

5.02: Update on Cooperative Weed Management Partnership

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that City staff has been attending meetings coordinated by the Anoka County Conservation District (ACD) regarding a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Partnership to address invasive and noxious weeds within the county. He stated that there are several points of emphasis for this partnership including mapping locations of noxious weeds, better coordination of public education efforts, and potential access to grant funds by private property owners for noxious weed control. He stated that participation in the CWMA does require execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which is a non-binding agreement that outlines the five main goals: information exchange, education, prevention, noxious weed control, and cooperation. He recommended that the Board recommend that the City Council authorize execution of the MOU for Ramsey to officially join the Anoka County Weed Management Area Partnership. The MOU does not obligate the City to do anything and provides Ramsey residents with potential access to grant funds to address noxious weeds on private land. The ACD would act as the grant administrator, thus this does not add any additional responsibility on City staff. He noted that the spirit of the partnership is to encourage information sharing, public education, and enhanced control of noxious weeds, which can have detrimental health impacts.

Chairperson Valentine asked for an update on the additional resources that this may require of staff.

City Planner Anderson replied that perhaps .25 FTE but noted that he already acts in this role and therefore this will not be additional work as he already completes this work. He stated that the additional activity would be for him to forward the information to the Conservation District, who would then visit the site, map the information, and conduct treatment.

Chairperson Valentine commented that this is a terrific program and just wanted to make sure that this would not be additional work for staff.

Acting Mayor LeTourneau asked for additional information comparing the current process today and the process that would occur under the MOU.

City Planner Anderson explained that this would open the door for the potential access to grant funds. He noted that the total grant is \$20,000 and therefore will not solve all the issues. He stated that property owners would have an opportunity to apply in a competitive atmosphere to address noxious weeds on their property. He stated that otherwise the process would not be different. He explained that the grant would be for a cost-share where the homeowner would pay for the removal and then could potentially be reimbursed for a portion of the cost. He stated that this would also bring in cooperation and information sharing between the communities, as plants do not know municipal boundaries.

Motion by Chairperson Valentine and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to recommend that City Council authorize execution of the MOU to participate in the Anoka County Cooperative Weed Management Area Partnership.

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

DRAFT