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Department of Planning & Housing

1

TO: Mayor and Ames City Council

FROM: Steve Osguthorpe, Planning & Housing Director

DATE: April 24, 2012

SUBJECT: Council Workshop – Airport Protection Regulations

One of the Council's priorities for Planning staff has been to develop options for protecting the continued viability of the Ames Municipal Airport in its current location. The Code of Iowa Chapter 329 gives cities the police power to protect airports through regulation. If the Iowa DOT demands that a municipality adopt reasonably adequate zoning regulations to protect an airport, and the municipality does not act within 60 days, the DOT may petition the court. So far the state has not made a demand on the City of Ames. The DOT is carrying out Chapter 329 by offering 85% matching grants for cities to update policies.

Currently, the only regulation in the Ames Municipal Code is Section 29.408(6), which states:

***Height Near Airports.** Heights of buildings constructed within 750 feet of the property boundary of any airport shall be in compliance with the height restrictions from the Federal Aviation Administration.*

On August 23 and December 13, 2011, the City Council considered whether additional land use planning and zoning regulation around the Ames Municipal Airport should be considered. Staff reminded Council that the Federal Aviation Administration does not regulate land use around airports. Rather, it is left up to cities to do this on their own. The Council then asked staff to research how other cities in Iowa are regulating development around airports. The Council was particularly interested to know to what degree the City should regulate use of land to protect the airport as opposed to just regulating the heights of structures. Accordingly, the Council directed staff to do further analysis of this, and also asked for information on what an airport zoning consultant might cost.

In response, staff invited Stephanie Ward with Mead & Hunt to give a workshop presentation on this topic. Ms. Ward has expertise in airport operations and regulations, and in fact authored a report on airport regulations called *Guidebook for Airport Irregular Operations Contingency Planning*. The workshop with Ms. Ward is scheduled with the City Council for April 24, 2012, at 6:00 p.m.

This workshop will include a PowerPoint presentation by Ms. Ward explaining her experiences with other cities and how they handled their own situations. She will then field Council questions about how vicinity land uses have impacted airports in other areas, what the potential impacts to the City would be if there

are no changes in our regulations, and what the implications would be to only regulate building height and not land use.

The information presented may help the Council determine if it wishes to direct staff to pursue further code development on this topic. The alternatives include: 1) not instituting any additional restrictions, 2) implementing height restrictions, 3) establishing use and development regulations, or 4) creating height and use regulations.

Members of the Planning and Zoning Commission have also been invited to this workshop, as well as airport users who have shown an interest in this subject.

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