

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

AUGUST 16, 2010

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 16TH day of August, 2010, 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: Davis, Goodman, Larson, Mahayni, and Orazem. *Ex officio* Member England was also present. Council Member Wacha was absent.

Mayor Campbell stated that the City Council workshop scheduled for tomorrow, August 17, 2010, will be rescheduled to September 21, 2010. She also informed the Council that a Press Conference will be held tomorrow morning at 8:00 a.m. regarding City of Ames flood recovery. In attendance will be RSVP, United Way of Story County, and Story County Emergency Management.

ENCROACHMENT PERMIT FOR SIGNS AT 206 WELCH AVENUE: Moved by Goodman, seconded by Davis, to approve an encroachment permit at 206 Welch Avenue for a new sign at T Galaxy that will encroach over the City sidewalk.
Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION OF PLANNING PRIORITIES: City Manager Steve Schainker said that staff would like the Council's direction on which Planning Priorities staff should focus on. Mr. Schainker told the Council staff has prepared a list of priorities to include priorities suggested at the joint workshops with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission, and the possible code changes received at the April 20, 2010 workshop with developers. He also said the staff report includes outstanding priorities and referrals by the City Council and suggested amendments from staff.

Mr. Schainker asked if the Council members needed clarification on any of the priorities. Member Larson asked about the suggested priorities staff came up with. Planning and Housing Director Steve Osguthorpe said they are in no particular order, but a grouping of items that could reasonably be completed in one year. Mr. Osguthorpe specifically asked the Council for direction on referrals coming in, specifically, whether or not referrals should get worked on as they come in, or if they should get put on the bottom of the list. Mr. Schainker added that some cities allow requests for rezoning only once a year in order to organize priorities.

Member Orazem referenced the staff-suggested priority of Code clean-up, and said that the Casey's on Bloomington Road is a good example of a process that needs work. Mr. Osguthorpe said the suggested Code clean-up section includes items that frequently trip up the staff as they are working on projects. Mr. Schainker said most things on that list help the customer, but he would like to see the inconsistencies and vagueness addressed. Discussion ensued on examples of inconsistencies in the code. Member Larson said he doesn't believe cleaning up the code has any disadvantages.

Mr. Osguthorpe said the Planning Department estimates it spends 25% of its time on long-term planning. He discussed the approximate Planner hours listed on the staff report and said some estimates are not exact, and as the Council directs staff on the particular priorities, the time can be better estimated.

Mr. Osguthorpe said the City of Ames is still in discussion with Story County staff. A recent discussion with Boone County did occur, and it is interested in discussing coordination of efforts.

Again, staff needs Council direction on how to proceed.

Mr. Schainker said it would be helpful to know if the listed referrals are still priorities of the Council. Mr. Larson said the Randall property issue is an example of something referred because the Council wants staff feedback before a process begins. He said it could be something the Council is not interested in doing, but needs more information first. Mr. Goodman said he feels a referral is asking staff to come back to Council with a sense for how the process might move forward. Mr. Mahayni said he wants a reaction from staff or a short staff report on whether the item needs more consideration rather than a complete study when referring an item. The Council members agreed on the way staff should treat referrals, and also agreed that when referring items, if more is wanted, the Council will specifically ask for more detail.

Discussion ensued on the Industrial Lands Study.

Mayor Campbell suggested the Council go down the list of staff-suggested priorities on page 6 of the staff report.

- Request from Dave Norris to amend Fringe Plan: All Council members agreed this needs to be completed.
- Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP) Evaluation (Planning Base): Member Mahayni suggested a regular review of the LUPP in its totality every five years. This review would just include looking at assumptions and projections, and their accuracy. Member Orazem brought up the northwest area discussion that occurred last week, and said he thinks there is a lot of uncertainty regarding intentions for that area. Mr. Schainker said policies shouldn't be changed until a vision is in place. He also said that the growth strategy needs dealt with now.
- Begin National Register Nomination for Downtown: Discussion ensued on historic preservation in downtown and campustown. Gloria Betcher, 531 Hayward Avenue, Ames, said a letter has been received from the State, and the Historic Preservation Commission is acting on it. She said she would be glad to see the greek area participate as well, but has not investigated whether or not this is something they would want to fund. Sharon Wirth, 803 Burnett Avenue, Ames, said a lot is in place currently to work toward downtown, meshing with facade grants and other programs. She said she has heard from a few downtown locations in the historic district regarding the tax credits that would be available. Ms. Wirth said new site sheets really need to go with the updating of Chapter 31. She also said there is a discussion going on among property owners regarding new technology available since the district went into place.

There was discussion regarding the greek area. Member Mahayni said some legwork needs done prior to moving forward. Member Goodman requested the letter sent to the Council from Ms. Betcher be sent to the greek community.

The Council members agreed that beginning the National Register Nomination for downtown should be a priority.

Council members discussed the review of Chapter 31 and decided to begin or initiate the review. Council members agreed this priority could be completed over two years instead of one year.

- New Site Sheets for Historic District: Council members agreed to wait on this priority until the Chapter 31 review is complete.
- Address issues of Density: Mr. Schainker said minimum densities are used as a tool for efficient growth, and there are other ways to accomplish that. Member Larson said he would like to change this, but not eliminate it. He also said it fits into a larger discussion of the LUPP and changes that could be made. After further discussion, Council members agreed to take this off the list of priorities for now.
- Review Plat of Survey provisions: Council members agreed this is a top priority.
- Tax abatement to revert multi-plex buildings back to single-family dwellings: Mr. Schainker said he is unsure if tax abatement is enough incentive at this time. Member Larson said he is hesitant to name this a priority before the workshop in September with landlords. The Council members agreed to take this off the list of priorities for now, and to continue with Strengthening Neighborhoods as a priority. This item will be put into a larger discussion.
- Code clean-up: Council members agreed this is a top priority.
- Revise LUPP so that it serves as a guide and is more easily changed: Mr. Schainker stated that the LUPP is very prescriptive, and not by accident. He said this priority would be very involved, almost like rewriting the LUPP. Council members agreed to wait on this priority.
- Define process for amending the LUPP: Council members agreed that it is important to define the process for amending the LUPP.
- Continued work of Urban Fringe issues: Mr. Schainker said this City Council must be briefed on this. The Council agreed that this issue must remain high priority.
- Contingency reserve - This priority was removed.

In addition to the above selected priorities, Council members desired the following to be part of the Planning Priorities:

- Provide report to Council on feasibility of requiring Master Plan be reviewed by City Council prior to submittal of Preliminary Plat.
- Provide report to Council on the request from Matt Randall regarding amending the LUPP for property located at 712 South 16th Street.
- Finalize discussion on growth strategies.
- Provide report to Council on initiating the process of developing standards for an airport overlay zone.

Moved by Goodman, seconded by Larson, to move forward with the selected Planning Priorities:

- Request from Dave Norris to amend the Fringe Plan
- LUPP Evaluation (Planning Base)

- Begin National Register Nomination for Downtown
- Begin Chapter 31 revision process
- Review Plat of Survey provisions
- Code Clean-up
- Define a process for amending the LUPP
- Continued work on Urban Fringe issues
- Provide report to Council on feasibility of requiring Master Plan be reviewed by City Council prior to submittal of Preliminary Plat
- Provide report to Council on the request from Matt Randall regarding amending the LUPP for property located at 712 South 16th Street
- Finalize discussion on growth strategies
- Provide report to Council on initiating the process of developing standards for an airport overlay zone

Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

COMMENTS: Member Orazem said he was thankful for the efforts during the flood last week.

Mayor Campbell said some of the hard work related to flood recovery is still ahead. Member Mahayni said he feels very proud of the staff during this disaster. He said the news nationally and internationally carried the updates of the flood event.

Member Davis concurred, and added that he was impressed by the reaction of the community to help.

Member Larson said he watched the press conferences, and heard the Mayor supporting staff. Larson complimented the Mayor on running the press conferences and working many hours to represent Ames.

Ex officio Member England said that Iowa State University classes start Monday.

ADJOURNMENT: The Special Meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary