

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

On Monday, April 16, 2018, the Environmental Policy Board (EPB) met in the Council Chambers at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minnesota.

Members Present:     Chairperson Thomas Stodola  
                          Board Member Reid Bernard  
                          Board Member Jane Covart  
                          Board Member Melissa Fetterley  
                          Board Member Michael Hiatt  
                          Board Member Laura Moore  
                          Board Member Michael Valentine

Members Absent:     None

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

**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 Board Member Bernard to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

**4.     APPROVE MINUTES**

**4.01:   Approve Meeting Minutes Dated March 19, 2018**

Motion by Chairperson Stodola and seconded by Board Member Covart, to approve the regular meeting minutes dated March 19, 2018.

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

**5.     POLICY BOARD BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Appoint Chairperson and Vice Chairperson**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Chairperson Stodola to appoint Michael Valentine as Chairperson.

Further discussion: Board Member Valentine stated that he would accept the position.

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

Chairperson Valentine took control of the meeting and opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairperson.

Motion by Chairperson Valentine and seconded by Board Member Bernard to appoint Michael Hiatt as Vice Chairperson.

Further discussion: Board Member Hiatt stated that he would accept the position.

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

Board Member Hiatt stated that perhaps it would be helpful for the new members to introduce themselves.

Board Member Moore introduced herself and provided some background information.

Board Member Fetterley introduced herself and provided some background information.

Chairperson Valentine welcomed the new Board Members and thanked them for volunteering their time on the Board.

### **5.02: Anoka County Cooperative Weed Management Partnership**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he noticed that the Rum River Watershed District is not listed.

City Planner Anderson noted that Ramsey staff pointed out that both the Upper Rum River and Lower Rum River WMO's were not included. He stated that a few other agencies that were not listed were pointed out at the meeting as well.

Chairperson Valentine stated that this seems like a very good program. He noted that there are a lot of residents that are trying to establish restoration projects and weeds are a huge component of those projects.

Board Member Hiatt stated that there is a great diversity included in the list, from inner city to rural cities like Ramsey. He asked if there is a sense that there will be fair and equal treatment to all the entities involved. He wanted to ensure that there is equality in decision making.

City Planner Anderson stated that there is a working group that is working to develop a baseline that would be equitable across the County. He stated that the funding source is \$20,000 but that is to be spread County wide. He noted that he is looking at this more from an educational standpoint, as this will provide quick access to educational materials that were created by other entities. He provided an example of featuring a weed of the month in City newsletters and on the website.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he was not aware that this was a County wide problem and is excited that Ramsey is being included. He stated that the EPB does have a Work Plan and was unsure that noxious weeds were included on the plan. He cautioned the group to temper the item to ensure that the Work Plan can still be accomplished. He noted that if this item becomes more of a focus, perhaps something else from the Work Plan can be placed on the back burner. He suggested that perhaps someone on the EPB sit in on the working group as there is an education piece involved in the process and the EPB is a voice to the residents.

Chairperson Valentine asked if any Board Members would be interested in being involved in more depth, should that be the direction.

Board Member Covart stated that she would volunteer if the schedule aligns with her schedule.

Board Member Hiatt asked if City Planner Anderson would be able to attend.

City Planner Anderson noted that the meetings take place during the work day. He stated that he continues to attend these meetings. He noted that the meeting the previous week was a high-level and basic meeting. He stated that the EPB Work Plan is a three-year plan and therefore the Board has the ability to review items in addition to the four items listed on the plan. He stated that he does not envision that this will be a large drain on the Board resources as the Conservation District will work as the fiscal agent for grant management. He noted that there is already information on invasive species listed on the City website and therefore tweaking that information should not take a great deal of time and effort. He did not anticipate this being a large taxing of staff resources and should not pull the Board away from the priorities on the Work Plan. He stated that he can send the information on the next scheduled meeting to the Board Members and interested members can attend the meeting if desired.

### **5.03: General Update on Recycling Program**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he is curious to hear more about multi-family homes and the methodology that is used to collect recyclable materials from those residents. He stated that there appears to be an effective curbside for single-family homes. He noted that there is a lot of multi-family homes being developed in Ramsey and wondered if there was an effective method to collect recycling from those properties.

City Planner Anderson provided additional details on the collection for multi-family housing developments. He stated that the education component for that type of development is key due to the transient nature of those residents. He stated that the number by default will be smaller because multi-family housing is a smaller market than single-family homes. He stated that staff continues to reach out to multi-family housing developments to provide additional containers and improve collection efforts. He noted that multi-unit recycling is a bigger challenge across the metro. He stated that the recycling agreement will go forward to the City Council at one of the next meetings with a small increase for additional educational efforts in attempt to boost participation.

Chairperson Valentine commented that he believes that a yard waste cleanup opportunity in the fall would be a benefit to the community.

City Planner Anderson stated that until recently residents had the opportunity to purchase a permit from Elk River to use that yard waste site. He noted that opportunity was closed when the threat of Emerald Ash Borer came about, and the quarantine for Anoka County went into effect.

#### **5.04: Resilient Communities Project Update**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report.

Tyler Thorn stated that his group is participating in the organics recycling program. He displayed the midway check-in poster that the group created, noting that they did receive input from City Planner Anderson. He stated that one of the biggest obstacles is finding a closer area to deposit the organic waste.

Marie Olson stated that they are aware of the pilot organics recycling program in Ramsey and recommend increasing that program with additional drop-off locations that could also stimulate commercial participation. She stated that the hope would then be to incorporate curbside pickup for organics.

Marin Forey stated that there are communities in the metro which have implemented curbside organics pickup. She stated that there is opportunity to combine household organics with yard waste, which would mean that the yard waste truck could collect the materials rather than requiring an additional truck for hauling.

Board Member Hiatt stated that one of the challenges in the community is that Ramsey is a large geographic area. He asked if a northern location was looked at as a possibility for drop-off locations. He stated that perhaps that would generate more participation from the residents in the northern part of Ramsey.

Marie stated that they did discuss that option with City Planner Anderson, perhaps using parks as drop-off locations.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he does believe that Coborn's would be a successful location as well.

Board Member Stodola stated that he uses the municipal drop-off location and would prefer a Coborn's drop-off location.

Board Member Fetterley asked for input on the methods that the other communities used that have expanded further to curbside organics pickup and the thresholds that those communities used.

Marin stated that she spoke with staff from Columbia Heights and they had about 2,000 households using the drop-off method before transitioning to curbside. She noted that threshold may be different for Ramsey, but they would recommend scaling up participation before transitioning to curbside collection.

Tyler stated the initial goal will be to increase participation in the organics program.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked for more information on what a drop-off site would look like and the amount of space that it would occupy. He stated that a lot of the organic material from homes, such as yard waste, has a lot of volume.

City Planner Anderson stated that this organics program is related to food waste and not yard waste materials. He stated that presumably someone would not come with a trailer full of material to drop-off. He stated that typically there are a few carts at a drop-off location that have a passcode to unlock the container. He noted that it is not a large-scale operation that perhaps Councilmember LeTourneau was envisioning.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked if the yard waste customers in Ramsey could contribute their household organic material.

City Planner Anderson explained that yard waste collection is specifically through the hauler and therefore he does not have participation information. He noted that there is a specific hauler used by Columbia Heights that allows household organics to be combined with yard waste collection. He stated that there are other opportunities, such as the Blue Bag program.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that he would be excited to have curbside pickup for organics and the possibility of combining that collection with curbside yard waste collection.

Board Member Hiatt commented that he remembers the transition from sorted collections to single sort. He stated that the easier the process is, the more participation there will be in the program. He stated that the ACE Solid Waste collections began today, noting that the company stresses that only yard waste can be placed in the container. He agreed that if there is an opportunity to combine yard waste and organics curbside collection, that would be a great opportunity for residents.

Board Member Stodola asked the type of materials that can be collected in yard waste.

City Planner Anderson provided details on the yard waste materials that can currently be collected through curbside pickup.

Chairperson Valentine referenced the curbside opportunity and stated that organic material could attract predatory animals in the rural areas and asked if security has been a thought.

Marin noted that is a good consideration.

City Planner Anderson stated that those same materials are included in trash collection currently.

Board Member Hiatt asked if there have been problems with animals getting into the organics collection carts at the drop-off location.

City Planner Anderson stated that there has not been a problem thus far and did not anticipate an issue because the containers are locked. He displayed the poster that was worked on from the water conservation group. He noted that those students planned to attend the meeting but were unable to make it because of the weather. He noted that the student group continues to work with the City Engineer but acknowledged that water conservation is an important topic to this group as well. He stated that he can send the PDF version to the Board Members to look more closely.

Councilmember LeTourneau asked for a high-level overview of the poster.

City Planner Anderson stated that the student group was asked to look at ways to reduce water use through the groundwater supply. He stated that the groups are looking at incentives, friendly neighborhood comparisons, comparisons to other communities, and public education efforts.

Councilmember LeTourneau stated that at the end of the fall semester there was a nice presentation for the community, which displayed all the posters. He asked if the same opportunity would occur at the end of the spring semester.

Dan Herrera replied that the University of Minnesota will host an open house on May 4<sup>th</sup> which will not only display the Ramsey projects but all the projects the RCP students have worked on throughout the year. He noted that there will be a wide range of posters along with students that will provide information. He stated that student groups can also provide informal updates, such as the presentation tonight.

Councilmember LeTourneau commented that the fall event was incredible and had a lot of great information.

Dan Herrera stated that the May 4<sup>th</sup> event is the last day of class for students and therefore they could not require students to attend an event after that date.

## **6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT**

- **Comprehensive Plan Update Final Open House Recap**

City Planner Anderson reported that the third and final Comprehensive Plan open house was held on April 9<sup>th</sup> and was well received. He stated that there was not specific input or comments on the natural resources information. He stated that there is a tentative public hearing date of May 3<sup>rd</sup> for the Planning Commission and May 22<sup>nd</sup> for City Council consideration before the draft plan is released for jurisdictional comments. He noted that all three public open houses were well attended and commended the approach that Community Development took with the process.

Chairperson Valentine stated that he was asked to assist in developing a program for the Metro Environmental Conference, which will be an opportunity for groups across the metro, similar to the EPB to share information and ideas. He stated that the event was held on April 7<sup>th</sup> and 24 of

32 possible entities attended. He stated that at the least, a network was developed which can be built upon. He stated that it will be an ongoing collaboration that he will continue to be involved in. He noted that a Facebook page will be created for the group. He encouraged members of the EPB to attend upcoming meetings for the group. He thanked Board Member Stodola for his many years on the Board and as Chairperson.

City Planner Anderson noted that an RCP student group hosted the first training session for the tree inventory. He stated that the student group is working to reschedule the outdoor session, which was canceled because of the weather this past weekend. He noted that there is also a possibility of holding a second round of training if there is additional interest in participating in the tree survey. He encouraged interested residents to take part in the trainings if offered again.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Chris Anderson  
City Planner

ATTEST:

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JoAnn Shaw  
Community Development Secretary

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*