

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

On Monday, December 18, 2017, the 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 Jane Covart
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Lucas Trossen
 Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent: Board Member Colleen Anderson
 Board Member Reid Bernard

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson

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 Hiatt and seconded by Chairperson Stodola to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated November 13, 2017

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Chairperson Stodola to approve the regular meeting minutes dated November 13, 2017.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Landscape Plan for Affinity at Ramsey (Project No. 17-142); Case of Inland Group

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the City has a purchase agreement in place to sell about four acres of land adjacent to Municipal Plaza for a proposed residential apartment building. He stated that the City has received an application for Sketch Plan review of a new, 175-unit apartment building at the southwest corner of Ramsey Parkway and Center Street and would serve the 55+ demographic. He reviewed details of the proposed Landscape Plan associated with the project.

Board Member Hiatt asked if there would be surface parking as well.

City Planner Anderson highlighted the areas of surface parking, noting that the remainder of the parking would be included as the first, partially underground, floor of the building. He stated that staff recommends approval of the Landscape Plan contingent upon the compliance with the Staff Review Letter. He provided additional details on the transition to the electronic permit submittal and review system the City is using. He noted that the new system will allow all departments to review and provide comments at the same time, rather than waiting for one department to make comments before passing the plans on to another department.

Board Member Hiatt asked if the City has developed its plan for the greenway area nearby this area.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff recently received authorization from the City Council to proceed with the schematic design for the park area within The COR.

Board Member Hiatt asked for timing details, specifically whether this project would be constructed near the same time as the park improvements.

City Planner Anderson stated that he was unsure of the timeframe for the construction and completion of the park improvements and at this time is only aware of the authorization to prepare the schematic designs for the park improvements.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to recommend approval of the Landscape Plan contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

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

5.02: Review Landscape Plan for New Elementary School

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the new elementary school is proposed to be constructed on Nowthen Boulevard, directly east of 170th Avenue. He noted that this will be in addition to the existing Ramsey Elementary School. He stated that the project includes a 90,000-square foot building footprint, plus outdoor play spaces, parking and a bus corral. He noted that the intention is for the new school to be open for the 2019-2020 school year. He reviewed the details of the proposed plans. He stated that staff recommends approval of the Landscape Plan contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter. He noted that the

School District would like to bid the project as early as March, should they gain all necessary approvals.

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Board Member Covart to recommend approval of the Landscape Plan contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

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

5.03: Review Draft Natural Resources Chapter of Comprehensive Plan

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He explained that the purpose of the case is to review the draft Natural Resources Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan and provide initial feedback to staff. He noted that the draft chapter was reviewed by the Steering Committee on December 11th. He provided a summary of the draft Chapter and noted that this will not be the last time the Board reviews this chapter. He asked for input from the Board, should they feel that something is lacking from the draft chapter.

Chairperson Stodola stated that the initial topics seemed to align with the topics from the Board's Workplan.

City Planner Anderson acknowledged that the Comprehensive Plan is a ten-year planning document but noted that staff and the Steering Committee also attempted to incorporate the broad topics from the Board's Workplan into the draft chapter.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he was pleased to see a mention of GreenStep, as he believed that there had been opposition to the program in the past. He asked if there has been any thought to wind energy. He acknowledged that solar energy is more common but asked if there should be a mention of wind energy, should that technology become more available in the next ten years.

City Planner Anderson noted that wind energy has been addressed in the zoning code, but acknowledged that there have been some advancements in technology since the ordinance has been written. He noted that another statement could be added to address future technologies that may emerge during the next ten years.

Board Member Valentine mentioned a newspaper article that he read today regarding solar energy and the remarkable growth that technology has encountered.

Board Member Hiatt stated that there are some really good ideas included in the draft chapter, noting that he was pleased to see the use of incentives for water reuse.

Board Member Covart asked if there are other programs similar to GreenStep that could be explored.

City Planner Anderson stated that there could be similar initiative programs out there.

Board Member Covart stated that she was not familiar with GreenStep but thought that it could be interesting for the Board to look for similar programs.

City Planner Anderson provided background information on the GreenStep program, noting that it is a voluntary program without commitment. He stated that the more items you accomplish voluntarily, the more recognition you would receive. He stated that the intention of the Board was for the City to look at its own initiatives and see what the City could be doing as a leader. He noted that there was some opposition and provided reasoning that was given.

Chairperson Stodola agreed that the City did not need to join GreenStep in order to explore initiatives and review policies.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he viewed the program as a resource that staff could use to gather additional Best Management Practices and other shared data.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the consensus of the Board that they are comfortable with the direction of the draft chapter.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Meeting Dates for January and February (due to Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Presidents Day, these meetings need to be rescheduled)**

City Planner Anderson stated that the January and February meeting dates will need to be re-scheduled as they fall on dates that City Hall will be closed. He noted that he will send out a poll to determine the best date for those meetings.

Board Member Valentine asked if there will be a future meeting when presentations will be received from the Resilient Communities Program.

City Planner Anderson stated that Community Development is working to develop an open house style meeting with all of the student groups on an evening prior to the City Council meeting where the Mayor provides the State of the City speech. He noted that will give the students an opportunity to present their information to all Board/Commission/Council members that would be interested, rather than attempt to schedule multiple meetings. He noted that once the dates are confirmed, he will pass that information to the Board. He confirmed that he will send out an email to confirm dates for the January and February meetings.

- **Possible Metropolitan Council Water Study**

City Planner Anderson stated that there is an opportunity, through the Metropolitan Council, to participate in a study that would look at ground water supply and aggressive conservation strategies. He noted that he passed the information on to the Board through email earlier today. He asked if there would be any objection from the Board in the City offering to participate in the study. He noted that the City may not be selected but he wanted to discuss the opportunity with the Board. He noted that additional information could be brought to the Board at their January meeting.

Board Member Hiatt asked and received confirmation that this study would only look at City wells and would not monitor private wells. He stated that data can never hurt and can only help to inform and therefore would support this opportunity.

Chairperson Stodola stated that he would be excited to be a part of a scientific study that could help the City to collect data as well.

Board Member Valentine agreed that it would be helpful to broaden the base of information that is available to policy makers. He stated that his only concern is what will be done with the information as he would want to ensure that the information would lead to equitable treatment of communities within the Metropolitan Council area. He used the example of Ramsey being stringent with their water use while perhaps a neighboring community does not follow that path and still obtains a cost savings in their water costs because of Ramsey's efforts. He stated that he would want to ensure that whatever is done following this study is applied to all communities in the Metropolitan Council's reach and not only to the cities that participate in the study.

Board Member Trossen asked if any neighboring communities are also on the list.

Board Member Covart noted that Andover was listed as the first community on the list and advised that Maple Grove and Brooklyn Park are also included on the list. She referenced a table that was included that listed communities that buy water from other communities. She asked the purpose of that table and specifically if that would mean that Ramsey could sell water to other communities, should the City manage their water well.

City Planner Anderson stated that he was unsure of the reason for including that table. He provided additional details on an upcoming meeting between the Ramsey City Engineer and a representative from the Metropolitan Council regarding possible surface water treatment options.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the consensus that the Board is open to participating in the study with the Metropolitan Council, should Ramsey be chosen, with the noted concern about equitable application of the results across the region.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Valentine and seconded by Chairperson Stodola 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.