

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

On Monday, March 20, 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
 City Councilmember John LeTourneau

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Stodola called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated February 22, 2017

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Board Member Anderson to approve the regular meeting minutes dated February 22, 2017.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Natural Resources Elements of Homestead Road Subdivision

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He reported that the City has received an application for a three-lot subdivision known as Homestead Road. He stated that the application includes review of a Preliminary Plat and a Variance to lot depth. He noted that no new roads are proposed with the development and the site already has municipal utilities stubbed in as a result of a previous road improvement project. He stated that the development site is located at 7131 166th Avenue NW and noted that a significant portion of the subject property is encumbered with wetland and floodway. He recommended approval of the Tree Preservation Plan and the Variance request contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

Chairperson Stodola commented that the staff report was well thought out and informative.

City Councilmember LeTourneau asked if rain gardens are used widely throughout the City in this purpose.

City Planner Anderson stated that the City is not commonly using them throughout the City. He stated that a few of the multi-family townhome developments have used rain gardens as part of their stormwater management but he was not aware of a single-family home development that currently uses that method. He provided additional details on rain gardens. He stated that rain gardens are becoming more popular throughout the metro area and noted that there are other opportunities in the City where rain gardens could be used.

Board Member Valentine stated that rain gardens are becoming more popular in single family home settings. He stated that he created three rain gardens on one of his properties which work very well and are very efficient. He was confident that the rain gardens would be a good fit but noted that the long-term maintenance would need to be identified to ensure peak performance.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he does love the idea but just wanted to learn more information on the topic to ensure that it would be a good fit.

Board Member Valentine noted that the rain garden would need to be designed to the right size to ensure it would work correctly.

City Planner Anderson stated that the engineering staff will review the plans to ensure the rates and volumes are met. He stated that education is a part of the long-term maintenance to ensure those conducting the maintenance know which items remain and which need to be removed. He explained that water is intended to filter through the rain garden and not hold water for long periods of time.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Chairperson Stodola to recommend approval of the Tree Preservation Plan and the Variance request 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: Receive Update on Covenant Meadows and Consider Environmental Review Options (Project #17-102): Case of Eric Thomson

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the purpose of the case is to review an application for a rezoning of the subject property from R-1 Rural Developing to Planned Unit Development (PUD) and Preliminary Plat. He stated that the site is generally located south of Trott Brook and west of Germanium Street. He stated that the applicant has proposed to subdivide the approximately 38-acre subject property into 12 single family homes that would be serviced by individual private utilities. The Preliminary Plat proposes deeding approximately 15 of 38 acres to the City as the public benefit in relation to the PUD application. He stated that the proposed 15 acres straddles Trott Brook, has steep slopes, and is also considered to be high quality natural open space. He noted that this is simply an update and formal action is not required.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that there was a proposal for some trail right-of-way but that does not seem appropriate because of the slope.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff believes that it still has merit to look at a trail corridor from the edge of the cul-de-sac to the land that would be deeded to the City. He stated that a trail to the brook would not be provided because of the steep slope. He provided additional details on possible locations for a walking trail through that area.

Board Member Valentine asked how likely it would be to require or request an EAW.

City Planner Anderson explained the triggers for an EAW, noting that the mandatory threshold is 250 units, while this proposed development is only 12 units. He stated that staff believes that 12 additional units will not have an impact on the aquifer that these homes would draw from and provided additional details.

5.03: Consider Draft 2017-2018 Work Plan

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the purpose of this case is to consider the Draft 2017-2018 Work Plan for the Environmental Policy Board. He stated that the EPB had identified four elements in February for inclusion in a Work Plan and those items were presented to the City Council at a joint meeting in February. He stated that the Draft Work Plan has been formatted to mirror that of the City Council's Strategic Plan as well as the Work Plan of the Planning Commission.

Board Member Valentine stated that City Planner Anderson did a great job compiling the information.

Chairperson Stodola stated that he also likes this format for the Work Plan.

City Planner Anderson stated that this is the template used by the City Council.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that the previous year the Board created the Statement of Purpose and thought the development of the Work Plan was a great logical next step. He noted the staff time that is shown and asked if this list of items might be too big of a commitment for staff to accomplish in the next year.

City Planner Anderson noted that there are members of staff that could work on the items on the list and advised that there may also be interns coming on board soon that could assist with some of the items. He stated that this Work Plan is designed for 2017 and 2018 and rather than remove items, he would prefer for the Board to prioritize the items on the Work Plan. He noted that the items on the Work Plan are not in any particular order and therefore could be prioritized.

Chairperson Stodola asked if the Work Plan could be for the next two years, noting that some items would be ongoing.

City Planner Anderson noted that the Work Plan can be designed for multiple years. He stated that the City Council works off a three-year Strategic Plan and the Planning Commission recently developed a three-year Work Plan. He recognized that there are challenges with the limited number of times a Board or Commission meets and the regular business items the groups must also consider.

Board Member Anderson commented that the items on the Work Plan do not appear to be things that can be accomplished quickly. The example was given that even if an organics recycling program is developed, there would still need to be follow-up to ensure that the program is working and to review the results.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Work Plan can be 2017-2019 with the intention that the document can be revisited and amended as time goes on.

City Councilmember LeTourneau appreciated the comments made tonight and noted that he will share the discussion with the City Council when the Council reviews the Work Plan. He stated that he likes the focus of having only four items and the idea that this is a living document with items that will take time to accomplish, rather than a hard start and stop date over the course of one year.

Motion by Chairperson Stodola and seconded by Board Member Anderson to recommend forwarding the Draft Work Plan to the City Council for approval, changing the date of the Work Plan from 2017-2018 to 2017-2019.

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

City Planner Anderson stated that he will inform the Board when this item is scheduled to appear before the City Council. He encouraged Board Members to attend.

City Councilmember LeTourneau asked if the Board would review the plan annually even though it is marked for 2017-2019.

City Planner Anderson stated that the Board will review the document at least one time per year and could make changes to the document as necessary.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Comprehensive Plan Update Workshop on Natural Resources Chapter – June 12, 2017**

City Planner Anderson stated that there will be a workshop on June 12th for the Comprehensive Plan update which will focus on natural resources and strongly encouraged the Board Members to be present and participate in the discussions.

City Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he attended the first workshop and there were a lot of residents that came to participate. He stated that he finds it helpful to listen at those meetings to ensure that the work he is doing on the Council is in line with the desires of the community at large. He stated that it would also be helpful for the EPB to be present to listen to the input from residents on natural resources. He stated that the people attending the meetings are very open minded and it is refreshing to hear the different opinions and that those same people can also listen and appreciate the other opinions.

Chairperson Stodola stated that Board Member Covart's term on the Board was expiring and the Council recently reappointed her to the Board.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.