

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

On Monday, December 1, 2014, 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 Thomas Stodola  
                          Board Member Bob Bentz  
                          Board Member Reid Bernard  
                          Board Member Larry Lewis  
                          Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent:     Board Member Michael Hiatt  
                          Board Member Tara Prendergast

Also Present:         Community Development Director Tim Gladhill  
                          City Planner Chris Anderson  
                          Councilmember John LeTourneau

**1.     CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Stodola 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 Bentz to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

**4.     APPROVE MINUTES**

**4.01:  Approve Meeting Minutes Dated October 6, 2014**

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Valentine to approve the regular meeting minutes dated October 6, 2014.

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

## **5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Collaborative Session to Develop Mission, Role and Functions of the Board**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He indicated that this session is a result of direction by the Board at their October meeting. The intent of the discussion will be to collaboratively determine the general mission of the Board and address the following questions:

1. What is the purpose/role of the Environmental Policy Board?
2. What actions or strategies are necessary to fulfill the purpose/role of the Board?

City Planner Anderson indicated that the Work Plan and the summary of Council discussions was available to help frame the Board's discussion and to be used as a reference. He stated that Staff would like to get a consensus on how the Board will function from this point on and bring the vision/mission back to the City Council to 'close the loop.'

Community Development Director Gladhill provided the Board with the following handouts/resources: Chapter 2: Vision, Values and Goals of the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan. This document is a framework for the City's Land Use Guide and emphasizes respecting the natural environment. He stated that the Board would likely be heavily involved in reviewing and developing the next generation of the vision, values and goals in this document. Based on community feedback, there is a need for language updates in Chapter 13: Environmental Protection/Resource Management of the City's 2030 Comprehensive Plan Update. He stated that the City's Environmental Plan is updated once every 10 years and that he sees developing and monitoring the document as a key component of the Board's work. Community Development Director Gladhill stated that it was a framework to develop the next Comprehensive Plan and that the Board would be involved in developing this plan as well as the City's responses to regional plans coming from the Metropolitan Council. He highlighted the City's priorities as being transportation and water supply.

City Planner Anderson stated that he saw the role of the Board as ranging from advising the City Council on policy to reviewing proposals and improvement projects.

Board Members were asked to identify how they would like to see the Board function in the future by participating in a post-it note exercise. Board Members identified the following roles:

- Advise on policy
- Advise Council
- Advise – be in the loop
- Community education
- Review development – might need to filter and key in on larger projects
- Bring forth community ideas for discussion
- New technologies
- Review of plans
- Set direction
- Present several perspectives

- Discovery
- Preserve accountability
- Promote environmental awareness and conservation practice for citizens
- See this group functioning more as environmental outreach committee – not policy board

Advising and education were identified as the common themes. City Planner Anderson asked the Board how they envisioned their advising role.

Board Member Valentine stated his belief that the Board's advisement role in the past has been reactive and that the Board is more effective in a reactive role than a proactive role. He spoke about being involved in the Comprehensive Plans as much as possible depending on timelines.

Chairperson Stodola felt that the Board should focus more on being proactive by bringing ideas/suggestions to the City Council.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he feels that Best Management Practices (BMPs) are a great tool in developing projects and suggested the Board utilize both BMPs and bringing ideas/suggestions to the City Council.

Board Member Valentine agreed that the Board should be proactive within the framework of the Comprehensive Plan.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that there seemed to be a broad agreement that the Board's statement of purpose should include an advisory component and asked the Board how it would feel about reviewing development plans and improvement projects focusing on environmental issues.

City Planner Anderson clarified that the Board's focus would be on environmental issues in the developmental phase of projects. This could mean one or two cases a month and would be concurrent with the review already going on with the Planning Commission. Staff would compile all of the input and bring it to the City Council. This would also be a good opportunity to learn about City ordinances and could lead to new ideas.

Board Member Valentine spoke about the importance of not slowing down the process.

City Planner Anderson clarified that future involvement of the Board would be blended into the current review process so that the 60-day clock on development proposals would not be affected.

Board Member Stodola asked if the Board would have the expertise to contribute positively.

City Planner Anderson suggested that with the residential developments the City could have the projects brought to the Board in the sketch plan phase. The Board could then provide recommendations/feedback to the developer.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the City would provide the Board with the tools to do this kind of activity and that the Board should not worry about the level of expertise.

Board Member Bentz gave an example of what kind of contribution the Board could make to development projects and stated that the Board is supposed to be composed of a variety of people for a variety of input.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked the Board if there was opposition to reviewing development proposals and improvement projects that eventually get to the City Council.

Board Member Lewis stated he is not opposed to reviewing the proposals, but is concerned that the issue of the role of the Board is still not clearly being defined and that the Board is still going in the same direction as it has been.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if it would close the gap if a framework and metrics was established to demonstrate the Board's goals and achievements.

Board Member Lewis stated in some respects it would help to close the gap but the underlining question in all of this remains where does the Board make the largest contribution back to the City and its citizens. He stated his opinion that what the Board is discussing, is what the Board is currently doing and packaging it a little differently but it is still the same thing. He questioned if this is the best use of the Board.

Chairperson Stodola stated that he believes what the Board is discussing now has not happened in the past when they often heard about projects after the window for input was closed.

Board Member Lewis suggested that major restructuring needs to occur in order for the Board to be proactive and become part of the process sooner. He stated his opinion that the Board is not a policy board, but an advisory board.

Chairperson Stodola stated that the Board is a policy board.

Board Member Lewis stated that the Board is a policy board in name only.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he is hearing the Board say they want to be more involved in the process and that it is up to him and City Planner Anderson to determine a process to facilitate more meaningful involvement.

Board Member Valentine stated he is sensing enthusiasm on the part of Staff to implement a new process and asked Councilmember LeTourneau for his opinion on the Board's desire to be more involved in the development process.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated there would definitely be value to the Board being more involved in the development process.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if there was enough consensus by the Board that he and City Planner Anderson could work on a proposed Statement of Purpose that includes advising the Council and development review.

Board Member Bentz suggested that only substantial work should be taken on.

Community Development Director Gladhill agreed and stated that staff would come up with a recommended threshold of development. Community Development Director Gladhill cited a 2015 water rate increase that will garner community feedback as an opportunity for the Board to implement its community education role. He also asked if there is Board consensus to add the community education role to the proposed Statement of Purpose.

Chairperson Stodola stated that the community education role should be added to define who the Board is.

Board Member Bentz asked about the status of the Environmental Expo.

City Planner Anderson stated that there is funding in the budget for the Environmental Expo. He suggested that based on the decline in exhibitors, the funds might be better used to make the event more green and sustainable. He spoke about restructuring the event and focusing the City's education campaign elsewhere.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that even if the Expo takes a different form, education will still be key to the community.

Board Member Bentz stated that most educational resources are free so the City would not incur too many expenses.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked where the suggestion for "present several perspectives" role would fit.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he would move that role under the "advise Council."

Community Development Director Gladhill asked the Board if the "present several perspectives" role could be moved under "advise Council." There was no objection voiced.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked to clarify the suggested role of "promote environmental awareness and conservation practice for citizens."

Board Member Lewis stated he would put it under the "community education" or the "present several perspectives" role.

The Board consensus was to put it under education.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if the current wording of the role would be acceptable in the Statement of Purpose. There was no objection voiced.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked the Board where it would put the roles of "bring forth community ideas for discussion" and "new technology." He also asked whether the role of "bring forth community ideas for discussion" is a standalone role.

Board Member Bentz stated it is sometimes hard for citizens to "get a voice."

Chairperson Stodola stated that this best fits under "education" because it involves citizens.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated he felt the role had its own identity.

Board Member Bentz stated that it involves getting feedback.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if it fit within the “present several perspectives” role. There was no objection voiced.

Board Member Valentine wondered if there were tools such as a blog that would be available to make it easier for people to bring their concerns to the City. He felt that role belonged under “education.”

Board Member Lewis stated this falls under communication as a component of “community education” and improving lines of communication.

Councilmember LeTourneau explained his proposed roles. “Discovery” would entail a deep dive into a topic to arrive at a formal conclusion or good recommendation. He did not think the City Council had time for this but it would be nice to have citizen input and he felt the Board could deliver a lot of value. The “preserve accountability” role is so that the City does not wander away from what is important and to hold the Council, staff and projects accountable from an environmental perspective. His “set direction” role is related to the “new technologies” role and is intended to address the need to be proactive in looking at trends on the horizon such as ground water supply.

Board Member Valentine spoke about the ground water issue in White Bear Lake.

Community Development Director Gladhill commented that the ground water supply is one of the key issues, part of the long-term plan in the Comprehensive Plan, and asked the Board for thoughts and feedback on Councilmember LeTourneau’s suggested roles.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated the Board could establish “promoting environmental awareness and conservation practice for citizens” as a broad goal and then get into advising the Council on policies; reviewing development proposals; and, communicating and educating the citizens by presenting several perspectives that touch on discovery, accountability and bringing forth new technologies. He suggested staff use this as a framework for the Statement of Purpose that will be brought back for the Board’s consideration.

Board Member Valentine stated that the Board would then have something to work with.

The Board reached consensus on the content of the proposed Statement of Purpose.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked the Board what makes a policy board different from a task board and if the Board wanted to expand on the issue under the lens of the Statement of Purpose.

Board Member Lewis stated his opinion that this Board as it is currently structured operates as a policy board in title only and that renaming the Board would help to clarify its function. He does not know if a task force would be the correct term, but he does not think it is a policy board. He

does not think that the Board has ever brought any policy before the Council. He stated that the Board may make recommendations or suggestions, but it has never set policy.

