

**SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL AND
AMES COMMUNITY SCHOOL BOARD**

AMES, IOWA

SEPTEMBER 17, 2012

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 17th day of September, 2012, in the Multipurpose Room of Ames High School, 1921 Ames High Drive, Ames, Iowa, pursuant to law.

INTRODUCTION OF SCHOOL BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND CITY COUNCIL

MEMBERS: Council Members present: Davis, Goodman, Orazem, Szopinski, and Wacha. Council Member Larson was absent. School Board Members present: Briggs, Deardorff, Espeset, Putz, Simpson, Talbot, and Woodin. School Board President Dan Woodin explained that the meeting would consist of a presentation of information that would update the City Council on several major projects.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND READING OF MISSION STATEMENT: Moved by Putz, and seconded by Espeset to approve the agenda.

Vote on Motion: 7-0. Motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Simpson read the Ames Community School District's (ACSD) mission statement. Introductions of School Board members and City Council members took place. It was noted that Jami Larson will not be in attendance, and that Jeremy Davis will be arriving late.

DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT'S MASTER FACILITIES PLAN: Mr. Woodin told the group that Superintendent Tim Taylor will review the Master Facilities Plan. He explained that the Board is being very conscious of how many renovations will be going on at once. He also told the City Council that the middle school will be paid off this year, which will be eight years early. Mr. Woodin said that a long-range working plan is being laid out, of which the City will receive a copy.

Dr. Taylor showed the working draft of the Facilities Master Plan, which takes the district through 2017. He said last year the community showed its support by approving a referendum for \$55 million worth of revenue bonds for elementary school building construction and renovation. Dr. Taylor said the proposed schedule is very compact, and that the Board has been working with architects to design Miller Avenue Elementary School, which will replace Edwards. He showed a map of the proposed school, explaining that at the center of the design is the gym, which is high school regulation-size. He said their thinking is that Parks and Recreation would be able to utilize it. He also said that security was very important in the design, as well as room for "bubble classes". He showed the kindergarten/ first grade wing, the second/ third grade wing, and the fourth/ fifth grade wing. Dr. Taylor also explained that the large hallways would also be used for engagement of small groups. Mayor Campbell sought clarification regarding the entrance Parks and Recreation would use for programming. Dr. Taylor said the main doors would be used, and there would be the ability to seal off the rest of the building during those events. He said the Board has been very aggressive and prudent in the design, and when construction is underway in January, then the Board will go through the same process for the other elementary building construction and renovations. Dr. Taylor said the goal is to have all elementary schools completed by the 2016/17 school year.

Dr. Taylor told the Council that by this time next year, the school district will be debt free other than the new bonds. He said that consumers in Story County currently contribute about \$3.4

million per year through the 1% of sales tax that goes to the district, which can be spent on specific items including remodeling buildings and new buildings. Dr. Taylor said they have also been looking at other projects such as the Municipal Pool, and possible athletic fields at the 24th Street site. Council Member Goodman asked how large the 24th Street site is. Facilities Director Gerry Peters said it is 26.4 acres.

Discussion ensued regarding the unused ACSD property. School Board Member Putz thanked the City for providing the background information and the zoning information for the properties. Dr. Taylor asked if the City is interested in any portion of the Roosevelt or Edwards facilities for parks. Council Member Szopinski said she is curious about the Roosevelt property, since she receives many opinions about making sure that something is done with it. School Board Member Talbot said he thought the City would take the property for a park. School Board Member Deardorff said that he would like to hold off on that until it is determined exactly what can be done with the facility, and the Board weighs options including moving the school administration offices there, creating green space, etc.

Mr. Putz said Edwards and Roosevelt were centers of their communities at one point, and said he doesn't feel that a large park is a means to retain that feeling. He also said he hopes that since the Roosevelt building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, that someone could benefit from tax benefits to remodel the building. Mr. Putz said he wants the facility to be community-oriented to retain the dynamic. Mr. Goodman asked Mr. Putz if he thinks the building is a core piece of that dynamic. Mr. Putz said that's a great question, and he believes the character of the neighborhood is related to the building. It was noted that StruXture Architects is doing a review on option for the building, and after those options are exhausted, then it could be opened up for suggestions. School Board Member Talbot said he doesn't want to sit on the decision until the building falls down. He said no one has come forward since the building became vacant in 2005, so if someone wants the building it is time for them to speak up. He also said he wants to make sure that it is or isn't an appropriate place for administrative offices. Dr. Taylor said some companies were discussing preserving the building and creating multiple residences, but the property is currently zoned for 1-2 units.

There was discussion regarding selling property when re-zoning or other land decisions needed to be made. Mr. Deardorff said the interested party for the old middle school will have 270 days to pursue re-zoning and other necessary changes, and if it doesn't work out, then the party can back out of the contract. Council Member Orazem commented that the new use would have to be able to pay for the demolition. Mr. Putz said the wording on the contract is such that the school Board washed its hands of the zoning issue, and that the buyer must take that up with the City. Mayor Campbell said having the government overlay was meant to prevent surprises to the neighboring residences and to limit land uses. Planning and Housing Director Steve Osguthorpe said in 2007 the Council was in a similar situation, having to respond to someone purchasing land from a governmental entity. He said there was nothing in place at the time to define how lands could be used after a buyer purchased land from a governmental entity. Mr. Osguthorpe explained that after seeking community input, holding workshops, seeking more feedback, and working with the school district, a statement was created that could be used to guide purchasing entities and the surrounding neighborhood. He said the statement included low to moderate density housing, and at that time the School Board agreed with the statement.

A chart was shown of the school district-owned properties, with the current Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) designation, and uses consistent with compatible zoning, of which most were low to

medium density residential. Mr. Talbot asked if the previous Board desired the most single family overlay as possible. Mr. Osguthorpe said yes. Mayor Campbell said the board was also concerned with compatibility to the surrounding area. Mr. Goodman said the Council desired to work with the district to increase their operational revenue as much as possible. Mr. Putz said the revenue from selling land must be used for infrastructure. There was discussion on the projected population and housing needs.

City Manager Steve Schainker said government property also includes university land. He said the concern with the school district at that time was that most of the growth was going into the Gilbert School District. Mr. Putz said single family housing by itself is not a reason to settle in a certain area. Mr. Woodin said current university enrollment does show that there will be a need for high density residential. He also said when an offer is received, the Board doesn't necessarily know what the planned use will be. Mayor Campbell said there is a finite amount of land available for development within the Ames Community School District. Mr. Goodman said more students would result in an increase in operational funding, and asked the Board if it has an interest in that. Mr. Putz said the Board does, but that Iowa State University (ISU) also has an interest. There was discussion regarding the fluctuation in ISU enrollment.

Mr. Deardorff said he is concerned that the Board needs to move on the old middle school site, that no offer has been received by developers, and that build out of that land could take some time. Mayor Campbell said to look at the most lucrative offer is not good land use planning. Mr. Deardorff said the Board is concentrating on how to provide the best education to the children in Ames. Mr. Talbot said his position is that City Council doesn't control curriculum, and the School Board doesn't control zoning. He said his perspective is that the Board should send purchasers to the City for zoning questions, as the City has the zoning experts.

Council Member Davis arrived at 8:00 p.m.

Council Member Wacha thanked Mr. Talbot for his perspective, and then stated that his perspective is that what is best for the entire community should be considered. Mr. Wacha said it would be great if the enrollment decline that the district has seen in past years could be prevented. Mr. Goodman said at some point the Board must decide if it is reasonable to absorb single family homes on the largest property it will be selling during this time. Dr. Taylor said the old middle school site creates a huge liability for the district. He also said that if the property was sold to developers, the revenue may not even cover the demolition.

