

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

**AMES, IOWA**

**MAY 20, 2014**

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2014, 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: Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Matthew Goodman, and Chris Nelson. Council Member Peter Orazem arrived at 7:02 p.m. *Ex officio* Member Lissandra Villa was absent.

**OVERVIEW OF CURRENT LAND USE POLICY PLAN:** Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann stated that the purpose of the workshop was to provide an overview of the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) to inform the Council on the potential scope of updating it. He recalled that a Council objective set during its Goal-Setting Session held in January 2014 was to examine the LUPP for relevance and effectiveness.

Director Diekmann explained that land use controls are a basic police power of a community to promote health, safety, and general welfare. The U. S. Supreme Court recognized that authority in 1926. The U. S. Department of Commerce provided zoning and planning standards enabling acts for states in 1926. Mr. Diekmann stated the reasons why Ames has a LUPP. It contains the City's vision, goals and objectives, and policies. Mr. Diekmann specifically noted that a key component of Ames's Plan is to strengthen neighborhoods and maintain community character. It is also the driver behind other City plans, i.e., Capital Improvements Program, Parks and Recreation Master Plan, Public Facility Master Plans, and Regional Transportation Plan.

City Planner Ray Anderson said that the City's Comprehensive Plan (a/k/a its Land Use Policy Plan) serves as a general guide to future development of the community. It was first adopted in 1997. Over the past 16 years, there have been dozens of amendments to the text and Land Use Map. Mr. Anderson explained the "New Vision" basis of the Plan. Under that, Allowable Growth Areas were created. It sought more expansion areas while limiting intensification of existing areas, addressed existing and new development areas differently, and provided for connections for people, places, and activities. The ten principles for guiding the goals for the Plan were listed. The six chapters of the current LUPP were summarized by Mr. Anderson. Each chapter provides background and highlights of specific issues and presents options for policy issues. Four of the five maps contained in the LUPP were shown and explained: Future Land Use Map, Fringe Plan Map, Overlay Map, and Allowable Growth Areas.

City Planner Jeff Benson provided a summary of the major influences of the current LUPP, as follows:

1. Village development preferred concept to implement Vision - use New Urbanism principles (walkable, mix of uses, design focus)
2. Manage growth to reduce environmental impacts and City costs
3. Allowable Growth Areas: Southwest, Northwest, and North

4. Management of the 2-Mile Fringe Planning Area through the Ames Urban Fringe Plan and subdivision authority
5. Select infill opportunities to avoid most neighborhoods
6. Environmental stewardship
7. Mobility Chapter focus on thoroughfares
8. Open space and parks access at neighborhood and community scale

City Planner Charlie Kuester continued the summary of major influences:

9. Planning assumptions for growth through 2030
10. Assumptions did not hold; City grew at a faster pace
11. Projections of population growth, expected land and housing type needs, and housing units projections to 2030

Mr. Kuester also detailed the seven models used to forecast population growth and explained the housing unit projections to 2030.

Director Diekmann explained the private development changes that had occurred over the past 16 years. He specifically noted the Mortensen/South Dakota Corridor, which was a product of the Plan and designed as a node of multi-family housing concentration. Public investments over that same time period were reported by Mr. Diekmann. In addition to the private and public development changes that occurred in Ames, national and local items that changed were listed as:

1. 2008 Recession
2. Public school enrollment increased for Gilbert and remained about the same for Ames
3. Iowa State University (ISU) enrollment is up 28% (to over 33,000 students)
4. Demographic changes: Ames's population grew by 25% while the state grew by only 4%, the number of school-age children (under 17) makes up a significantly less percentage of overall population and hasn't changed much in the past 16 years, there has been significant growth in older adult population, and there is more ethnic diversity

Director Diekmann reported on what had changed since the LUPP was adopted in 1997, specifically, economic changes that might affect future trends; technology and communication, which impacts how the City interacts with the public; and access to information.

Points of contention and challenges of the LUPP commonly heard or experienced by staff were described, including:

1. Language of the Plan allows for broad interpretation without priorities.
2. There appears to be a lack of interest in Villages. Floating Suburban is an alternative choice, yet the primary development type.
3. Infill interests versus neighborhood protection. Expansion of existing or new higher density housing is difficult to accommodate, which causes pressure to expand to outskirts and change

other land uses to residential.

4. Housing needs for all types of housing. There is no higher density land available.
5. Student housing development.
6. Annexation policy and interest in rural large lot subdivisions.
7. Allowable Growth Area development. The Southwest and Northwest largely untouched; cost of sewer and street extensions may be a factor.
8. Environmental protection goals and interest. There has been no direction regarding what can be done within Greenways and Environmentally Sensitive Overlay.
9. Infrastructure planning and public service costs.
10. Commercial retail development opportunities are more limited by Internet and regional competition.
11. Unlocking Lincoln Way Corridor's potential for redevelopment of commercial and residential uses.

