

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY BOARD (EPB)
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

On Tuesday, May 19, 2015, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the COR Room at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Acting Chairman Michael Valentine
 Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Jane Covart
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Larry Lewis

Members Absent: Chairperson Thomas Stodola
 Board Member Bob Bentz

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 City Council Liaison John LeTourneau

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chairman Valentine called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated April 20, 2015

Motion by Board Member Lewis and seconded by Board Member Bernard to approve the regular meeting minutes dated April 20, 2015.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Review Framework for a Future Citizen Engagement Process Related to the Environmental Protection/Resource Management Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan

City Planner Anderson stated that this case is not a continuation of the Planning Commission and EPB joint meeting in April. It is to review the Board's proposed framework for how it is going to proceed to look at the Environmental Protection/Resource Management Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the citizen engagement process used in the past has worked well for the City when they were looking for public feedback on small land use area planning. This process involves a scoping meeting to look at a broad general question to engage the public and allow the participants to identify specifics they would like to talk more about and to ask meeting participants to break off in smaller groups and discuss a specific issue and then reconvene in a larger group to discuss and look at themes that have support from participants. The second step would be to develop alternatives and solutions based on the discussion. The third step would be to agree on how to move forward. This may require a follow-up meeting depending on how many people attend the meeting and the discussion. He stated that there has been positive feedback regarding this process because the City is not setting up the agenda but is getting feedback and input from the public and basing what the City is going to do off of the input. He requested input from the Board on what the question for the public meeting should be and what additional resources the Board would like to see available for the public meeting. He stated that a public meeting would likely take place in late fall.

Board Member Lewis asked if City Planner Anderson wanted the Board to select a singular topic or question from the case information provided.

City Planner Anderson replied that the case information contained examples of questions asked in the past so none of those questions would be used. He stated that the intent of the question would be to draw out the public and get them engaged.

Board Member Covart asked if it would be possible to have a list of natural resources under question number two.

City Planner Anderson stated that they might be able to highlight a couple of very broad natural resource topics and underneath the broad question have specific bullet points such as water resources. He thinks the question itself would be broad and the supporting promotional materials could contain a more refined list.

Acting Chairman Valentine stated it is a challenge and a delicate balance to provide focus without leading people too much.

City Planner Anderson explained that Staff would kick the meeting off with an example of a topic and then open it up to the public for their concerns and encourage them to write those concerns on the wall on a post-it note. People interested in a specific topic are put into a small group with their interest. Each small group takes its own notes and presents back to the group as a whole. He stated that the phrase "natural resources" would interest the public.

City Council Liaison Letourneau suggested the broad question “What principles or goals might we need to change for this community to meet our land use vision.”

Board Member Hiatt stated he liked the question but would want to see the words “quality” and “environment” used. He suggested “maintaining or improving our quality of environment”.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that this type of question instantly got the Board into the type of conversation it needs to have. He thinks it should be about quality of use and types of use and those are the types of things you would want the group to naturally start to talk about.

City Planner Anderson likes the question, but would have some concern that it may be viewed by the public as a part of the land use mapping exercise as opposed to tying in with natural resources. He asked if there is a way to weave into the question “land use vision and natural resources” or something along those lines.

Board Member Lewis stated that his problem with the question is the wording “land use vision” because it begs for a description. He stated that he does like the question, but thinks that it needs to be rephrased.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that nobody knows what land use vision is but it does pose all those larger questions that get the conversation going. He agrees that the Board should try to weave in “natural resources” or possibly take “land use vision” out or tweak it. He stated that the words “land use vision” are used in the case several times.

Acting Chairman Valentine stated that what the Board is talking about is not necessarily changes to the land use vision, but rather how the natural resource factors work with the land use vision.

City Planner Anderson suggested modifying the question to read “How do natural resources fit into the land use vision of the City?”

Committee members agreed with City Planner Anderson’s modification.

Acting Chairman Valentine asked if it should read “How do” or “How should”.

Board Member Lewis suggested modifying the question to say “your perception” or “your vision of land use within the City of Ramsey”.

City Planner Anderson restated the question as “How do or how should natural resources fit with your perception of land use?” He asked Board Member Lewis to restate his suggestion.

Board Member Lewis suggested “How do they fit or align with your perception/vision of the land use vision.”

Board Member Hiatt asked how the Board can make sure the discussion is all encompassing on various environmental factors. He asked how the connection between natural resources and recycling could be made. He stated that the word environmental is more encompassing.

City Planner Anderson suggested adding “natural resources and the environment”.

Committee members agreed with this suggestion.

City Planner Anderson stated this was good input and key to setting up the public meeting. He restated the question “How do natural resources and the environment align with your perception of land use within the City?” He asked if the word vision should be used.

Board Member Hiatt stated that “land use vision” implies future planning and moving forward.

Board Member Lewis suggested the word “practices” instead of “vision”.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau asked if the word “practices” continues to project people forward.

