

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

On Wednesday, February 22, 2017, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Lake Itasca Room at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present: Chairperson Thomas Stodola
 Board Member Colleen Anderson
 Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Jane Covart
 Board Member Lucas Trossen
 Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent: Board Member Michael Hiatt

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Stodola called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated January 18, 2017

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Board Member Bernard to approve the regular meeting minutes dated January 18, 2017.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Landscape and Tree Preservation Plan for Covenant Meadows; Case Brookview Estates, LLC

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He noted that the City has received an application for Preliminary Plat and Rezoning for a proposed 12 lot subdivision on the property legally described as Outlot A, Meadowbrook. The request includes rezoning the subject property from R-1 Residential (Rural Developing) to Planned Unit Development (PUD). He stated that a PUD allows for some negotiation regarding bulk standards (lot size, setbacks, etc.) if there is a definitive public benefit as an outcome of the project. He stated that in this instance the developer is proposing to deed to the City approximately 15 acres of land that straddles Trott Brook. He stated that through this request there would be high quality resources protected as well as steep slopes. He noted that staff is supportive of the landscape and tree preservation plans.

Chairperson Stodola asked and received clarification on the location of the land the City would receive through deed. He asked how the smaller lot sizes would compare to the existing neighborhoods nearby.

City Planner Anderson noted that the proposed lot sizes range from one to almost three acres. He noted that some of the neighboring land is currently an outlot. He noted that the proposed lot sizes would be fairly compatible with the adjacent neighborhood to the east.

Board Member Valentine asked and received confirmation that the properties would not be served by City sewer and water.

City Planner Anderson stated that if there were a rebate or incentive program enacted for irrigation systems, these properties would not be eligible as in that instance only those on municipal services would possibly be eligible for a rebate.

Chairperson Stodola noted that the explanation provided by staff covered all the questions he had.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Parks and Recreation Commission will also review this item at their March meeting.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Chairperson Stodola to recommend approval of the Landscape Plan and Tree Preservation Plan, contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

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

5.02: Consider Draft Ordinance Amendment Addressing Irrigation Requirements

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that over the past two months, the Board has discussed a potential ordinance amendment regarding irrigation requirements for multi-family and commercial/industrial developments. He stated that based on the discussion at the January meeting, staff has updated a draft ordinance that eliminates the irrigation requirement and

also stipulates that if an irrigation system is installed (including single family parcels), it must be equipped with a rain sensor, per state statute, as well as one or more water efficient technologies. This could include, but would not be limited to, a smart controller, soil moisture sensor(s), and/or an evapotranspiration (ET) sensor(s). He stated that this provides enough flexibility so that as future advances in water efficient irrigation technologies are developed, it will not require additional ordinance amendments. He noted that while not specifically included in the draft ordinance, it may be worth noting that this could be an opportunity to encourage more native landscaping within projects; noting that the Board could contemplate some sort of landscaping credit for projects incorporating a native grass and plant community. He noted that staff is not suggesting that this be contemplated as part of the draft ordinance but something that the Board may wish to keep in mind from a broader water conservation perspective. He noted that staff is still assessing how the water efficient requirement would be verified in the field and any potential action on the draft ordinance could be contingent upon finalizing an effective and efficient inspection methodology.

Board Member Anderson asked if there is some sense of how an inspection could occur.

City Planner Anderson stated that the building official did not say he could not do an inspection but simply stated that it would not fit in with an existing inspection. He stated that he believes that there is a way to fit in the inspection but simply wants to ensure that the proper methodology can be identified. He stated that he has heard positive comments from the staff members he has spoken with, noting that they all agree that it makes sense to have the sensors as a requirement.

Board Member Anderson asked whether staff would be looking for the sensor or ensure that it is functional during the inspection.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff is most likely going to check to ensure that it's installed.

Chairperson Stodola stated that he likes the language proposed as it provides flexibility for future technology that is developed. He asked if City Planner Anderson believed that the Council would agree with the vague language or whether they would like it more defined.

City Planner Anderson stated that there are specific examples listed, but the language simply leaves the door open for future technologies. He stated that if the Council is in agreement with the concept he did not believe that there would be a problem with the language.

Board Member Anderson noted that another option would be to use different language and state other approved technologies. She stated that she does prefer the language as proposed but was simply providing an alternative.

City Planner Anderson noted that the City Attorney has reviewed the language and approves of the proposed language. He confirmed the consensus of the Board to use the language as proposed and if there is a problem the alternate suggested could be used.

Motion by Chairperson Stodola and seconded by Board Member Covart to recommend adoption of Ordinance #17-04, Amending Multiple Sections of the Ramsey City Code Relating to Irrigation Requirements, contingent upon staff developing an efficient and effective inspection methodology.

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

It was the consensus of the Board to direct staff to vet out the opportunity to encourage more native landscaping within project, with the use of some sort of landscaping credit for projects incorporating a native grass and plant community; as well as the possibility to retrofit existing irrigation systems.

5.03: Consider Potential Topics for a 2017 Work Plan

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that in 2016 the Board focused on developing a Statement of Purpose to better define the role of the EPB. He stated that this was done in lieu of a Work Plan for the year. He stated that with that process now complete and implemented, the Board can once again focus on developing a Work Plan to outline what their efforts will focus on in 2017, and possibly beyond. He asked the Board to suggest some topics that they would like to focus on and include some reasoning as to why the Board should focus on the topic. He provided an update on recent Council action noting the Council approved Mayor Strommen to take the Mayors for Monarchs Pledge. He stated that he would suggest pollinator initiatives as one of the Work Plan items. He also suggested including the development of the incentive/rebate program as discussed by the Board. He also suggested including prioritization of the shoreline inventory along the Mississippi.

Board Member Valentine asked for more details on how the Board would be involved on the pollinator item.

City Planner Anderson stated that at one point in time the Board was proactively working on articles for a standing column on the City newsletter. He stated that there are some underutilized areas in the parks that the Board could work cooperatively with the Parks and Recreation Commission to determine where native planting could occur to support pollinators. He noted that the Parks and Recreation Commission is on board for the idea as well. He noted that education would also be a possibility for the Board, explaining that the Board Members would not themselves be in the field doing the work.

Board Member Valentine stated that he was also confused on how the Board would fit into the prioritization of the shoreline inventory.

City Planner Anderson stated that after potential properties are identified and there are willing property owners identified, the Board could work on letters of support for grant applications and other items of that level. He stated that if there are a lot of interested property owners the Board could also help to prioritize and select the candidates. He explained that the Work Plan is a tool that staff uses mainly with input and assistance from the Board.

Board Member Covart stated that perhaps the potential landscaping credits mentioned at the end of the last case would also be a good fit.

City Planner Anderson noted that item could fit in well under the pollinator item and would not need to be a standalone item.

Chairperson Stodola stated that perhaps the second item could be broader to state explore rebates and incentives for water conservation initiatives which could include retrofitting and native plantings, among other things.

City Planner Anderson stated that the intention tonight is not to draft the Work Plan to present to the Council next week, but simply be able to discuss some potential ideas that can be mentioned with the Council.

Board Member Anderson stated that perhaps some alternative grasses could be planted in the parks with educational signage. She explained that would lower the maintenance responsibilities and educate visitors as a demonstration.

It was the consensus of the Board that the pollinator initiative could include a bullet that states to work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to identify areas within existing parks to convert to sustainable pollinator friendly landscaping.

City Planner Anderson stated that he wanted to encourage any ideas that come forward as the Work Plan could span more than the course of one year but suggested that the plan not span more than three years.

Board Member Valentine stated that it is hard to predict the plans the Board will need to review and consider and therefore he would not want to see the plan contain too many items.

City Planner Anderson stated that he would still welcome any ideas and staff could then vet out the type of resources that would be necessary to accomplish the items. He recognized that some items on the plan will be delayed depending on the amount of regular work that comes in for the Board to consider.

It was the consensus of the Board for the Work Plan to include the following objectives: explore pollinator initiatives, develop rebates and incentives for water conservation initiatives, and prioritization of the shoreline inventory along the Mississippi.

City Planner Anderson noted that water resources could cover the water conservation initiatives and other items such as discovering the relationship between ground water, surface water, and aquifers. He stated that water supply continues to be a high priority for the City and confirmed the consensus of the Board to include that item on the plan.

Board Member Anderson stated that she recently received a flyer from Anoka County regarding organics recycling and asked for more information on that topic.

City Planner Anderson stated that is a great question, noting that he met with Ace Solid Waste today to discuss a pilot program that could provide organics recycling within Ramsey. He noted that topic could be added to the Work Plan as well.

Board Member Anderson noted that education would be a vital component as some people want to do the right thing but are unsure of the category items would fall into.

It was the consensus of the Board to add organics recycling to the Work Plan.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the consensus of the Board to have the main topic be water resources with the water conservation initiatives as a bullet under that item. He also confirmed the Board Members that would be available to attend the joint meeting with the City Council the following week.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

There was none.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Anderson and seconded by Board Member Covart to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.