

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

On Monday, March 2, 2015, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the COR 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

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 City Civil Engineer II Leonard Linton
 City Engineer Bruce Westby
 City Council Liaison John LeTourneau

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Stodola called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated February 2, 2015

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Lewis to approve the regular meeting minutes dated February 2, 2015.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Surface Water Management Plan Update

City Planner Anderson introduced City Civil Engineer Linton and City Engineer Westby who were present to discuss the update of the City's Surface Water Management Plan.

City Civil Engineer Linton presented the staff report and provided additional information regarding Atlas 14.

Board Member Bentz addressed areas of sloping and concerns of potential erosion.

City Civil Engineer provided additional information noting that some areas are not completed and other areas will be routed to ponds.

City Planner Anderson stated that there are Best Management Practices (BMPs) referenced throughout the Plan. He stated that the Surface Water Management Plan, in its current state and as proposed to be updated, focuses on BMPs.

Board Member Valentine asked if staff has any concerns with the requirements of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA).

City Civil Engineer Linton stated that some of the recommendations from the MPCA can be adapted to fit the needs of the City, providing an example of rock construction entrances, which are not effective in Ramsey.

Board Member Valentine referenced the increase to the 100-year rain figure and asked for additional information.

City Civil Engineer Linton explained that the Atlas 14 data provided much more information and that was used to determine the figures.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Lewis to recommend that the City Council adopt the updated Surface Water Management Plan.

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

City Engineer Westby stated that this item will move on to the Public Works Committee on March 31st to seek their recommendation to the City Council. He believed that the item would appear before the City Council in April for their preliminary approve and then will be submitted to the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization by May 17th. He advised that there is a 60-day review period and believed that the Plan would appear back before the Council perhaps in August for final approval.

City Planner Anderson stated that the full Plan and Atlas 14 information could be provided to the Board Members if desired.

Board Member Valentine stated that he would like the additional information.

5.02: Consider Request for Variance to Side Yard Setback for an Existing Pool and to Minimum Lot Size in the Critical River Overlay District on the Properties Located at 14255 and 14235 Bowers Drive NW; Case of Travis and Bridgette Richard and Lucas Hase

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Lewis stated that based on the fact that the adjacent lots seem to be non-conforming this request does not seem to be out of sync with the area. He stated that there would be more of an environmental impact if the pool were to be removed.

Board Member Valentine questioned if there was an issue for either property owner.

City Planner Anderson stated that this issue arose prior to the closing of the sale on the lot and both parties are in agreement. He noted that the owners of lots one and two were not involved in the placement of the pool. He stated that the DNR has been consulted and they do not have any issues with the variance.

Board Member Bentz stated that he personally would think the issue would have been grandfathered in. He stated that since there have been multiple property owners he would think this issue would have come up during the title insurance process.

City Planner Anderson noted that this did come up in the title insurance process for this sale and all parties were in agreement that this would be the cleanest and best approach.

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Valentine to recommend that the Planning Commission adopt Resolutions #15-03-063 and #15-03-064 approving a variance to the minimum lot size on the property located at 14235 Bowers Drive NW.

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

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Valentine to recommend that the Planning Commission adopt Resolutions #15-03-065 and #15-03-066 approving a variance to pool setbacks on the property located at 14255 Bowers Drive NW.

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

5.03: Outreach Opportunities for the Environmental Policy Board

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Bentz referenced the education aspect mentioned in the Surface Water Management Plan, which needs to be completed on an annual basis.

City Planner Anderson agreed that the City could do a better job with education and believed that the knowledge of the Board could be a great component.

Board Member Lewis stated that in his opinion the Board should develop a very specific focus before participating in some of the events mentioned, rather than simply providing general information. He commented that the Board would be more successful with focusing on one or two items very specific to Ramsey homeowners.

City Planner Anderson agreed and explained that these are simply opportunities, should the Board develop those specific areas of focus.

Board Member Bentz believed that surface water must also be mentioned through education because of how the Plan is composed.

City Planner Anderson explained that the public education component of the Plan could be met through several avenues, such as newsletter articles or utility inserts. He agreed with Board Member Lewis that if the Board were to participate in these events there should be a specific focus.

Board Member Valentine stated that spring is around the corner and if the Board wants to participate in some of these events the group needs to be able to plan in order to develop a relevant topic and was not sure of the best method to prepare.

City Planner Anderson stated that this is not an item that requires action as these events occur on an annual basis and the Board can plan ahead for 2016. He stated that his recommendation would be if the Board were to have a topic of importance, they could participate in one of these events to spread that message.

Board Member Valentine agreed but believed that the Board could do a better job to become organized for the future.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Board could review the time of year for the events to determine which topics would fit well, and provided the example of Oak wilt during the spring.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau noted that this list of events is just a list of opportunities where the Board could spread a message and the Board does not have to choose to participate in specific events. He agreed that the Board should focus on one educational element per year and spread that message.

Chairperson Stodola agreed that the Board could develop seasonally pertinent issues that could be included in newsletters or broadcast on QCTV segments and believed that work had begun in the past.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Board did intend to create some seasonal articles for newsletters and QCTV segments but explained that he was having trouble obtaining volunteers from the Board to write the newsletters or film a QCTV segment.

Board Member Lewis stated that perhaps an item could be placed on the next agenda.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Planning Commission requested to hold a joint meeting with the Board in April and believed that would occur on the regular Board meeting date for April.

Chairperson Stodola stated that perhaps Subcommittees would be a good method of discussing this item further.

Board Member Lewis stated that he believed that the next agenda should include time to discuss the topic which the Board should focus on for the next year and then a Subcommittee could be formed to further research that aspect.

Board Member Bentz stated that this item should be a homework aspect that the Board Members research on their own so that when the item is discussed during the meeting it does not encompass a lot of time.

Chairperson Stodola stated that because the joint meeting will occur in April, the Board should come prepared to the May meeting with their ideas.

Board Member Bentz suggested that the Board Members email their ideas to City Planner Anderson.

City Planner Anderson suggested that the Board Members email him their topics of preference, which he can then draft into a case to provide a more streamlined discussion.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau suggested holding the joint meeting in May and letting the Board move forward on this topic in April.

City Planner Anderson stated that he would look into that option but noted that he was not in attendance at the Planning Commission when the idea was brought forward. He advised that he will follow up to determine if that would be possible and will email the Board to advise them if the joint meeting would occur in April or May.

5.04: Discuss Water Conservation Alternatives

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Lewis stated that in his opinion, the top soil requirement should remain intact and any additional measures would be a bonus and could be incentivized.

City Planner Anderson stated that his interpretation from the discussion one year ago was that the focus became strictly top soil and nothing else and the City should allow the ability for builders to select from a menu of options that could be implemented, one of which could include top soil, in order to achieve the same goal. He stated that based upon what they have seen in the field and the cost of top soil (which could range from \$3,000 to \$5,000 for a single home) he would question if that top soil requirement should remain or whether there are other opportunities that still achieve the same water conservation goal.

Board Member Lewis questioned if there is a measurable goal desired on a per lot or per acre basis which could be built into the language.

City Planner Anderson did not believe that could be quantified. He compared the average water use during the winter months and summer months.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau provided additional information on the top soil study that was completed. He stated that there needs to be a shift in thinking for homeowners to look at some of these alternatives in replacement of sprinkling in order to conserve water.

Board Member Bentz stated that he would like to see the option for commercial properties to not install irrigation, which is currently required.

City Planner Anderson stated that perhaps the recommendation of the Board would be to keep the top soil requirement and to eliminate the requirement for irrigation within the business, industrial and multi-family zoning districts. He stated that perhaps there would be an option to exempt the top soil requirement if the applicant were to achieve the goal in another manner. He stated that perhaps the Board could use educational efforts to prioritize some of the alternative options.

Board Member Valentine agreed that perhaps the beginning point could be top soil but then there could be an option to achieve the goal using alternative methods, but was unsure how that end result could be measured.

City Planner Anderson stated that he will forward these comments to staff to further discuss and bring back additional recommendations in the future.

5.05: Review Article for Potential Inclusion in Newsletter

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Chairperson Stodola questioned if someone has verified that the numbers are accurate.

City Planner Andersons stated that the information does seem accurate but noted that staff would verify the figures.

Board Member Lewis questioned if this would be an opportunity to recognize the business for the Eco Star award, as this would be a great kick off for the program and would provide recognition to the business and the program. He stated that perhaps language could be included in the article that the Board is nominating the business for an Eco Star award.

The Board provided consensus to include the article under the EPB portion of the newsletter with additional language nominating the business for the Eco Star award, with direction for staff to verify the figures in the article.

Board Member Lewis stated that perhaps this would be a good opportunity to publish an article about the Eco Star program. He volunteered to draft the article.

5.06: Well Water Wise Week Promotion

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He welcomed input from the Board regarding information they feel would be pertinent to the website, noting that information could be provided through email.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Joint EPB/Planning Commission Meeting on April 20, 2015**

City Planner Anderson had nothing further to add.

Chairperson Stodola commented that he recently attended a City Council meeting to present the Work Plan and noted that the Plan was very well received by the Council.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau noted that Chairperson Stodola did a great job presenting.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.