

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

On Monday, April 20, 2015, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) and Planning Commission held a joint meeting in the Lake Itasca Room at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

EPB Board Members Present: Chairperson Thomas Stodola
 Board Member Bob Bentz
 Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Jane Covart
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Larry Lewis
 Board Member Michael Valentine

Planning Commission Members Present: Chairperson Gary Levine
 Commissioner Andrew Andrusko
 Commissioner Randy Bauer
 Commissioner Ralph Brauer (arrived at 6:47 p.m.)
 Commissioner Matthew Maul

Planning Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Cindy Nosan
 Commissioner Gary VanScoy

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 Development Services Manager Timothy Gladhill
 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 Valentine and seconded by Board Member Bernard to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated March 30, 2015

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Bentz to approve the regular meeting minutes dated March 30, 2015.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Review of Environmental Policy Board's Statement of Purpose

City Planner Anderson stated the one reason for the meeting tonight is to provide the Planning Commission with an update on the EPB's recently adopted Statement of Purpose. He stated that the Board worked with the City Council on their new Statement of Purpose. This was done in response to the need to determine the Board's relevance and to determine how they could better serve the City Council and the community. He stated that the biggest change is the Board is now actively participating in the review of land use applications for all major plats, site plans, variances for various overlay districts and Comprehensive Plan amendments. Their role will be to look at the natural resource aspect of projects and to provide feedback on storm water management. The Board will also be participating in the Comprehensive Plan update. The Board will take the lead on environmental protection and natural resources management chapter of the Comprehensive Plan update. Their previous roles with education, looking at ordinances within the zoning code and seeing where there might be room for improvement will carry forward. City Planner Anderson stated that the EPB has been instrumental in the environmental protection ordinances that the City currently has and that getting them involved in the overview process closes the loop. He stated that the City Council will be looking at how the two Boards interact and see how their involvement in the City's land use application review benefits the Planning Commission and their review. He noted that the EPB has changed their regular meeting to the third Monday of the month because the Board did not want to interfere with the land use application process. They wanted the opportunity to get involved in the overall review without disrupting the process.

Chairperson Stodola stated that the Board felt like they were floundering and needed guidance and more to do and that is how they got to the Statement of Purpose.

City Planner Anderson stated that this organizational change was approved by the City Council on a trial basis for a year. After a year, they will look at memorializing the new organizational structure with a code amendment.

Community Development Direction Gladhill stated that this meeting is at the request of the Planning Commission to better understand what types of land use applications the EBP would look at and ways to collaborate on the Comprehensive Plan.

Planning Chairperson Levine stated that having the EPB involved is important because the Planning Commission looks at a lot of stuff. They try to look at environmental issues, but are

also looking at a lot of other things. He thinks input from the EPB will be very helpful especially with large projects. He stated that he is in favor of a trial run.

Commissioner Maul stated that he felt it was a really good idea from an environmental standpoint and that it would alleviate some issues.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau observed that the land use applications for Parkview East Apartments and Common Bond Apartments were reviewed and the thing that came to the surface was the water management system that Common Bond had put in. It was identified as a best management practice. He stated that this is a good example of how this structure can be the shepherd of these issues and the City will start to see consistency in how it is handling surface water and its retention.

Community Development Direction Gladhill spoke about the Harvest Estate project and how they were able to apply ordinances that were developed through the EPB.

Commissioner Bauer spoke about a recent project that had more than the required number of parking spaces. He stated that the EPB discussions before the Planning Commission's review of the project were helpful.

City Planner Anderson stated that the hope is to have this type of feedback built into the review to go to the Planning Commission and then to the City Council.

Board Member Valentine stated it would be nice if there could be a feedback loop so that we don't wait too long to find out we are out of sync.

City Planner Anderson stated that as Staff they can try to do that. He stated that Staff is going before the EPB and then two weeks later the Planning Commission and then two weeks later the EBP meets again. It could be his responsibility to relay the general conversations rather than waiting a full year. He will try to serve as a go between.

Chairperson Levine stated that this is already being done but now it will be more purposeful and will keep both commissions on track.

5.02: Review Development Review Process and Meeting Procedures

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he would like to give a broad overview of the land use application process. He stressed the importance of learning the structure of code and being able to find the information Board Members/Commissioners need. He stated that City ordinances come from state statute and constitution. He stated that the League of Minnesota Cities is a great resource and encouraged Board Members and Commissioners to attend a Governance Training Services function.

Community Development Director Gladhill went over zoning and subdivision codes and the Planning and Zoning Discretionary Pyramid and how it is used. He stated that the Planning Commission is the recommending body to the City Council with the exception of variances in which the Planning Commission is acting as the Board of Adjustment and Appeals and they actually make the approval or denial of variances. The Planning Commission's decisions are

subject to appeal to the City Council. He went over the Community Development Department staff, which consists of the Planning Division and the Building Inspection Division that works closely with the Economic Development Division. He stated that the Economic Development Manager serves as liaison to the Economic Development Authority. He spoke about contracted inspections, the uniqueness of an in-house contracted electrical inspector, and a contracted planner used to help Staff meet the 60-day deadline. He reported on the Comprehensive Plan's Vision and Values Statement as it exists today. He stated that the community desires some changes to it. He stated that it will serve as the framework going forward and will lead into zoning code amendments as the City applies its development review standards. He spoke about the values and checklist for zoning alternatives that was developed by citizens and the desire to continue that type of collaborative community engagement. He spoke about the City Council's revision process of the 2015 Strategic Plan.

Community Development Director Gladhill also reported on the powers given to the City by Minnesota Statute Chapter 462 with regard to zoning and subdivision codes. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan is part of Minnesota Statute Chapter 473 and outlined the City's process for completing the Comprehensive Plan update. He spoke about the Regional Plan that includes transportation, water resources management, regional parks, etc. He stated that the Comprehensive Plan must be in harmony with the Regional Plan. He stated that this has implications on how fast the City grows and how it serves the community with infrastructure needs. He stated that Highway 10 and the water supply are key issues that subcommittees are currently working on. He provided the Board and Commission with the Comprehensive Plan's future land use map. He reported on several overlay districts that are specialized geographic areas that might not fit the mold of an underlying zoning district with rivers and the closed landfill as an example. The landfill is a new component of the Comprehensive Plan. He reported that an application needs to be processed in 60 days with one 60-day extension allowed.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that *Roberts Rules of Order* are utilized by both the Planning Commission and the EPB. He pointed out motions that are not used frequently such as "Call the Question".

Commission Brauer recognized Bob Bentz and Joe McDilda for their contributions to the last Comprehensive Plan.

Board Member Hiatt asked for clarification on the timing of the EPB's review.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the EPB is part of the same silo as the Planning Commission versus a separate step. The EPB will be in advance of the Planning Commission and then a proposal will be forwarded to the City Council.

Commissioner Bauer asked if applicants will come to the EPB.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the City makes it an option and not a requirement to come before the EPB. He stated that if the EPB or Planning Commission feels this is important to let Staff know.

Commissioner Bauer stated that if the EBP makes a recommendation for modification, the applicant may be blindsided and that possibly applicants should meet with the EPB on anything controversial.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that he and City Planner Anderson are relatively good at anticipating issues and if they believe there will be an issue, they will strongly encourage the applicant to come before the EPB. He pointed out recent cases where applicants were made aware of the EBP feedback before going to the Planning Commission. He stated that he was interested in feedback on applicants going before the EPB.

Board Member Lewis asked if the Planning Commission reviewed feedback from the last EPB meeting.

Commissioner Brauer stated that they had and it was great and a lot of help to have the background while reviewing the cases. He spoke about a recent position taken by the EPB on a park placement.

Chairperson Levine agreed that it was very helpful and that the Planning Commission could miss some things and the EBP are the experts.