Board Member Lewis stated that he felt it brings it to a current as well as a future state. He was not sure “practices” was the right word but something that encompasses both current and future would be prudent.

City Planner Anderson suggested “How do natural resources and the environment align with your perception of land use practices and the vision within the City?” He asked Board Members for a general consensus.

Committee members agreed with the question as stated but agreed that Staff could have leeway to make minor changes.

City Planner Anderson asked if there are any specific resources that would be helpful for the general public to have. He asked Board Members to e-mail him with suggestions.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau suggested the City’s Strategic Plan. He stated there may be a couple of items in that plan that would relate to this exercise.

City Planner Anderson stated that the City’s Strategic Plan would be a document that would be included in any exercise. He will make sure that it is a resource.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that if a topic links back to the Strategic Plan it validates it and gives it more weight.

5.02: Consider Topic and Process for Focused Education Campaign

City Planner Anderson stated that this case came from a discussion at the Board’s March meeting. The Board had stated its desire to look at one particular educational topic. He stated that the City does have an approved legislative platform that identifies transportation and water supply as two major issues. He stated that it made a lot of sense to have water resources as the educational topic. He stated that it ties in nicely with the legislative platform and Surface Water Management Plan education. He went over the process and mediums that would be most impactful. He would like input from the Board on developing an action plan so that Staff could start to prepare. He suggested QCTV as another medium to consider and putting together a display for community events such as Happy Days. He stated that if the Board is comfortable,

he can start to put together timelines to consider. He talked about taking the water resource topic and trying to break it down. He presented ideas on how the City could start to put together some educational information on each of the subtopics. He stated that he realized this deviates from the discussion at the March meeting in which the Board was going to come up with educational topics. He stated that he did receive suggested topics that are included in the case. He stated that after the Board discussion in March and discussions with other Staff, there was a realization that water resources is a topic that aligns with the City's legislative platform.

Acting Chairman Valentine asked the Board for support of the water resources topic and/or other topic suggestions.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he thinks it is a smart move to align with the legislative platform. He suggested coordinating the education with the City Council's work on the legislative platform.

Board Member Lewis stated he likes the water resources idea, but he would like to have the topic be quantifiable. He would like to have a benchmark and objective within the community. He likes the idea of having a challenge thrown out and feels it begs for more community participation. He stated that his intention would not be to mandate but to encourage participation on a citizen and business level.

City Planner Anderson stated that the goal would be to relate the concern to the public, demonstrate the problem such as water usage in the summer, educate the public about things that can be done to reduce water usage, and then issue a voluntary challenge to the community.

Acting Chairman Valentine stated that the Board has to be careful that it doesn't look like a regulation. If it speaks to someone's desire to contribute to the solution of a problem, he thinks it is a good idea.

City Planner Anderson suggested a contest of some sort involving citizens that use the municipal water system. If citizens can demonstrate their reduction, they would qualify for some sort of credit or rebate. This would be more of an incentive than a regulation.

Board Member Hiatt stated that the primary goal is educating the community about water usage. The Board would want to see a change in practice as a result of the education. It needs to be very carefully stated upfront that this is not a mandate. The best education would be that they would want to do it and it would be good to have some measurable outcome that reflects that the Board's education has had an impact. He stated the importance of keeping the focus on educating the community and looking for a change in practice.

City Planner Anderson distributed a water conservation handout entitled *Diverse Measures Ensure Conservation Success*. He stated that the handout was forwarded to him today and it was suggested that it be given to the EPB. It was not necessarily intended for discussion.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau brought up a communication by Connexus Energy that compares individual consumption ratings with their neighbors. He suggested this may be a tool to consider if we have access to that type of information.

Acting Chairman Valentine commented that this is a terrific tool and it stimulates thoughts and reactions.

City Planner Anderson asked for a general consensus on focusing on water.

Committee members agreed to focus the education on water resources.

Board Member Covart asked how this would impact or tie in with the previous case to engage citizen input on the Environmental Protection/Resource Management Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan.

City Planner Anderson stated that this case is about coming up with a community education program to try and make sure the community fully understands the issue of water resources. He stated that he would hope that water would come up as a topic of importance at the citizen engagement meeting.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau asked about the subcategories of water resources and if the Board was going to focus on one specific issue. He stated that there could be a lot of time spent educating the public on ground water issues. He suggested narrowing the educational focus.

Board Member Valentine agreed that there is a need to focus energy on one or two issues at a time. He stated that it would require further discussion, but that he feels both water supply and storm water are critical.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Board can and should identify a subtopic. He stated that information on other subtopics could also be compiled so that when the educational focus moves forward there will be information in place. He stated that it is important to hone in on one subtopic but not to lose sight of others as they are connected and maybe water supply is where to start.

City Council Liaison LeTourneau stated that if the City's legislative platform goes towards surface water and rivers, the Board may want to shift in alignment.

Acting Chairman Valentine agreed with the need to track the City's legislative platform.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

None

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Denise Bosch
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.