

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING  
OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL**

**AMES, IOWA**

**JANUARY 7, 2012**

The Ames City Council met in special session at 8:30 a.m. on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2012, in the Parks and Recreation Activity Room, 1500 Gateway Hills Park Drive, pursuant to law with Mayor Campbell, Council Members Davis, Goodman, Larson, Orazem, Szopinski, and Wacha and *ex officio* Member Finseth were present. City Manager Steve Schainker, Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred, City Attorney Doug Marek, Project Manager Brian Phillips, and City Clerk Diane Voss were also in attendance. Assistant City Manager Sheila Lundt arrived at 10:40 a.m.

**UPDATE ON EXISTING CITY COUNCIL GOALS/OBJECTIVES:** The meeting began with each veteran Council member and the Mayor sharing, for the benefit of newly elected Ward 4 representative Victoria Szopinski, lessons that they had learned since being elected. Council Member Szopinski then expressed what she felt she still had to learn.

The Mayor led a discussion on her role as Mayor, Council members' role with the "Council team," Council members' role with the public, and Council members' role with City staff. Firstly, she asked for input on the efficiency of Council meetings. Council Member Wacha asked to know the number of meetings held and the number of hours met. The City Clerk will provide a report to Council. Council Member Goodman pointed out that it is important for the Council members to clarify the assignments made to staff. Council Member Orazem noted that Agendas are long and it is important to have public deliberation; therefore, the Council needs to deal with the issues, no matter how long it takes. Council Member Larson stated his preference that, when there are staff reports listing next steps, that item be placed on the next Agenda for action. He suggested that a topic be listed on the Agenda specifically for staff reports, especially if there is no Council action being required. Another possible solution was offered by Council Member Wacha was for the staff person making a presentation to ask if the Council wants a summary or the full presentation. Council Member Goodman expressed that he wanted the Council to focus on not being redundant, i.e., not making comments on issues after they had been dealt with, and "losing quickly" (meaning when the vote does not go the way the particular Council member had desired, they should state his or her opinion and move on).

City Manager Schainker explained that if the Council members want an explanation of any City operations, he or she should make that request to the City Manager. He will research it and provide the answer to the Mayor and all Council members, not just the person making the inquiry. Discussion ensued on referrals and the process followed after an item was referred to staff. It was recommended by the City Manager that a memo from staff was being requested. Council Member Larson suggested that the memo/short report be placed on the next agenda.

City Manager Schainker noted that the Council had established a goal of having a "can-do" attitude. Staff's job is to enforce the Code, so it is necessary to involve the Council on specific requests that would create exceptions to the Code. Council Member Larson said he felt that Council should look at what things could be built in to the Municipal Code that will give staff the latitude to make exceptions.

City Attorney Doug Marek explained the role of Council from a legal standpoint. He emphasized that, when acting in a quasi-judicial role, all information that is exchanged and all deliberation on the topic must take place in a public meeting. Mr. Marek clarified that the City Council member may have general discussion with a potential applicant before the specific request is made or application submitted.

The meeting recessed at 10:05 a.m. and reconvened at 10: 14 p.m.

Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred led the group in a team exercise.

City Manager Schainker began the review of the Council's current goals. He noted the importance of being able to bring different values together to become an effective governing body to achieve the common goal of making Ames a better place. Mr. Schainker told the Council that its first step was to arrived at a shared vision for the community.

Assistant City Manager Lundt arrived at 10:40 a.m.

City Manager Schainker summarized the tasks and accomplishments for the 2011 Goals.

Regarding sustainability, Council Member Orazem expressed his strong desire to not lose focus on the conservation of electricity. He does not want to broaden the focus so much that the tasks are not attainable.

Council Member Larson pointed out that some tasks are noted as being completed; however, he would prefer that they be labeled as "ongoing." He does not want those tasks to go away. Mr. Schainker noted that some tasks might drop off because they have become embedded in the normal operations of the City.

Council Member Orazem requested that the City Council be notified of the schedule for the "Meet-and-Greet" trailer reservations. Assistant City Manager Lundt advised that she would take care of that.

It was noted that Council Members Larson and Orazem were the representatives appointed to participate with the Mayor in the Joint Funders' meeting. Mr. Larson indicated that all Council members can and should attend the ASSET Joint Funders' meeting as there are issues with at least two agencies that will have to be decided..

Council Member Larson cited his preference for the same format to be used consistently in goal-setting, referring to listing the goal, the objective of the goal, and the specific tasks.

City Manager Schainker informed the Council that any new goals would be covered first and then the existing goals would be revisited.

The meeting recessed at 11:45 a.m. and reconvened at 12:10 p.m.

Mr. Schainker asked the Council if anyone had any new goals that they wanted to discuss.

Council Member Wacha raised the issue of the mental health crisis. He was not sure if it should be its own goal or fall under one of the existing ones. Discussion ensued and culminated with the decision to place it under the goal of Strengthen and Protect our

Neighborhoods for a United Ames. Mayor Campbell advised that the mental health crisis is currently being address by the ASSET. Council Member Orazem expressed his concern that the City of Ames was becoming the “default funder.” Assistant City Manager Lundt stated that the mental health crisis was also becoming an extra burden on the Ames Police Department. Ms. Lundt enlightened the Council that the Ames Police Department handled approximately 580 mental health incidents. Council Member Wacha said that he would like the mental health issue more directly spelled out as an objective.

Council Member Goodman advised that he had two issues that were brought to his attention and developed from the National League of Cities Conference: (1) assisting youth in the community, i.e., out-of-school time and transportation. He felt that mobility pertains directly to young people’s success. Mr. Goodman said that his second item pertained to economic development, and he would wait to discuss it until that goal was reviewed.

Council Member Larson suggested that the goal be listed as “Strengthen Community Through Human Service Initiatives.”

Council Member Wacha raised the goal of Rejuvenate Campustown. He noted all the work that went into bringing that goal to fruition; however, it ultimately was not feasible because landowners were not willing participants. Therefore, it was his opinion that this goal no longer should be listed in the Council’s top six goals. Council Member Orazem disagreed, noting the importance of economic vitality in Campustown. *Ex-officio* Member Finseth offered that the City had done all it could to achieve its goal. In his opinion, it should perhaps be a goal of Iowa State University, but not one of the City’s. Council Member Goodman strongly disagreed. He felt that the City had to and should be involved. Mr. Wacha agreed with Mr. Finseth, stating that if the local land owners were not willing to sell, he did not see anything that the City could do to accomplish the Council’s goal. Noting the new President coming on board at Iowa State University, Council Member Larson recommended that an objective be to Develop a Relationship with Iowa State University, with Rejuvenate Campustown being listed as a task. Council Member Goodman suggested that a goal or objective be: Collaborate with Iowa State University and the Campustown Action Association (CAA) to Ensure an Attractive Campustown. He adamantly promoted the City continuing to work on it; he did not want the City to “back-off.” Council Member Larson recommended that another objective be to Continue to Develop Relationships with Iowa State University to Enhance Campustown.

Council Member Wacha asked to remove Further Streamline and Improve Government Processes and move the unaccomplished objectives to other goals; i.e., move “Promote Ames as a welcoming place...by embracing a can-do attitude” and “Revising City Code...and procedures to streamline processes” to the goal of Promote Economic Development.

Council Member Goodman noted that many of the objectives will be ongoing whether the Council lists them as objectives or not.

Council Member Szopinski asked where the City’s relationship with the Ames Community School District fits in the City’s goals. It was noted that meeting with the Ames Community School District was listed under the Go Green...goal; however, it

pertained mainly to the future of mass transit needs. Ms. Szopinski said she asked because there were a number of issues that surfaced during her campaign pertaining to land owned by the School District being redeveloped for low-income housing. Mr. Schainker noted that it could be listed as an objective under another goal.

