

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

OCTOBER 21, 2008

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 21ST day of October, 2008, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell presiding and the following Council members present: Doll, Goodman, Mahayni, Popken, Larson, and Rice. *Ex officio* member Tracy was also present.

NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMIT WORKSHOP: Mayor Ann Campbell welcomed everyone in attendance, and described a goal of the City Council to strengthen neighborhoods.

City Manager Steve Schainker described the actions taken by City Council since last year's Neighborhood Summit. He said the Neighborhood Improvement Program has been very successful since its inception, providing over 104 grants for neighborhood improvement projects. The projects add permanent physical improvements to the neighborhood, improve the appearance of the neighborhood, and forge relationships among neighbors through a common project. City Council has expanded Neighborhood Improvement Program eligibility since its inception. Mr. Schainker also said that communication has been important to neighborhoods. City Council has established a neighborhood newsletter that is published and distributed out of the Public Relations Office, consisting of information submitted by neighborhood associations and residents. In addition, some individual neighborhood associations have expressed interest in having their own newsletter, of which the City Council has approved the printing, or the distribution.

Mr. Schainker also described the Good Neighbor Guide, a brochure that captures frequently asked questions, important phone numbers, laws, and programs. The document was developed by staff with input from neighborhoods. Mr. Schainker said the Information Services department has made themselves available to teach neighborhood association representatives and residents how to create a blog. Another topic important to neighborhoods was becoming more proactive with existing City codes, which led to the creation of the Neighborhoods Inspector position.

Pat Brown, 3212 West Street, Ames, said she has seen a dramatic change in the appearance of her neighborhood. She said she serves on the Rental Housing Advisory Committee and feels the group is doing very well. She spoke about landlords that may be looking into selling properties instead of making upgrades, and she hopes that a grant program can be made available for homeowners to convert rental houses back to owner-occupied.

Debbie Lee, 214 S. Maple Avenue, Ames, said she sees a faster response from the City when issues do arise. Ms. Lee asked if it would be possible for a regular publishing schedule of the neighborhood newsletter so that those making contributions can anticipate deadlines.

Jack Riney, 2045 Prairie View East, Ames, said he was disappointed there were not more neighborhood association representatives present. Mr. Riney said he finds the *City Side* publication that comes with the utility bills to be very informative. He also said he would like to see neighborhood representatives go through their neighborhood with a City official to point out concerns and ask questions. Mr. Riney thanked the City Council and staff for hosting the workshop.

Dale Brentnall, 429 25th Street, Ames, thanked the City for taking the time to discuss neighborhoods.

Ms. Lee said the Inspections Division and the Police Department have become more proactive, and that the Good Neighbor Guide is very helpful.

Jeff Houghtby, 4915 Westbend Drive, Ames, spoke of his concern regarding soil erosion in his neighborhood. He said he has questions regarding what the residents' responsibilities are in the situation, and what the City's responsibilities are.

Planning and Housing Director Steve Osguthorpe said an intern will be hired to assist with neighborhood associations. He asked that neighborhood association representatives would notify the City if their contact information or representative changes.

Ken Kruempel, 2519 Timberland Road, Ames, said he was unsure how to sign up for the neighborhood newsletter. He suggested publicizing it more.

Chuck Habing, 2220 Hayes Avenue, Ames, spoke of the cars traveling Hayes Avenue. He feels speeding and the number of cars traveling the road is a continual problem. He would like to see more enforcement.

Ms. Lee spoke about the report completed by the Inclusive Community Task Force. Ms. Campbell stated that once the Community Conversations on Diversity have concluded, she hopes that the two groups can merge the outcomes, and next steps. Ms. Lee suggested the City sponsor block parties for neighbors to get to know one another. She also suggested a park be added to the neighborhood bordered by Lincoln Way on the north, Duff Avenue on the east, S. 3rd Street or S. 5th Street on the south, and Walnut Avenue on the west. Ms. Lee said there are many families living in the apartments in that area, and a park would assist in bringing people together.

Mr. Brentnall said he hopes that the different neighborhoods within the community can all be supportive of one another. He said that commercial nodes within residential areas is sensitive, and may or may not be an enhancement to the community and neighborhood in the long term.

Mr. Riney said the human services campus located at the current Evangelical Free Church site is a good proposition, and hopes it happens. He also said he appreciates the improvement of the railroad tracks on 24th Street, but knows that Northcrest residents are concerned about getting onto 24th Street.

Mr. Houghtby asked if the City publishes a street improvement schedule. Mr. Schainker said that the arterials and collectors are planned five years out, but others are reprioritized every year. When a residential street will be improved, press releases with street closings go out, and a notification to residents is distributed. Mr. Schainker said that safety issues such as potholes and cracks are addressed quickly. He said there are many roads in Ames that are not in the City's jurisdiction, such as areas along Stange Road and Duff Avenue. They may be under the jurisdiction of the University, State, or County.

Mr. Kruempel said that new development is very slow in some instances, particularly the finishing of the sidewalks and curbs.

Fire Chief Clint Petersen invited everyone to the Rental Housing Advisory Committee Public Input Session on November 12th at 3:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers. The Committee has addressed 81 code issues and will be presenting its report and asking for input from the public. The City Council will then have a roundtable discussion on November 18th regarding the Committee's proposal. The report will be completed and posted on the Inspections Division website on November 5th.

COMMENTS: There were no comments by the Council.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary