

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL**

AMES, IOWA

DECEMBER 13, 2008

The Ames City Council met in special session at 8:30 a.m. on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2008, in the Parks and Recreation Activity Room, 1500 Gateway Hills Park Drive, pursuant to law with Mayor Campbell, Council Members Doll, Goodman, Larson, Mahayni, Popken, and Rice and *ex officio* Member Tracy present. City Manager Steve Schainker, Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred, City Attorney Doug Marek, and City Clerk Diane Voss were also in attendance. Assistant City Manager Sheila Lundt arrived at 10:50 a.m.

**UPDATE ON EXISTING CITY COUNCIL GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** City Manager Steve Schainker stated that the purpose of this meeting was to review the goals set or reaffirmed by the City Council on January 12, 2007. He noted that the intent was also to bring the Council together to forge a shared vision. Mr. Schainker reviewed the steps that had been directed by the City Council and presented the status of each of the previously set goals, as follows:

**Goal No. 1: Rejuvenate Campustown.** Council Member Goodman indicated that he was a proponent of redeveloping Campustown; however, there might be those who do not want Campustown to change. Mr. Schainker emphasized that there have not been any permanent changes decided on at this point, but the University has agreed to engage the services of RDG to determine the feasibility of developing the block west of Welch as generally proposed some time ago by Scott Randall. Council Member Rice asked for a copy of the "Randall Plan." City Manager Schainker pointed out that the City will not be able to force any redevelopment as the property in question is privately owned.

**Goal No. 2: "Go Green."** Council Member Goodman recalled that the Council had previously requested to know if it were possible to require LEED standards (energy-efficient design) on all proposals for construction projects. City Attorney Doug Marek advised that it is possible, but that must be decided prior to preparation of the project's plans and specifications. Council Member Goodman voiced his opinion that more money could be spent on the design up-front, which would save money through energy-efficiency over time.

Council Member Popken indicated that the direction given to staff regarding researching the "Energy Star" Rating System was very broad. He would like to see some mechanism to promote energy-efficiency in commercial buildings. City Manager Schainker stated that the goal specifically referenced the promotion of "Energy Star" ratings. Council Member Goodman suggested that discussions occur with realtors and others in a forum-type format.

Regarding recycling, Mayor Campbell reported that additional information on Ames' efforts needs to get out to the student population. Council Member Popken asked for a comparison among the City and other cities regarding how much Ames recycles and how much material has to go to a landfill. Council Member Larson pointed out that there has been no information distributed mentioning the disposal of electronics. Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred advised that Goodwill Industries is the largest recycler of computers and Best Buy accepts up to two computers at a time for recycling. It was suggested that computer disposal options be listed in the next Resource Recovery newsletter.

Regarding a fare-free public transportation system for all riders (not just students), Mr. Schainker advised that, in 2009/10, CyRide will see an 8% increase in its budget just to

retain the same level of service. If the City decides to implement a totally fare-free system, the City and ISU Administration would need to increase its funding by an additional \$163,000 plus the 8%. A grant applied for was not funded. Mr. Schainker noted that the students are already paying more to subsidize the fare-free system. He advised that, because of cutbacks in state funding, support from ISU for this new initiative might not be received. Council Member Larson pointed out that a totally fare-free system received low support in the City's Resident Satisfaction Survey. Council Member Goodman said that he was very much in support of a totally fare-free system during the summer months only. He referenced information received from Transit Director Sheri Kyras, which indicated that an increase in ridership would secure additional federal monies or at least ensure the retention of those currently being received. It was stated that if a fare-free system were approved, no fee could be charged for Dial-a-Ride services either. Discussion ensued as to the deficits being seen for Dial-a-Ride and if those could be remedied if a small fee, e.g., a quarter, could be charged to all riders. Council Member Doll emphasized that the system is not "fare-free" for students; they pay a fee through their tuition for CyRide whether or not they use its services.

Council Member Goodman strongly believes that there should be a program for fare-free summers for two reasons: (1) to show commitment to the "green" concept (through the use of public transportation) and (2) for the possible financial benefits from federal sources due to increased ridership. He asked to have a better explanation of the amount referenced in Ms. Kyras' memo.

Council Member Doll advised that he is not against a "fare-free" (subsidized) program for CyRide, but he feels that it might be more beneficial to have a small charge and expand CyRide routes. He reasoned that more residents could possibly then take public transportation to their work sites.

Council Member Mahayni said that it is oftentimes more convenient and less expensive to drive; however, the cost and availability of parking is the impetus for people to use public transportation.

Council Member Larson asked if any statistical analyses had been done with the University routes removed to find out the ridership numbers. Noting that some City routes have very few, if any, riders, and diesel fuel is costly, he pointed out that mass transit is not always less expensive.

Regarding global warming emissions, Council Member Larson asked to receive an update on the feasibility study to convert the City's RDF to bio-crude, which was to be prepared by Prairie Rivers RC & D.

Council Member Goodman suggested that AMOS continue to be involved in the City's efforts to educate the public on global warming strategies. The topic of utilizing the services offered by AMOS led to a discussion of the City's existing boards and commissions. It was suggested that a task force be formed to specifically address certain issues. It could simply disband when no longer needed, which would require no formal action by the City Council. Council Member Popken recommended that a "go green" task force be created by the City specifically to (1) get information out to the public and (2) foster involvement by the community. He suggested that staff determine what other cities are doing concerning environment sustainability. Council Member Mahayni concurred, stating that after those contacts had been made, the City could design a program that works for the Ames

community. He cited two specific issues: education and technology. Council Member Larson suggested that meetings be held with the Homeowners Association, Realtor Association, etc. It was noted that, when a survey of other cities is performed, it is important to define the charge of other communities' sustainability commissions or task forces. Council Member Rice asked if additional staff would be needed. City Manager Schainker said that the Council should determine what outcomes it is expecting. If the formation of another City-appointed commission is formed, it will require more staff time.

Moved by Popken, seconded by Goodman, to direct staff to provide a report to the City Council by June 1, 2009, as to: (1) what other cities are doing to promote sustainability, (2) how they are doing it, and (3) what other organized groups within Ames (e.g., AMOS, homebuilders, realtors, etc.) are already doing in this regard.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

It was agreed that the goal in giving this direction is for Ames to become a leader in environmental sustainability.

Moved by Mahayni, seconded by Popken, to direct that the City take an inventory of its current efforts towards sustainability.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

**Goal No. 3: Strengthen Neighborhoods.** No additional discussion.

**Goal No. 4: Promote "One Community."** Mayor Campbell asked if annual meetings should be held with other governmental organizations in the City and County.

Moved by Popken, seconded by Larson, to host a meeting every other year with the City of Gilbert, City of Nevada, Ames Community School District, Gilbert Community School District, United Community School District, Ames Economic Development Commission/ Chamber of Commerce, Smart Growth Alliance, Convention & Visitors Bureau, Government of the Student Body, Mary Greeley Medical Center, Boone County Board of Supervisors, and Story County Board of Supervisors to discuss and coordinate future plans.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The meeting recessed at 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:40 a.m.

**Goal No. 5: "Brand" Ames.** Council Member Rice suggested that the City's efforts to "brand Ames" be expanded. Council Member Doll recommended that the City advertise the "greatness" of Ames.

**Goal No. 6: Define Desired Growth.** Referencing the Council's efforts at its last Goal-Setting Session, Council Member Larson believes that there is a segment of the community who believes that the definition of "defining growth" is incomplete.

**DISCUSSION OF SUGGESTED ITEMS FROM CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS:** City Manager Schainker reviewed the list of items submitted by City members.

1. Fare-Free CyRide. City Manager Schainker advised that this issue will be addressed at budget time.

2. How to eliminate 3-to-3 votes by the City Council. City Attorney Marek explained that the City of Ames has operated under a “Home Rule” type of charter since the early 1970s. There are two ways that the charter could be changed: (1) The Council could cause a new proposed charter to be prepared and filed, and then, by resolution, it could be submitted to the voters at a special election; or (2) Eligible electors could petition the Council, which would require the Council to appoint a Charter Commission. If a petition signed by a number of eligible electors equal to at least 25% of the persons who voted in the last Regular City Election were filed, the Council would appoint a Special Charter Commission [between five (5) and 15 members] to draft a new proposed charter. That new proposed charter would be submitted to the voters at a special election. Any new charter would have to provide for an odd number of Council members, not less than five.

Discussion ensued over the necessity of changing the charter to prevent votes ending in a tie. Council Member Larson indicated that he had heard from representatives on the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and citizens that there had been a number of issues not moving forward because the vote had ended in a three-to-three vote. He feels that this is making the City ineffective and inefficient. Mr. Larson also believes that the current charter lends itself to an inefficient way to get results from City staff.

The Mayor said that she would be opposed to changing the Charter to one where the Mayor would vote on Resolutions and Ordinances. She feels that the role of Mayor is to conduct the meeting in as unbiased of a manner as possible.

Council Member Larson believes that Ames is the only city of the top 15 largest cities in the state to have an even-number of members elected to serve on its City Council. Although not in favor of changing the City’s charter, Council Member Goodman suggested that the public decide; if 25% are passionate about changing it and sign a petition, it would go forward for a vote.

Mayor Campbell suggested that the Council’s two representatives on the Ames Economic Development Commission report the results of this discussion to the AEDC.

The meeting recessed at 11:55 a.m. and reconvened at 12:04 p.m.

3. How can the Council take a proactive role in recruiting neighborhood leaders who would help with issues, e.g., promoting the Property Maintenance Code or Inclusive Community Initiatives. Discussion ensued on a variety of suggestions, including: (1) an outgrowth of the Community Conversations group, which was that each Council Member recruit a person from each precinct in his ward to lead their individual neighborhoods. The liaison would be responsible for communicating information from the City to the residents of that precinct. The goal would be getting neighbors interacting with each other and working together. It was also suggested that members of the Leadership Ames or the Citizens Academy groups be instrumental in finding a person from each precinct that would serve as the liaison. A recommendation was made that a block party “trailer” be purchased and reserved through that Neighborhood Liaison.

Council Member Rice suggested that the City’s role should be to make sure that the structure is in place, but “neighborhoods should be allowed to do what neighborhoods do.” Assistance with the cost of creating and distributing a newsletter would be helpful. He disagreed with Council Members recruiting a person from each precinct, as he doesn’t

know what those persons would be responsible to do. Council Member Goodman clarified that the Council's goal would be to strengthen relationships within and among neighborhoods. Council Member Popken advised that he felt the representative would be responsible for connecting with his or her neighborhood and communicating information to those residents.

The Mayor described a program that was being created by Ralph Rosenberg and Story County Extension to strengthen neighborhoods.

The Mayor suggested that Council Members Goodman and Larson ask the Community Conversations group to come up with a "job description" for each Neighborhood Liaison. He suggested that the representative be responsible for welcoming new residents, reserving the block party "trailer," and communicating with neighbors.

Assistant City Manager Lundt suggested that the Human Relations Commission and the Breaking Down the Barriers groups could assist in finding Neighborhood Liaisons. The City Council and staff would provide the structure. Ms. Lundt reported that the Breaking Down the Barriers members recently named dealing with diversity issues as its mission. Council Member Larson noted that the Human Relations Commission role is not necessarily to deal with diversity issues or neighborhood issues. City Manager Schainker suggested that Assistant City Manager Lundt present the idea to the Breaking Down the Barriers members. If they are willing to take on the task, they could develop a "job description" for Neighborhood Liaisons (aka precinct representatives). Council Member Larson pointed out that strengthening neighborhoods is more of a communication issue and not necessarily a diversity issue.

It was the consensus of the Council that Ms. Lundt will present the issue (of neighborhood liaisons being responsible for communicating with their neighbors and attempting to get neighbors to interact with each other) to the Breaking Down the Barriers and Human Relations Commission members to see if they are willing to work on it and what their suggestions are for facilitating it. She will report back to the Council in the near future.

4. Create a plan to develop industrial land to the east. City Manager Schainker advised that, under the City's agreement with Wolford Development, the developer is responsible to extend the sanitary sewer line and the water line to the east across his property. Specific language in the Agreement alludes to "when development is initiated," and it is not certain when that would be. That language is important as the City has the option to require Mr. Wolford to extend the sewer and water line when construction of the Life Style Center begins. It was pointed out that plans and specifications had been created to allow utilities to be extended to the Regional Commercial site in the spring. The City Manager advised that there are still many obstacles to the City's development of an industrial park to the east, i.e., how to pay for the land and utilities; the strategy is not yet known. Council Member Popken requested that the City Manager have an informal discussion with Mr. Wolford concerning the City moving ahead in the future to create an industrial park to the east of his property.

Council Member Larson wondered if it would be possible to open up the Power Center portion of the Regional Commercial development first in an effort to increase the City's Local Option Sales Tax proceeds. Council Member Goodman said that he wants all

energy to be generated towards the development of the Regional Commercial portion (to the north), not the south portion (Power Center).

5. Reaffirm and enhance the City's commitment to "Going Green" and engage citizens more in this endeavor. Moved by Larson, seconded by Popken, to direct that the City partner with private sector groups (AMOS, Ames Homebuilders Association, Realtors Association) to develop a plan to create Energy Star awareness.  
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

6. Work towards establishing "complete streets". Council Member Rice would like the City to plan for the use of roundabouts and ways to create an auto-less community in the future. He feels that it is inevitable and the City should be prepared.

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Rice, to direct staff that, when the City constructs or redevelops arterial and collector streets, they explore the cost with on-street bicycle paths and without on-street bicycle paths.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Council Member Rice asked how it would be determined whether or not the on-street bicycle path should be constructed. Council Goodman suggested that on-street bicycle paths be constructed if the cost does not add any more than 10% of the total cost.

Mr. Goodman raised the issue of the City's current level of enforcement regarding snow removal on bike paths and/or sidewalks. City Manager Schainker pointed out that there are already policies in place and asked if the Council were directing a change in the service level. Mr. Goodman said that he was not in favor of the City cleaning the snow from sidewalks. Mayor Campbell suggested that the City embark on a public relations campaign to educate the public to call in when sidewalks are not cleaned. Council Member Larson requested that the Council be informed about the City's current policies regarding snow removal.

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Popken, to direct staff to provide a report to the City Council on its current policies regarding snow removal from sidewalks and shared-use paths with the goal of eventually providing for safe multi-modal transportation in all types of weather on sidewalks and shared-use paths on arterial streets.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

7. Update on sustainable neighborhoods. Council Member Popken referenced the email received from Debbie Lee pertaining to residential properties along Lincoln Way that are not well-kempt and are currently for sale. City Manager Schainker advised that tax abatement or façade improvement funds could be used to assist the owner in improving the property. It was questioned whether a Property Maintenance Code could be the mechanism to resolve the issue. Council Member Goodman said that he would like to give the Property Maintenance Code a chance to work on resolving such matters.
8. Is a parking deck needed in Downtown in the next ten years. It was pointed out that the City's Traffic Engineer is working on this, and no further discussion occurred.
9. Increased funding for the Arts. Limited discussion centered on COTA funding. Council Member Rice reiterated that he did not want to cut arts funding. It was pointed out that,

at its meeting of November 25, the City Council had recommended a ten percent (10%) increase over last year's allocation for COTA..

10. Review the existing work plan of the Planning & Housing Department. Council Member Popken asked that the Planning staff move up No. 14 on its list, which is to review Code provisions pertaining to the installation of solar panels and wind turbines in Ames.

Since there is not an open workshop date for the Council until April 2009, Mr. Kindred suggested that the Council meet with the Planning & Zoning Commission in the near future prior to a Regular City Council meeting to review its referrals and priorities

Other Issues. Mayor Campbell said that she and the City Managers discussed the list of organizations to which Council members have typically been members to see if those are still worth the investment of time and funding. She specifically referenced the Metro Coalition. She and Bob Kindred have been representing the City in the telephone conference calls, but the Mayor welcomed all Council members to participate. Mr. Kindred advised that no additional funds will be due by the City for next fiscal year as the Coalition over-estimated what was owed by each City last year.

Council Member Larson briefed the Mayor and Council on an International Town & Gown Association Conference that he and City Manager Schainker attended at Texas A & M University. He explained that the City and University could become members of the organization for \$800/year each. Mr. Larson thought it would be beneficial for the City and University to join this organization. It was concurred that the Mayor and City Manager would discuss membership in the Town and Gown Association with University representatives.

Moved by Larson, seconded by Goodman, to approve the City joining the International Town and Gown Association at the \$800 level contingent upon the University also joining.  
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The Mayor brought up that the Council's travel expenses continue to rise as more Council members are opting to attend National Conferences more often and staying longer. Council Member Larson suggested that each Council member be allowed to attend one national conference per year.

Regarding the combined lobbying efforts of the City, Chamber of Commerce, and the Ames Economic Development Commission, it has come to the Mayor's attention that representatives from the other two entities are not available due to spring break to attend the National League of Cities Conference (NLC) to be held on March 14 – 18, 2009. The Chamber and AEDC have requested that City representatives go to Washington, DC, the week before the NLC Conference in order to continue the combined lobbying efforts. The Mayor pointed out that if City representatives went the week before the NLC Conference, it would require them missing the Council workshop on the library expansion discussion, which is scheduled for March 10. Council Member Rice expressed his disapproval of changing the Council's workshop with the library consultants scheduled for March 10.

The Mayor suggested that representatives of the Iowa League be contacted to see what it will be presenting to the federal legislators. Council Member Popken would like to have an item

on the Council's agenda to determine what issues the City will be taking before the legislators so that the members are prepared.

It was the consensus that the Mayor, Council Member Popken, and City Manager Schainker will serve as the City's representatives to lobby with the representatives of the other entities on March 11 and 12, 2009. Mayor Campbell will also attend the NLC Conference, but Mr. Popken will not. Council Member Doll indicated that he might be attending the NLC Conference.

**COMMENTS:** Council Member Goodman recalled an individual who came before the Council asking that the City form a Sister City arrangement and host a delegation from the Darfur Region. He felt such an arrangement could be explored by the Ames of International Partner Cities Association (AIPCA). Mr. Goodman added that such an arrangement would be even more valuable because the people in the Darfur Region are so much different than the majority of our population.

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Rice, to ask the AIPCA to explore the possibility of entertaining a delegation from Darfur.

Council Member Mahayni pointed out that an airline ticket from that Region to Iowa would cost a minimum of \$2,000.

The Mayor questioned whether taxpayer money should be used for such a purpose; it should not be used to provide international aid.

Mr. Kindred advised that the AIPCA follows the doctrine of the International Sister City Organization. He gave the history of Sister City arrangements in Ames. The first Sister City was Loha, Ecuador; however, when it became more of a foreign-aid mission, the partnership ended.

Vote on Motion: 2-4. Voting aye: Goodman, Rice. Voting nay: Doll, Larson, Mahayni, Popken. Motion failed.

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor