

From: [Ann Rezarch](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Thanks for your hard work
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 6:26:05 PM

[External Email]

I want to tell all of you how much respect I gained for you as a result of last night's work. I had to leave right after I spoke, but just finished watching the rest of the meeting online. When I first started talking about this a few weeks ago, many people told me you wouldn't change anything because you would say it was too late. I tend to think the best of people. I trusted that you would listen and you have already exceeded my highest expectations. And a special thanks for reducing that ridiculous fine from \$500 to \$50. Seriously. Thank you. Thank you. For everything.

The speakers who talked after me were amazing. We all came at it a bit differently, but our themes were woven together in the true spirit of shared community. I was very touched.

So there are still a few things to wrangle through. My remaining thoughts are mostly more conceptual than action items.

- please give more thought to your views around rentals vs private ownership. An example was shown of two lawns - one mowed (rental) and the other not (private). Keep in mind the home owner may work all day and not have money to fix their lawnmower. The landlord has it mowed and then writes it off on their taxes - to increase their profit. This is such a glaring difference, it's hard for me to see it as the same in any way. They are a business and I certainly encourage you to hold them to similar standards as other types of businesses.
- although several people have brought up the complaint driven process causing tensions between neighbors - no council person has addressed that. So I have to make some assumptions. Maybe you don't agree that it makes neighbors angry with each other. Or perhaps you know it causes discord, but think the end justifies the means. Neighborhood battles are just a casualty of the system. But keep this in mind as well. There has been a lot of talk about the need to protect the public and maintain the homes. But it's only important, apparently, if someone tells on a neighbor. If no one complains, the houses can fall to the ground or a person can fall into a pot hole.
- try to hear what I'm saying with the intent I'm saying it. Just food for thought..... I'm glad the council members consider the impact on enforcement to some degree. But much of what is said sounds to me like the tail wagging the dog. There need to be standards in any town. The safety of the public and the decision making authority of the homeowner must be balanced. But the enforcement piece is only a tool. The ordinance should be designed around the need, not about what it will take to enforce. Enforcement is the supporting player, not the driver.

Note - someone asked me today if I would consider running for city council. I said - no... you

people keep crazy hours.

Ann

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Amy Bleyle](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Problems with the proposed Property Maintenance Code
Date: Monday, July 17, 2023 11:13:00 AM

[External Email]

To the Ames City Council Members and the Mayor:

I am writing to implore the council to postpone the vote on this unfair property maintenance code. I believe it should be scrapped entirely. The following are the reasons why.

There was not adequate communication to individual homeowners. I learned about this ordinance several weeks ago. I was shocked when I found it had been in the works for 3 years. I was upset to hear the information was sent to realtors, landlords and neighborhood associations, but not to individual homeowners. I pay pretty close attention to the local news and somehow I missed this. The meetings were during the pandemic when people may have not wanted to attend a public meeting. Every single homeowner in Ames should have gotten a letter informing them of this proposed ordinance.

This ordinance discriminates against low income homeowners. Many people cannot afford to get their house painted, gutters fixed, roof redone, or fence fixed. This ordinance discriminates against the elderly and the physically challenged. This ordinance discriminates against those with depression or some other mental illness, who don't have the motivation to fix these things. Fines add to the stress of people who can least afford to do anything. These are people's homes, even though they are not in perfect condition. Even if the city came up with financial assistance to help with these maintenance costs, (which I think would be impossible seeing as how many houses are in violation of this ordinance) it is still within the homeowner's rights to keep their property as they want. They own the property.

As I've been biking through different areas in town there are some neighborhoods where every other house has something that is in violation of this ordinance. Very few items on this list are about safety, it's all about aesthetics.

Peeling paint, piles of yard waste, full gutters, piles of lumber, mismatched fencing, mismatched shingles, piles of "junk," unworking vehicles in the driveway, furniture that might be construed as for indoor use, cracked foundations, mismatched exterior surfaces, plywood covered windows, boats, trailers, or recreational vehicles in the front yard.....none of these things pose a public safety risk.

The items in this ordinance that do pose a risk are already covered in other ordinances. We

already have an ordinance about snow removal, grass cutting, and noxious weeds. We also already have an ordinance to condemn a house if it is structurally unsound.

This ordinance caters to a few vocal homeowners who really should be living in an HOA. It caters to realtors, who want to make as much money as possible and are concerned that if the houses next to the properties they are selling have peeling paint, it might lower property values.

This ordinance destroys the community and creates discord between neighbors. The anonymous reporting makes homeowners suspicious of their neighbors. What happened to the days when people talked with their neighbors about any issues, and helped each other?

Not every homeowner can afford or wants a perfect golf course yard and a perfectly maintained house. Many people want to have unique yards, with metal art or "junk," or butterfly gardens that extend to the street. People want to be able to work on their cars, have a boat or trailer. Some want to grill out and have furniture outside. Some have lumber, or metal or other "junk" in their yards for an ongoing project. It's classist to expect that all Ames citizens should be required to follow this aesthetics based ordinance. Homeowners should not have to conform their yards, exterior of their homes and their lifestyles to other people's ideas of how things should be.

In the City's Values and Goals Statement you say, "We value a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community." This ordinance completely contradicts this statement.

Thank you for your time.

Amy Bleyle

From: anneclark@netins.net
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: homeowner ordinance
Date: Sunday, July 16, 2023 11:36:38 AM

[External Email]

Honorable Mayor Haila and city Council,

I oppose many of the rules set forth in the proposed city ordinance concerning property maintenance.

I oppose the seemingly arbitrary and ambiguous rules regarding plantings:

I oppose the seemingly arbitrary rule requiring setback of plantings 12" from the traveled portion of the road with a maximum 12" height, and perhaps the same for sidewalks. Another is the height of turfgrass and other plantings. I've seen tall turf grass plantings used decoratively and for conservation purposes. They are beautiful and covered by the 1st amendment's freedom of expression wording. Our yard is planted in natives which absorb rainwater and support numerous pollinator species as well as frogs, toads, birds, and many other creatures. There is no runoff of rainwater from our yard. A goal of the city. I don't see how either of the 12" will provide safety. Conformity perhaps but that is not your business.

I oppose the subjection of citizens to the whims of an unelected board if we have an objection upon being accused of an infraction:

Who will these people be? They will not be accountable to the citizens of Ames through elections. Seems as if the city is abdicating its responsibility.

I oppose what appears to be the council kowtowing to real-estate developers/rental property owners:

I have read that real-estate/rental property owners are pushing this ordinance so homeowners must comply with the same rules they are required to follow. They are businesses that are required to comply with state rules for property maintenance. Why does the council feel obliged to make homeowners act like money making entities open to the public?

I am especially concerned that anyone who doesn't like my yard or me can "report" me anonymously, subjecting me to petty bureaucratic rules and large fines, pitting neighbor against neighbor. This seems very 1984. I understand that the trend in government now days is to take away rights, but I urge you to reconsider some of the proposed regulations.

I urge you to reconsider parts this ordinance,

Anne Clark,

3122 Kingman Rd, Ames 50014

From: [Rollins, Anita](#)
To: farmer@gunderfriend.com; [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Re: homeowner property maintenance
Date: Tuesday, July 25, 2023 4:54:24 PM

Good afternoon,

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your thoughts and concerns related to the ordinance we're considering. It's so important to know what people are thinking, so having you take the time to share with us based on your experiences and perspective is really appreciated.

Please continue to share your thoughts!

Kind regards,
Anita

Anita Rollins
Ward 3
City Council
c/o City Hall, 515 Clark Ave.) | Ames, IA 50010



515-451-8032 *main*
anita.rollins@cityofames.org
Mailing: 515 Clark Ave. | Ames, IA 50010

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From: farmer@gunderfriend.com <farmer@gunderfriend.com>
Sent: Monday, July 17, 2023 6:00:03 PM
To: City Council and Mayor <mayorcouncil@amescitycouncil.org>
Subject: homeowner property maintenance

[External Email]

Ok, so here the city government goes again in dealing with property maintenance rules for owner-occupied homes.

Did you ever think during the months since the issue surfaced with many passionate people speaking at council hearings in 2021, to have a next stage consisting of small sessions with those

people as you prepared for this current stage of council deliberations and imminent vote to pass the ordinance/s?

Did you ever think of contacting those of us who spoke then to get us up to speed with current staff thinking and make sure we knew of the current round of hearings? And to help discern solutions?

I have read all the emails to the council that were attached to Bronwyn Hansen's review of the council proceedings. I agree with many of them. Many of us choose not to live in an HOA with HOA rules. We want to live with diversity of plants and sustainable maintenance and to have a variety of activities such as gardening, raising chickens, composting food waste, sitting around a fire pit, and seeing beautiful patches of wild flowers.

Too much of Ames development trend is toward gentrification. There are neighborhoods that have a sterile feel considering all the perfect concrete and lawns. There is ISU forging ahead with its version of Reno, Las Vegas, Napa Valley between the stadium and Scheman with high end shopping and dining opportunities. Other developers are creating a convention center on Lincoln Way a block south of Main Street. But know that many of us Ames residents do not believe in that kind of ritzy style and making Ames so attractive to a elite level of people but more unaffordable for people to live here. Wouldn't it have been great if ISU and Ames could have made a wellness center or a homeless facility a higher priority than a high end shopping and night life entertainment center?

This kind of council movement toward standards for owner-occupied standards has been going on for years. I recall many years ago, my neighbor complaining about my prairie plants in the parkings. I took the initiative to talk at length more than once with a staff member. I was assured that people such as myself would be invited to engage in small group discussions about the height of plants in those areas. The only discussions I have been aware of have been ones like in 2021 that dealt with the whole bundle of maintenance topics with plenty of people lined up, concerned about a variety of issues, each with only three minutes to speak. And no creative dialog.

I do believe it is important to be consistent and have similar if not identical standards for rental and owner-occupied homes. It certainly is hard to distinguish between the two kinds of properties in a residential area. Take Old Town. Who knows if a home there is rental or otherwise owner-occupied?

I have mixed feelings about anonymous complaints. I think that it is a slippery slope to allow them to be anonymous. Perhaps OK for someone to report a concern about a dead tree without going on the record. But it could be more a matter of simply reporting a concern that could be monitored over time and dealt with if it became too much of a hazard but not be considered a complaint.

Maybe expressing a concern to keep a log could be anonymous. But to take things to the level of a complaint, the person would have to provide a name.

I often trim trees or weed thistles and other weeds at my place and have a designated area to leave them that is not noticeable from the street where a garden assistant picks them up when the pile becomes substantial enough to take them away. To limit the life of such a pile to a week does not seem necessary. Individual contractors such as my garden assistant do not come weekly, and when I call and ask for them to clear out my pile, they may have other commitments. But I know that sooner or later, they will do the job well.

I have prairie patches and weed patches and am quite conscientious about maintaining them, but there is no such thing as perfection without some areas that are wilder and messier than others.

That's my choice, and I love the environment here. And a lot of people love to visit to be part of the spirit of the place.

I have prairie plants in the parkings taller than 12 inches that have concerned one neighbor. I know of many people who love the prairie patches. I expressed my rationale in writing and at a council hearing in 2021. I believe I have even sent the city staff my process of maintaining those plants with an eye to safety. The city puts out literature to encourage prairie plants, seeing them as a virtue. Essentially, there is no way to have a healthy, diverse prairie plot that is restricted to 12 inches in height.

No city staff or council has asked me for more thoughts on my suggestion that if a rule becomes code that restricts the height of plants in the parkings to 12 inches, that there be a permitting process for conscientious owners who meet certain standards in applying, to have taller plants. Here is the video I presented at the 2021 meeting.

<https://vimeo.com/561608755?share=copy>

My neighbor to the north has about a 190-foot, straight driveway right along our boundary line. They have motorcycles that make much noise, even sometimes in the late night of early morning. I wish the neighbors were more considerate, but I don't think the noise should be policed. Perhaps the city could offer reconciliation opportunities if such an issue became too much of a stressor. But again, these are slippery slopes.

I have also had a long-standing issue with that neighbor. They have a huge, stone dead, Ash tree next to the boundary that has been in that condition for a few years. There ought to be some way to require or encourage the neighbor to remove the hazard. As it is, I already paid \$1,800 several years ago to have an arborist remove the huge branches that extended about 28 feet over my property line. My arborist assures me that if the remainder of the tree were to fall, there would be little risk of it falling on my property. But if it does, then my insurance company would call that an "act of God" and I would need to pay a \$5,000 deductible for any damage before the company would pay for damages. In my mind, it is a bad rationale to refer to it as an act of God. Yes, maybe a nature event, but not with God pulling some kinds of strings to blow the tree down. Rather, it is an act of what--negligence? Or perhaps stubbornness? Or perhaps a family not having the resources to take precautionary action?

Please let me know you have received this message and whether my thoughts from the past and now are sufficiently on record. I really would rather not come and say essentially the same rationale for many of these points that I have been making for years. I assume that before you vote, you will review the archive of input as well as current input.

Thanks,

Helen

Helen Gunderson
1626 Burnett Avenue

From: [Debra Andrews](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Proposed Aesthetics Code
Date: Thursday, July 27, 2023 11:37:34 AM

[External Email]

Please consider the low income residents or elderly on fixed incomes. My neighbor is autistic and he wouldn't be able to fix what you suggest. With the rising prices of labor and food costs and property taxes and more this proposed code change just adds to the stress we feel. I don't understand who will decide what is good enough to pass the codes and what happens when you can't pay. Are you going to make the homeowner sell? My hope is that the council will consider those with less and not add to their stress. I am a 70 year old widow on a fixed income who tries to maintain her property. I don't know who to trust. I can see some people who will try to take advantage of us. Please stop this code from going through. Thank you. Deb Andrews

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows



Virus-free www.avg.com

From: [David Martin](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Re: Property Maintenance Code - please make changes
Date: Sunday, July 16, 2023 8:29:26 AM
Attachments: [David Martin comments on Proposed Property Maintenance Code.docx](#)
[David Martin comments on Proposed Property Maintenance Code.pdf](#)

[External Email]

Dear Mayor and Council,

As you face the Property Maintenance ordinance reading this week, I'd like to repeat that I don't support the current draft and have suggestions for how I think it could be vastly improved. My original email to you is below, including my tracked-changes version of the ordinance that I would support, with explanatory comments. Note that I identified a couple clerical-level issues that should be fixed separate and apart from my policy opinions.

I have a couple additional comments. My proposed edits changed the yard waste storage time frame from 7 days to 3 months. In response to this, I know that staff will say that they are complaint-driven, and if they approach a homeowner who says they plan to haul it to the free yard waste day, staff will happily back off, and so the 7-day max is reasonable given the entire policy. BUT the proposed ordinance does not say any of that. **There is nothing letting residents know that the policy is more flexible than the ordinance implies**, at least I didn't see that. Now, a city has no choice but to expect its residents to be aware of its ordinances. But I think it's bizarre to additionally expect residents to understand that the ordinances are seldom going to be enforced as written. Hence, my proposal to make the ordinance more permissive on its face (3 months).

An alternative is that you could leave it at 7 days and rephrase to say "Yard waste may be retained for longer than seven days if composting is being completed or a realistic plan for suitable seasonal disposal exists." Neighbors who complain about piles will probably still complain, so staff will initiate exactly the same conversations as they would with the proposed ordinance language, with basically the same outcome—but given this "realistic plan" language, the public will know how it actually works. I know that a truly noncompliant resident could game the "realistic plan" language for a long time. So while this may not provide quick relief in every individual circumstance, I think it would still have the effect of improving yard waste disposal throughout the community, since most people do want to comply with expectations.

Finally, to the extent that the "consistent coloration" type requirements restrict free speech (e.g., expressive murals on roofs, siding, fences), they're constitutionally suspect. The ordinance should be phrased so it doesn't suggest even a whiff of a limit on such expression. Maybe an overall disclaimer would do the trick (if you keep any of the aesthetic coloration requirements, which you shouldn't :-).

Best,
David Martin
339 Hickory Dr

On Fri, Jun 30, 2023 at 12:38 PM David Martin <dmartin@dmartin.us> wrote:

Dear Mayor & Council,

I have a couple of concerns about the property maintenance code ordinance set for first reading on July 18.

First, I think the ordinance needs some more work. The main issue is that I think it goes too far in imposing new aesthetic requirements and that's why I don't support it as currently written. I know some of the aesthetic requirements are aiming for consistency with current rental requirements, but I think you can be flexible on that. Given your votes so far you may not agree with me. Even if you disagree about my concern with the aesthetic requirements, there are other kinds of problems I've identified in the draft that are more easily fixed. So **please take a look at my edits/comments in the attached marked-up draft and consider whether you would adopt any of the proposed changes.**

Second, as you know, I participated in the 2021 discussions and workshop. That was two years ago. I know staff has fully considered the comments they received and have adjusted the proposal accordingly. Sara and Rich have been really responsive on that. But you only had one member of the public talk to you about this during your June 20 workshop and zero on June 27. There were almost 20 speakers back in 2021. To me, this says that in spite of the solid efforts to publicize this ordinance, people still aren't sufficiently aware of it and there's a risk of outsized backlash if you simply begin passing it. Unless you alter course, I think you should plan for a lot of vocal opposition on July 18. (Though I still live primarily in North Dakota and won't be in attendance :-)

Best,
David

From: farmer@gunderfriend.com
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: homeowner property maintenance
Date: Monday, July 17, 2023 6:00:31 PM

[External Email]

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Thanks,

Helen

Helen Gunderson
1626 Burnett Avenue

From: farmer@gunderfriend.com
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: property maintenance standards
Date: Thursday, July 20, 2023 9:16:07 AM

[External Email]

Dear Mayor and Councilors,

I hope you received and read a recent email that I sent. As it is, I have received confirmation from only one of you. I am wondering how much I need to re-address the issue of property maintenance standards after communicating my thoughts with you in recent years when the council previously held hearings on the topic.

My biggest concern has to do with the potential rule that vegetation in the parkings must be shorter than 12 inches. Here is the two-minute video that I showed at a past hearing, and it is still relevant today. And I wish my thoughts to be entered with the record of public input.

Helen Gunderson
1626 Burnett

<https://vimeo.com/562223577?share=copy>

This is an abridged version (2 minutes) of a slightly longer video that Helen Gunderson of Ames, Iowa, produced when she learned that the city staff and council were proposing a maximum height of 12 inches for vegetation in residential parkings (the areas between sidewalks and curbs). If the standards are approved, the prairie in the parking at Helen's urban farm would no longer be allowed, considering there is very little in terms of prairie grasses or forbs that thrive at such a short height. Helen proposes that if a short height is adopted as the new standard, the City of Ames establish a permit program to promote, create, and maintain healthy prairie patches in the parkings on volunteer rental and owner-occupied homes.

From: [Joslin Peters](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Minimum Exterior Property Maintenance Ordinance Concern
Date: Friday, July 28, 2023 9:02:13 PM

[External Email]

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to you because I have several concerns with the proposed *Minimum Exterior Property Maintenance Ordinance*. I believe many of those concerns were addressed at the 18 July City Council meeting. However, one item raised at both the 20 and 27 June, 2023 meetings, was the issue of parking travel trailers, recreational vehicles, boats, and trailers on private property.

Currently, ordinance (30.5 Nuisance 22) states that those vehicles/trailers are not allowed to be parked in driveways in the front of houses which was a surprise to me. Apparently they can only be parked on paved parking spots in the back of houses. Judging from the number of these I have seen in driveways, I am not the only resident unaware of this restriction. And now, the current discussion involves restricting those that are parked behind the house in some way, (despite staff recommending loosening the current time restrictions).

I would like to offer an alternative view; if they are operable vehicles they be treated the same as any other operable vehicle, be it large like a Hummer or small like a Prius, and be allowed in all driveways, front or back. Certainly restrictions regarding setbacks so as to ensure safe sight lines are in order. Restrictions of length of time so one does not become an unpermitted residence are understandable. Banning operable, legal vehicles from private properties based strictly on aesthetics is overreach.

I hope this is an item that could be taken up at a future time since the current *Minimum Exterior Property Maintenance Ordinance* is already past the first reading where community concerns are taken into account.

Thank you,
Joslin Soule-Peters
933 Gaskill Drive
Ames, IA 50014

From: [Lambert, Mark](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Cc: [Schainker, Steve](#); [Phillips, Brian](#); [Higgins, Rich](#); [VanMeeteren, Sara](#); [Chang, Jane](#)
Subject: Just an FYI
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 12:17:53 PM

This is just a “for what it’s worth” follow up. During the discussion last night about the wording in the proposed Property Maintenance Code ordinance “injurious to the senses,” I thought I had read that phrase before. And I know the Council voted to strike that wording from the definition, so this really isn’t even relevant at this point.

It turns out that it is similar to (yet different from) the Iowa Code definition of “nuisance” – although the Iowa Code version is, I think, clearer. In my mind, “unreasonably offensive to the senses” is a more understandable standard than “injurious to the senses” (does that require an actual injury?).

657.1 Nuisance — what constitutes — action to abate — electric utility defense.

1. Whatever is injurious to health, indecent, or unreasonably offensive to the senses, or an obstruction to the free use of property, so as essentially to interfere unreasonably with the comfortable enjoyment of life or property, is a nuisance, and a civil action by ordinary proceedings may be brought to enjoin and abate the nuisance and to recover damages sustained on account of the nuisance.

Again, this is academic at this point, but for what it’s worth!

Mark



Mark O. Lambert
City Attorney

515.239.5146 *main* | 515.239.5142 *fax*

mark.lambert@cityofames.org | City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue | Ames, IA 50010

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From: [N.K. Osborn](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Minimum Exterior Property Maintenance Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 3:50:19 PM

[External Email]

Hello Mayor Halia,

I am emailing you about the 'Minimum Exterior Property Maintenance Ordinance.'
I greatly disagree with this ordinance Honestly, I can't believe you & the other members of City Council don't see this for what it is: gentrification.

Gentrification is defined as: 'the restoration and renewal of deteriorated urban property by affluent people, often resulting in displacement of lower-income people.'

'Deteriorated' is a keyword. Where in this proposed ordinance is deteriorated clearly defined? Does a home with different colored shingles because one was discontinued mean the property is deteriorated? Does a camper or ATV in the front yard mean the property is deteriorated? Does having a currently undriveable vehicle in the front yard for more than 2 days mean the property is deteriorating?

I can see - I think anyone would agree - the value in keeping homeowners & the community safe -- but how do any of the above make a property unsafe or even lower the property value??

The fees for violating this ordinance even the first time is excessive. Not to mention, there are no grants listed in the proposal that could help lower income, single income, or disabled homeowner's cover the costs of such a trivial ordinance.

This ordinance is ableist, racist, and benefits only the privileged rich. Who do you think will be able to cover \$500-700 fees + the cost of repair? The Pandemic showed us that most Americans cannot afford to cover the expense of a \$1000 emergency. Most people have to save for years, borrow equity from their home, or do the best they can (such as using the most cost effective but different brand/color/material fencing or shingle or siding). Who do you think is most likely to cover these expenses without completely depleting their income or savings? Who do you think will buy up the property once the homeowner is overcome with fees + repair costs?

It's not poor people.

This ordinance is a vile attempt to remove the underprivileged from their homes. The priority should be to KEEP people in their homes. As a white woman with a decent income, I cannot imagine how I would be able to cover the fees AND repair costs of this ordinance - especially if it happens more than once/year.

How does the City of Ames plan to house & support those who are underprivileged & are inevitably forced to leave their homes because of this ordinance?

I question who proposed this ordinance to the City of Ames and what their motivations are. It looks to me like investors want to buy more rental property here by booting out all the poor & middle-class homeowners in this lucrative housing market in Ames - home to Iowa State University.

Do the right thing. Do what the citizens + listen to what homeowners want - **do not support this ordinance.**

Good day,
Natalie - a concerned citizen of Ames, Iowa

From: [Tim Gossett](#)
To: [City Council and Mayor](#)
Subject: Concerns about proposed property Maintenance Ordinance
Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 4:46:23 PM

[External Email]

Mayor Haila & City Council members,

I have quite a number of concerns and questions about the proposed Maintenance Ordinance that will be considered at this evening's meeting.

- I find it troublesome that an individual can bring a complaint against a neighbor. To me, this represents a breakdown in community between neighbors, and it feels as if it's likely to cause conflicts. What keeps someone who wants to buy up properties from filing perpetual complaints within a neighborhood, for example?
- As others have noted, there's a difference between safety vs. aesthetics - safety is reasonable; the proposals related to aesthetics are vague and much less clear.
- The whole thing feels punitive and not helpful. In fact, it's regressive in nature - it harms those who can least afford it. It's not based on the real harm done, the cost of the "change" needed, the value of the property, etc.
- The ordinance prioritizes one set of values (say, a beautiful property) over another (say, putting food on one's table in a time when affordable housing is impossible to find).
- There was little information beforehand. Hardly anyone one knew about it, and there was little sharing of it in public ways. Even the Ames Tribune did not cover it until recently. This feels like a major lack of transparency.
- It contributes to the existing affordable housing problem. A \$500 fine (or multiple fines) is incredibly high for many low- and middle-income individuals and families.
- It is discriminatory to low-income individuals, people with disabilities, the elderly, and people with mental health issues who may not have the time, resources, or skills, or physical ability to do the work.
- I urge you to slow things down and get additional public input. For something that affects so many homeowners, there is no rush, as I see it, especially on items related to aesthetics.

Some of the questions I feel are unanswered as I read the document:

- Why \$500? That's a regressive fine. Why wouldn't this be tied to the value of the property or the seriousness of the problem, for example?
- When/where has there ever been dialogue about this between landlords and homeowners? From what I've gleaned, it's primarily landlords who have been approached to weigh in.
- What about native plantings? Will they still be allowed? Under what guidelines? Many wouldn't seem to fit the requirements.
- How does this help or hurt the effort in Ames to be carbon neutral by 2030?
- Will this require additional staff? How many, and at what cost?
- What data are you using to compile this list of ordinances?
- How does it tie into efforts to promote habitat for pollinators? (It would seem to run counter to that.)

- What happens if someone accumulates multiple fines they are unable to pay? Will people start going to places like Good Neighbor for assistance, taxing their limited resources?
- How are you going to help those who cannot afford to make the improvements?
- Why is there no difference between the area inside vs outside a fence? Or is there?
- Will the city be offering perpetual opportunities for free drop-off of yard waste, if there's no opportunity for people to, say, have a brush pile by their garage?

Thank you for your consideration. I wish I could be there in person tonight to deliver these comments and questions, but I look forward to following the responses and the video feed.

Sincerely,
Tim Gossett
Homeowner, 810 9th St., Ames

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