

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

**AMES, IOWA**

**JULY 18, 2009**

The Ames City Council met in special session at 8:10 a.m. on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2009, in the Parks and Recreation Activity Room, 1500 Gateway Hills Park Drive, pursuant to law with Mayor Campbell presiding. Council Members Doll, Goodman, Larson, Mahayni, Popken, and Rice and *ex officio* Member Keppy were present. Also attending were City Manager Steve Schainker and City Attorney Doug Marek.

**REQUEST FROM PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION TO CREATE A “VISION:”**

Extensive discussion took place on whether the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) update process or the creation of a vision should be discussed first and how they were related. Many differing opinions were voiced on what level of LUPP review is needed. Mr. Schainker said staff is working on a status report with some quantifiable categories that may be useful to the Council in review of the LUPP.

Discussion was held on methods to obtain input from the public on a general plan for the City's future.

City Manager Schainker asked Council Members if they believed that there was a vision for the community imbedded in the LUPP, and if so, what that vision was. Council Member Larson read the stated visions from the LUPP. They are: (1) targeted growth, (2) seeking more expansion areas while limiting intensification of areas, (3) addressing existing and new development differently, and (4) providing connections for people, places and activities.

Mr. Schainker asked Council Members what an ideal outcome to the visioning process would be. The consensus was “a short paragraph.”

The following was agreed to as the goals of a “vision:”

1. A concise statement of what the citizens of Ames desire the City to become
2. To provide policy direction to Council that will influence other plans of the City, such as the LUPP, Park Master Plan, and Long-Range Transportation Plan

It was further discussed and agreed to that a good process would do the following:

1. Ensure a large cross-section of population participation (in terms of numbers and differing perspectives)
2. Force a look at what Ames is now (introspect)
3. Include a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses)
4. Engage new participants
5. Work to avoid past failures of this type of project
6. Identify a consultant who has had success in a college town

Council Member Goodman asked if it would be reasonable to ask Mayor Campbell to talk to other entities about what the Council is attempting to do. Mayor Campbell said she could do that.

The meeting recessed and reconvened after ten minutes.

City Manager Schainker distributed reports completed by the downtown parking consultant. It was noted that the report is also available on the City's web site.

The Council members verbally committed to moving forward with the visioning project. The next step will be for staff to start contacting consultants to see what type of process they have at what cost and report back. City Manager Schainker asked if anyone knew names of any such consultant to please provide them to him. Two were mentioned: James Hunt (Past-President of the National League of Cities) and SPPG. It was decided that the visioning process should be conducted in Spring 2010 (February-April).

City Manager Schainker said staff is attempting to bring the LUPP progress report to Council by late August. It was agreed that would also be an opportune time to announce the proposed work on a vision.

**OTHER ITEMS:** Mr. Schainker asked if there were any other topics that Council Members would like to discuss. Council Member Larson said that he would like to follow up on what took place at the last Council meeting regarding the North Grand Mall expansion. He said he is continually concerned that the City is not doing anything to support a mall. According to Mr. Larson, other parts of the state are growing and Ames needs to do something to promote regional commercial growth or at least not go backwards.

Council Member Larson said he thinks Ames need to make sure it has good retail here. In his opinion, "We just moved back a year." With regard to the industrial park on East 13<sup>th</sup> Street, one of the cost factors is getting infrastructure there. He is wondering if and when Mr. Wolford will get that going. Mr. Larson asked if Mr. Wolford was obligated to do so before he is ready to start the Life Style Center. It was noted that Mr. Wolford has indicated that he would be willing to work on infrastructure if we would agree to let him begin the Power Center on the south side of 13<sup>th</sup> Street first.

Council Member Larson said he fears that if the City does not work with one of the developers to do something, it is going to lose the chance to do anything. He wanted to know if the City Council members want to do something. Council Member Goodman indicated that he shares the concern about the lack of retail. Council Member Doll asked if this was a policy decision that Council can decide or if it is a marketing decision. Mayor Campbell stated that the part that would be a policy decision is whether to allow the Power Center to be developed before the Life Style Center. Council Member Popken said that he thought the agreement was structured to use the big box development as the "carrot" to get the Life Style Center, and if the City approves that type of change, it would be giving up that "carrot." Council Member Goodman asked if the City has the right to change the regional commercial designation at North Grand to community commercial or something that would eliminate it as a competitor to a regional mall. Council Member Rice said that North Grand Mall has a tremendous advantage and they still can't seem to draw tenants. In Council Member Goodman's opinion, North Grand Mall will never make the investment in the current site that will make it a regional commercial site.

Council Member Larson asked what the City can do to try to spur Mr. Wolford to move forward with his project. Council Member Goodman said he believes that by the City Council making a choice about where regional shopping will be may do that. Mayor Campbell asked if Mr. Goodman was saying that the City should go in and change the zoning at North Grand Mall. Council Member Goodman confirmed that was what he meant. He said that having two regional commercial sites is creating confusion. City Attorney Marek clarified that North Grand Mall

would still have to come back to Council with their plans for the old Sears area if they have a potential tenant, as there are limitations on the Certificate of Occupancy until changes are made. City Manager Schainker believes that the City should notify North Grand Mall that they are going to have to come back for approval. City Attorney Marek said he could contact their attorney and clarify that position.

**COMMENTS:** Council Member Larson said that the Visitor and Convention Bureau was notified that Ames will host the 2010 International Town and Gown Best Practices next June. He wanted to thank City Manager Schainker for the good job he did writing the potential programs Ames can provide.

City Manager Schainker advised that the Resource Recovery Plant metal extraction system is now in operation and working well.

Mr. Schainker reported on the possible options for opening the new aquatic center that would more than likely be brought to the Council for action in the future.

Discussion was held on the multitude of street repair projects taking place. Council Member Doll raised an issue that had been brought to his attention several times - that of reconstruction of private yards after street repairs are made. He had a specific example of a yard that is still not finished after a project last August. Mr. Schainker agreed that it is not an acceptable level of service and mentioned some alternatives that staff is working on. Council Member Goodman asked if there was a method to update citizens on projects. A suggestion was to create an e-mail list for updates to projects that anyone can ask to be on. It should then be advertised when sign-up is available. Mr. Schainker said something like that could be done.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Goodman, seconded by Doll, to adjourn at 11:42 a.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

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Donna Scherr, Recording Secretary