National trends in Planning were explained by Director Diekmann. He pointed out that those national trends may or may not affect planning for Ames's future. Four topics of interest nationally were listed as

1. How to compete in the changing economic climate - employers locating where there is talent, the future of commercial retail in the age of e-commerce
2. Creating high-quality and interesting places - focus is on quality, experience, "third places" that are lively and attract interest
3. Digital age and communication
4. sustaining government services
5. Coordination of land use with transportation investment - connections and access to destination with 5- to 15-minute walks
6. Integrate planning with public health and wellness
7. Resiliency to emergency and hazards
8. Affordable housing needs for low-income continue to grow in choice, quality, and cost
9. Local government is responsible for greater share of transportation costs for new investments and maintaining infrastructure

The Council members were asked by Director Diekmann to voice their comments and concerns.

Council Member Gartin noted that Ames not only needs to look at itself, but also to communities around Ames. He asked how much communities such as Ankeny and Des Moines influence Ames. Director Diekmann noted that both Des Moines and Ankeny have a strong commercial and residential influence.

Council Member Orazem stated his preference for a "bullet-point" version of the LUPP, which would make it easier than looking through six chapters.

Mr. Orazem also shared his opinion that it is absolutely crucial to attempt to pinpoint where the

centers of employment are going to be. Transportation to and from work and home must be considered as it is a “more transit world now.” He reiterated that where the jobs are located is a critical element. Council Member Betcher concurred with Mr. Orazem and noted the conflict between the goal of being a walkable community and expanding the commercial areas on South Duff, which encourages access by automobile.

Director Diekmann pointed out that there are other areas in Ames besides Somerset that could be considered villages, e.g., the Downtown. City Manager Schainker provided the history behind the village development. He noted that the village concept was once mandatory for development in the New Lands category; however, it is now optional.

Council Member Orazem said that Ames has to look at the plausibility that one fraction of the Ames community will walk to the retail establishment to make a purchase. However, the successes are those which are drawing in customers from other locations.

Planner Kuester noted that Somerset Village was an incentivized growth areas. Council Member Orazem shared that he did not feel incentivizing growth areas had worked all that well. He preferred that practice no longer be done.

It was shared by Council Member Orazem that another item that had changed since 1997 was the role of Rural Water Districts.

Council Member Goodman pointed out that the Council had held no discussion on how the City will serve the North Growth Area, and most specifically Quarry Estates.

Mayor Campbell added that when the City is deciding on which way it should grow, it was crucial to ascertain if there are willing sellers.

Council Member Orazem said it was not clear to him why the cost of infrastructure was such an issue when deciding on the Targeted Growth Areas. He said that the Council needs to look logically at the total value of property, which should more than offset the cost of infrastructure.

Council Member Nelson pointed out that it was important for the Council to decide on the scope of LUPP revisions that it was looking for and the time frame that it expects it to take. In his opinion, the LUPP should be “tweaked;” it should not be completely redone. Council Member Goodman shared that he was comfortable with the current Goals and Objectives. City Manager Schainker stated out that he believes the biggest philosophical issue is intensification.

Council Member Betcher said that she agreed with Director Diekmann in that the City should pursue intensification of the Lincoln Way Corridor. It should also look at possible changes to land use in that area to see what works and what doesn’t. Council Member Goodman said he agreed with that; however, would insist that it heavily involve the neighborhoods along the Corridor.

Council Member Gartin agreed with Council Member Orazem that economic development is an important component of the Plan. He also believes that the City must have conversation with Iowa State University, Story County, and Boone County.

Council Member Corrieri would like to know if there are other concepts (besides the village) that could be explored for residential development. She asked to know how other communities are developing residentially.

Council Member Orazem reiterated that it would be important to project where retail and employment were going to occur and what the age mix was going to be. Director Diekmann expressed skepticism about making age projections.

Council Member Goodman suggested that the Plan needed to address: (1) the need for affordable housing, (2) the scale of new annexation, and (3) the diversity of housing type.

Council Member Betcher acknowledged that the City is experiencing unprecedented pressure due to the growth of the Iowa State student population. As a part of that, neighborhood preservation and types of housing must also be considered. Ms. Betcher shared that she was also concerned about School District lands that are going to be on the market in the course of the next few years.

At the inquiry of Council Member Gartin, Director Diekmann advised that the planning horizon should be 20 to 30 years.

City Manager Steve Schainker stated that another workshop would be held on June 17, 2014, for further discussion on this topic.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** Council Member Betcher noted that Campustown Summerfest will occur on June 14, 2014. Council members were encouraged to volunteer or participate in the events.

Council Member Orazem referenced a letter the Council had received from Gary and Kathy May, 2978 S. Riverside Drive, Ames, regarding being included in the annexation of property around the ISU Research Park. Mr. Orazem noted that the Mays' letter had stated they would consent to the annexation if the City of Ames gave them the option to connect to sewer and/or water services at some point in the future.

Moved by Orazem, seconded by Goodman, to refer to staff for a memo on what is traditionally done regarding accommodating existing property owners pertaining to annexation.

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

Moved by Orazem, seconded by Corrieri, to direct staff to place the Copper Beech sign request on a future agenda.

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

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Corrieri, to refer to staff for a memo regarding the potential of and fees for prohibition of plastic bags.

Vote on Motion: 3-3. Voting aye: Betcher, Corrieri, Goodman. Voting nay: Gartin, Nelson, Orazem. Mayor voted aye to break the tie.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Corrieri to adjourn the meeting at 9:18 p.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor