the State does not like to make that decision until there is proof. He explained that this policy was drafted by the EPB in 2010 and advised that the City stopped allowing Ash trees to be planted on public property around 2008. He explained that while the City can discourage the planting of Ash trees on private property, they did not want to limit a resident's right to plant the type of tree desired.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Lewis to recommend that the City Council adopt the Emerald Ash Borer Management Plan.

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

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that it would be his intent to group as many items as he could together for presentation to the City Council and asked that as many Board Members as possible attend the meeting, whether that occur at a regular or work session meeting.

5.03: Rain Garden Demonstration Project Update

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report. He noted that the Parks Supervisor will be meeting someone onsite to discuss the prairie restoration project also on the Alpine Park site. He advised that he has been invited to attend the meeting as well and hoped that he would be able to pull the expert over to this site to obtain further suggestions for this project.

Chairperson Max questioned if this was the best location for a demonstration site because it does not have very wet conditions.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson stated that the intent of a rain garden is not to hold water, but noted that the soil could be amended onsite to delay the absorption of the water.

Board Member Bentz stated that the project should have similar soils to Ramsey residents and should not be amended.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson noted that the expert would be able to provide some good feedback the following day. He confirmed that the intent would be to use gallon size plants to create a fairly quick visual impact. He also confirmed that staff will take pictures before, during and after. He asked that the Board consider holding the planting on a weekday, possibly before a regular EPB meeting and noted that the regular meeting could be held onsite at the park. He stated that if everything were to come together the planting could occur in conjunction with the August Board meeting.

5.04: Environmental Expo Update

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson presented the staff report, noting that he did receive a fourth confirmation of registration (Home Depot) for exhibitors. He noted that in conversations with Mayor Strommen, she would try to verify the availability of the desired keynote speaker within the next two weeks. He confirmed that it is not unusual to only have a few exhibitors confirmed at this time and verified that he would accept assistance from Board Members in the recruitment of exhibitors.

Board Member Prendergast confirmed that there is no charge for the Environmental Expo exhibitors.

Chairperson Max noted that petting zoos have been widely popular.

Board Member Bentz stated that perhaps the petting zoo could be included, but not funded through the EPB.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson confirmed that it was his understanding that the desire was not to fund the petting zoo through the EPB but to ensure that this would not conflict with the exhibitors for the Expo. He referenced the Subcommittee, which met following

the June meeting to develop the five survey questions that could be presented to residents at the Expo.

Board Member Bentz commented that some of his neighbors verified that they would be willing to complete the survey.

Chairperson Max stated that he believed the questions to be a great start and advised of additions that he would make including the addition of a scale and different language suggestions.

Board Member Lewis referenced question four and the desired information that would be obtained.

Board Member Valentine stated that he viewed it as a measure of engagement for residents.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson confirmed that Chairperson Max will work to wordsmith some of the questions and bring that information back for further review at the August meeting. He noted that he would prefer to reserve a booth with electricity for the Board at the Expo and conduct the survey on a site such as Survey Monkey. He advised that at the direction of the Board the survey could be left open for a specific length of time to allow additional resident response.

Board Member Prendergast stated that some of the items she was unsure of and questioned if some of the answers should be more than a yes or no answer. She also noted that “green” could have many different interpretations.

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson referenced the green question and stated that perhaps that item should be tweaked because of the broad interpretation of “green” and the level of understanding for those not familiar with environmental issues. He noted that if a date for survey results was listed it should be estimated as the January/February issue of the newsletter as that would allow time for the Board to compile the results. He advised that a snapshot of the results could be published in the newsletter with full results available online.

Board Member Bentz noted that it would also be helpful for staff and the City Council to complete the survey as well.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Monthly Recycling Event**

Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator Anderson advised that the first monthly collection event hosted by Ace Solid Waste took place about two weeks ago. He noted that he intends to send a mailing before the July and August events to promote the monthly events. He advised that he was unable to send a mailing before the June event but noted that Ace sent out electronic notification to their customers. He reported that even with very minimal marketing for the June event, there were still about 50 participants. He advised that the fall event will still take place in September.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
Associate Planner/Environmental Coordinator

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.