Commissioner Andrusko asked if EPB meetings are open to the public.

Chairperson Stodola replied affirmatively.

Commissioner Brauer brought up setback cases that involve the Mississippi and Rum Rivers and wondered what the EPB's role was in terms of the scenic river issue and if they felt it was important to take a position on development with regard to the scenic issue.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated the environmental overlay districts are important for the EPB to see. He stated that the overlay districts along with shoreline areas are not Ramsey developed rules so there is a limitation on influence on the policies. He stated that it will be good to get feedback from the EPB as the City continues to work with the DNR.

Chairperson Levine stated that he has learned that the area along the Mississippi River is designated as a national park.

Board Member Bentz asked if people that owned property along the river can put fill in to address erosion issues.

City Planner Anderson stated that there is a permitting process in terms of bank stabilization that is reviewed by the City and the DNR. He thinks the DNR would prefer to see techniques such as cedar revetments or other more natural appearing techniques for stabilization, but he has seen examples where rip rap has been approved for stabilizing the bank. He stated that the DNR would like residents to explore alternatives to rip rap and they would like to see that offset with native plantings to give a naturalized appearance and to help with sediment control.

Board Member Lewis stated that he thinks there are a lot of issues like this that are on the table that we haven't been able to look at like we want to. He thinks the restructuring and redefinition of the EPB will help with that.

Commissioner Brauer stated that it is good to see the change in coming back to where we used to be.

Board Member Lewis thanked the Planning Commissioner for the opportunity.

5.03: Review Structure of Chapter 13 (Environmental Protection/Resource Management) of the Comprehensive Plan and Prioritize Areas of Revisions for Current Goals and Strategies

City Planner Anderson stated that the purpose of this case is to begin the review of Chapter 13 (Environmental Protection/Resource Management) of the Comprehensive Plan. This initial introduction is intended to provide both the EPB and the Planning Commission an opportunity to review the existing contents and inform Staff of areas where updates may be necessary or appropriate. The intent is not to develop new goals, strategies, or alternatives yet, but to prioritize areas for future revisions. Essentially, Staff desires the group to identify priority areas for revision and to also identify areas that do not require additional future revisions and areas that need input from the public. He would like to focus on Section B that outlines goals and implementation strategies. He talked about the goal of reducing waste going to landfills and recommended a strategy to explore opportunities to promote or implement source separated organics collection. He stated that the City does have a natural resources inventory and a wetland inventory that was completed and that there hasn't been a lot of development since the studies were done so he doesn't see a need to update presently as they provide a good base of information.

Board Member Valentine wondered if it would be helpful to emphasize water supply in the water resources area. He thinks it is a key area going forward with sustainability in the long term being the underlying policy issue.

City Planner Anderson stated that this is certainly something we can do. He stated that a water resource plan is new to the Comprehensive Plan process and there will be a heavier emphasis on water. The City Council has identified transportation and water supply as major priorities.

Chairperson Levine asked for elaboration on item 1E – “Establish a revenue stream dedicated to the permanent protection of high-value natural resources area.”

City Planner Anderson stated that there is currently nothing in place. The EPB did look at it a few years ago. The intent was to conduct a public survey to gather information on support for a referendum in terms of a natural resources fund. The City Council opted not to move forward with conducting the survey.

Commissioner Andrusko stated that it might be helpful to the Comprehensive Plan in general to expand on Subsection 1E to let citizens know there is not a dedicated funding source and establishing a need for it. He wondered if there was a program of future expenses or a program of planned priorities and investments.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that two tools used in addition to the Strategic Plan for financial planning are the Capital Improvement Program and the annual budget. Planning starts with Strategic plan, then the CIP and is funded by the annual budget. The CIP is a planning document.

Board Member Bentz asked about the City saying there is too much park property and looking at ways to sell it off.

City Planner Anderson stated that the City did complete an inventory of city-owned land and identified land as not serving a purpose to be marketed for sale.

Board Member Bentz asked about a requirement for set aside for development purposes.

City Planner Anderson responded that there is a park dedication requirement that can be satisfied with land or cash or a combination of both. The general policy is to satisfy it with cash.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that City Planner Anderson's statement was correct that it is cash in lieu of land. It has to meet the master park and trail plan. He suggested looking at the term "cluster ordinances" and refining it or getting it out of the Comprehensive Plan. He explained the cluster concept.

Commissioner Brauer stated that in the past, there was a misunderstanding between clustering as a strategy for developing green space and clustering as a way of cramming a lot of houses together that was never resolved.

Board Member Bentz stated that a lot of people looked at it as poverty neighborhoods.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that this issue warrants some future refinement and strategy. Commission and Board Members agreed.

Commissioner Brauer stated that it was ambiguous at the time and it hasn't gotten any less ambiguous.

Board Member Bentz asked if there was a moratorium.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the ordinance was repealed. The only tool that can be used is a planned unit development.

Commissioner Brauer stated that he liked Board Member Valentine's point about sustainability and that that value wasn't stressed enough in the last plan. He thinks it is crucial now to community survival.

Board Member Valentine agreed with Commissioner Brauer and stated that there are plenty of people that think it is a dirty word.

Commissioner Brauer spoke about the need for a discussion on what do we mean by it and how do we plan on doing about it. He talked about reviving the Andover ordinance model. He talked

about the land use issue that Commissioner Bentz brought up and about a past practice of picking up land at a sheriff's sale. He also spoke about a dedication fee issue that could be increased incrementally as a way of financing development.

Board Member Valentine agreed with City Planner Anderson's comments on organics recycling.

Commissioner Andrusko asked about emergency management/planning with regard to the oil trains running through the community. He stated that this is a significant environmental protection topic at the state legislature.

City Planner Anderson stated that he didn't think this chapter addresses emergency response, but that the fire chief and the police chief are actively involved with training with the increased rail traffic. This issue could be added as a goal.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the City does have an emergency operations manual that is regularly updated and part of that is oil safety. He pointed out the Highway 10 Access Planning Study, which has led to a request to legislature for grade-separated railroads at Ramsey Blvd., Sunfish Lake Blvd., and Armstrong Blvd. He stated that there are environmental remediation issues long after the event and that the long-term remediation role would be for this group to work on.

Board Member Valentine pointed out that there is a linkage. He talked about the long term clean up and management of properties that were affected.

City Planner Anderson stated that Staff will be preparing for a future public input meeting at some point.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if there were any other issues and stated that Staff would like to go out to a broader public meeting for input. He stated that they followed this process with their Land Use Vision Statement and were able to pull out areas for refinement.

Commissioner Hiatt spoke about the need for a strategy on the conservation of water that includes an educational process for citizens.

Commissioner Bauer stated that he is not sure how aware the community is that down the road we could run out of water.

Board Member Hiatt spoke about the White Bear Lake situation.

Commissioner Bauer spoke about the need to be more proactive in this area.

Chairperson Stodola stated that water conservation has been talked about since he joined the board.

City Planner Anderson stated he is developing a flow chart that he will be bringing to the EPB. It will be a framework to help outline how to proactively educate the community on water resources.

Board Member Bentz stated that he would still like to see a price tag put on water with irrigation water at a different rate than potable water. He thinks the best way to get people's attention is to let them know this is how much water is being used and it's going to cost them this much more. This would take the issue/costs away from the state and concentrate it locally. He stated that everyone needs to know the costs and that everyone is paying for it.

Commissioner Bauer stated that is a good point. He stated that those on their own well are not concerned because they are not paying for the water, but it is costing the community. He talked about making those with their own private well aware of the issue.

City Planner Anderson stated when the topsoil ordinance was adopted there was a discussion about the ordinance being for those on City services or City-wide. The decision was to make it city-wide because citizens are all drawing from the same aquifer.

City Planner Anderson stated that this is a starting point for framing discussions at an upcoming public meeting.

Board Member Bentz asked the Planning Commission if when they get blueprints and layouts, they use modern best management practices for landscaping, lighting, roofing, etc.

Commissioner Bauer answered that they don't get into this with residential developments. The multi-family proposals do need to present this information.

City Planner Anderson stated that this would be another benefit of the Board actively taking part in the review of the land use applications. If an issue is not in the zoning code, it may not be required but there can be advisory comments. If a consistent message is coming forward, then maybe it's time to look at an ordinance amendment.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau suggested looking at what the City can do to set best practice standards for the community to follow.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked if he was talking about City operations.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau answered affirmatively.

Chairperson Levine stated he didn't want to add a lot of cost to proposed projects and that there needs to be a balance.

Chairperson Stodola stated that we could educate developers on the long-term cost savings.

City Planner Anderson stated that looking at if the City can create incentives to encourage some of the techniques to be incorporated into a project could be a goal.

Commissioner Brauer explained points-based zoning that has been adopted by some cities. He stated that if we had a points-based system, developers could be rewarded for green space and less parking.

Commissioner Andrusko asked if the City participates in the Green Steps Program.

City Planner Anderson responded that the EPB did explore the Green Steps Program and brought it forward to the City Council, but it was not fully supported.

Chairperson Stodola stated he thought of the Green Steps Program when City Council Liaison LeTourneau brought up the City establishing best practices standards for the community to follow.

City Planner Anderson stated the Board was proposing the City look at ways to lead by example.

Community Development Directed Gladhill stated that participating in the Green Steps Program was not supported but it can be used as a tool in the background. He stated that City Council members supported some parts of the program but still voted against it.

5.04 Review Presentation on Update of Development Projects

Community Development Director Gladhill provided an update of various private and public construction projects under construction or scheduled to commence construction in 2015 so that Board Members and Commissioners could answer questions from the community. He presented information on new detached single family development household starts; vacant residential lot inventory which is the lowest seen in a number of years; the market outlook for new construction and existing homes; and inspection metrics and additional help brought on to keep up with the metrics. He reported that Stoney River did get occupancy late this year; that the City has finished its initial review and is working on getting revised plans and issuing a building permit from Casey's General Store; the City Council is looking at preliminary plans for a detached single family development for the former Municipal Center site; the Sunwood Village project will be in front of the City Council on May 12; Parkview East first read will be on April 28; and McDonalds does own the site but does not want to open its doors until work on the Armstrong exchange is complete.

Commissioner Brauer stated that the data on household starts is another example of why the Metropolitan Council predictions are wrong.

City Council Liaison Letourneau presented an update on the sale of the Residence of the COR to an investment organization out of Washington. He stated that it was very successful and the City was able to recover its bond investment and interest accrued.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **EAB Informational Meeting – April 30, 2015**

City Planner Anderson reported that Emerald Ash Borer had been identified and confirmed in Anoka County in Ham Lake in late March. There will be a meeting hosted by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture on April 30th at the Anoka County Activities Center at 6 p.m. The emergency quarantine will be discussed and comments will be accepted on the proposed permanent quarantine.

- **Spring Recycling Day Event Reminder**

City Planner Anderson stated that the spring recycling event will be held May 2nd at the Public Works facility. He stated that information will be on the website and in the newsletter.

- **May EPB Meeting Date**

City Planner Anderson stated there is a conflict with the May 18th meeting. He is seeking to reschedule or cancel. He stated that no land use applications are anticipated for the June Planning Commission meeting.

Chairperson Stodola stated he would be in favor of moving to another date instead of cancelling.

City Planner Anderson suggested May 19th or May 21st. He stated that EPB members can let him know the dates they are available.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau suggested that City Planner Anderson send out an e-mail and let Board Members choose the date.

City Planner Anderson will send an e-mail to the group.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Denise Bosch
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.