

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 in addition to the reason 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 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 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 incentive 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 cautioned that the plan should 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.

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