

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Revisit the Question to be Asked as Part of the Citizen Engagement Process for the Environmental Protection/Resource Management Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He noted before staff moves forward with the public engagement process regarding the Comprehensive Plan, they wanted to have a conversation with the Board to proceed with the questions that had been developed. Specifically, the question of “What value do natural resources and environmental sustainability add to your neighborhood?” has been discussed previously, and he said he is seeking further discussion on it. He pointed out there will be further opportunities to solicit feedback such as at the Draw Concert series, and upcoming Happy Days. The questions will also be brought before the City Council before adoption.

Board Member Bentz commented the question sounded good.

Board Member Valentine stated it had come to his attention in the last year that the word “sustainability” had become a bad word. He asked if that word could be removed because it can be a distraction for some people.

Board Member Lewis mentioned he also does not approve of the word “sustainability”. He added the word “environmental” can stay if needed. He suggested the question read “What value do natural resources add to your neighborhood?”

Chairperson Stodola stated he approves of the word “sustainability” and did not think it posed a problem.

Board Member Lewis clarified he did not think it was a very clear word.

Chairperson Stodola said he liked Board Member Lewis' suggested question because it is clearer. He suggested replacing the word “neighborhood” with “community”. He said he thinks the word “community” invites people to think more broadly.

Consensus was reached to use the word “neighborhood” in place of “community”.

City Planner Anderson offered to eliminate the word “sustainability”. He explained he added it in to address one of the discussions that occurred in May, because one of the Members wanted to see more environmental types of questions. He said people may or may not see it as negative. He concluded the word may come up in workshop discussions and as part of the neighborhood process.

Council Member Bentz asked if it is a mandate of a Comprehensive Plan to address sustainability.

City Planner Anderson responded it should be acknowledged and incorporated into a Comp Plan. He said it is not a required element of the Comp Plan.

Board Member Covart commented using the word “sustainability” may make people feel it is something they can do something about. She suggested using the word “renewable”. She said that may bring in the idea of active participation.

City Planner Peterson clarified that the word “natural resources” should be changed to “renewable resources”.

Board Member Covart said she didn't have a concrete suggestion, and just wanted to suggest the word “renewable” be added.

Councilmember LeTourneau noted he approved of using the words “natural resources” because it makes people think of natural things. We want to raise awareness of water and renewable resources, and he said he would like to have people be brought into a discussion of how we can address the aquifer and other issues. If the word “renewable” helps open up the conversation, then it should be used. He suggested the question read, “What value does environmental and natural and renewable resources add to your community.” He pointed out water is renewable. Trees are somewhat renewable, and compost and recycling is more renewable than natural resources.

Chairperson Stodola stated the word “renewable” was redundant.

Board Member Bentz commented these words are more along the lines of reclaiming rather than renewable. He suggested creating a statement with the words “renewable” and “reclaimable”, as they both fit under the umbrella of “sustainability”. He stated a moderator in a discussion may be able to suggest words that others may not think of. He said preservation is a large part of this subject, and others may not think of this as sustainable.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated he would like to find words that resonate with the public.

Chairperson Stodola noted he had thought over the situation and he would no longer like to keep the word “sustainability” in. He said if the Board is having this much discussion over it, the public could be unsettled.

Board Member Lewis suggested the word “sustainability” be replaced with “conservation”. He stated it may be more to the point. He clarified the question would then read, “What value do natural resources and conservation add to your neighborhood?”

It was the consensus of the Environmental Policy Board to move ahead with the question: “What value do natural resources and conservation add to your community?”

Councilmember LeTourneau asked when this item will come before the Council.

City Planner Anderson replied it will be either the 25th of August or the 8th of September.

Councilmember LeTourneau suggested this question be posted at Happy Days.

City Planner Anderson responded he did plan to have it in place by Happy Days for that reason. He said it would be a great opportunity to get feedback on this, and anything else.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated if there is a lot of confusion over it, the Board can discuss at a future meeting. If people seem to understand it, then we can move forward in discussion this chapter of the Comp Plan.

Board Member Bentz inquired if dates had been set up for the discussion of the Comp Plan.

City Planner Anderson replied there are no public dates set up yet. Some of the other chapters will likely not move forward until 2016. The Comp Plan Update is not actually due until 2018. Our discussions are ahead of the game.

5.02: Discuss Erosion Concerns Along Both Rivers and Consider Potential Prevention/Mitigation Resources

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He noted both the Rum and the Mississippi Rivers are considered waters of the state. He explained any work conducted below the Ordinary High Water elevation would require the involvement of the DNR. Any work above the Ordinary High Water elevation will require involvement of the state. He said staff is looking for a motion or direction to reach out to the Conservation District to get a better sense of what is needed.

Board Member Bentz questioned why the previous inventory was stopped at Ramsey's eastern border.

City Planner Anderson replied it was dependent on the pool that is created above the dam. The purpose of that study was to assess the condition of the recreational pool of the dam, and that geographically ended before Ramsey.

Board Member Bentz asked if the Army Corps of Engineers could do the work.

City Planner Anderson responded they could do the work, depending on their staff and the funds available to them. He said that is another entity or agency to reach out to, or bring into the conversation.

Councilmember LeTourneau clarified the discussion is not about spending any money yet. It is to discuss the choices available.

City Planner Anderson confirmed this discussion is not to authorize anything.

Board Member Valentine thanked City Planner Anderson for putting the information together to begin a discussion on possible remedies. This discussion is a great need. He also mentioned he just learned about Minnesota Erosion Control Association. He said it seems to be more involved in stormwater management.

City Planner Anderson responded he is aware of this agency. While they do work with stormwater, he said they could be a source of funding.