

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

APRIL 21, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 6:00 p.m. on the 21st day of April, 2020. Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and David Martin were present. *Ex officio* Member Devyn Leeson was also present.

Mayor Haila announced that it is impractical to hold an in-person Council meeting due to the Governor of Iowa declaring a public health emergency because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, limits have been placed on public gatherings, and this meeting is being held as an electronic meeting as allowed by Section 21.8 of the *Iowa Code*. The Mayor then provided how the public could participate in the meeting via internet or by phone.

AMES PLAN 2040 WORKSHOP ON FUTURE LAND USE MAP: Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann said the draft Future Land Use Map of the City and descriptions of the designations have been provided. Mr. Diekmann stated that questions and comments from the Council will be received during the meeting and following the meeting, and then direction from Council can be given at the City Council meeting on April 28. Mayor Haila advised that a Land Use Map and a Zoning Map will both be needed. Mr. Diekmann concurred. Mr. Diekmann said the point of the map is to describe future land use of the city as well as general character of areas. He noted zoning will be detailed and on a different map after receiving clarification from Council on the concepts.

The following categories of land use designations were reviewed: Neighborhoods, Centers, Special Development, and Employment.

Council Member Martin asked about the areas on the map not previously named growth areas. Mr. Diekmann answered that throughout the scenario exercises there were a few Tier 1 areas that can be built off existing areas, so they were included. Mr. Diekmann added that the Tier scenarios not chosen are not included, but the areas needing protected for future use need will need to be discussed. He noted the area to the south includes some Tier 3 area because it's connected.

Council Member Betcher said some near-campus neighborhoods are being labeled as Established Neighborhoods. Mr. Diekmann explained that staff could have gone either way, naming those neighborhoods Traditional or Established; that designation is easy to change. Ms. Betcher said the north South Campus Area Neighborhood (SCAN) area and the Colonial Village area were developed before 1950 and the area between Beach and Ash Avenues was developed in the 1930's. Mr. Diekmann stated age is not the only descriptor in labeling neighborhoods, but the team will take a look at those areas. Mayor Haila pointed out that the first two bullets of those categories may need re-worded.

Council Member Gartin asked about land use characteristics being descriptive of the community as it is today. Mr. Diekmann said generally the characteristics would be descriptive of the current use, and if the use needs to be different, the policy should state a plan to accommodate future uses. Mr.

Gartin asked if it makes sense to add a pre-scripted element regarding infill. Mr. Diekmann concurred and said intentional development should be described.

Council Member Betcher noted that Greek Houses are included in multi-family neighborhoods. Mr. Diekmann said multi-family neighborhoods are all zoned Residential High Density (RH), which allows group living.

Mr. Diekmann said within the category of Centers are major commercial and neighborhood commercial areas. The type and scale of retail and commercial use would be the characteristics used to determine the designation, rather than highway or arterial street designations. He added that the team is proposing adding General Commercial, which would be a hybrid between commercial and light industrial in response to comments received from Council regarding accommodating commercial.

Council Member Gartin asked about the amount and location of commercial land to be designated. He wondered if, as the population of Ames grows, the amount of commercial grows at the same proportion. Mr. Diekmann said where commercial will be successful will not change. Mr. Gartin pointed out that many communities have vacant commercial space. Mr. Shukert, one of the consultants, said the function of commercial is very important, and they are anticipating most commercial would be neighborhood service like supermarkets or pharmacies, not a regional mall or big box stores. Mr. Diekmann asked if Mr. Gartin feels the area should expect small and large businesses. Mr. Gartin said when he thinks about communities with light industrial areas, there will be support businesses in the periphery. Mr. Diekmann stated that Regional Commercial is shown there because of past decisions of the City regarding a regional mall. He said they are being consistent, but that designation should not be predictive.

Mr. Martin asked about Y Avenue and the designation of Commercial Retail. He said it looks more substantial west of the county line than east. Mr. Diekmann said existing conditions are reflected and it was presumed to become residential. Mr. Martin wondered about sales tax as an incentive to Ames. Director Diekmann said if this portion of the Plan goes forward, a conversation with the Boone County Board of Supervisors will need to take place regarding local option sales tax being collected in that area.

Director Diekmann discussed the category of Employment, and noted there will be different zoning districts within that category. He said the East Industrial Area will need attention after infrastructure decisions have been made. He advised that there is a policy in place to be resource-conscious when discussing growth.

Redirection areas were defined as areas where what is currently there will eventually become something else. Mr. Shukert said policy should guide the Redirection areas toward more useful uses. He noted that the area east of Downtown and north of Lincoln Way near the Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) is an example of a Redirection area, and said that would become a maker space and creative area that incorporates residential if the RRP relocates in the future.

Mr. Gartin stated that access improvements to Interstate 35 would be exciting. He said showing some possible interchanges and doing an overlay of multi-use trails would be helpful. Mr. Diekmann advised that a transportation layer needs to be added to this to include streets and trail options. Mr. Gartin commented that money may have to be put into transportation for the future of the community.

Mr. Diekmann showed Attachment B, which was a close-up view of the areas near Campus. He said the diagonal hashing represents the near-campus neighborhoods. He asked if the near-campus overlay, as used in the Rental Code, makes sense in application at this scale and if it applies to as many areas as was shown in the Rental Code. He said they are expecting some redevelopment in the south part of Campustown and expect those lots could be redeveloped with more intense uses. Director Diekmann advised that the Urban Corridor or Redirection designation would be needed as a transition between single-family and higher-density housing.

Mayor Haila asked what the implications were for the university overlay. Mr. Diekmann said the team needs assistance with that question, but the current meaning states single-family homes cannot add bedroom capacity, and before that was created, there was a University Impacted Area that required slightly higher design implications and higher parking requirements. He stated that considering reducing some parking expectations to recognize walkability may be needed.

Ms. Betcher asked if the City is using the parking requirements in the single-family neighborhoods as a means to control density. Mr. Diekmann stated that only two parking spaces are needed to have a rental home, not one per bedroom. He noted that vacation lodging has a higher parking requirement. Ms. Betcher said her main concern is whether the expectations have impact on the transition of single-family homes to rentals.

Mayor Haila asked why the area west of Hyland Avenue is labeled Village. Mr. Shukert said the area has a village center feel to it, and as some of those properties get redeveloped or change character, there could be a more pedestrian-scale, center-oriented type of form that develops. He added that the evolutionary change would take into account the potential of the area. Mr. Diekmann said this area is different than multi-family because it could justify more pedestrians and zero setbacks. Mayor Haila asked about the Urban Corridor area west of that. Mr. Shukert said that area reflects some of the ideas included in the Lincoln Way Corridor Plan. Mayor Haila asked if those designations mean that those properties could be rezoned to higher density or commercial. Mr. Diekmann advised that most of them are already zoned RH and wouldn't need changed because mixed use is allowed in the RH zone. Director Diekmann added that Urban Corridor can have commercial, but would expect moderate- to medium-density residential as well. Mayor Haila said the COVID-19 crisis could have a prolonged effect on the community and wondered about the impact on small businesses and other commercial.

Ms. Betcher asked about the area around Hickory Drive. Mr. Diekmann said it wouldn't all be commercial, and could be an overlay. Ms. Betcher then asked if the overlay is there to protect existing near-campus areas. Mr. Diekmann answered the overlay there protects the recently adopted Rental Code. He said it's being suggested that the single-family rentals not remain long-term. Mayor

Haila said the map could be clarified. Mr. Diekmann said it's possible the overlay doesn't apply, and the team will look at it further. He stated that the team would like feedback from Council regarding the areas transitioning from low-density residential, and if an overlay is desired that relates to neighborhoods like in the Rental Code. He said feedback on the University overlay could be received by Council on April 28.

Council Member Martin asked if the restriction on adding bedrooms to homes could be undone by decisions made for the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Diekmann said that is a separate ordinance and will remain no matter what is decided in the Comprehensive Plan. He added that, in general, balanced neighborhoods are desired. Mr. Diekmann stated that the area south of Campustown is an area that additional higher-density housing could be added; it is labeled Redirection. Mr. Diekmann said that area is currently pretty restrictive.

Director Diekmann discussed the Redirection area south of Campustown that is meant to be a transition out of Campustown and would be a change from current policy. Ms. Betcher asked how it would be a change. Mr. Diekmann answered that significant redevelopment is currently not asked for in that area and it is restrictive. He said if it was changed to allow higher density, density expectations could be updated. Ms. Betcher said she's not interested in anything more than four stories in that area because it's right next to a single-family neighborhood. Ms. Betcher said the foot traffic through the neighborhoods has been problematic because of the Towers dormitories, and she does not want to see that get worse.

Council Member Gartin said there's been a policy for some time on decreasing density in that area. He added that, because it's a broad conversation, he would like to see draft documents leaning more aggressive with options so feedback can be received. Mr. Shukert said the Redirection option does not say the buildings would be eight stories. Mr. Diekmann commented that good conversations are needed to make sure what is being considered is clear to the public.

Director Diekmann stated that the area labeled Core Redirection is an area where change is desired. He said the area along Northwestern Avenue near Wheatsfield is labeled Redirection. Mr. Gartin asked if it could be suggested that Downtown Core could be expanded north into the Old Town neighborhood. Mr. Shukert said south of Lincoln Way is the area designated for Downtown growth. Mayor Haila pointed out that the overlay preempts developers from doing work in that area. Mr. Gartin asked if the types of shops Downtown could be replicated south of Lincoln Way. Mr. Diekmann answered that the area would be more office space, not Main Street retail shops. Mr. Shukert said it would be more likely to see a combination of office, residential, and a secondary amount of commercial. Mr. Gartin commented that other voices should be invited to provide feedback. Mayor Haila asked about expanding the Core area north toward 7th Street. Ms. Betcher asked why expanding into an area that is succeeding would be a good idea. Council Member Gartin said constituents in the entire community need to have growth opportunities for a robust Downtown. Mr. Diekmann advised between Clark and Grand Avenues from 6th Street to 7th Street could be an appropriate Redirection area that would be consistent with the current Plan.

