

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

On Monday, December 13, 2021, 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 Laura Moore
 Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Melissa Fetterley
 Board Member Michael Hiatt
 Board Member Jared Little

Members Absent: Board Member Michael Valentine

Also Present: City Planner Chris Anderson
 Community Development Director/Deputy CA Brian Hagen
 City Council Liaison Chelsee Howell

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Moore called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Board Member Little and seconded by Board Member Hiatt to approve the agenda as submitted.

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated August 16, 2021

Motion by Board Member Fetterley and seconded by Board Member Little to approve the regular meeting minutes dated August 16, 2021.

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

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Mississippi River Shoreline Erosion Control Plan

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that in late 2015, the City engaged the services of the Anoka Conservation District (ACD) to conduct an inventory of the Mississippi River bank to assess the impacts of erosion. Subsequently, an item entitled “create a shoreline erosion control plan for the Mississippi River” was incorporated into the EPB’s Work Plan. The intent was to utilize the inventory data and attempt to work with the most impacted property owners to complete shoreline stabilization projects. These projects would not only prevent further loss of property but would also help improve water quality.

Mitch Haustein, Anoka Conservation District, provided an overview of the inventory that was completed in 2015 noting that the majority of the land falls under private ownership. He provided details on the methodology used to determine the bank condition and displayed the results of the inventory. He stated that the report includes a site profile for the ten properties that have areas marked with severe or very severe erosion issues. He noted that ACD has received interest from some of the properties identified within the report but acknowledged that funding continues to be an issue. He provided an example of a property owner that did reach out to ACD and when funding was available a project was completed in 2020 on that property. He noted the total project cost of \$175,000. He explained that ACD received a Clean Water Fund (CWF) grant to assist in the project, but the homeowner still contributed \$35,000. He provided details on the different funding sources that are available and the associated considerations. He stated that ACD primarily focuses on the CWF and provided additional details on the grant requirements. He reviewed the draft approach proposed for spring and summer 2022, related draft implementation information for 2023, and how ACD could be involved in that process.

City Planner Anderson stated that he is not looking for specific action on this tonight. He noted that the item has been on the workplan for some time and tonight was meant to provide background information, review the cost to complete this type of work, and highlight the limited funding sources that may be available. He stated that more specific discussion could occur at a future meeting as to what would make the most sense, should the group desire to continue in this direction.

Board Member Hiatt asked how much the erosion is changing and whether there is rationale as to whether that is happening.

Mr. Haustein replied that conditions are constantly changing because this is a river. He stated that this is the snapshot from 2015 and believed that there would be progression of the erosion in the severe and very severe cases. He noted that on average small amounts of shore are lost each year, but larger events can cause tree loss and loss of more shoreline.

Board Member Hiatt asked if there is consideration up and down stream to review this on a bigger picture.

Mr. Haustein commented that they do look at the system as a whole but because of the challenges they are left to address site specific issues to protect properties.

Board Member Bernard asked if the funding is only available for private property owners or whether there would be funding available for the City owned property as well.

Mr. Haustein commented that the grant would be available to public property as well. He did not believe Ramsey has property along the Mississippi River.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that Ramsey does not own property along the Mississippi River, but Anoka County does own property along the river.

Chairperson Moore asked what could be done in a situation where three landowners are on board for a project in a stretch of the river but perhaps there is one landowner that does not want to participate in the middle.

Mr. Haustein stated that there are ways to design a project to stabilize individual stretches of the river. He noted that it is most cost effect to stabilize the contractor once in order to complete a stretch of the project. He stated that most often the hurdle is funding as some homeowners do not have \$20,000 to contribute. He noted that one consideration could be if the City had funds available to reduce the burden on the homeowner share of the cost.

Board Member Hiatt asked if there would be a potential for more funding into these pots this year with the budget surplus of the State.

Mr. Haustein explained that the Clean Water Fund is funded through sales tax. He stated that riverbank stabilization has been prioritized for those funds.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the consensus of the Board to follow up on this discussion in January or February to further discussion options.

Board Member Hiatt stated that he would also find it helpful to have input from the identified property owners.

City Planner Anderson stated that six to 12 property owners have reached out to ACD since the inventory was completed in order to find out the options and available funding opportunities. He stated that each year the City receives about two to five inquiries and staff typically refers those callers to ACD because of their expertise and experience in submitted successful grant applications.

5.02: Consider Natural Resources Related Plan Elements for Trott Brook Crossing Preliminary Plat (Project No. 21-130); Case of TEG Land Holdings, LLC

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that the City has received an application from TEG Land Holdings LLC for a Preliminary Plat of 270 single family residential homes on the properties generally located west of Nowthen Boulevard, east of Variolite Street, north of Trott Brook and south of 173rd.

Chairperson Moore referenced the southwest corner of the plan that did not receive approval for rezoning. She asked if the applicant would then not use that portion of the property, or if that is developed would it then be developed into two lots.

City Planner Anderson replied that without the necessary zoning and Comprehensive Plan amendments, that parcel could be put into an unbuildable outlot or could be designed with 2.5 acre lots that meet the bulk standards of the zoning district.

Board Member Hiatt stated that the staff report indicates that the application is lacking in density transitioning and asked if that has been upgraded to meet the requirements.

City Planner Anderson confirmed that there have been updates to the plans that meet the density transitioning requirements. He stated that the corridor has been widened to 45 feet with the required plantings.

Chairperson Moore stated that she likes the idea of a large park utilizing the existing farm structures.

Motion by Board Member Hiatt and seconded by Board Member Bernard to recommend approval of the natural resources elements of the project contingent upon compliance with staff review comments in ProjectDox and with City Council consideration of density transitioning.

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

5.03: Consider Participation in a Future Rain Barrel and Compost Bin Sales Event

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that staff was recently asked about any opportunities to partner and promote a rain barrel sales event. In response, staff contacted the Recycling Association of Minnesota (RAM), which annually coordinates a rain barrel and compost bin sales event. In 2016, the City of Ramsey partnered with RAM to serve as one of the distribution sites. At that time, the City's only obligation was to provide a location for the items to be picked up by customers. RAM handled the promotion of the event and the transactions. There were approximately 80 customers that picked up a rain barrel, compost bin, or both at the Ramsey location.

Board Member Fetterley commented that this would be a great opportunity for the residents and therefore she supports this action. She noted that perhaps some of the Board Members would volunteer their time to assist with pickup.

Chairperson Moore agreed and noted that she would also volunteer.

City Planner Anderson confirmed the consensus of the Board to pursue this opportunity.

5.04: Meeting Schedule

City Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He reviewed the 2022 meeting schedule and identified alternative meeting dates where necessary. It was the consensus of the Board to hold the January meeting on January 10th and the February meeting on February 28th.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

City Planner Anderson introduced the new Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator Brian Hagen.

Community Development Director/Deputy City Administrator Hagen introduced himself to the Board.

City Planner Anderson provided an update on the successful fall recycling event which was held at the new Public Works Facility.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Little and seconded by Board Member Bernard to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
City Planner

ATTEST:

Nicole Laubach
Planning Administrative Assistant

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.