

Martin, David

From: Pease, James [NREM] <jlpease@iastate.edu>
Sent: Friday, April 9, 2021 3:50 PM
To: City Council and Mayor
Subject: Rose Prairie Redux
Attachments: Rose Prairie Restoration Plan.pdf

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9 April 2021

Dear Ames City Council and Mayor:

Last fall, Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park Board of Directors (FAHHP) asked the City to acquire what is called Rose Prairie and turn it into parkland to better protect the water quality of Ada Hayden Heritage Park (AHHP). After a staff report and consideration by the Council, the proposal was rejected at a meeting on November 24, 2020 by a 3-3 vote. Since then, the current developer appeared before the Council on 9 March 2021 not with plan improvements, but rather made significant requests for several delays, exceptions, and changes regarding the property. The current owners, the third set since the 1980s, also still have the property listed for sale with People's Company out of Clive. While the viability of this property for housing seems still very much up in the air, we believe that it is still in the best interest of the people of Ames, the AHHP's future, and the natural resources that we all cherish, to make this area into a park.

Since the vote in November, FAHHP contracted with Environmental Consulting & Technology, Inc. to design a proposed park plan for the Rose Prairie property. The consultant created a potential plan that reflects our ideal vision: converting the property to high quality and diverse prairie and wetlands, populated by native, local-genotype plants, and interlaced with trails for use by the public. That plan is attached. You'll note that we have also included prices for each portion of the plan (wetland establishment, prairie establishment, trails and parking). While based on actual bids on similar projects, we have intentionally put them at the high end for each, so as to not be hampered in getting high quality and high diversity. The prices include planting and management for the first couple of years. The wetland establishment will include some earth moving to establish small earthen dams with risers that control the water levels behind them so as not to interfere with the drainage rights of upstream landowners, and also serve as cost-effective stream crossings for the trails. The plan also includes innovative new techniques that imitate the construction skills of the original civil engineers, American beavers.

This restoration plan represents an ideal that we believe is the best for the land, for the park, and for the citizens of Ames both now and for the area's future growth.. It does not preclude any changes or additions previously mentioned in the city staff report.

As you ponder the many concessions you have already made to this and previous "developers" of this land, we hope the Rose Prairie Restoration Plan gives you a vision of what a true gift you and the Ames

citizenry could create for the future. Rather than a largely impervious development of roofs and concrete streets, funneling ever more runoff into the wetlands of Ada Hayden, you would offer a reconstructed porous landscape of water-absorbing prairie and shallow wetlands that would allow runoff to be held for short periods and partially cleansed of nutrients and other chemicals before it enters the Ada Hayden wetlands on the west side of the park. Instead of more mowed and chemically treated lawns and compacted soils, you would gift valuable habitat for wildlife and trails for people to explore the increased biodiversity of Ames. If 2020 has taught us nothing else, it is clear that people want and need *more* such areas, as much as do other species with whom we share this landscape. It will also give a great assist to the City's stated goal of stemming the threat of global warming by permanently sequestering carbon in prairie and wetland soils. We believe the combination of a Rose Prairie Park and AHHP will become a central core of natural area that the northern growth area, and the entire city of Ames, will depend upon for its leisure, recreation, and land use diversity for years to come.

Please reconsider what you have already gifted to the proposed developer of this land. We encourage you to reconsider your previous rejection of our request, view this plan we present as a progressive vision of what Ames can offer its present and future citizens, and let us begin to help you make this a new and brighter reality for Ames. We know many folks who are anxious to help and funding that may assist.

Sincerely,

James Pease, President
Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park Board

Erv Klaas, Founder and Past President
Wolf Oesterreich, Vice President
Stephanie Fox, Treasurer and Secretary
Kevin Kane, Board Member
Robert Klaver, Board Member
Paul Domoto, Board Member
James Patton, Board Member
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"I'm glad I shall never be young without wild places to be young in. Of what avail are forty freedoms without a blank spot on the map?"

--Aldo Leopold