

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

On Monday, December 16, 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 Reid Bernard  
                          Board Member Jane Covart  
                          Board Member Melissa Fetterley  
                          Board Member Michael Hiatt  
                          Board Member Laura Moore (arrived at 6:31 p.m.)

Members Absent:     None

Also Present:        City Planner Chris Anderson  
                          City Council Liaison Debra Musgrove

**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 Covart and seconded by Board Member Fetterley, to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

**4.     APPROVE MINUTES**

**4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated November 18, 2019**

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Bernard to approve the regular meeting minutes dated November 18, 2019.

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

Board Member Moore arrived at 6:31 p.m.

## **5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Consider Landscape Plan and Natural Resources Aspects for Garden View Villas**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the City has received an application for Preliminary Plat and Site Plan review of a proposed residential development located north of 147<sup>th</sup> Lane and east of Center Street. The subject property is zoned R-2 Residential (medium density) and consists of 23 detached townhome units. The Minnesota Land Cover Classification System identifies two land cover types on the subject property, dry grassland and wetland. However, the City's Natural Resources Inventory further classifies both as altered/non-native plant communities. There is some built in protection for the wetland in the form of the required 16.5-foot setback encumbered with drainage and utility easement, which is shown on the Site Plan. It appears that just beyond this setback is a proposed five-foot-tall retaining wall. He provided additional details on tree preservation, landscaping, and density transitioning.

Board Member Covart referenced the native grass planting area and asked if staff would recommend a berm or hedging.

City Planner Anderson stated that he would recommend continuing with sod in that area near the road and identified another area, not adjacent a public road, where native seed mix could be utilized. He explained that without an active management plan native mixes can appear unkept. He confirmed that he would recommend keeping the trees planned along the roadway and would simply replace the native seed mix with sod in that area.

City Councilmember Musgrove asked how the overall landscaping plan would work with a homeowner's association.

City Planner Anderson stated that it is the understanding of staff that the landscaping would be managed by the homeowner's association. He explained that the homeowner's association would be responsible for all of the landscaped areas, including turf areas, trees, shrubs and native areas. He provided additional input on the process needed to establish and maintain native planting areas.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Bernard to recommend approval of the Landscape and Tree Preservation Plans contingent upon compliance with the staff review letter.

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

### **5.02: Consider Possible Amendments for Landscape Requirements in the Employment Districts**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that at the November meeting, the Board directed staff to research what some of the peer communities have in terms of landscaping requirements for their industrial areas and how those compare with the current requirements of Ramsey. The landscape standards from Elk River, Andover, Dayton and Coon Rapids were provided in the case. As can be seen, there is a range of approaches that the communities utilize. Staff believes there is some merit in considering amendments to the planting standards in the

Employment Districts, where it is more common to have large buildings accompanied by large parking and maneuvering areas, leaving less areas for a healthy, thriving landscape. However, staff is not ready to provide any specific recommendations. The intention is to simply continue the discussion about potential ideas to improve the landscaping standards while not losing sight of their purpose.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he is curious about applying the canopy cover formula to an industrial site and asked how close that would be to the adjustments approved on the Delta ModTech site.

City Planner Anderson stated that the canopy cover formula may be the way to go but noted that would depend on the species of trees proposed. He noted that with the species proposed, Delta ModTech would have been at roughly 100,000 square feet of canopy cover and would have needed about 150,000 square feet in total. He noted that calculation does not exclude the stormwater pond area. He stated that the site probably would have been somewhat close under the formula if the stormwater pond area was excluded, as plantings are not allowed in that area, and perhaps if different species were chosen. He noted that he could bring additional information back to the Board at a future meeting.

Board Member Hiatt stated that as the City continues to develop in the industrial park it makes sense to review this requirement as the landscaping plan is not realistic for those areas. He believed that the canopy cover formula would provide better guidance for those areas.

City Planner Anderson noted that formula is also not prescriptive in stating a strict number of trees, which provides flexibility based on species. He encouraged the Board to perhaps consider specifying a minimum number of genus' to choose from and a minimum number/percentage of species that could be used to ensure sufficient diversity.

Chairperson Valentine commented that he would like to see a sketch plan example in addition to staff supplying the numbers. He confirmed the consensus of the Board that a visual example would be helpful.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he also likes the idea of including goals and the intent of the policy as that provides additional guidance to the developer. He asked if there are other elements of the policies from other communities that staff feels should be incorporated into the Ramsey policy.

City Planner Anderson stated that he feels that there should be a reduced emphasis on the shrub requirements. He stated that while shrubs soften the façade of the building, he feels that the bulk of the landscaping should be provided through trees, both shade and ornamental. He explained that there are many more benefits provided by trees compared to shrubs, and shrubs are oftentimes removed after a number of years and/or oftentimes replaced with perennial plantings.

Board Member Covart asked how long the trees lives.

City Planner Anderson explained how the tree book was created. He stated that if the trees are well cared for, in a landscaped setting, they could live for over 40 to 50 years. He explained that trees that live for hundreds of years are in natural settings and typically not these developed landscaped areas. He stated that in a poorly maintained boulevard setting he could see the lifespan

reduced to possibly as little as five to ten years. He explained that part of that factor is due to soil volume limitations and salts and other pollutants on roadways.

City Planner Anderson stated that he will use the canopy cover formula as discussed to create a sketch that the Board could review in example. He confirmed the consensus to exclude the stormwater ponding space from the calculation.

### **5.03: 2020 Environmental Policy Board Meeting Schedule**

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that at the November Board meeting, staff was directed to prepare the meeting schedule for 2020, which was included in the case. He noted that the regular meeting dates for January and February coincide with Martin Luther King Day and Presidents Day, respectively, and thus, staff has proposed rescheduled dates of January 13<sup>th</sup> and February 10<sup>th</sup>. There are no further conflicts with the regular meeting dates in 2020. However, the December meeting, scheduled for December 21<sup>st</sup>, is the same week as Christmas in 2020. He asked for direction from the Board as to whether this meeting date should be kept as scheduled, rescheduled or canceled.

Chairperson Valentine suggested that the decision for December 2020 meeting be delayed in order to determine if there is a need to hold the meeting.

City Planner Anderson stated that his recommendation would be that if a meeting is needed in December 2020, perhaps that be held one week earlier. He confirmed that the Board could discuss that date when the time is closer. He confirmed the consensus of the Board with the 2020 meeting schedule as proposed.

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

- **EAB Confirmed in Ramsey**

City Planner Anderson reported that he was out with Department of Agriculture staff the previous week reviewing an Ash tree in Ramsey and it was confirmed that Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) exists in that tree. He stated that there was a tree several homes down from that tree where EAB may have started. He reported that EAB has therefore been confirmed in Ramsey and he will work with Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) staff on scheduling a presentation on EAB. He stated that when the presentation is provided by the MDA, he will most likely invite the Park and Recreation Commission and City Council to attend the EPB meeting. He stated that Anoka County has been under quarantine for about four years as EAB was discovered in other communities. He stated that staff will send out additional information to residents through upcoming newsletters. He confirmed that a direct mailing would be sent to that specific neighborhood.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:26 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.*