

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

On Monday, April 21, 2025, 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 Melissa Fetterley
 Board Member Reid Bernard
 Board Member Nick Burgess
 Board Member Thomas Hagerty
 Board Member Paula Houts
 Board Member Hassan Salami (arrived at 6:35 p.m.)

Members Absent: Board Member Laura Moore

Also Present: Senior Planner Chris Anderson
 City Council Liaison Michael Olson

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Board Member Bernard and seconded by Board Member Hagerty to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Fetterley, Board Member Bernard, Hagerty, Burgess, and Houts. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Members Moore and Salami.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Meeting Minutes Dated March 17, 2025

Motion by Board Member Burgess and seconded by Board Member Houts to approve the regular meeting minutes dated March 17, 2025.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Fetterley, Board Member Burgess, Houts, Bernard, and Hagerty. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Members Moore and Salami.

5. POLICY BOARD BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Natural Resources Aspects of a Site Plan for Kwik Trip at the Southwest Corner of Armstrong Boulevard and Bunker Lake Boulevard (Project No. 25-104); Case of Kwik Trip, Inc.

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that staff recommend approving the natural aspects of this Site Plan.

Board Member Salami arrived at 6:35 p.m.

Board Member Burgess asked if there is any type of protection for the car wash, similar to the fuel protection.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that this is located within the wellhead protection district, which does have regulations for the fuel tanks. He stated that all of the runoff from the carwash will run into the sanitary sewer system.

Motion by Board Member Bernard and seconded by Board Member Hagerty to recommend approval of the natural resources aspects of the Site Plan.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chairperson Fetterley, Board Member Bernard, Hagerty, Burgess, Houts, and Salami. Voting No: None. Absent: Board Member Moore.

5.02: Outdoor Wood Boilers

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He stated that this case is intended to solicit feedback from the EPB on whether the City Council should consider any additional standards for outdoor wood boilers.

Randy Keyser, 16967 Bison Street NW, commented that he has had many interactions with City staff and the Police on this matter, as he has three neighbors within 200 to 300 feet from his home, who use wood boilers. He commented on his experience, noting that once the material is placed into the boiler, he can smell the smoke and has had health issues as a result. He provided input on the poor air quality in his neighborhood and the additional measures he had done to his home in an attempt to mitigate the effects. He stated that this is impacting his health and, therefore, should be able to trigger the City's nuisance ordinance. He stated that the boilers are going 24 hours per day, seven days per week. He questioned whether the residents obtained a permit to install the wood boilers and whether there should be three allowed within such a small distance. He noted that many cities have prohibited wood boilers because of the impacts on others, and the cities that do allow them have regulations in place, such as requiring a taller stack. He questioned the efficiency of the wood boilers as well as the quality of the material being burned. He asked the City to step in and consider prohibiting wood boilers, as he was unsure, he could make it through another year of these conditions.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that one of the outcomes from the worksession discussion was direction for the Community Development Director to utilize the *Ramsey Resident* to provide education on this topic. He stated that if what is being burned in a boiler is not clean, dry wood or pellets, depending on what is required by the system, that could cause a lot of nuisance issues such

as excess smoke and odor. He described the likely path forward, with the group having more discussion on this topic and then perhaps a joint worksession with the City Council.

Board Member Houts asked if the problem is more of what is being burned or that it is on all of the time.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that he is unsure. He stated that it could be a combination of both, or could be the material that is being burned.

Chairperson Fetterley stated that when these complaints are received, it would seem that the City Code is limited to the expectation for people who use this type of heating device. She asked if staff have verified if permits were obtained or inspected the devices to determine what is being burned.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that the Code Enforcement Officer has been involved in at least one of the complaints, and the Police provided input at the worksession as well. He was unsure if permits were pulled and did not have the specific information on the properties that use wood boilers. He stated that he could explore whether mechanical permits were pulled, and if not, he could work with the building division on follow-up.

Chairperson Fetterley commented that if the issue is the material that is being burned, that would seem to be a separate issue rather than needing to ban these systems throughout the community. She stated that she would prefer to verify if the situation mentioned is inappropriate before placing additional regulations across the city.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that in reviewing the minutes from the Council worksession, it seemed that the majority consensus was not to ban this equipment and rather ensure that the devices are only burning what is intended.

Board Member Hagerty appreciated the desire to educate the public on the proper use of the equipment and what should and should not be burned. He asked if the restriction of rural residential includes a minimum acreage for properties.

Senior Planner Anderson replied that the rural residential zoning district does have a minimum lot size of 2.5 acres, but many properties exist today in that zoning district below that threshold. He cautioned against trying to devise anything based on property size and would suggest sticking with a setback from the property line.

Board Member Hagerty suggested that perhaps they also consider the number of units within an area as well, to prevent the situation as described by the resident.

Chairperson Fetterley asked if other cities have regulations of that type.

Senior Planner Anderson commented that certain communities have prohibited the wood boilers, others allow them, and some have created regulations. He stated that he has not yet reviewed what the neighboring community regulations are, but confirmed that could be done if they do a deeper dive on this topic. He noted that one of the main objectives of the Comprehensive Plan is to maintain the balance of rural character and urban growth, and so it would seem counterintuitive to

ban something like this as they are not necessarily uncommon in rural America. He agreed that perhaps better regulation would make more sense.

Board Member Burgess asked the next steps.

Senior Planner Anderson acknowledged that Councilmember Peters may have more insight on this case as he has spoken with the residents and visited the site, but was unable to attend tonight. He believed that they would circle back to this next month, and potentially inviting an industry expert to review wood boilers with the Board. He invited the Board to complete their own research on wood boilers prior to the next meeting as well. He noted that if a wood boiler was installed in accordance with the rules and regulations at that time, any new rules would most likely not become retroactive.

Chairperson Fetterley agreed that the Board could attempt to educate themselves on this before the next meeting. She reiterated that she would like to determine if there is an issue with these specific properties and what could be done to alleviate the issue in this area.

Councilmember Olson commented that he was not at the work session where this item was discussed. He stated that perhaps the educational article lists the items that are allowed to be burned and those that are not, with an emphasis that the disallowed materials list is not exhaustive.

Senior Planner Anderson reiterated the items he would research prior to the discussion at the next meeting.

5.03: Arbor Month Planting Event

Senior Planner Anderson presented the staff report. He encouraged all EPB members to attend and participate in this Arbor Month planting event.

Chairperson Fetterley hoped that all members of the Board, along with members of the public, attend the event to participate.

6. BOARD / STAFF INPUT

- **Update on Term Limits for Chairperson**

Senior Planner Anderson stated that the City Council revisited the term limits for Chairs of Boards and Commissions and decided to eliminate the previous limit of two years for a person to serve in that position. He explained that there is no longer a limit on how long someone can serve as Chair of a Board or Commission.

Senior Planner Anderson stated that the spring recycling event is scheduled for Saturday, May 3rd and postcards were mailed to residents last week with the details.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Board Member Burgess and seconded by Board Member Hagerty to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Anderson
Senior Planner

ATTEST:

Katie Schmidt
City Clerk

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.