

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

MARCH 20, 2007

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 20th day of March, 2007, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell presiding and the following Council members present: Doll, Goodman, Mahayni, Popken, and Rice. Council Member Larson was absent. *Ex officio* Member Buske was also present.

REQUEST FOR SEARCHLIGHTS FOR EVENT ON MARCH 24: Gateway Hotel and Conference Center asked permission to use a searchlight as part of an event to be held at the Hotel on March 27, 2007. Section 29.411(6) of the Municipal Code prohibits the use of searchlights for advertising purposes. Since the searchlight has already been arranged for the March 24 event, the Hotel is asking Council for special permission.

Moved by Doll, seconded by Goodman, to allow the use of a searchlight in connection with an event to be held at the Gateway Hotel & Conference Center on March 24, 2007, by suspending enforcement of Section 29.411(7) of the Municipal Code at that location and for that evening only. Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

JOINT MEETING WITH HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION (HPC): Present from the HPC were: Betcher, Leslie, and De Geest.

Planning & Housing Director Steve Osguthorpe introduced Gloria Betcher, Chairperson of the HPC.

The West Ames Historic Study Report (Fourth Ward), as proposed by Will Page, was presented by Gloria Betcher. This new Multiple Property Documentation Form adds West Ames to what is already known about downtown. The boundaries for this report are the main campus on the north, Beach Avenue on the East, Sheldon, Highland, and Ontario on the West, and Storm on the South. This area is the focus of the new MPDF.

The purpose of the joint meeting is to review and discuss:

1. The “Multiple Property Documentation Form” for West Ames. Eight areas in West Ames have been identified as potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places as historic districts:
 - a. Campustown
 - b. College Heights
 - c. Colonial Village
 - d. Greek Letters
 - e. Oak-Wood-Forest
 - f. Ross Road
 - g. South Campus

h. West Gate Center

Each district was defined by Planner Ray Anderson and Ms. Betcher. All areas are candidates because of their architectural significance and the historical significance of the area. Among the areas, three were labeled outstanding candidates: Greek Letters, Oak-Wood-Forest, and South Campus.

2. An intensive survey of the College Heights Neighborhood. The HPC is recommending that this Neighborhood be the first to be studied. There is a possibility of grant funding through the State Historical Society; however, the City has budgeted \$14,000 for this survey.

College Heights consists of 100 single-family dwellings dating between 1920 and 1950 with architectural significance of homes, landscape architecture, and historical significance. The support of residents has already been obtained. Maps were shown to demonstrate the landscape architecture and street design of the area.

3. Preparation of a Preservation Plan for Ames. The West Ames Study recommended that a Preservation Plan be prepared for the community, and at the request of the HPC, the City has budgeted \$25,000 in the next fiscal year for preparation of the Plan.

Director Osguthorpe emphasized that there is no planned action at this point. There was discussion on the benefits property owners would receive if their property was designated in the National Register of Historic Places. Ms. Betcher responded that there are different benefits for rental and residential property owners. Commercial properties would be eligible for tax credits. Council Member Popken wanted clarification on whether or not the end goal of these surveys was recognition in the National Register. Ms. Betcher stated that the real goals are to stabilize neighborhoods and to cut down on the degradation of the neighborhoods. She emphasized ISU and the City's interest in promoting the community in West Ames in this way. Mayor Campbell wanted to know the downside of these surveys. Ms. Betcher replied that this designation does require property owners to keep up their properties in certain ways. Being in the National Register does not prevent demolition of buildings. It also does not prevent owners to do things such as paint their homes or put up a fence. Mr. Osguthorpe pointed out that if these areas did want to become locally designated, the City would have to initiate the process.

The meeting recessed at 7:58 p.m. and reconvened at 8:07 p.m.

JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION: Knight, Heuss, Barnes, Aronson, and Jons, representing the Planning & Zoning Commission, were present.

Director Osguthorpe introduced the Commission and the initiatives.

The possible new Planning initiatives, along with the suggested ranking from Commission members, were presented for consideration, as follows:

1. Efficient Use of Land and Density Requirements
2. Village Residential Development
3. Industrial Land
4. Affordable Housing
5. Campustown
6. North Ames Study

Commission Member Darryl Knight discussed the focus of the Planning & Zoning Commission, emphasizing their desire to make progress in these areas. The Commission is concerned about all initiatives, and is seeking direction from Council on research and the ability to explain to citizens their concerns regarding these matters. Commission Member Jons reiterated the need for guidance from Council, as well as the Commission's desire to work independently while revisiting these initiatives. Commission Member Barnes explained how the list was derived.

Referring to the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP), Mayor Campbell stated she would be interested in knowing what the Planning & Zoning Commission thinks the City should have a second look at. Mr. Barnes stated that there is a point in time when all plans need to be reviewed to find what would make it better, rather than concentrating on defending and protecting what is known. He also stated it would be beneficial for staff to answer some questions of the Commission. Mr. Osguthorpe pointed out that although some minimum densities have been made, some portions of the population want larger lots. He commented on the unique situation here vs. western states, in that property market value is much different. Midwest property values are lower and property is more plentiful. City Manager Schainker reviewed the process used to arrive at the minimum density standard for single-family residential. He also explained the concept of targeted growth.

Manager Schainker asked the Commission where they thought would be more efficient to accommodate our growth. Ames' LUPP allows for many options. Mr. Jons stated the school district is very constrained, in part because of our LUPP. He pointed out that people are building on large lots just outside the city limits; those children are not going to the Ames schools. Council Member Popken discussed fixed boundaries. Mr. Jons commented on the opportunity of city and other constituents to work more closely than they have in the past. Manager Schainker reminded the Council and Commission members of the April 17 meeting, when the LUPP will be discussed in relation to boundaries in the school district, and their additional lands. Commission Member Heuss stated that the Commission really wants the assistance and direction of Council, as they go forward with these initiatives rather than going ahead on their own.

Council Member Mahayni stated that our LUPP is reflective of the City's vision. Mr. Knight responded that its not a revamp of the LUPP, but outgrowths of it that need looked at because they were not issues at the time of its creation, e.g., certain constraints placed on developers. Manager Schainker asked if it would help to lay out the school district boundaries. Mr. Buske suggested prioritizing these initiatives with the list, and revisiting these items.

Mr. Jons requested background on the village concept from Manager Schainker. Mr. Schainker stated that a steering group and the Council, plus many public sessions, were used to envision

Ames and create the LUPP. The consultant assisting them came to the conclusion that what they wanted were villages, or close proximity living. Some of the greatest battles in Ames have occurred when there were apartment buildings being built next to single-family homes. Ames' village is separated from the original concept, separating townhomes, apartments, commercial, and single family homes. It is a small identified area with a maximum of 2,000 people and density of 8. Council assisted with tax abatements.

Several Commission members felt that more is needed on the Industrial Land Area study. The area east of I-35 consisting of 3,000 acres was discussed. After the regional commercial area is developed, the area will be annexed to provide for larger lot industrial. City Council has this on their list to make recommendations on annexing the area.

Mr. Barnes stated that the affordable housing in Ames is made up mostly of trailer parks. Mayor Campbell commented on Habitat for Humanity, and Community Development Block Grants buying land for this purpose. Mr. Osguthorpe stated that everyone needs affordable housing relating to their income, and asked for clarification between affordable housing and low-income housing.

Mr. Barnes stated that he is unimpressed with the appearance of Campustown. Mr. Goodman asked for suggestions on improvements in that area. Mayor Campbell stated that the government's ability to change certain things relating to this issue are nonexistent. Mr. Knight added its not only the appearance, but the layout and lack of parking that is disappointing. He is hopeful that working with the students will be possible to address these issues.

At the request of the Commission, the Northwest Study is to be provided to Planning & Zoning Commission.

Commission Member Heuss said she values the various viewpoints that have been brought up by the Planning & Zoning Commission. She said that the Commission prefers to be included in the planning process and to be proactive in their approach, rather than having the issues brought to them after the fact.

It was the consensus of the City Council to refer list to Planning staff to be integrated with their work priorities.

COMMENTS: Moved by Doll, seconded by Goodman, to refer to staff the letter from Main Street Cultural District regarding the snowflake streetlights.

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Doll, seconded by Rice, to adjourn the meeting at 9:53 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary