

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

On Monday, March 30, 2015, the Special 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 Reid Bernard
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Larry Lewis
 Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent: Board Member Bob Bentz

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 Community Development Director Timothy Gladhill
 City Council Liaison John LeTourneau
 Board Member-Elect Jane Covart

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 Hiatt to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated March 2, 2015

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

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Appointment of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson

City Planner Anderson introduced new Board Member Jane Covart whose term will start in April.

City Planner Anderson asked for nominations for Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for an April, 2015 to March, 2016 term.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Lewis to nominate Thomas Stodola for Chairperson.

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

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to nominate Michael Valentine for Vice Chairperson.

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

5.02: Review Landscape and Tree Preservation Plans Associated with the Preliminary Plat Application for Harvest Estates; case of NIK Management, Inc.

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Valentine inquired about storm water compliance.

City Planner Anderson replied that the engineering staff is responsible for storm water compliance but from what he can see, it appears to meet the minimum standards. There would not be tree loss directly related to storm water ponding. He pointed out that the proposed lot sizes are approximately a quarter of an acre and each site would get two front yard trees. He stated that a concern raised by adjacent residents that they would like to see more of a buffer has been addressed with the plan. He spoke about reforestation standards and their interpretations.

Board Member Lewis asked about the area between phase one and two.

City Planner Anderson replied that it may be ponding for the site.

Board Member Lewis asked if it was a ponding area or swale.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated his assumption that it is needed for storm water purposes.

Board Member Lewis asked if there is any possibility for additional plantings in that area.

City Planner Anderson replied that it may be a possibility and the Board could make a recommendation to explore the possibility of additional plantings at the rim of the ponding area.

Board Member Valentine stated it was worth looking at it if it wasn't going to create interference with storm water management.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated this is an excellent example of how the ordinance is being applied and that we have more plantings with the reforestation requirements. He stated that Staff is looking for a policy direction on how the ordinance is interpreted and calculated to make sure the Board is accomplishing what it intended.

Board Member Valentine stated that the ordinance would be unworkable without some flexibility and he is comfortable with the City's interpretation of the ordinance in this case.

City Planner Anderson stated that this is one of the benefits we should see with the Board reviewing proposed development plans.

Board Member Hiatt said he could see the logic of two options and asked if the City is setting a precedent for other developers. He asked if the Board is giving flexibility without giving precedent.

City Planner Anderson stated that every request or proposal is unique and that everything cannot be accounted for in an ordinance. Having flexibility and checking in with various advisory boards protects the City from setting undesirable precedents.

Board Member Valentine stated that he felt another developer would try to take advantage of a precedent if it was advantageous to them, but that checking in with the various advisory boards should protect the City.

City Planner Anderson stated that Staff is supportive of what is being proposed in this case as meeting the City's overall intent of the ordinance. He is hoping to get feedback from the Board in terms of policy direction moving forward and would like direct feedback on perimeter plantings in the rear yards of properties. He stated that it is Staff's opinion that it should be a stage one improvement and should be the developer's responsibility to install the trees. He is seeking feedback from the Board on Staff's recommendation that excluding the two front yard trees, the remainder of the plantings be the responsibility of the developer as a stage one improvement. He is seeking a motion to recommend that the landscaping and tree preservation plans are acceptable.

Board Member Lewis would like to get additional feedback on the recommendation. He would like to take a look at additional plantings at the perimeter to avoid it being mowed grass and to make sure that these plantings are part of the original plan.

City Planner Anderson stated that Staff is open to additional plantings around the perimeter. He stated that the City's engineering staff would have to determine that the plantings would not cause any additional maintenance issues.

Board Member Lewis stated that his intention is not to interfere, but to enhance the area.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to recommend Option 1; to include Staff's recommendation that excluding the two front yard trees, the remainder of the plantings be the responsibility of the developer as a stage one improvement; and to explore the potential for additional plantings around the rim or perimeter of the area between Block One Harvest Estates and Block One Harvest Estates Second Addition.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau suggested adding the recommendation that the plantings be the responsibility of the developer in the phase one improvement clause also.

Board Member Valentine accepted that as a friendly amendment.

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

5.03: Consider Landscape Plan Associated with a Site Plan Application for Parkview East; Case of PSD, LLC

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Stodola asked if the developer could put shrubbery in along the perimeter.

City Planner Anderson replied that the City is trying to stay clear of shrubbery installations on the boulevard area for maintenance reasons.

Board Member Lewis inquired about the ratio of parking spaces to apartment units.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated the number of parking spaces are more than the City would require and there are tuck under garages in the apartment building. He stated that the applicant feels that they are meeting the parking needs from a marketing perspective. If the issue becomes a storm water question, the Board will be addressing it.

Board Member Lewis stated that the planting proposal seems unimaginative to him and talked about the back wall of the parking stalls. He indicated that there was no photometric plan included in the proposal.

City Planner Anderson agreed and stated that plans for internal landscaping and photometrics have not yet been received from the applicant.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that currently the architectural plans don't match up with civil engineering plans.

Board Member Hiatt asked if an internal landscaping plan can be required as part of their proposal.

City Planner Anderson replied that it is not specifically required within the Design Framework but that it is reasonable to ask what the intentions are and the City will be reaching out to the applicant.

Board Member Hiatt stated that the City should make sure the applicant is aware that we are expecting an internal landscaping plan from them and suggested addressing the landscaping along the back wall of the garage.

Community Development Director Gladhill asked the Board if they wanted to continue the trend to prescribe the plantings in the boulevard area for a consistent look and the Board's desire with regard to reducing the parking lot size.

Board Member Hiatt stated that the Board could not take the number of parking spaces below the code for minimum parking spaces.

Board Member Lewis stated he was not proposing that the Board force the applicant down to the minimum number of parking spaces, but that it seemed to him that there was an inordinate amount of parking. He would like to know if the parking is appropriate for the size of the building and he would like to see more imaginative landscaping.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated he would like to know about any economic reasons for having that much parking.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the Board's general consensus to explore the question of parking and if there is an ability to shrink it and to offset it with landscaping.

Board Member Valentine stated that it would be useful to look at landscaping to provide drainage and a way to handle storm water management.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated his concern is any storm water that makes it back into the river and he would want to think about it before we asked them to re-engineer.

Board Member Valentine stated he was not talking about major re-design of their storm water system but trying to create more pervious area.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Staff Review Letter can be revised and general advisory comments added regarding the parking lot and the storm water plan and stating that the City feels this is an issue worth exploring. He stated that the Board is identifying a best management practice that could be implemented on this site.

Community Development Director Gladhill will forward the Board's comments on the aesthetic components of development plans to the Planning Commission.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that the Board should be focused on the exterior development plan and that the garage issue does need to be addressed.

Board Member Lewis felt that it was important to look at the overall development plan.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that the Board is making judgements without an internal concept.

Chairperson Stodola stated that the review process is new to the Board.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that the feedback from the Board is very valuable.

City Planner Anderson stated he is looking for a recommendation with regard to the landscape plan. He summarized the Board's wishes to explore with the project developer the quantity of parking on site and if there are opportunities to shrink that and offset it with additional green space and to consider as an advisory comment opportunities within the two largest islands for additional plantings of some sort. He stated that Staff is looking for a recommendation to approve the landscape plan contingent on compliance with the Staff Review Letter and upon exploring the quantity of parking and additional plantings raised by the Board.

Board Member Lewis added the issue of taking some of trees that are being displaced in the current plan and placing them in the back of garages.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau asked about the tree species along Ramsey Parkway being consistent with what is on the North side of the parkway.

City Planner Anderson stated that the North side is a park and it will likely have a different look.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Valentine to support Staff's recommendation of Option 1 with exploration with the developer the quantity of parking on site and if there are opportunities to shrink that and offset it with additional green space; an advisory comment to consider opportunities within the two largest islands for additional plantings of some sort; and to look at relocating landscaping to the South side of the enclosed parking structure.

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

5.04 Review Landscape and Storm Water Management Plan Associated with a Site Plan Application for Sunwood Village: Case of Common Bond

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Chairperson Stodola asked if they would be sharing the ramp.

City Planner Anderson replied that the access points off Sunwood and Veterans Drives will be shared.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that there is on-site parking.

Board Member Lewis inquired if it was all surface parking.

Community Development Director Gladhill responded affirmatively.

Chairperson Stodola asked if there is enough parking.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the type of floor plan and income levels were considered. This project would likely be more one car households so it would meet the minimum of one stall per unit.

City Planner Anderson stated that there is visitor parking a half a block away that is not overnight parking for guests.

Board Member Lewis commented that this plan was well thought out and robust and that he was impressed. He doesn't have a problem with it and felt that it was more innovative and detailed than the previous proposal.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that this project did receive \$580,000 in funding from the Metropolitan Council.

Board Member Lewis stated that this is the kind of project and plan that should be looked at for the Eco-Star Award.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau spoke to the Staff regarding the contrast between the two cases and how the Board is appreciative of a complete picture. He asked how likely is it that the Board can ask developers to provide more complete plans in the future.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that this is something the Staff strives to achieve. He spoke about project deadlines and said that historically the City has tried to give some contingent recommendations and revisit them. If the Board feels that the information in the last case was not enough, then Staff should know and then they can go back to the developer. He stated that if it is the Board's wish to have the kind of detail found in this project, Staff will make sure they provide it without delaying projects. Staff can work with code to provide the desired level of detail.

Board Member Valentine would like to support the Staff. He talked about the huge contrast between the cases. He felt that the Parkview East case was close to the line of not having complete plans. He would like to support the Staff to be able to go back to developers to get more fully developed plans.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that he doesn't think it is the Board's intention to push developers away by setting too high a standard.

Community Development Director Gladhill stated that the Parkview East case warrants pursuing additional details and that the City can commit to a smooth process if they are provided with detail.

Chairperson Stodola asked about the timeframe of the projects.

Community Development Director Gladhill replied that the City tries to provide approval 45 days from the date the application is received. Some cases do take longer depending on complexity.

Motion by Board Member Bernard and seconded by Board Member Lewis to recommend approval of the Landscape Plan.

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

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **EAB Confirmed in Anoka County**

City Planner Anderson reported that emerald ash borer was confirmed in Anoka County in Ham Lake. He reported that the county will be put under an emergency quarantine and ultimately the county will be placed under a state and federal quarantine. The quarantine would limit the movement of ash wood products and all firewood outside the boundaries of the county without a compliance agreement.

- **Joint Meeting with Planning Commission April 20**

City Planner Anderson reported that the Board's regular meeting will now be held the third Monday of the month. He stated that the joint meeting with the Planning Commission will address this Board's involvement in land use review; a recap of Roberts Rules; and looking at the Natural Resources Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

- **Spring Recycling Day Event May 2**

City Planner Anderson stated that the recycling event will be held at the Public Works facility. He stated that there will be many of the same vendors as in the past, but the appliance vendor has changed. There is information on-line and in the May/June issue of the newsletter.

Board Member Hiatt inquired about putting information on the emerald ash borer quarantine on City's website.

City Planner Anderson replied that information on the quarantine was placed in the weekly update and that he will update the emerald ash borer section of the website.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau asked about the status of the quarantine.

City Planner Anderson replied that the emergency quarantine is now in affect but that there is a more drawn out process for the formal quarantine that will eventually be in place.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that he wanted to go over Roberts Rules because he has been experiencing questions about the rules and how they apply to the City's meetings. He questioned if he has a voting position on this Board.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Denise Bosch
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.