Each goal was reviewed individually, as follows:

1. Go Green to Promote Environmental Sustainability. Council Member Orazem suggested that an objective be listed: Improve Electric Energy-Efficiency Within the Total Government (not necessarily City government). Council Member Larson asked to first discuss the recommendation of the Sustainability Task Force to broaden its initiatives. He noted his preference not to broaden the Task Force's initiatives. Council Member Goodman pointed out that the City Council was hesitant to go to the next step. He suggested that an objective could be to Explore Models Relative to Economic Sustainability and the task would be to direct the Task Force to do that. Council Member Orazem preferred not to do that, having studied other cities that had done that; he is unsure of the definition of "economic sustainability." Council Member Wacha noted the amount of work that was necessary for just the electric energy sustainability piece. He preferred to leave it at Environmental Sustainability.. Council Member Goodman disagreed, stating that moving to the next step would not require staff time; it is totally being worked on by volunteers.

Mr. Schainker asked how many Council members supported Environmental Sustainability. Council members unanimously agreed to retain the goal as originally stated. Mr. Goodman argued, stating that, sooner or later, cities will have to discuss economic sustainability; it must be present to have vitality. He noted that the Task Force will disband if the three steps they recommended to move to are not supported by the Council. Council Member Larson said that he did not want to go on record supporting expanding the goal as it will ultimately increase the load on staff. It was decided to drop the "Go Green to" and list the goal only as "Promote Environmental Sustainability."

Council Member Wacha asked if there was any support to list that the Task Force focus first on electric energy efficiency and then that they work on ideas for natural gas and water. Mr. Schainker acknowledged that the current Task Force will sunset as the initiatives directed to them had been accomplished. Another task force would have to be created to work on the natural gas and water efficiency component. Council Member Larson suggested that the electric energy efficiency be the first objective, with the second one being Start the Process to Improve Natural Gas and Water Efficiency. The only task could be to gather information on water consumption.

Council Member Orazem wanted another task under ...Increase Availability of Alternative Forms of Transportation to Expand the Trail System from North Dakota to Emma McCarthy Lee and from South Dakota to Campus. Assistant Manager Kindred advised that expanding the trail in that manner was not feasible.

Council Member Goodman asked to include the evaluation of life-cycle operating costs of bids when making capital investments under Environmental Sustainability. He felt that it increased the sustainability of the City's capital investments. Council

Member Orazem pointed out that the City should always be doing that. Assistant Manager Lundt noted that the City is already doing that on all equipment bids.

2. Promote Economic Development. It was unanimously concurred that Objectives A, B and C would remain.

The Council revisited Council Member Wacha's previous suggestion to remove "Further Streamline and Improve Government Processes" and move the unaccomplished objectives to other goals; i.e., move "Promote Ames as a welcoming place...by embracing a can-do attitude" and "Revising City Code...and procedures to streamline processes" to the goal of Promote Economic Development. After discussion, the Council agreed to move, to Promote Economic Development, the objectives "To Revisit City Codes, Policies, and Procedures to Streamline Processes" and "To Promote Ames as a Welcoming Place to do Business by Embracing a "Can Do" Attitude."

Council Member Goodman asked to add another objective under ...Economic Development, which was to participate in a EDSAT (Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool). Council Member Larson recommended that a task be to work with AEDC to determine its support for an EDSAT. Mr. Goodman said that normally cities take the lead.

3. Create and Promote a Community Vision. Mayor Campbell suggested that Objective A be moved as a task; that had been done. City Manager suggested that the goal be listed as Promote a Community Brand (dropping the words "Create and"). Council unanimously concurred.

Council Member Larson suggested that a task be added to Work with ACVB and AEDC to Implement the New Brand.

4. Rejuvenate Campustown. It was unanimously decided that a new objective to Collaborate with Iowa State University and the Campustown Action Association (CAA) to Ensure an Attractive Campustown. Council Member Larson stated that it was important to work with and include CyRide.

It was decided to include another task: to work with Iowa State to explore funding for flat space.

Council Member Goodman informed the Mayor and City Council what actions had been taken by the Campustown Action Association (CAA) to date. He advised that the Council will be asked to assist with any large redevelopment projects in Campustown. One of the objectives should be to Continue to Support the CAA. It was unanimously decided that Objective C will remain.

Council Member Orazem recommended another objective be to Foster Negotiations Between ISU and CAA. He brought out the need to "smooth the relationship" between neighborhoods and ISU pertaining to ISU lands. Mr. Orazem clarified that this would pertain to lands that ISU retains ownership of and those that they sell. Mr. Schainker noted that once the land is sold, the City's zoning regulations would pertain.

Council Member Wacha took issue with the word “Redevelop” Campustown. He noted that the City had given it its best effort, but due to property owners not willing to sell, it was now a moot point. Council Member Goodman said that an objective could be to “Work with CAA to Redevelop Incentives for Redeveloping Campustown.” It was unanimously agreed to remove the word “Redevelop.”

Although not directly pertaining to goals, Mayor Campbell raised the issue of collaborating with State Legislators. She pointed that it is more important than ever that City Council members inform other community groups about what is going on at the state level to educate residents and advocate for or against certain measures. Council Member Davis suggested that an email every two weeks be sent to the Council by the Mayor and/or Bob Kindred. Council Member Goodman said he preferred updates be given during “Council Comments” during Council meetings. Once the information is given, Council members would share it with their constituents and the public. Mr. Schainker indicated that an e-mail would be sent to the Mayor and Council members with major issues being brought up during the City Council meeting under “Council Comments.”

The meeting recessed at 2:52 p.m. and reconvened at 3:05 p.m.

Additional discussion ensued as follows:

5. Strengthen and Protect Our Neighborhoods for a United Ames. Council Member Larson again suggested that Objective A be “Enhance Interaction Between Non-Residents and Residents.” Objectives B and C would remain. Discussion ensued on Objective D: “To Make a Stronger Commitment to Work with ASSET Joint Funders.” Council Member Larson wanted to see more defined listed. A task would be to work with “Joint Funders to Identify and Address the Elderly and Mental Health Issues.”

Council Member Goodman asked to a task be added under Objective D to “Explore the Interest in Developing a Youth Master Plan in the Community.” Discussion ensued on whether that would be to work through ASSET on this task. Council Member Larson disagreed with using the words “Youth Master Plan.” He preferred to say “issues with youth in the Ames community.” City Manager Schainker said that this would be at the Objective level with specific tasks listed under it. Council Member Goodman said that another task would be the dealing with the transportation issue, i.e., fare-free CyRide for youth.

Mayor Campbell raised the issue of a referral of a request from Carolyn Jons for funding and support for the Third-Grade Level Reading Task Force. Council Member Larson said that he had been going to the meetings; however, it was not determined whether funding was needed to further the endeavors.

Assistant City Manager Sheila Lundt left the meeting at 2:10 p.m.

A review of the goals decided upon with clarification of expectations ensued.

1. **Promote Environmental Sustainability**
  - a. Improve electric energy efficiency within the community
    - I Staff report on timing of Sustainability Task Force implementation plan
  - b. Promote and educate Ames residents about environmental sustainability

- i. Funding for AMOS public education program (electric, water, natural gas conservation)
  - c. Increase availability of alternative forms of transportation
    - I. Prepare updated map of uncompleted multi-use trails (by budget time) (including N. Dakota to McCarthy Lee Park/ISU)
  - d. Consider life-cycle operating costs when making vertical infrastructure decisions, e.g., water plant, library, electric utility, etc. – at design level
- 2. **Promote Economic Development**
  - a. Promote Ames as a Regional Center
    - i. Work with owners of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street regional commercial land to develop concept plan
    - ii. Facilitate HM zone discussion between providers and neighbors to identify an acceptable long-term solution
    - iii. Determine information needed to make a decision regarding infrastructure extension to 590<sup>th</sup> Street (by budget time) – Council members to each send their information needs to Steve by January 31, 2012
  - b. Support private-sector growth to improve quality of life, increase number of jobs, and develop stronger tax base
    - i. Work with AEDC to determine whether to use EDSAT (Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool)
    - ii. Determine cost of hiring consultant to advise Council on development of *minimum ROI requirements* (in the form of jobs and taxable improvements) for public incentives or infrastructure extension to commercial/industrial areas
    - iii. Beautify entrances to Ames and major arterials
    - iv. Entryway/directional signage (Chamber committee)
    - v. Identify aesthetic detractors and non-conforming structures along major arterials and entryways; then develop strategies for relocating or upgrading
  - c. Revisit City Codes, policies, and procedures to streamline processes and to help facilitate renovation of existing buildings
    - i. Staff report to identify how City can facilitate redevelopment of older existing buildings (within Codes) [including grease traps and restrooms]
  - d. Promote Ames as a welcoming place to do business by embracing a “Can Do” attitude
    - i. Create mechanisms to make sure each business interacting with the City (Inspections/Planning) is aware of Business Development Coordinator
    - ii. Create a public information campaign to help newly developing businesses be aware of Business Development Coordinator
- 3. **Strengthen our Community**
  - a. Promote our Community Brand
    - i. City Public Information Officer’s professional group
    - ii. Implement
  - b. Enhance interactions between ISU students and permanent residents
    - i. Student Affairs Commission
    - ii. Web site
    - iii. Give Council list of meet-and-greets and block parties
  - c. Work with ASSET funders to identify and address service deficiencies in human service delivery
    - i. Mental health and elderly services

- d. Explore issues related to youth in the community
    - i. With school districts, ASSET, and other providers of youth services
    - ii. Determine interest in development of a youth master plan
    - iii. Representation by Council member to “Third-Grade Reading Council”
  - e. Support a community “Blue Zone” designation
4. **Mitigate Flooding in our Community**
- a. Reduce possibility of damage in Ames community caused by river/ watershed flooding
    - i. Carry out a comprehensive engineering analysis of possible flood mitigation actions, including options related to intense rainfall scenarios, benefit/cost analyses, and policy options
    - ii. Educate public regarding steps they can take to mitigate or ensure against flooding damage
    - iii. Adopt regulatory steps and/or public improvements plan to mitigate future damage
    - iv. Collaborate with other jurisdictions and agencies to identify and implement long-term flood mitigation actions
  - b. Reduce possibility of damage in our community caused by localized flooding
    - i. Schedule appropriate neighborhood storm water improvements in CIP and budget
    - ii. Determine whether new storm water management standards are needed for public improvements and/or for private development
    - iii. Educate public regarding likelihood and impacts of future intense rainfall events, plus steps they themselves can take to prevent or insure against damage
5. **Enhance Relationship with ISU Through Additional Partnerships**
- a. Revitalize Campustown
    - i. City Manager, ISU and Campustown Action Association (CAA) will develop proposed strategies for revitalizing area
    - ii. Staff report on possibility of extending façade program to Campustown
  - b. Continue to support CAA
    - i. Consider providing funding for CAA operations (to be discussed at budget time)
  - c. Foster negotiations between ISU and CAA to help Campustown businesses be viable
    - i. Mayor to arrange initial meeting among new ISU president, CAA, the Government of the Student Body, and City
  - d. Explore flat space funding feasibility
    - i. Mayor to meet with new ISU president to ensure commitment to financially participating in this priority
    - ii. Work with ACVB to see that food and beverage tax bill is presented to state legislature

Additional items that were not resolved and placed into the “Parking Lot” pertained to the City Council’s role in reference to state legislation, specifically, whether the Mayor or City staff would send weekly emails to update the Council and/or whether the updates would be made during Council meetings under “Council Comments.”

City Manager Schainker advised that the Council still needed to identify its top priorities. It was decided that Mr. Schainker would attempt to rank the tasks and bring it back to the Council for discussion and approval at a future session.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

---

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

---

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor