

# MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

JULY 21, 2009

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2009, 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 Keppy was also present.

**PRESENTATION OF AMES DOWNTOWN PARKING RAMP STUDY:** Mayor Campbell welcomed attendees of the Main Street Cultural District (MSCD), and introduced the City of Ames Downtown Parking Study that was commissioned by the City Council months ago. City Manager Steve Schainker reminded the City Council that McKel Group is interested in developing a downtown building, but was not interested in proceeding without additional parking. He said the Council was interested in the idea, and asked for a study regarding only Lots X and Y, so the study was focused specifically on this area based on direction by Council. Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer said OPN Architects, Inc., was asked to lead the study, and introduced Rick Seely of OPN Architects, Inc. Mr. Seely thanked the group, and recognized the other firms involved in the project.

Mr. Seely reminded the group of the purpose of the project, to evaluate the potential for a parking structure that will serve the Central Business District by providing additional parking immediately adjacent to Main Street, using the area currently designated Municipal Lot X and Y. He described the goals of the project, which include maximizing parking density, making sure the appearance of the structure complements downtown buildings, and exploring sustainability options. Mr. Seely said other influences included zoning ordinances, building code requirements, best practices for parking structure design, and cost effective construction methods.

Mr. Seely told the Council there are many options, but the three most logical concepts are presented in the study.

- Concept A: Parking structure extending from Clark Avenue to Kellogg Avenue across both Lots X and Y.  
Total Project Cost Estimate: \$9,224,768
- Concept B: Parking structure with phased construction. A parking structure built on Lot X, to be considered Phase B-1, and followed by another structure built on Lot Y, considered Phase B-2. For cost estimation purposes, construction of Phase B-1 was assumed to begin in 2010 with construction of B-2 to begin in 2012.  
B-1 Total Project Cost Estimate: \$4,575,107  
B-2 Total Project Cost Estimate: \$5,217,006  
Concept B Complete Total Project Cost Estimate: \$9,792,113
- Concept C: Parking structure with two elevated decks constructed on Lot X only with Lot Y to remain as a surface parking lot.  
Total Project Cost Estimate: \$7,567,050

The proximity of the proposed structure to downtown was reviewed, and the views of downtown from the proposed structure were shown.

Council Member Popken asked if the cost estimates include any aesthetics. Mr. Seely directed the group to page 19 where the included aesthetics are listed.

Mr. Schainker told the group that Phase B-1 of Concept B represents the new cost estimates associated for a parking ramp that was proposed a year ago by the McKel Group.

Emily Munson, 302 Main Street, Ames, asked if property owners downtown were notified that this study was being done. Mr. Schainker said the City worked with the MSCD, and there was no mailing that went out.

Susie Owens, 302 Main Street, Ames, said her mother has owned a building downtown since 1985, and there have never seen parking issues before Innova moved downtown. She said 50 employees change the parking situation immensely. She said the City should have contacted all businesses downtown regarding this study, not just the members of the MSCD.

Russ McCullough, 2054 Cessna Street, Ames, of McKel Group, asked if a reconfiguration of Lot Y was considered. Mr. Pregitzer said it had been looked into, and that removing the median and reconfiguring the lot actually resulted in a loss of space. Mr. McCullough said McKel Group's proposal only requested 150 more spaces, so the construction of all of Concept B may not be needed.

Ms. Owens asked how the City would pay for a parking structure. Mr. Schainker said that Council has not given any direction yet, but that staff could present options for a financing strategy.

Bill Malone, 229 Main Street, Ames, said he has owned his property for ten years, and there are countless times when there is no parking available near his business. He said the businesses could really use additional parking. Mr. Malone also said that he hopes the parking structure would look attractive, adding value to the downtown aesthetically.

Council Member Mahayni said there hasn't been a study of the demand for spaces in that area. Mr. Popken said the Council should answer Russ McCullough of McKel Group first, since that is the reason the Council is at this point.

Discussion ensued about financing options available for this type of project.

John Doyle, 1406 Curtiss Avenue, Ames, said downtown revitalization would include the proposed downtown catalyst project that the McKel Group came forward with, but could also include improvements to the Sheldon Munn, which could also take advantage of the parking structure.

Council Member Larson asked that if expansion of Tom Evans Plaza was out of the picture, could the parking structure be built more to the east, and also create a parking lot along Clark Avenue.

Council Member Doll asked if this proposed structure would be built for one new tenant, or for all businesses. He said if additional parking is now needed, and 150 spaces were requested by McKel Group, it is possible that more will be needed.

MSCD President Tim Coble, 309 Main Street, said there are 1,460 parking spaces in the downtown vicinity, but the space is linear, which creates physical limitations.

Mr. Popken said these options are expensive, but he believes it would be a good investment to make, seeing that it would keep people in Ames. Mr. Goodman said investing toward a goal is a good idea, but he is not really sure what the goal is – parking for the McKel Group proposed catalyst project, and/or parking for businesses, or both. Mr. Popken said this project has been discussed for 12 months now, and a timely decision is needed. Mr. Mahayni said the issues being brought up now are the same ones that were discussed last year. He said a comprehensive look at the issue should be taken before \$9 million is spent in one location. He suggested an incremental option would be better.

Mr. McCullough said he doesn't see the figure as \$9 million, but more like \$5 to \$5.5 million. Chuck Winkleblack, 105 S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street, Ames, said he is concerned about the age of the structures downtown, and said if certain apartments are not grandfathered in, they may be vacant forever because of current code requirements. He suggested a compromise of code requirements. Mr. Winkleblack also said the numbers being presented seem big for a new structure.

Mayor Campbell asked if the MSCD has had a meeting regarding the study. MSCD Director Jayne McGuire said they had not.

Mr. Schainker said staff will need direction from Council on how to proceed. Mr. Larson suggested the MSCD meet regarding the study, inviting all business and property owners.

Discussion ensued on the amount of parking needed downtown.

Mr. Goodman discussed the proposed library expansion, and the need to think about these proposed downtown investments together. Mr. Larson said there is also the possibility of the renovation of the Sheldon Munn, and the addition of a human services campus downtown. Mr. Doll said with all of these discussions going on, more than 150 spaces may be needed.

Mr. Popken said to wait for the perfect scenario or calculation would mean a long wait.

Moved by Popken, seconded by Goodman, to have staff present to Council financing options for the proposed concepts.

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

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Popken to have the staff partner with the MSCD with the primary purpose of presenting the parking ramp study to all downtown business and property owners.

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

**SECOND PASSAGE OF ORDINANCE APPROVING THE 2008 NATIONAL ELECTRIC CODE, WITH LOCAL EDITS:** Moved by Goodman, seconded by Popken, to pass on second reading an ordinance approving the 2008 National Electric Code, with local edits.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

**COMMENTS:** There were no comments.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Doll, seconded by Rice, to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

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Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary