

# MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

MARCH 20, 2012

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2012, 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, Orazem, Szopinski, and Wacha. Council Member Larson was absent.

**MOTION APPROVING 5-DAY CLASS B BEER PERMIT FOR COMFORT FOOD & BBQ CATERING AT AG LEADER:** Moved by Davis, and seconded by Goodman to approve a 5-Day (March 23 - 27) Class B Permit for Comfort Food & BBQ Catering at Ag Leader, 2202 S. Riverside Drive, Ames.

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

**JOINT MEETING WITH PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION:** Mayor Campbell welcomed the members of the Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z). Council Members and P&Z members introduced themselves.

P&Z members in attendance were:

Elizabeth Beck  
Debra Lee  
Chuck Jons  
Norman Cloud  
Yvonne Wannemuehler  
Rob Bowers

Ms. Beck thanked the Council for the opportunity to discuss P&Z priorities, and said that the Commission has attempted to align its priorities with the Council's priorities. She referenced the memo sent to Council from P&Z on January 4, 2012, and discussed the topics the Commission would like to discuss with the Council, including:

1. Industrial Lands
2. Traffic Impacts and Intermodal Transit
3. Tax Base Diversification
4. Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP)/ Codes Review for Consistency with Sustainability
5. District Planning - Niches
6. Flood Mitigation Efforts

Commission Member Jons discussed the need to attract jobs to Ames. He said there needs to be industrial land ready for businesses, or business will go elsewhere. Mr. Jons encouraged the Council in developing industrial land, so as not to further suffer from lost tax base. He also told the Council he would like to see the City review traffic plans more closely as they relate to future growth, and that he would like to see the shared use paths along the creek system in Ames utilized more in bringing people to Ames.

Commission Member Cloud recalled multiple situations where a previous development's traffic flow was fine, but then an extension of the development caused a neighborhood street to become an arterial street. Mayor Campbell said when the LUPP was initially created, the intended growth

areas were taken into account with the traffic patterns. She said more recently, growth has been in areas where it was not planned or intended, which then causes the traffic issues. Council Member Goodman said that the Council should look at proposed developments in the context of existing long term investments to be sure that infrastructure can be used as anticipated.

The group further discussed the LUPP and the need to review it. Planning and Housing Director Steve Osguthorpe said a process was recently adopted for reviewing the LUPP both as requested, as well as a regular 5-year cycle for review. He said it just needs to be determined when the cycle will begin and when the first update will occur. Mayor Campbell asked the Commission if someone wants to annex some land, which may include jobs, whether the City should put that priority above the review of the LUPP. Mr. Cloud said P&Z has been having these discussions, and that though multiple projects are getting completed, there aren't enough people looking at the big picture of how Ames is being developed.

Mayor Campbell said maybe Council should take a hiatus from referring these issues to staff and P&Z, and first review the LUPP. Ms. Lee said the purpose of the LUPP is to simplify these types of decisions, and said it should be decided if a review of the LUPP is important enough to devote staff time toward it first, and then each request that comes in. Council Member Goodman said he feels as if no matter what the Plan says, there could always be a different opportunity that creates pressure, so it will take Council and P&Z to decide and prioritize. Mr. Cloud said it is hard to pinpoint where growth should occur, and said that he is not confident in the Council's desires, making it hard for him to make decisions on P&Z.

Mr. Osguthorpe commented that the recent discussions related to traffic have suggested that the capacity is there, but quality of life may be affected. Ms. Beck discussed the need for traffic patterns involving vehicles, public transit, bike paths, and pedestrian walkways. Discussion continued on development, traffic, and the possibility of updating the LUPP. Council Member Szopinski stated that Council members are not of one philosophy on how quality of life is defined, so decisions are based on the majority. Mr. Cloud said he would like to have a better feel for what the consensus would be on particular issues.

Ms. Lee said she feels a chance to look at the LUPP is an opportunity for a community discussion on the values of the community. Mr. Jons said less emphasis could be placed on the long-range plan since the City must negotiate with surrounding entities concerning how we want Ames to look. He would rather see the City be the instigator of new and different ideas. He also said he is concerned the City would spend a large amount of resources and time developing the LUPP when those within the City could be utilized more cost effectively. Mr. Cloud said he doesn't totally disagree. He said at some point the City needs regulation, and a consensus on how to deal with these issues. Ms. Beck said she agreed that the conversation needs to happen, to determine what the community wants Ames to be. She also said that she agrees that \$150,000 does not need to be spent. Mr. Jons said it is very difficult to get the entire community involved in these discussions. Ms. Beck said if the conversation consisted of a representative group, it could be useful.

Council Member Wacha referenced the request for a consistent idea of the Council's viewpoints in certain instances. He said he struggles with the inconsistency also, but that every request that does not fit within the LUPP can be denied, neither can everything be "rubber stamped." He said it's not black and white, but more of a gray. Member Goodman said he feels that if millions of dollars are being spent on infrastructure, then it should be less "gray," and that maybe a plan with more flexibility is needed. Member Wacha said the other complication is the forever-changing

make-up of the City Council.

There was discussion on the qualities of Ames that make it unique, and the growth of Ames. Mayor Campbell wondered where the intention is to grow in terms of maintaining viable school districts. Mr. Cloud said P&Z had this discussion, and he has “given up” on controlling the market in the short term. He said he is puzzled as to if it can be legislated, or if it is just going to happen. Member Goodman said there is a limit to the infrastructure investments. Member Orazem said the number of children in Story County is smaller, and if Ames wants more children more jobs are needed. He said Ames currently has the same amount of jobs as it did in 2000. Member Szopinski said there are people that work in Ames that no longer live here because of a lack of affordable housing. Member Goodman said the current trajectory shows the Gilbert district growing. Council Member Davis said with the growth, Gilbert may benefit in the short term, but Ames still benefits through property taxes and additional affordable housing that is then available. He said there is a natural progression in neighborhoods, and the Ames school district could also benefit in the coming years.

Mr. Jons asked how staff is coming with the Council goal of flood mitigation. Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred said that since the floods, staff has been working with ISU, Story County, and others to coordinate efforts to deal with flooding, and that the Iowa Flood Center is doing a lot of work in Story County to help discern the best ways to mitigate flooding. Mr. Kindred said staff is putting together a Request for Proposals to go out next month for an engineering study similar to the study completed after the 1993 floods, but with much higher quantity and quality of data, and better tools and modeling which will hopefully be completed by the end of the year. Mr. Kindred said different rainfall models are being taken into account in order to bring options to policy makers based on different levels of protection, with the associated costs and regulations for each option.

City Manager Steve Schainker said in the commercial market, everyone wants to be on South Duff Avenue. He said the current Council is much more conservative than the national requirements, and requires those building there to build 3 feet higher than the projected 100-year base flood elevation. He said a map of the flood plain would show that the majority of Ames’ commercial areas are in the flood plain. Mr. Schainker said that very important policy decisions will need to be made.

Ms. Lee suggested a public relations effort to update the community on the flood mitigation progress, since residents are seeing the activity on South Duff Avenue now. Mr. Cloud said many of the older businesses on South Duff Avenue are thinking they will be impacted even more during a flood now since newer businesses are building higher. Council Member Goodman said it is frustrating that its taking so long, but the public should know that the City is engaged in a process more bold than ever before to mitigate future flooding, but Council has made a decision not to stop development in the area. Mr. Bowers said every time it floods, it floods differently. Member Wacha said he suggested looking at aerial views of Ames during the last flood. He said whoever builds on South Duff Avenue is taking a risk, and the new buildings will have a minuscule effect on existing businesses.

Mr. Schainker said for cities and city staffs, the most important thing is the LUPP, and once that is established, everything is planned off of that such as parks, sidewalks, bike paths, water towers, sewer lines, water lines, arterials, etc. He said that having a Plan does not mean there is no flexibility. Ms. Beck said she is very glad the community has a LUPP, but is not comfortable

always being asked to make exceptions. Mr. Schainker said a Plan becomes stale after 20 years, and to review it every 5 years will allow for the community's changing values and direction, but also allow for some certainty during the periods of time in between the reviews.

Mr. Schainker told P&Z that the Planning priorities referred by Council are requests from customers that need addressed. Discussion ensued on the outstanding council referrals and the staff time committed to each priority. Mr. Schainker suggested beginning with the higher priority items. Mr. Osguthorpe said the highest priorities are already in process, or customer-initiated. Mr. Schainker asked for direction on the higher-ranked referrals. Council Member Davis agreed with the priorities, and said he would like to see them all resolved and addressed. Mayor Campbell noted the amount of referrals. Mr. Schainker said new referrals could divert staff work on the current referrals.

Discussion ensued on meeting deadlines with customers, and also the need for a review of the LUPP.

Council Member Wacha thanked P&Z for their advisory work, and recognized the complexity of the issues. Mayor Campbell thanked Ms. Beck and Mr. Jons for their time and said she looks forward to Mr. Bowers and Ms. Wannemuehler's work on the Commission.

**COMMENTS:** Mayor Campbell reminded the group of the Boards and Commissions luncheon on Wednesday, March 21. She also told the group that the Ames Day at the Capitol is Monday, March 26.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

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Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary