

Staff Report

Old Ames Middle School Master Plan Process

May 14, 2013

BACKGROUND

On March 11 and March 15, 2013, two applications for rezoning of two parcels of land, owned by Breckenridge Group Ames Iowa LLC, were submitted to the City of Ames. The requests for rezoning are for two parcels of land, one at 321 State Avenue which is the site of the former Ames Middle School (referred to herein as the middle parcel). The request is to change the zoning designation from S-GA (Special-Government/Airport) to RL (Low-Density Residential). The second parcel is at 601 State Avenue (referred to herein as the south parcel). This site was recently split from the larger lot on which the current Ames Middle School is located. This request is to change the zoning designation from S-GA to FS-RM (Floating Suburban Residential Medium Density).

Breckenridge Group Ames Iowa LLC owns an additional third parcel, the former middle school athletic field, at 205 S. Wilmoth Avenue. That parcel lies along Lincoln Way and is referred to herein as the north parcel. That site is currently zoned as S-GA. The owner is not seeking a change of zoning designation at this time and has stated that this will be done in a later phase. A map is included as Attachment 1.

As noted in the March 26 staff report, at the time of the rezoning and with the acquiescence of the owner, **the City Council can impose further conditions than those allowed by the requested zoning designation, provided such conditions are agreed to in writing prior to the close of the public hearing. This approach is often referred to as “contract rezoning” and is authorized under Code of Iowa Chapter 414. Any conditions “must be reasonable and imposed to satisfy public needs which are directly caused by the requested change.”**

On April 9, 2013 based on the criteria established to determine if a Master Plan can be required with the requested rezoning, **the Council determined a Master Plan should be submitted and should include certain information as identified in the motion.** See Attachment 2 for list of code required and Council requested Master Plan conditions.

In Council Comments at the April 9, 2013 meeting, the Council also requested that staff “come up with a process to be brought back to the Council including a time frame, for speeding along as quickly as possible the development criteria and methods to be used for the Master Plan”.

PROCESS AND DECISIONS

Staff has worked with the College Creek/Old Ames Middle School Neighborhood Association, Iowa State University, and Fox Engineering, representing the Breckenridge Group, to establish a Master Plan process to address the information requested by Council as conditions of the Master Plan. On May 9th, staff hosted a group meeting that included Scott Renaud, Fox Engineering and Brian Torresi, Attorney, representing the Breckenridge Group, Cathy Brown, representing Iowa

State University, and representatives of the College Creek/Old Ames Middle School Neighborhood Association including, Sharon Guber, Marilyn Clem and Michael Peterson, to discuss a process for development of the Master Plan. The group held a very thoughtful, insightful, and productive meeting that outlined a proposed process and identified the topics to be discussed. **Mr. Renaud noted that the developer wishes to include the code required and council conditioned items as part of the Master Plan to the best of his ability, but he also noted that his intent was to include as much detail as appropriate to minimize changes and discussion at subsequent steps in the overall development process.**

While there are still reservations regarding this type of rental development in a single family neighborhood and an understanding that this process may not reach an ultimate resolution to all noted concerns, the process will help to gain a general understanding of development in this area and the issues to be addressed. Although it was noted that this process does not tie any party to complete agreement to the outcome, staff felt this was a great starting point to the process of working together to try to get the best possible plan for the development area.

The Master Plan process that was discussed and agreed upon by the group, includes a series of design charrette meetings, a minimum of four, which would help focus the design of the master plan and identify at what step in the process certain concerns will be addressed. It was clarified that not all of the community concerns may be addressed specifically within the Master Plan, but the process could identify in the Plan what concerns will be addressed in subsequent steps in the general planning and development of the sites.

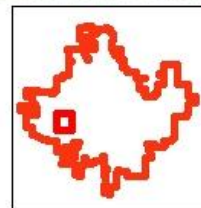
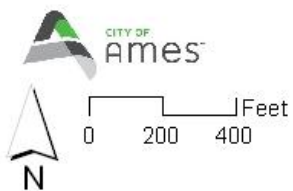
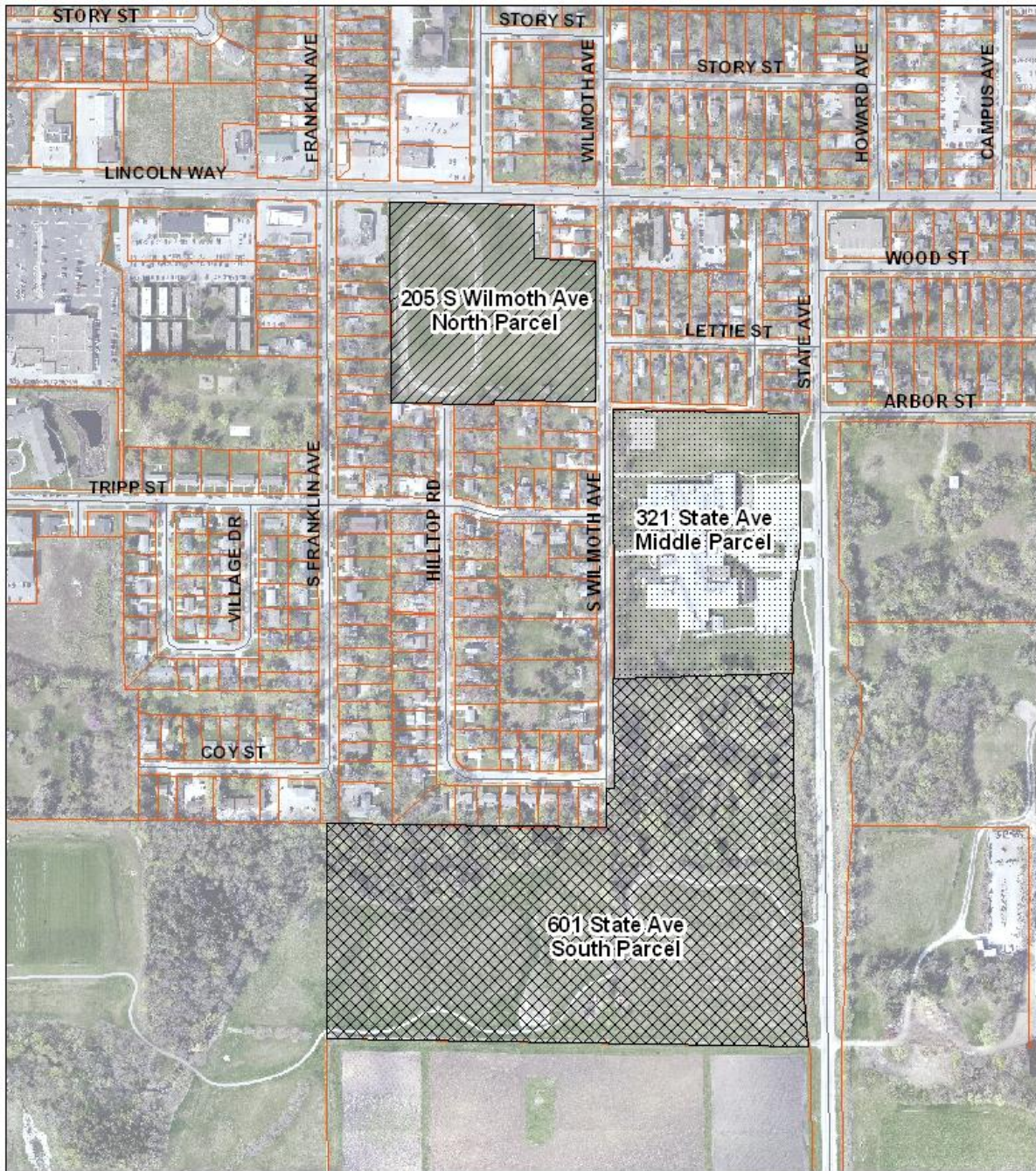
Staff had laid out a tentative outline for a meeting series, which the group reviewed and elaborated on. Some minor revisions have been made to the outline based on the discussion, which include adding a final public neighborhood meeting that will present the final plan for review by the larger neighborhood association for any final comment and discussion. Staff feels that the process could be set up to allow the series of charrettes over the next 6-8 weeks based on availability of the group. For the process staff is looking into the possibility of hiring a trained facilitator, possibly through ISU Extension, to run a focused charrette series to allow for a very open and organized discussion of the topics. **The developer has agreed to cover the financial responsibility for the facilitator.**

The overall goal of this Master Plan process will be to allow the developer to get some clear and focused feedback on concerns and requests of the neighborhood and will allow the neighborhood an opportunity to work with the developer to resolve or mitigate impacts to the neighborhood. An outline of the proposed process as discussed is included with this report as Attachment 3.

STAFF COMMENTS

It is important to recognize that this process of developing a Master Plan will have a large and long term impact on the immediate College Creek neighborhood and on the whole Ames community. Staff wishes to acknowledge the great effort of the group and their willingness to participate in development of a process to plan such a project. Based on the previous direction, staff feels the group discussion developed a process outline that meets the intent and desires of the Council. Staff would look for concurrence or further direction from the Council on the proposed Master Plan Process.

Attachment 1: Location Map



Attachment 2
Master Plan Requirements/Conditions

COA Code Requirements of Master Plan(Section 29.1507(4))

- a. Name of the applicant and the name of the owner of record.
- b. Legal description of the property.
- c. North arrow, graphic scale, and date.
- d. Existing conditions within the proposed zoning boundary and within 200 feet of the proposed zoning boundary: Project boundary; all internal property boundaries; public rights-of-way on and adjacent to the site, utilities; easements; existing structures; topography (contours at two-foot intervals); areas of different vegetation types; designated wetlands; flood plain and floodway boundaries; areas designated by the Ames Land Use Policy Plan as Greenways and Environmentally Sensitive Areas
- e. Proposed zoning boundary lines.
- f. Outline and size in acres of areas to be protected from impacts of development
- g. Outline and size in acres of areas proposed of each separate land use and for each residential unit type
- h. Pattern of arterial streets and trails and off-site transportation connections
- i. For proposed residential development provide the number of unit type for each area, expressed in a range of the minimum to maximum number to be developed in each area
- j. For proposed residential development provide a summary table describing all uses of the total site area, including the number of units per net acre for each unit type and each zoning area.

City Council Conditions of Master Plan (April 9, 2013 Meeting)

- a. The RL zoning designation states, **“This zone is intended to accommodate primarily single-family dwellings, while accommodating certain existing two-family dwellings and other uses customarily found in low-density residential areas.”** A large number of single-family homes on a single lot is not a use customarily found in low density residential areas. **The City Council may wish to condition, at least for the middle RL parcels, that only one home be placed on each lot.** This would require the property to be platted as a traditional subdivision, providing each lot with frontage on a street, public utilities and off-street parking. This requirement would still allow for the individual homes to be rented, as envisioned by the owner. It would also allow the integration of this development into the fabric of the adjoining neighborhoods and the community. For the south parcel, it is typical to see multiple apartment buildings on a single lot in an FS-RM area so this issue is not as important there.

If the City Council chose to allow multiple single-family homes on a single lot, then the Council should consider, as a condition of rezoning, that a Major Site Development Plan be submitted and approved prior to construction. This would be similar to the process for allowing apartment buildings in the FS-RM zone. This would allow staff and the Council to review specific features such as building separation, parking location, landscaping, and buffering.

- b. Descriptions of buffering and security. These should be physical design features that can be expected to be incorporated into the site and building designs, rather than employment of personnel which may be diminished over time.

- c. As part of the Master Plan, the City Council may wish to see a street connection of Tripp Street from Wilmoth Avenue to State Avenue. Such interconnectivity of residential neighborhoods is a consistent expectation of the City Council in reviewing other developments.
- d. As part of the Master Plan, the owner should identify the natural resources of the site, such as the flood plain, Greenway and Environmentally Sensitive Lands of the LUPP, conservation easements. Further, the owner should provide information as to how these resources will be protected as part of the project.
- e. As part of the Master Plan, the owner should identify any common facilities, such as open spaces or amenity buildings.
- f. As part of the Master Plan, the City Council can ask that all three properties be included. Although a rezoning is sought only for the middle and south parcels at this time, it is the owner's expressed expectation that the north parcel would be a later phase.
- g. Items listed as part of the letter submitted from Iowa State University dated April 4, 2013:
 - 1. Impact on adjacent agricultural plot and field work, require adequate fencing
 - 2. Light pollution on adjacent experimental field plots
 - 3. College Creek watershed impact and downstream water management.
 - 4. Portions of State Street are in institutional road. Responsibility for funding road improvements. Who will pay for widening, signalization other possible improvements?
 - 5. This project may require traffic signalization or construction of a roundabout at State Street and Mortensen to safely manage traffic.
 - 6. Adequate parking in the area.
 - 7. CyRide cost increases for bus service. ISU and students fund ~70% of CyRide operations. Where will financial support come from for expanded service?
 - 8. Impact on Arboretum and Cross County Track on east side of State Street.
 - 9. Walking and bicycle paths from the housing area to campus and retail and residential development to the west.
 - 10. Impact on ISU recreations are to east.
 - 11. Law enforcement and fire protection impact.
 - 12. Campustown revitalization is higher priority for resource commitments and may be a better location for expanded student housing.
 - 13. Long term ISU enrollment trend. Is housing of this type needed and can it be converted to other uses if there are changes in enrollment trends?
 - 14. Impact on residential neighborhood and housing that many of our younger faculty and staff occupy. The neighborhood is opposed to the project.
- h. As part of the Master Plan, the City council asked that the plan include the equivalency of subdividing the property so that every building is on a separate lot and meets all City requirements.

Attachment 3

Old Ames Middle School Master Plan Process Proposal

What: Design Charrette Series for Old Middle School Master Plan

Location: City Hall Conference Room TBD

Time: 2 Hour Sessions

Facilitator: TBD

*Note: Topic location/order may change based on discussion direction or amount of discussion time available.

Meeting 1: (Date TBD)

Scott Renaud to distribute alternative plans, site constraint information and contour information prior to meeting for review by the group.

1. Charrette Overview
2. Topics to be Discussed
 - Density
 - Long term ISU enrollment trend. Is housing of this type needed and can it be converted to other uses if there are changes in enrollment trends?
 - Impact on residential neighborhood and housing that many of our younger faculty and staff occupy.
 - Campustown revitalization is higher priority for resource commitments and may be a better location for expanded student housing.
 - Parking. Adequate parking in the area?
 - Traffic
 - Portions of State Street are in institutional road. Responsibility for funding road improvements. Who will pay for widening, signalization other possible improvements
 - This project may require traffic signalization or construction of a roundabout at State Street and Mortensen to safely manage traffic.
 - CyRide cost increases for bus service. ISU and students fund ~70% of CyRide operations. Where will financial support come from for expanded service?

Meeting 2: (Date TBD)

Scott Renaud to distribute a revised plan based on previous meeting for review by the group prior to meeting.

1. Review Discussion of Previous Meeting Plan
2. Topics to be Discussed:
 - Drainage, Flooding, Erosion
 - Funneling
 - Water Table
 - College Creek watershed impact and downstream water management.
 - Impact on adjacent agricultural plot and field work, require adequate fencing
 - Light pollution on adjacent experimental field plots
 - Quality of Life: Greenway

Meeting 3: (Date TBD)

Scott Renaud to distribute a revised plan based on previous meeting for review by the group prior to meeting.

1. Review Discussion of Previous Meeting Plan
2. Topics to be Discussed:
 - Quality of Life: Morningside
 - Quality of Life: Wildlife
 - Quality of Life: City Multi-use Path. Walking and bicycle paths from the housing area to campus and retail and residential development to the west.
 - Litter
 - Pride
 - Impact on ISU recreations are to east. Impact on Arboretum and Cross County Track on east side of State Street.
 - Safety: Residents/Guests. Law enforcement and fire protection impact.

Meeting 4: Full Neighborhood Public Meeting (Date TBD)

Scott Renaud to distribute a final revised plan based on previous meetings for review by the group prior to meeting.

1. Discussion of Previous Meeting Process
2. Presentation of Complete Plan
3. Discussion/Questions of Plan
4. Clarification of any proposed/requested changes prior to Official Master Plan submittal.