

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

OCTOBER 20, 2009

The Ames City Council met in Special Session at 7:00 p.m. on the 20th day of October, 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.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EMERGENCY REPAIR TO CHIMNEY AT POWER PLANT: Moved by Mahayni, seconded by Rice, to adopt RESOLUTION NO. 09-502 authorizing emergency repair to the chimney at the Power Plant.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Resolution declared adopted unanimously, signed by the Mayor, and hereby made a portion of these minutes.

PRESENTATION OF IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE ON CITIES: Mayor Ann Campbell introduced Dr. Gene Takle, Professor of Boundary Layer Meteorology and Global Climate Change at Iowa State University. Dr. Takle introduced his presentation as a discussion on strategies and said he hoped some issues presented will spur discussion among the group.

Dr. Takle discussed global emissions of carbon since 1990, when projections were first being made. Surface melting across the Greenland Ice Sheet was discussed as being greater than expected. Dr. Takle said there has been a warming trend in the Midwest of 3.5 to 4 degrees, longer frost-free periods, fewer extreme high temperatures, and longer periods without rain.

Dr. Takle said there are some policy and planning areas that will need attention because of climate change, such as building codes, water supply, and transportation. He said that there is expertise in the Ames/Iowa State University community that does not exist elsewhere, and that expertise should be taken advantage of.

Council Member Rice said he feels as if many people are not listening to the message of global warming.

There was discussion regarding the need for collective action of several communities for profound change to take place.

Jeffrey Young, 3225 Evergreen Road, Ames, agreed that the issue has not been thought about enough, and said he doesn't think the idea is real for most people. Dr. Takle suggested that knowing how to get people to respond becomes a psychological question.

There was discussion regarding crop yields and projected population.

Erv Klaas, 1405 Grand Avenue, Ames, commented on the displacement of people after Hurricane Katrina. He asked Dr. Takle if, assuming the predicted drought happens in the southwest part of the country where many people have moved in the last several years, he believes these people will move to the Midwest. Dr. Takle said south of the border and the southwest part of the country will indeed have water supply issues, and the Midwest should be aware of that.

Mark Hansen, 2615 Northridge Parkway, Ames, asked if Dr. Takle had additional graphs dating back farther than the 1990's regarding emissions. Dr. Takle said he could provide graphs that

date back farther, showing more fluctuation of CO₂.

There was discussion on what it would take to involve people in efforts to slow global warming.

Mayor Campbell thanked Dr. Takle for the presentation and his efforts regarding the subject.

BRIEFING ON 2009 INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL CODE INCLUDING FIRE SPRINKLING OF RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS: Fire Chief Clint Petersen discussed the upcoming code adoption cycle. He explained that, for the last nine years, the International Code Council (ICC) updates the *Code*, the City studies them, then adopts the recommendations one year later, which gives the ICC the opportunity to update and refine the codes, and also gives the City the chance to study them. He said the ICC puts out new codes every three years, and that several of the codes are coming up for renewal in 2009.

Chief Petersen described the regular process, which starts with the Building Official working with the Building Code Board of Appeals to work through the code changes and work out an amended local code to bring to City Council. He said the last two times this has happened, the local code brought to City Council was fairly non-controversial. Chief Petersen said the same will not be true this year.

Chief Petersen said the *International Residential Code* is mandating sprinklers in one- and two-family homes, which would be implemented in 2010. He said this is facing stiff opposition in Iowa. Chief Petersen also said the *International Energy Code* is mandating further enhancements of energy standard installations, which is also facing stiff opposition in Iowa. He said these are the areas in which staff desires for dialogue to begin.

Chief Petersen presented information regarding the construction of new homes now. He said firefighters have much less time to perform a search, rescue, put out the fire, and get out because of different building materials being used, an increase in fuel loads, and the difference of materials inside the home. He said the average home has 1,700 pounds of plastic inside, and that synthetic fabrics burn much faster than natural fabrics.

A video was shown regarding the effectiveness of sprinklers to lengthen the time that residents and firefighters have to exit the structure.

Chief Petersen described the decline in permits issued for single-family homes and apartments, which shows the industry is facing tough economic times. He said he does not want to downplay that, but would like to hear all viable arguments, and, therefore, desires dialogue to begin. Other arguments that have been discussed are customer choice and affordable housing. He also said that the Fire Department would have to work with the Water and Pollution Control Department regarding the backflow protection requirement.

Chief Petersen said the Iowa Association of Professional Fire Chiefs met, and 56 out of 57 voted in favor of keeping it as a mandatory sprinkler system in Iowa. He said the cost is unknown at this point, and could range from \$.92 to \$6.00 per square foot. Chief Petersen discussed two major communities in America that have multiple years behind a similar code. Scottsdale, Arizona, has over 46,000 homes with required sprinkler systems, and no fire deaths during the

last 15 years. Prince George's County, Maryland, also has 15 years experience with required sprinkler systems and no fire deaths.

Chief Petersen said that, about a year ago, the Ames Fire Department started a sprinkler tree at Fire Station No. 1, where they post pictures of sprinkler systems that put out fires in our community. He said the sprinkler tree is half full, and that it is quite impressive to see the damage costs reduced. He also said that this *Code* is only speaking to new homes, and that the community will still rely heavily on fire education.

Council Member Rice asked about the State of Iowa and whether this *Code* is mandated or the City has an opportunity to take part in it. Chief Petersen said the State does not typically adopt the *International Residential Code*, and that the State-adopted building codes generally do not affect Ames because Ames adopts its own *Code*. He said there is a group pushing for the State to adopt the *International Residential Code* for the first time, and another group pushing for a mandate that it should not be adopted. Chief Petersen said the recommendation coming from the State Fire Marshall's office is to adopt the *Code* as mandated, but to delay implementation from 2011, as stated, to 2013.

Possible effects of the *Code* adoption were discussed.

Chief Petersen thanked the Ames Home Builders Association for being at the meeting.

Randy Rathert, 3025 Sedwick Street, Ames, represented himself as a small home builder in Ames and the Ames Home Builders Association. Mr. Rathert said the requirement for sprinklers in new homes would be a wonderful precaution for families. He said that he, as well as the Ames Home Builders Association, would like to see the addition of sprinklers to new homes offered as an option to the customer, but not mandated. Mr. Rathert spoke about the added cost of building a home when *Code* changes take place, and the desire to see houses more affordable.

There was discussion on recent *Code* changes.

Jake Hanson, 2421 Clayton Drive, Ames, said that homes in Ames are built to a higher standard than other communities.

Council Member Mahayni said that homes are being built safer because *Codes* have changed, adding safety features. He asked if the proposed *Code* is increasing the safety for homeowners, and if anyone could convince the Council that this new *Code* should not be adopted.

Mr. Rathert said he feels the customer should be able to decide.

There was further discussion on home safety requirements.

Holly Fuchs, 806 Brookridge Avenue, Ames, asked if the sprinklers would work, and for how long. Chief Petersen said the design is looped with no dead ends and the sprinklers are reliable.

Chief Petersen explained that at least three meetings will be held with the Building Code Board of Appeals in November, and a continued dialogue will be had with the Home Builders Association to try and reach a consensus. If a consensus cannot be met, a list of alternatives will be submitted to the City Council.

COMMENTS: Moved by Doll, seconded by Rice, to delay the City Council Goal Update Session scheduled for Saturday.

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

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary