

City of Ramsey
Agenda
Environmental Policy Board (EPB)
Monday, December 10, 2018
6:30 pm
Council Chambers, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Citizen Input**
- 3. Approve Agenda**
- 4. Approve Minutes**
 1. Approve Meeting Minutes Dated November 19, 2018
- 5. Policy Board Business**
 1. Consider Landscape Plan for a Proposed Expansion of Parking for Pleasureland RV (Project No. 18-129)
- 6. Board/Staff Input**
 - 2019 Environment Commissions Conference
 - Board, Commission, and Employee Appreciation Holiday Party January 11, 2019
- 7. Adjournment**

Environmental Policy Board (EPB)

4. 1.

Meeting Date: 12/10/2018

By: Chris Anderson, Community
Development

Information

Title:

Approve Meeting Minutes Dated November 19, 2018

Action:

Attachments

Meeting Minutes Dated November 19, 2018

Form Review

Inbox

Tim Gladhill

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 12/06/2018

Reviewed By

JoAnn Shaw

Date

12/06/2018 02:43 PM

Started On: 12/06/2018 02:20 PM

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

On Monday, November 19, 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 Michael Valentine
 Board Member Jane Covart
 Board Member Melissa Fetterley (left at 7:10 p.m.)
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Michael Madison (arrived at 6:35)
 Board Member Laura Moore

Members Absent: Board Member Reid Bernard

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 City Engineer Bruce Westby

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Valentine 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 Covart to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated October 15, 2018

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Board Member Moore to approve the regular meeting minutes dated October 15, 2018.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Discussion on Topsoil Requirement and Potential Amendments or Alternatives (Project No. 146)

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He noted that the Board previously held a general discussion on the City's topsoil standard. The impetus for that discussion (and this case) was a request from a developer/builder that the City revise the topsoil standard by eliminating the specification for Premium Topsoil Borrow. The request identified two negative effects of the current topsoil requirement. First, that the topsoil is doing too good of a job in terms of holding water; they acknowledge that many homeowners are not adjusting their irrigation system to account for the topsoil and are actually contributing to the problem. Secondly, they identified price as a concern compared to the cost of "regular" black dirt. He stated that as part of the initial discussion, staff was asked to gather information on what similar peer communities (with similar sandy soils) require and what the purpose of the requirement was (to see if it is an apples-to-apples comparison). Additionally, staff has attempted to compile water usage data for the City over the past ten years in an attempt to assess the effectiveness of the current topsoil requirement to reduce water usage.

City Planner Anderson noted that while topsoil is a beneficial addition, both for water conservation and vegetation establishment, the cost difference of an engineered soil compared to a more standard black dirt is significant. Focusing more on the irrigation systems and water efficient technologies rather than engineered soils, along with additional educational information on irrigation systems, should be as effective as the current standard regarding reducing demand on groundwater. It would certainly be accomplished at a lower cost to the future homeowner (and possibly current homeowners if a rebate program were implemented). Thus, staff would recommend proceeding with an Ordinance Amendment to modify the definition of topsoil consistent with other peer communities (such as "black dirt composed of unconsolidated material, largely undecomposed organic matter with no more than 35% sand").

City Engineer Westby stated that staff is involved with other groups on the topic of water supply, both regionally and across the metro, and provided background information on the groups that he is involved with. He stated that he has worked with Capstone over a number of years on the developments that they have been working on in Ramsey. He stated that he become more involved in the topsoil specification and the fallout caused by the specification, specifically in the Brookfield 7th and 8th additions. He provided examples of backyards in that neighborhood that consistently hold water after rain events or from upstream property owners overwatering their yards. He stated that staff worked with Capstone in those areas to use a Ramsey topsoil which has a higher portion of sand and lesser organic material as test cases and that seems to have worked well. He stated that since the time the topsoil requirement was enacted, the cost for smart sensor technology for irrigation has come down significantly and is a much more effective manner to conserve water. He stated that he has attended a lot of workshops, especially those sponsored by the University of Minnesota, to learn more on the topic.

Board Member Hiatt asked if there is information in the infiltration and the improvement in infiltration that would be provided through the newly proposed topsoil compared to the current topsoil.

City Planner Anderson stated that he does not have definitive figures. He stated that the soil will have more structure to it because of the increase in sand which will provide additional opportunity for infiltration and reduction of that soginess.

Board Member Hiatt asked for information on the test sites in Brookfield.

City Engineer Westby provided background information on the test sites in Brookfield as well as soils used by other communities such as Monticello and Big Lake. He stated that ground would be less saturated and soggy using the new proposed topsoil.

Board Member Hiatt stated that if something is going to be changed, he would want to ensure that enough is being done to provide better infiltration to get the water back into the aquafer. He stated that perhaps there can be quantifiable data that would show the comparison of infiltration between the current topsoil requirement and the newly proposed topsoil.

City Engineer Westby stated that the once the topsoil mix is completed, it can be tested to provide that infiltration rate information.

Board Member Fetterley stated that her concern would be whether the City is currently doing a better job protecting the aquafer using the current topsoil requirement compared to other communities.

City Planner Anderson stated that he does not have comparable data of water use over time for other communities. He stated that the City has already amended the zoning code to state that if an irrigation system is going to be installed it must include some form of water efficient technology. He was unsure if other communities have enacted similar regulations. He stated that he could request water usage data from the other communities to determine if their topsoil standard has had an impact.

Chairperson Valentine commented that this was a great presentation that clarifies the parameters of the issue. He stated that at some level there needs to be an effort to quantify the value that is being received from the systems put in place to conserve groundwater. He stated that Ramsey has residents on municipal water and residents that have their own wells and therefore there is a need for different education materials for those residents as both impact the aquafer. He stated that he would support the staff recommendation to change the topsoil requirement and beyond that there is a broader framework that needs to continue to be looked at as there are many dimensions to this topic.

City Engineer Westby stated that from a cost-benefit side, implementing a soil moisture sensor provides a savings of about \$200 to a homeowner in water savings in the first growing season, which pays for itself within that first year. He stated that staff is attempting to provide infiltration to recharge the aquafer and the lower organic content will provide additional infiltration opportunities.

Board Member Moore asked if there has been any talk about whether it would be beneficial for different parts of the City to have different soil requirements because of the different soil conditions that exist throughout the community.

City Planner Anderson stated that staff has soils maps that identify fingers of clay but noted that the majority of Ramsey is composed of sandy soils. He stated that it would be difficult to design a standard based on an underlying soil type, noting that sometimes the soils maps are inaccurate, or pockets of clay are found that were previously unknown.

Board Member Hiatt referenced the proposal from Capstone which requested the change to the topsoil requirement and a mandate for inground irrigation with water sensors. He stated that water sensor information was not included in this recommendation and asked if the City already requires that.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that the zoning code was previously amended to require a form of water efficient technology. He explained that the language was left broader, providing examples, to ensure that the City would not preclude new technology that is developed after the code was enacted. He stated that a majority of the irrigation systems in the City were already installed prior to the adoption of that ordinance change.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Chairperson Valentine to direct staff to prepare an Ordinance Amendment to revise the definition of topsoil.

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

Board Member Hiatt stated that perhaps this would be a good time to work on an incentive-based model that would encourage those that already have irrigation systems to install the new sensor technology to reduce water usage.

City Planner Anderson noted that although education was not a focus of this discussion, it will continue to be an element going forward. He stated that staff can develop and make available all the educational material, but people have to actually read it. He agreed that staff could connect with other communities that have enacted incentives to gather information and develop a proposed implementation plan.

Chairperson Valentine asked if staff would need additional support in order to move this forward with sufficient speed.

City Planner Anderson stated that he is unsure of the staffing needs but agreed that there would be added time to administrating any incentive-based program. He noted that there would be options for interns or other options that may not have a cost to the City. He did agree that there would be added resources needed from staff to implement a program of that nature and would be included in anything that comes forward for review.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Receive Update on Water Efficient Potential Project Analysis**

City Planner Anderson stated that earlier in 2018 the Board discussed Ramsey potentially participating in a study organized by the Metropolitan Council.

City Engineer Westby stated that Ramsey was identified within the top 20 water users of the metro area and therefore were included as a possible partner in this study. He stated that the study would look at the economic potential to apply water conservation measures that will help the City to benefit economically. He stated that the City Council provided approval to participate in the study and he has received a draft report. He noted that there were some inaccuracies in the report that will be updated. He stated that the Metropolitan Council are meeting with 15 of the 20 communities that agreed to participate, and the models will be adjusted based on the information received by each of the cities. He stated that the preliminary results will only be improved by the more accurate data. He stated that if the City is able to reduce their residential irrigation use effectively, using education and marketing or incentive programs, perhaps the two wells planned within the next ten years would not be needed. He believed that the updated report would be available in February of 2019.

City Planner Anderson stated that the December meeting is scheduled for December 17th and confirmed the consensus of the Board to reschedule that date to December 10th.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Madison to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

Meeting Date: 12/10/2018

By: Chris Anderson, Community
Development

Information

Title:

Consider Landscape Plan for a Proposed Expansion of Parking for Pleasureland RV (Project No. 18-129)

Purpose/Background:

Pleasureland RV (the "Applicant") desires to expand the surface parking area of their property located at 7900 Riverdale Drive NW (the "Subject Property") to accommodate additional display area for their merchandise. The Applicant has submitted civil engineering plans relating to drainage, grading, utilities, and landscaping (although no formal application has been received yet) for review by the City.

Observations/Alternatives:

This project does not include a building expansion, it is just an expansion of pavement to accommodate more display area for the Applicant's merchandise. The expansion area has approximately 1,060 linear feet, which requires at least twenty-one (21) new trees and thirty-five (35) new shrubs (1 tree per 50 linear feet and 1 shrub per 30 linear feet). The plans presently propose eleven (11) new trees, split between the northern and southern lot lines, and no shrubs.

The Subject Property borders an existing residential parcel to the south, which triggers a bufferyard of at least fifty (50) feet and additional plantings. This same standard applied with the Subject Property was originally developed and resulted in the installation of a six (6) foot tall, maintenance-free, vinyl fence and evergreen trees along the southern lot line. These improvements did not extend all the way to the western boundary, where the proposed expansion will occur. Thus, Staff has recommended that the fencing be continued to the western boundary and that in addition to, or in place of, the proposed silver maples, evergreen trees also be installed. This will not only assist with screening the commercial expansion from the existing residential use, but will also ensure a consistent appearance along the southern lot line.

It is worth noting that on the adjacent residential parcel, there is an existing double row of evergreens that does provide decent screening between the uses (see attached photos of existing trees, plus existing fencing). Staff is of the opinion that the buffering requirements should still apply and be accommodated on the Subject Property, but would like feedback from the EPB on this item specifically.

The plans appear to be providing for the necessary bufferyard area (50 feet) and greenspace area along public roads (20 feet). As noted previously, there is existing landscaping on the Subject Property from the initial improvements completed in the mid 2000s. Staff has recommended that for aesthetic and consistency purposes, that same design should be extended not only along the southern boundary but also along Riverdale Drive. This does not necessarily have to be the same species, but should include the same spacing between trees and the same clustering of shrubs.

There do not appear to be any wetlands, natural communities, floodplains, or other natural features of any significance. The MLCCS categorized this area as Urban with Little Vegetative Cover.

The current building is serviced by a septic system that is located within the bufferyard area. When Pleasureland RV was originally reviewed, it was noted that at the time of expansion westward, the building would need to connect to municipal services. The proposed expansion does include installation of and connection to municipal services.

Alternatives

Alternative 1: Recommend approval of the proposed landscaping, contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter. While there are some necessary revisions to the proposed landscaping, they are relatively minor and should not result in significant plan changes. The primary focus is ensuring that the project provides the required bufferyard and screening from the adjacent, existing residential parcel. Staff supports this alternative.

Alternative 2: Recommend approval of the proposed landscaping as shown on Sheet 3, with no revisions. This action would indicate that the Board believes the existing tree cover on the adjacent residential property provides sufficient screening from the proposed expansion. While Staff acknowledges that the existing evergreens do provide screening, the screening/planting should standard is intended to be satisfied by the developer. If no screening is required, the adjacent residential property owner would bare the sole responsibility for maintaining screening to create the buffer between the two uses. Staff does not support this alternative.

Alternative 3: Do not recommend approval of the proposed landscaping. If the EPB has serious concerns about the proposed expansion and landscaping, they should clearly identify them so they could be drafted into Findings of Fact for consideration. While there are some necessary revisions, there are no significant concerns that Staff has identified with the proposed project and thus, Staff does not support this alternative.

Funding Source:

All costs associated with this request are the responsibility of the Applicant.

Action:

Motion to recommend approval of the proposed landscaping, contingent upon compliance with the Staff Review Letter.

Attachments

Site Location Map

Site Plan (Including Landscaping)

Photos of Existing Fence and Landscaping

Aerial Image of Subject Property

Staff Review Letter

Form Review

Inbox

Tim Gladhill

Form Started By: Chris Anderson

Final Approval Date: 12/04/2018

Reviewed By

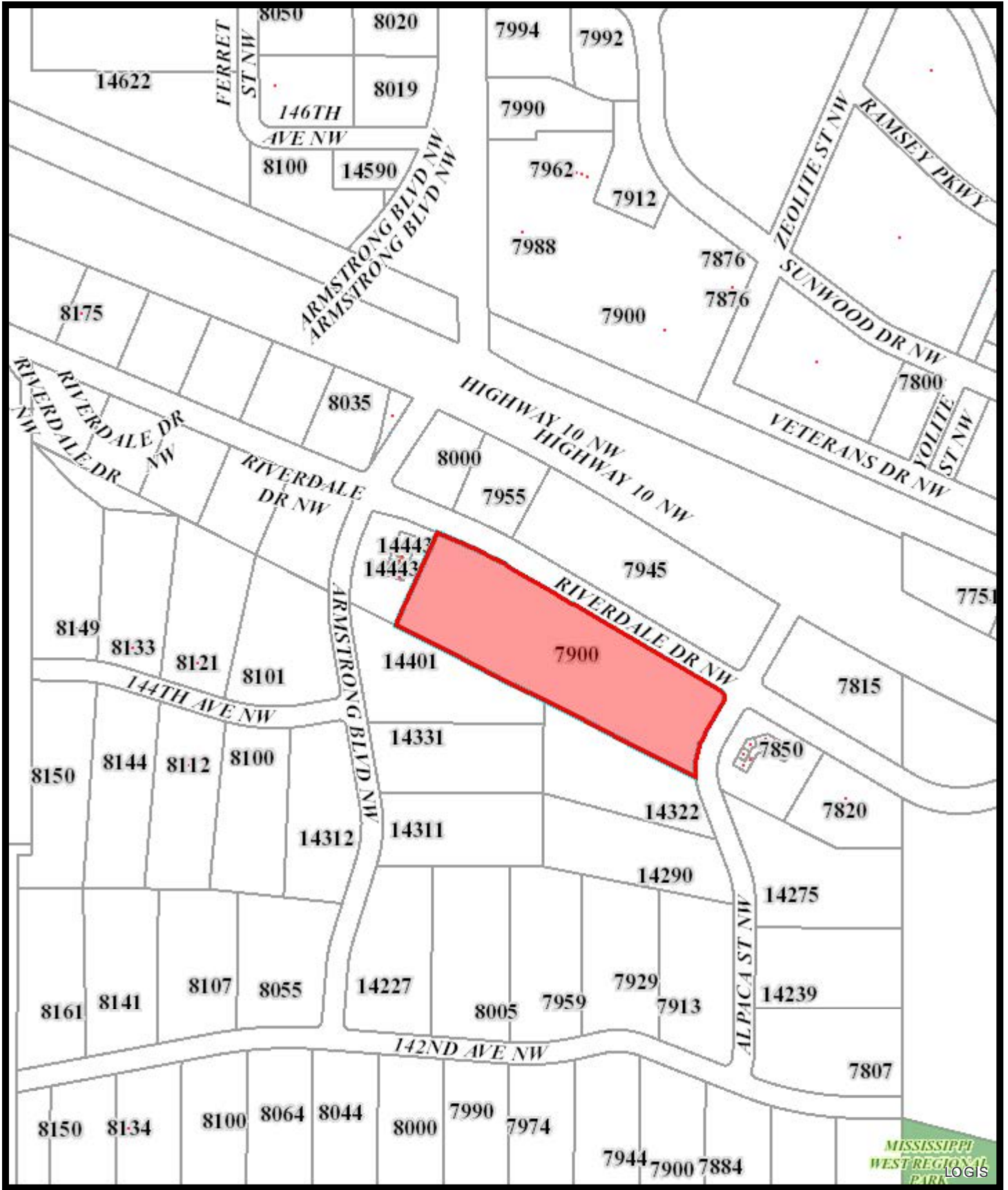
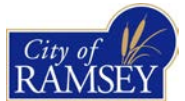
Tim Gladhill

Date

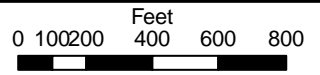
12/04/2018 02:30 PM

Started On: 12/03/2018 03:02 PM

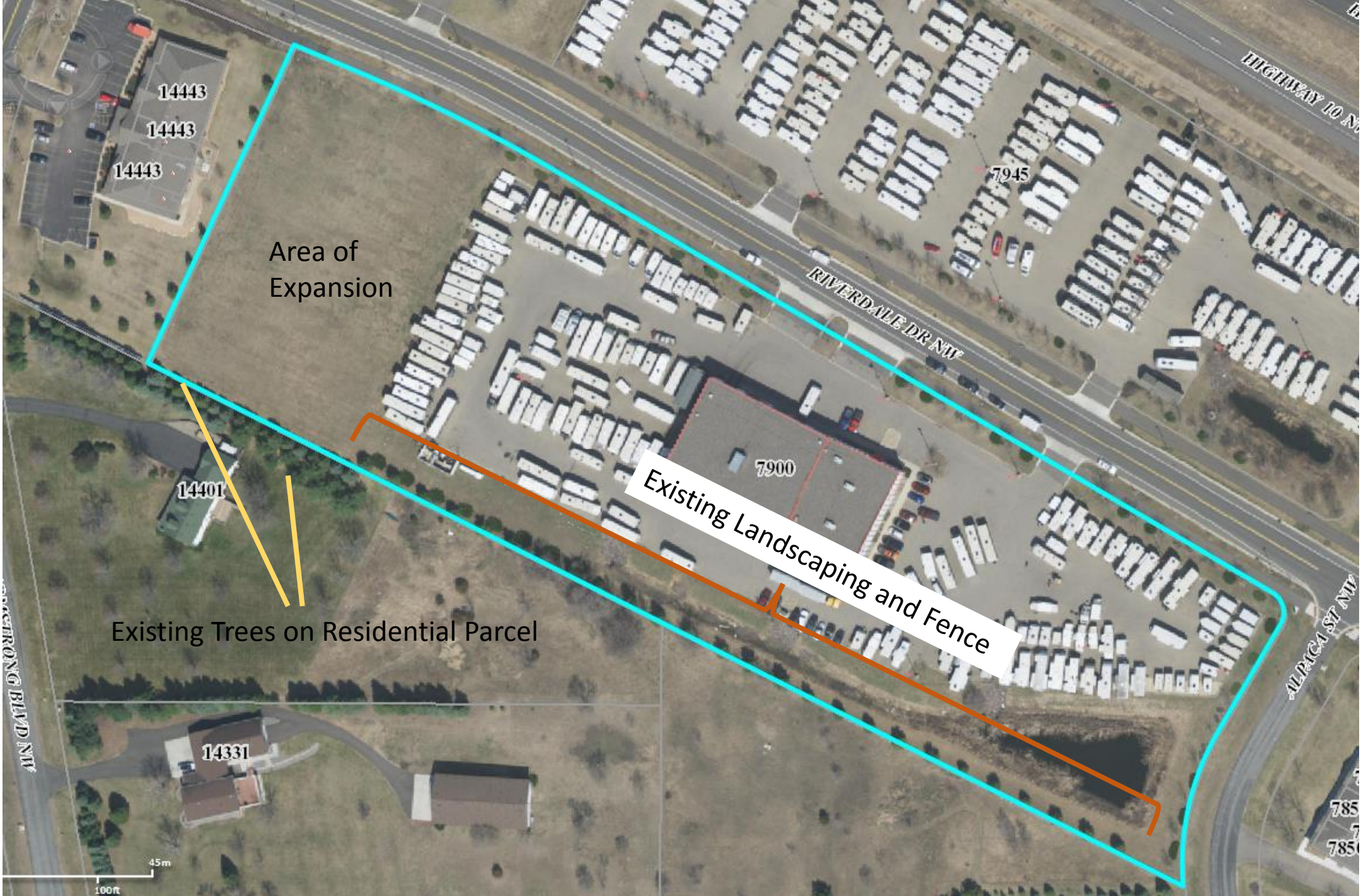
Site Location Map



MISSISSIPPI
WEST REGIONAL
PARK
LOGS







14443
14443
14443

Area of
Expansion

7945

RIVERDALE DR NW

14401

Existing Landscaping and Fence

7900

Existing Trees on Residential Parcel

ALPACA ST NW

SAGORONG BLVD NW

14331

785
7850

45m

100ft

CITY OF RAMSEY LAND USE APPLICATION
TECHNICAL REVIEW FILE

DATE	DECEMBER 3, 2018	PROJECT ADDRESS	7900 RIVERDALE DRIVE NW
PROJECT. TITLE	PLEASURELAND RV		
ESCROW #			
DEPARTMENT:	Community Development: Planning Division (Landscape Plan & Environmental Resources)		
TECHNICAL REVIEWER:	Name: Chris Anderson, City Planner Phone: 763-433-9817 Email: canderson@cityoframsey.com		

We offer the following comments regarding the plans prepared by Bogart, Pederson & Associates, Inc., dated October 1, 2018:

Sheet 2:

- Update legend to reference existing maintenance free vinyl fence along southern boundary of Lots 3-6.

Sheet 3:

- At least ten (10) additional trees and thirty-five (35) shrubs are required based on the linear footage of the expansion.
- The existing white, maintenance-free vinyl fence should be extended to the western boundary to assist with providing buffering/screening of the expansion to the existing residential parcel to the south.
- There is an existing pattern of landscaping along both the northern and southern lot lines that, for aesthetic and consistency purposes, as well as to meet minimum standards, should be continued to the western boundary.
- Evergreen trees shall be utilized along the southern lot line to aid with screening/buffering from the adjacent, existing residential property (similar to the existing landscape to the east).
- Landscaping should be shown on a separate Landscape Plan sheet and shall include a Planting Detail and Planting Schedule.
- If an irrigation system is to be installed, it must include a rain sensor AND some form of water efficient technology, such as a smart controller, soil moisture sensors, and/or ET sensors. This must be specified on the plan sheet.