Chairperson Stodola agreed that the Board does not have the authority to set policy.

Board Member Lewis stated that it could be called an advisory board. He does not recall the Board setting policy other than recommending the GreenStep City program that was presented and never carried forward. He felt that this issue was part of a former Board Member's frustration. He supported restructuring the Board to something that is more in keeping with the way this group actually operates and functions.

Board Member Valentine stated if the Board becomes something other than a policy board, it would narrow the Board's focus but if the Board remains a policy board, it can still do task work.

Community Development Director Gladhill suggested creating an implementation schedule of when the Board would be seeing/reviewing plans. He stated that he is seeing new direction coming out of the proposed Statement of Purpose. He also suggested that Staff bring back a Statement of Purpose with a timeline process so that the discussion can be continued.

Chairperson Stodola stated he did not think in order to be a policy board the Board has to create policy but it can make recommendations on policies and review current policy and make recommendations.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that historically there has been a lot of that kind of activity.

City Planner Anderson stated that historically, the Board has had direct involvement with policy advisements.

Chairperson Stodola stated that he feels the Board has gotten away from that but that is what the Board wants to be doing.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if the Board had accomplished the core of the last meeting's discussion.

Board Member Valentine stated he is satisfied with what was accomplished and recommended that Staff move forward with developing a Statement of Purpose.

The Board Members concurred.

#### **5.02: Review and Recommend a Response to the Anoka Conservation District's Draft 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan**

City Planner Anderson explained the Anoka Conservation District's (ACD) 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft had been sent out for public comment. He has reviewed the plan and will be providing the ACD with comments and feedback. City Planner Anderson stated the 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft does not appear to have any new mandates. It is looking at existing resources, efforts and strategies.

City Planner Anderson presented the following summary of the ACD draft:

1. Supports the notion of incorporating or considering the emerging issues throughout the natural resource management process.
2. Recommends designating a water quality monitoring site along the Ford Brook, which is a tributary of the Rum River, the ACD's highest priority watershed.
3. Concerned with the potential drawdown effect on our lakes/wetlands and the desire to be regularly updated regarding potential strategies being considered and/or developed by the Metropolitan Water Supply Advisory Committee.
4. Recommends that the riverbank inventory that was completed in 2012 along the Mississippi River be extended west beyond the Coon Rapids Dam pool to the western boundary of the county.
5. Recognizes and supports their focus on education while encouraging the ACD to promote these educational opportunities and services more so that Ramsey (and other municipalities) can take advantage of them.

City Planner Anderson stated he saw nothing of great concern but wanted to provide a summary and open it up for discussion with the Board. He stated the Planning Commission is also reviewing the 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft and staff's draft response. The information will then be brought to the City Council for their direction and authorization to send it to the ACD.

Board Member Valentine commented that City Planner Anderson did a great job of summarizing issues in the draft. He expressed concern about the water table drawdown issues and asked who is on the Metropolitan Council Advisory Committee.

City Planner Anderson said he did not know all the members of that Committee.

Board Member Valentine encouraged the City to be as involved with that Committee as possible. He felt every community is in danger of catastrophic problems in the future, if this issue is not closely monitored.

City Planner Anderson asked if Board Member Valentine wanted the language strengthened.

Board Member Valentine stated that he would like to have someone participating in the issue so that the City will not be at the back end.

City Planner Anderson explained that the City Engineer is a part of Northwest Metro Groundwater Group so there is a City representative actively participating in the groundwater issue and discussions.

Board Member Valentine felt the City needed to stay close to the issue and what the DNR may have in mind.

Board Member Bentz asked if the Committee was tied to the DNR because the City seems to always be over its water appropriations permit and asked if it would be an issue.

City Planner Anderson responded that to the best of his knowledge the answer was no. The City does tend to be one of the top water users and has been over its allotment in the past. He does not

think there is a connection between being on that list and the enforcement that is referenced in the ACD's 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft.

Board Member Bentz asked if the ACD has a five-year plan.

City Planner Anderson stated ACD does develop an annual work plan that gets more specific. This document is the overall framework.

Board Member Bentz questioned the Plan's stated frequency of testing lakes as four years. He noted the City has lakes that go 10 years between testing and asked if the ACD would receive editing comments from the City.

City Planner Anderson stated that the ACD is looking for any type of feedback from the public. He asked Board Members to give him their feedback and pointed out that individuals could also respond directly to ACD.

Board Member Bentz spoke about an issue addressed in the 2015-2019 Comprehensive Plan draft with respect to the depth of the sand plain affecting surface waters. He spoke about the City's sewage water being piped to St. Paul for treatment and asked if aerobic septic systems have been looked into. He felt the City should be keeping its water here as opposed to piping it down to St. Paul.

City Planner Anderson agreed there has been an emphasis over the last decade or more to gather up all the water in a pipe and get it out of the City. He spoke of the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization's regulations, the need to focus on infiltration, and the need to recapture the water. He stated that Ramsey is a primary recharge area for one of the aquifers and agreed that there might be some merit to exploring alternative options. City Planner Anderson stated if the Board feels strongly, he would add that as a comment.

Board Member Valentine stated he would like to see that added in as a comment.

City Planner Anderson asked for clarification from the Board whether it wanted a general statement added to look at alternative options as opposed to piping water out of the City without getting more specific with regard to the aerobic systems.

Board Member Valentine asked if it would be called "de-centralized treatment."

City Planner Anderson stated he would add in the comment and asked if there were any additional thoughts or comments.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Lewis to reinforce the language concerning the drawdown potential and for the City to do what it can to stay in the loop and be a part of that discussion and also to include the recommendation from Board Member Bentz to look at de-centralized treatment options.

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

**5.03: Consider Recommendation of Best Management Practices for Landscape Plan, Storm water Plan, and Energy Efficient Design for Fire Station No. 2 Replacement to be Located at 5650 Alpine Dr NW; Case of the City of Ramsey**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He described the location of Fire Station No. 2 and reported that it would be a multi-purpose facility providing space for the on-call fire department and Allina Health Emergency Medical Services. He stated that the plan has not been approved by the City Council and that it is in the review process. He stated that it is not often that the City has a public improvement project of this nature and he wanted to route it through the Board to review the landscaping, storm water, and energy efficiency components of the project, and get recommendations and feedback. City Planner Anderson stated the City has made some recommendations for potential BMPs that could be incorporated so it could serve as a demonstration project for potential developers.

City Planner Anderson reported there is a strong desire to keep a maintained appearance along Helium Street and along Alpine Drive and there is an agreement in concept to convert more of the storm pond area south of the property to a natural prairie setting; to consider ribbon curbing; to change out some of the tree species; to look at energy efficient systems; and, to utilize LED lighting both exterior and interior. He also spoke about sensor requirements for the irrigation system.

Board Member Valentine asked if BMPs are memorialized.

City Planner Anderson replied that there is not a set of adopted BMPs for the City.

Board Member Bentz asked if ideas were taken from the GreenSteps Program with regard to this project.

City Planner Anderson answered that the GreenSteps Program was not referenced.

Board Member Valentine asked where the City is on the process of working on BMPs related to storm water management.

City Planner Anderson replied that it is in the exploratory phase.

Board Member Valentine suggested that all rain garden or low water requirement planting opportunities be explored.

City Planner Anderson stated that the type of sod could also be considered to achieve a sustainable landscape with a manicured appearance.

Chairperson Stodola suggested using the new data from the recent study the City did on topsoil.

Board Member Bentz asked if the City considered the sight triangle on all of their plans.

City Planner Anderson stated that the City uses a vision clearance triangle that is applied at intersections of roadways and commercial driveways. He explained the concept.

Board Member Bentz stated that it looked as though the driveway would not let people see the fire trucks coming out on Helium Street.

Community Development Director Gladhill explained the plan to shield vehicle lights from residents.

Board Member Bentz asked if it would be a drive-through design.

Community Development Director Gladhill replied that the Fire Department vehicles will back into stalls.

Board Member Bentz asked about stoplight plans.

Community Development Director Gladhill reported that the stoplights will be looked at for future planning.

City Planner Anderson reported that there is a transmission line easement along the north side of the property so the City will need a written agreement/acknowledgement from that easement holder to allow the plantings as shown on the plan.

Board Member Bentz asked if there were storm water calculations on the storm pond.

City Planner Anderson replied that the City did have storm water calculations and engineering staff is looking at the feasibility of tying into an existing storm sewer pipe on the north side of the property.

Board Member Bentz asked if the City uses any of the overflow drains.

City Planner Anderson replied that a lot of City storm ponds have the emergency overflow drains.

City Planner Anderson indicated he will incorporate the Board's recommendations to look at alternative landscaping along Alpine Drive in the form of native prairie plantings or a drought-tolerant sod.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked Councilmember LeTourneau if it would be helpful to bring thoughts and ideas or motions to the City Council.

Councilmember LeTourneau replied that thoughts and ideas would be helpful. However, if the City Council is specifically asking for direction, a motion would be preferred.

## **6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT**

- **Boards/Commissions/Volunteers Appreciation Event and Holiday Party (January 9, 2015)**

City Planner Anderson reminded Board Members about the event and asked them to RSVP.

Councilmember LeTourneau encouraged Board Members and their spouses to attend.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chris Anderson  
City Planner

ATTEST:

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JoAnn Shaw  
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Denise Bosch  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*