Mr. Putz said he believes there will be some K-12 students in whatever housing is built. School Board Member Simpson said having empty properties is ugly, looks run down, and more importantly, there is a true liability knowing that people have broken in and used the facilities for shelter. She said no one else has come forward with an offer, and that the current offer for the old middle school property is for \$2.5 million, and the purchaser will tear down the building. She said there are lots of factors, but among the factors being weighed by the Board are how to best improve the community for children, receive income, and get rid of old, vacant buildings. She said the Board does care about who is buying the property and what they will do with it. Mr. Woodin said the Board cannot control what the buyer does with the property. Mr. Wacha said from his long-term focus, he has concern that the existing, core neighborhoods will suffer if 900 more beds are added. He said in the case that ISU enrollment drops, it will be the core neighborhoods that will experience emptiness, not the new developments. Mr. Deardorff said it

is an opportunity for those owners to revitalize their properties. Discussion ensued regarding density requirements.

Mr. Putz said he would volunteer time if individuals would like to get together to discuss working together. Mayor Campbell said she hopes that is initiated at the staff level. Ms. Szopinski said the discussion was very helpful. Mr. Goodman said he would like to see opportunities proposed for the old middle school site, such as the plan for affordable housing on the 24th Street site several years ago that would have been supported by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds. He said the old middle school site could work for that same type of effort if both parties were interested. Mr. Goodman said more affordable housing could be created, of which there is a shortage. He said he realizes the Board is very concerned about moving forward, but it would be worth looking into. Mr. Deardorff said there are 270 days of review in the contract, so these discussions could be had during that time. He also said he would be concerned that ideas like this could jeopardize the contract. Mr. Davis said the CDBG funds for the current year are already spoken for, and said he is hesitant to plan for future CDBG funds since it is uncertain whether the City will continue to receive those funds.

Mr. Woodin said traffic could change specifically at the old middle school site, as well as other sites if the use changes. Mr. Schainker said when the City develops a site, the Development Review Committee reviews plans with the needed expertise of the City Traffic Engineer to look at the effects on neighborhoods. Mr. Putz asked about traffic at the new middle school site. He said buses are having trouble getting out of the middle school, and asked about a traffic light. Mr. Schainker said the site is not warranting a stop light at this time according to Iowa Department of Transportation's warrants. Discussion ensued regarding the traffic at the middle school. It was clarified that the recent traffic study was done for future traffic, as if Dotson Drive was completed. Mr. Wacha said there is not enough traffic according to the State criteria to warrant a stoplight at this time, and since it's not warranted, he sought clarification on if the School Board is asking for a light. School Member Briggs said it is the apartments, built after the school, that is causing the problem. He said the Board is willing to put money toward the traffic light for safety reasons, and said the Board would like help from the City. Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred said that there are 3 east/west arterial streets in the entire community, and Mortensen Road is one of them. He explained that as new development comes online north or south of this major arterial, it is required that the developer do a traffic study to check trip generations. Mr. Kindred said that when the school was built there was no need for a traffic signal, so it was not included in the requirements. He said that the apartments to the south come out on different points of Dotson Drive, and the question of whether or not a traffic signal is required is asked at each intersection. Mr. Kindred explained that the five year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) includes any new signals that are needed, and this area has not show up on the radar at all since it hasn't risen to that level yet. He said that someday when Dotson Drive goes all the way through, as the warrant analysis showed, a signal will be needed but it is not needed now. Mr. Putz suggested staff members could get together to discuss this issue.

School Board Member Espeset asked if, when Dotson Drive is connected, it would be warranted to have a signal. Mr. Kindred said yes. Mr. Espeset asked how that would be paid for. Mr. Kindred said if arrangements had not been made previously for developers or others to have escrowed money for it, then it would be scheduled into the five year CIP plan to be constructed and paid for by the City. Mr. Kindred said that for example, if in four years, the developer of Southfork Subdivision paved to the northern edge of the school property, that would kick in the contractual provision that the school district finish Dotson Drive within two years, which would

trigger the City to place the traffic light in the CIP. Mr. Putz asked how the process could move faster. Mr. Kindred said it depends on the private property owner's progress. Mr. Woodin said much information was shared, and said he hopes to meet again in the future.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary