

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

JUNE 19, 2007

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 19th day of June, 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, Larson, Mahayni, Popken, and Rice. *Ex officio* Member Luttrell was also present.

AMES FEASIBILITY STUDY: Sheri Kyras, Transit Director, gave a summary of the Study, which began in January 2007 and was done to determine the feasibility of new services. This was prompted by discussions on the reintroduction of the “Dinky” service from Iowa State University (ISU) Campus to Downtown and on services needed to Ames’ growth areas. Ms. Kyras said that a consultant, URS, was hired to examine seven corridors to determine the need for, cost of, and potential for additional transit services. She introduced Rick Nau, the Vice-President and Director of Transportation of URS Corp. Mr. Nau advised that the seven areas of Ames identified for the Study were:

- Corridor 1 - ISU Center parking lot to ISU Campus
- Corridor 2 - ISU to Downtown Ames (former Dinky route)
- Corridor 3 - 13th/Dayton areas serving the proposed new shopping mall
- Corridor 4 - South Duff retail area/Southdale
- Corridor 5 - Mortensen Road
- Study Area 1 - North Grand Avenue and Mall
- Study Area 2 - Northwest Ames planned development

The scope of the consultant’s work was to identify current ridership in existing corridors or study areas and then project ridership to the Year 2030 in those corridors. Based on the ridership projections, URS identified the type of service that would best meet current and future demand. After the type of service was determined, a cost/benefit analysis was completed. The results of the analysis were presented. Based on the greatest existing and future needs, the Corridors ranked as follows:

1. Iowa State Center to ISU Campus
2. Mortensen Road
3. 13th Street - New Mall
4. Northwest Growth Area
5. ISU to Downtown Ames
6. South Duff
7. North Grand Avenue - Mall

This prioritization was based on: current issues identified by focus groups/staff/route analysis, future transit ridership/needs, alternatives assessment (adjacent impacts, consistency with Plans, performance) and cost versus feasibility to fund.

Discussion ensued on the benefits of using articulated buses versus standard buses. At issue would be the maintenance and storage of articulated buses; the current transit facility cannot house them due to their height and the maintenance area cannot service them due to their length. Director Kyras explained that the Transit Master Plan is nearing its expiration. She is recommending that it be updated, and building needs would be addressed in the Plan. Ms. Kyras stated that the average age of CyRide's fleet is twelve (12) years, while the national average is seven years, and it is not being recommended that buses be retained longer to provide expansion of the system.

The recommendations for each Corridor and Study Area were given, and the next steps to be taken for each were explained. Ms. Kyras advised that a grant application was submitted in an effort to receive federal funding for an alternative analysis study. The City requested \$160,000 in the application that was due May 22, 2007. The local match for that grant, if funded, would be \$40,000. If funded, the City would have three years to complete the study.

COMMENTS: Council Member Rice asked if additional staff were needed to respond to referrals in a more timely basis. Mr. Rice referenced a request by George Belitsos, Director of Youth and Shelter Services, which he felt was not being addressed in a reasonable amount of time. The request was for a change to the regulations to allow vinyl as a permitted replacement material for windows in the Historic Preservation Area. It was noted by Assistant City Manager Kindred that the request was referred to the Planning & Housing Department, prioritized with other pending projects, and given an estimated date of completion in March/April 2008. It was pointed out by Council Member Goodman that the change being requested was from one property owner, but if approved by the City Council, would affect the entire Historic Preservation area. Mr. Schainker advised that, given the number of projects staff is working on, it would be helpful if the Council would give additional direction on the level of priority for referrals.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Doll, seconded by Goodman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor