

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

On Monday, March 18, 2019, 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 Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Laura Moore

Members Absent: Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Melissa Fetterley
 Board Member Michael Madison

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 City Council Liaison Melody Shryock

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, and Moore. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Bernard, Fetterley, and Madison.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated February 25, 2019

Motion by Board Member Covart and seconded by Board Member Moore to approve the regular meeting minutes dated February 25, 2019.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Review Site Plan and Final Plat for The Sapphire (Project No. 18-138); Case of PSD

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the purpose of this case is to review a proposed Site Plan and Final Plat for a project known as The Sapphire, located at the southeast corner of Center Street and Ramsey Parkway. The proposal is for a four story, 118-unit apartment building that mirrors the existing Parkview East building just to the east. The property is located within The COR Sub-District 1 (Mixed Use COR) and is subject to The COR Design Framework. The City's Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) does not identify any significant natural areas within the subject property. The entirety of the subject property is classified as "urban with little vegetative cover" per the Minnesota Land Cover Classification System (MLCCS). The subject property is devoid of any significant trees and thus, there is no need for a Tree Inventory and Preservation Plan. There are no identified wetlands on the subject property per the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) nor any floodplain areas present.

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

Further discussion: Councilmember Shryock asked if the landscape plans are reviewed for safety on larger projects. City Planner Anderson stated that the safety issues that are reviewed are in regard to landscaping near intersections to avoid site obstructions. He stated that the City has not implemented review of landscaping from other safety aspects. He noted that part of the safety concerns sometimes arise from placement of evergreens and advised that this request does not include many evergreens. He stated that if the Board is interested, there could be further discussion on that type of review/policy. Councilmember Shryock stated that as The COR starts to fill in with large developments, they should be mindful of the environment as they continue to design, she provided the example of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). Chairperson Valentine confirmed the consensus of the Board to further discuss the topic.

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

Board Member Hiatt stated that he would love to see some additional trees incorporated in the large open areas.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the consensus of the Board to ask the applicant to explore additional options for landscaping within the parking area.

5.02: Ramsey's Closed Landfill Site Solar Potential Assessment

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the MN Brightfields Initiative is a program exploring the potential and feasibility of developing renewable energy on Closed Landfill Program (CLP) sites. This initiative includes a wide array of state and federal agencies, as well as various associations and organization, including the Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA). A primary focus of the MN Brightfields Initiative is to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from CLP sites (estimated are that CLP sites account for about one fifth of all state agencies' greenhouse gas emissions). Ramsey's CLP site was identified by the MN Brightfields Initiative as a potential candidate for further analysis, at least in part due to the larger boundary of state (MPCA) owned land compared to the actual waste footprint (the landfill itself). Recently,

City of Ramsey staff were informed that the CDFR's Brownfields Technical Assistance Program selected Ramsey's CLP site for free technical assistance in assessing the site's solar potential. The City will be working with the MN Brightfields Initiative to identify stakeholders for inclusion in a future on site meeting to discuss the potential economic asset the CLP site could be.

Chairperson Valentine stated that this is very intriguing and a great way to use a poor-quality property.

Board Member Hiatt asked the acreage of the landfill.

City Planner Anderson estimated about 260 acres.

Board Member Hiatt asked the size of the solar array that was recently approved/constructed.

City Planner Anderson replied that solar array is 20 to 30 acres.

Board Member Hiatt stated that it is good to move in this direction. He stated that this could be an ideal location and could be moved up in scale to have a larger impact.

City Planner Anderson stated that the PCA is sending crews out to mow two or three times per year. He stated that if something were to happen, there would be a potential to convert the landscaping into a more native, pollinator friendly landscape.

Chairperson Valentine asked if the process includes an environmental review.

City Planner Anderson stated that is some of the information that they hope to gain from this exploration. He stated that there are a lot of unknowns and this process will provide some answers.

Board Member Covart stated that in the past Connexus had an ability for homeowners to buy into the solar field. She asked if that would be an option for this activity.

City Planner Anderson stated that Connexus is not involved in the discussion at this time.

5.03: Arbor Day Event Update

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the purpose of this case is provide an update to the EPB regarding a planned Arbor Day activity with Ramsey Elementary School. The planting event will occur on Arbor Day, which in Minnesota is always the last Friday in April (this year April 26th). The MN DNR will also be assisting in the tree planting activity by providing the seedlings to be planted in the Environmental Learning Area (ELA). Staff was unfortunately unable to attend the initial planning meeting for the event but did receive a follow up email from the school with some information. Planting by students will occur from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Staff has been asked to try and provide a couple volunteers to assist with the planting activities and to see if a water truck may be available for use that day as well. He stated that this would be a great opportunity to infuse some excitement and education about the benefits that trees provide in the community and encouraged EPB member to assist with the event if possible.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

Board Member Moore reminded the Board of the upcoming environmental conference on April 13th.

- **Photo Contest Entries and Proposed Winners**

City Planner Anderson stated that the City offers a photo contest each year. He stated that in past years the EPB has provided a recommendation on winners. He explained that in order to streamline the process, the winners are being chosen by the Parks and Recreation Commission and then certified by the City Council. He stated that he included all the submittals and the proposed winners for informational purposes.

Chairperson Valentine thanked staff for sharing the photos.

Councilmember Shryock agreed that there were a lot of great photos this year. She asked if all the photos would be available on the City website once submitted.

City Planner Anderson stated that he understands that in order to submit the photo as part of the contest, the resident is acknowledging that the City has full use of the photos for the website or promotional use. He stated that some of the entries from last year are currently being circulated on the City's website.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

JoAnn Shaw
Community Development Secretary

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