Mr. Diekmann said the older multi-family properties north of 30th Street just east of Grand Avenue are included in a Redirection area. He said the Neighborhood Core areas were discussed as including smaller retail, office, and restaurants. Mr. Diekmann said the map is reinforcing commercial in the mall area. Ms. Betcher asked about a North Ames Employment zone. Mr. Diekmann said professional offices can be located in the Neighborhood Core areas.

Mr. Gartin asked if there could be value in providing designations for areas in the County, but not yet in the City, like the Squaw Valley development. He said it would be worth considering adding details to those areas on the map so it can be seen how they relate to the rest of the map. Mr. Diekmann said there will be a Fringe Area discussion with Story County and then the Tier boundaries will be added to the map to show relationship to existing development. Mr. Gartin commented that would be helpful.

Council Member Gartin asked about the City-owned land north of 13th Street and west of Interstate 35. Mr. Diekmann said that area includes lime ponds, an old landfill, and leftover area where differences are not anticipated.

Mayor Haila asked about East Lincoln Way between Duff Avenue and the Employment area. Mr. Diekmann said most of that land is flood plain. He noted that there's an extension of Cherry Street planned that will tie into 3rd Street and 5th Street to create a commercial collector street; however, staff needs direction on if the area could be a commercial area meeting flood plain requirements. Mayor Haila said it makes sense to leverage the taxpayer funds used to extend the street with tax-paying properties since there's an identified scarcity of Highway-Oriented Commercial. Mr. Martin suggested erring on the side of being aggressive to see what the public has to say about it. Mr. Gartin said he would like to hear if Municipal Engineer Tracy Warner has any comments about the area based on flood modeling.

It was discussed that direction is needed by Council on overlays in University areas; the Redirection area south of Hunt Street and north of Knapp Street; the area north of 6th Street being considered as Redirection area; and the commercial area on Cherry Street.

Mr. Diekmann stated that changes will be made to reflect comments received in the Urban Corridor area. He also said Council will need to consider broad acceptance of the designations and proposed mapping pattern with corrections at the next Council meeting.

Mr. Gartin asked if there's anything about the designation of Core that should be taken into account as they are hoping for more residential in the Main Street area. Mr. Diekmann said the policies should be in line with the designation and allow for higher-density infill development options.

Council Member Martin asked what Council should expect at the meeting next week. Mr. Diekmann said updates will be made, but for the most part, the materials won't change. He said Council could decide to move forward with the designations and the map. Ms. Betcher said the near-campus neighborhood and SCAN residents will be interested in possible changes. Mr. Diekmann stated that he can send those residents notice of the meeting.

DISPOSITIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: Mayor Haila acknowledged the letter received from Henkel Construction regarding Brookside Park restrooms dated April 9, 2020.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Betcher, to request a memo from staff on the intersection of 6th Street and Northwestern Avenue in response to the email from Carrie Michalec dated April 16, 2020.

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

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Council Member Betcher noted that COVID-19 could reshape the Comprehensive Plan. She also said she has been lobbying for Ames regarding the 2020 Census.

Mayor Haila said a letter is being sent to a congressman to ask that the City of Ames be included in the COVID-19 Stimulus Bill financial package that would benefit cities with populations that exceed 500,000. City Manager Steve Schainker advised that the Bill passed with no relief for lost revenue for cities at this point.

Mayor Haila said www.testiowa.com is now available and the goal is to test 3,000 people per week. He commented that he had registered online, and the idea is to find out if people have symptoms and if they are eligible for a test. He explained that this will help the government track symptoms and collect information to be used for reopening the economy.

Mayor Haila stated that he is sending a letter to Iowa State University students to communicate regret that they cannot be in Ames and also to emphasize how critical it is that they claim Ames for the 2020 Census. Ms. Betcher commented that parents have been advising children to claim their hometowns because they are at home. She thanked the Mayor for sending a letter. Ms. Betcher said she is part of a group lobbying for funding to help with a recount, if needed.

Mayor Haila said the peak for COVID-19 cases in Iowa could be a couple weeks away. He noted that he's encouraged that Story County numbers have remained so low.

Mr. Schainker stated that staff has been moving forward to consider the safety of the economy with a recovery plan for the City of Ames. He said a two-step process is being looked at with many goals. The impact of lost revenue will go into the next fiscal year, and a set of recommendations will be coming. Mr. Schainker advised that meeting the first goal will involve recovering the remainder of this fiscal year. He said recommendations for cuts in expenditures for operations and CIP projects will soon be shared with Council, as well as the criteria being used to determine the recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary