

5.01: Review Tree Preservation Plan Request for Trott Brook North

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that at the June 28th EPB meeting, the Board reviewed a request from a developer to utilize a Fixed Radius Plot (FRP) sampling technique to survey trees in a planted setting. The EPB raised questions about cost and time savings and accuracy of such a sampling technique. A memorandum was included from Kjolhaug Environmental Services Company in attempt to address those questions.

Board Member Hiatt asked if a variance would go through the Planning Commission.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that the Planning Commission is the body that acts on variances, therefore the request would go to that body.

Board Member Hiatt asked if there would be an expectation that the EPB should provide a recommendation as to whether the body supports the variance request.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that tonight would be a good opportunity for the Board to provide that feedback or a recommendation to forward to the Planning Commission should the developer choose to pursue that.

Board Member Fetterley commented that she finds the additional information helpful. She stated that this seems to be reasonable based on that additional information and believed the sampling would be well done. She stated that based on the unique situation of this plot and method for calculation, this seems to be reasonable, and she would support this technique for this situation.

Board Member Little agreed. He commented that this technique has a drawback for larger trees and asked for additional information on when that age frame would come into play in terms of years after planting.

Mr. Mark Kjolhaug of Kjolhaug Environmental Services Company commented that the trees were planted at the same time, are growing in similar conditions, and have comparable growth rates so that does not really apply in this instance.

Chairperson Covart stated that she also appreciated the additional information and agreed that this was thoroughly presented. She stated that she would also recommend approval of the variance.

Board Member Hiatt commented that he supports this because it is a planted area, which provides uniqueness. He stated that this method is reasonable because this is a planted area and believed that was important to document in order to avoid setting precedence. He believed there was distinction between a planted area and a naturally wooded area. He stated that in places where the Board can be supportive of a developer, and when appropriate, he is happy to do that. He noted that 150 hours is a sizeable savings in terms of time and cost. He asked if staff was aware of any other significant planted areas in Ramsey.

City Planner Anderson commented that he did not do a complete analysis. He noted that there is one large tree farm and there are a few other planted areas similar to this. He did not believe it is overwhelming throughout the community.

Board Member Fetterley asked if another applicant would have to request a variance if they wanted to use this same method of calculation.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that this situation is rare enough where a variance request on a case-by-case situation would be appropriate.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Little to support this sampling technique in the planted areas of the proposed plan and encourage the applicant to pursue a variance.

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