

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

AMES, IOWA

JANUARY 19, 2013

The Ames City Council met in special session at 8:30 a.m. on the 19th day of January, 2013, in the Parks and Recreation Activity Room, 1500 Gateway Hills Park Drive, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell, Council Members Jeremy Davis, Matthew Goodman, Jami Larson, Peter Orazem, Victoria Szopinski, and Tom Wacha and *ex officio* Member Sawyer Baker present. City Manager Steve Schainker, Assistant City Managers Bob Kindred and Melissa Mundt, Acting City Attorney Judy Parks, Management Analyst Brian Phillips, and City Clerk Diane Voss were also in attendance.

UPDATE ON EXISTING CITY COUNCIL GOALS/OBJECTIVES: Assistant City Manager Kindred led the group in a team-building exercise.

Mayor Campbell led a discussion on City Council interactions between Council members and other Council members, Council members and staff, and Council members and the public.

Council/Council. Council members shared their evaluations of Council meetings. Suggestions for improvement were made as follows:

1. Council Member Goodman: Not allowing discussion until a motion had been made and seconded.
2. Council Member Szopinski: Council members discuss their perspectives one-on-one with other Council members to get each other's perspectives prior to the meeting.
3. City Manager Schainker: Put more items under the Consent Agenda.
4. Mayor Campbell: Redundant points should not be made.

Council Member Orazem said that the City is unique in that: it includes a Power Plant as part of its Electric Utility and it has a jointly operated Transit system. He also noted that the City has an aging sewer system and is building a new Water Treatment Plant. Mr. Orazem contended that there are many issues that need to be dealt with, so sometimes lengthy meetings are necessary.

Council Member Larson acknowledged that the meetings are many and long, but needed due to the complexity of the issues.

Council Member Wacha pointed out that he had been the Council member who had wanted a goal of more efficient meetings; however, he now believes that could actually compromise quality.

Discussion ensued on "calling the question" when discussion had stalled, was becoming redundant, or no new information was being presented. Assistant City Attorney Judy Parks advised that it was her understanding of Robert's Rules that if a Council member called for the question, discussion would cease, and the vote would be taken. Council Member Davis added that there are two options under Robert's Rules: (1) all discussion ceases immediately or (2) the legislative body would actually vote on whether the question should be called.

The Council was also asked if the amount of information to be provided on Agenda items by staff was adequate. Council members concurred that it was. Mayor Campbell noted that if a Council member had any questions about any items on an Agenda, he or she should ask City Manager Schainker to answer those prior to the meeting.

Council Member Goodman asked if it were possible for staff to be more conservative when creating the Agendas. City Manager Schainker pointed out that there are many time-sensitive items and the Council has directed that staff have a “can-do attitude.” He believes that staff needs to be more direct in telling the Council that there is only time to deal with a certain number of issues; therefore, the Council has to direct which items will have to “slide” to the next agenda.

Council/Staff - City Attorney. Mayor Campbell advised that Council Members Goodman and Larson had been assigned to work on the recruitment of the new City Attorney. Mr. Larson gave a report on his and Mr. Goodman’s meetings with Acting City Attorney Judy Parks, City Manager Schainker, and Mayor Campbell. It was noted that the City Council directly supervises the City Attorney. Council Member Goodman said that he felt the Council had been remiss in not knowing what the City Attorney does and providing direction to him or her. The Mayor shared that the Council members needed to be cognizant of the amount of work that they assign to the City Attorney. Council Member Szopinski stated her preference that the City Attorney be seated around the dais with the Mayor, Council, and City Manager.

The City Council committed to continue to meet with the City Attorney periodically. It was decided that the Mayor and two Council members serving on the compensation committee would be the ones to periodically meet with him or her.

Council/Staff – City Manager and Staff. City Manager Schainker reviewed the current policy regarding City Council members contacting staff: Any Council member has the prerogative to go directly to any City employee to ask questions, just like any other citizen. Mr. Schainker would like to be apprised of the issue, if possible. It is understood that Council members will not direct any staff member to embark on any task without the consensus of other Council members. City Manager Schainker noted that there are times when a citizen has an issue, shares it with a Council member, and that Council member asks a member(s) of City staff to meet at the site of the issue. When the Council member also attends such a meeting, it puts pressure on the City employee, who is unsure whether he or she is being directed to do whatever action is being asked for by the citizen or just there to listen to the issue. Mr. Schainker recommended that, if he or she chooses, the Council member could continue to meet at the site with the citizen and City employee (preferably including City Manager Schainker) and listen to the complaint or issue, but not direct staff to take any action at that time. City Manager Schainker clarified that it is important for Council members to continue to meet with their constituents. The difference is that no direction to take any action should be given to staff by the Council member. To do that, it needs to be by a vote of the Council as a whole. Council Member Larson asked Mr. Schainker to let the Council know if staff ever expresses that he or she felt pressured by a Council member to take any action.

Mr. Schainker shared that 80 referrals for some type of action had been made by the City Council to staff. Staff was requested to send the Referrals update to Council on a monthly basis.

Council/Public. The City Manager noted a staff policy that if one Council member asks a question of the City Manager or staff, staff’s response is sent to all Council members, not only to the one making the inquiry. Discussion ensued whether a Council member should forward information via email to the other Council members after he or she had met with a neighborhood association, citizen advocacy group, or constituent. Concerns were expressed whether doing so was actually violating the Open Meetings Law since all Council members could be offering dialog on the issue without it occurring at a public meeting. It was noted that members may

have discussions one-on-one, but the public perception is very important and the public may draw the wrong conclusion. Acting City Attorney Parks cautioned the Council about having individual meetings with citizens and sharing their opinions about the issue in an email with all the Council members.

Ms. Parks also cautioned the Council that when discussion involves a certain set of facts pertaining to a legislative change, e.g., rezoning, that information needs to be presented to the remainder of the Council at the same time. Any discussion between the Council member and the public should be curtailed and a recommendation made to bring it before the entire Council as a whole. An example was provided by Council Member Goodman that if a zoning change has been applied for, therefore pending, it should not be discussed in an individual meeting. Assistant City Manager Kindred stated that City staff needs to advise the Mayor and Council when applications had been filed.

The meeting recessed at 10:30 a.m. and reconvened at 10:37 a.m.

Review of Current Status of Goals/Objectives/Tasks. City Manager Schainker noted that 33 tasks had emanated from the Goals and Objectives set during the last Goal-Setting Session.

Council Member Wacha recommended that the Council “stay the course;” when the current goals were set, they were set as two-year goals. He pointed out that there is a great deal already placed on staff’s plate.

Council Member Larson noted that situations had changed, so what was germane last year might not be so this year. City Manager Schainker noted that, on the Summary distributed by staff, if the item says “Completed,” it only refers to the Task, not necessarily the Objective or the entire Goal.

Discussion ensued on specific items where no action had yet been taken, as follows:

Wayfaring Signs (Entryway Signs). City Manager Schainker noted that the Chamber had taken a different path to accomplish the objective. Management Analyst Phillips noted that the Chamber had submitted a grant for funding through the Outside Request funding program.

Council Member Goodman asked to review each goal individually.

- **SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Improve electric energy efficiency within the community. Council Member Goodman suggested that a strategy be developed to go from informing to action.

Educate Ames residents about environmental sustainability. Council Member Larson recommended asking the Student Affairs Commission to assist the City with educating the public about Ames efforts.

Increase availability of alternative forms of transportation. Nothing further.

Increase availability of alternative forms of transportation Consider life-cycle operating costs when making vertical infrastructure decisions.

- **PROMOTE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Develop Ames as a Regional Center. The first two tasks are in progress, and nothing further is needed. Regarding the third task that pertains to extending utilities to 590th Street, it was concurred by the Council that a resolution to the issue as to what entity was going to provide water to the east needed to be found.

Support private sector growth to improve quality of life, increase number of jobs, develop stronger tax base. Discussion occurred about the use of EDSAT (Economic Development Self-Assessment Tool). It was concurred that the Council needed to be re-educated as to how the matrix works. They need to review the matrix and determine if the matrix needed to be “tweaked.” Council Member Goodman asked staff to report specifically on what EDSAT has to offer (receivables) and if there are similar companies who do that work. Council also asked to receive an update from the AEDC as to what has already been done in this area. *Ex officio* Member Baker also commented on keeping Iowa State graduates in Ames and finding ways to notify them of what jobs were available. A suggestion was made for the Student Affairs Commission to work with the Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development Commission to link graduates with available jobs.

The meeting recessed at 11:35 a.m. and reconvened at 11:50 a.m.

The discussion on the tasks under Promote Economic Development continued.

Beautify entrances to Ames and major arterials. No new tasks were assigned, but Council concurred that it wanted to retain this objective.

Revisit City Codes, policies, and procedures to streamline processes and to help facilitate renovation of existing buildings. It was noted that the Fire Chief is working with the Management Analyst to determine how other cities have dealt with this issue.

Promote Ames as a welcoming place to do business by embracing a “Can Do” attitude. The Business Development Coordinator is working on developing a page on the City’s website to help businesses who are contemplating developing and/or expanding in Ames.

- **STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY**

Promote community vision and brand. Council Member Goodman stated his opinion that the City should be expanding its efforts, including allocating funding for external advertising. Council decided to direct the BRAG Team to have conversations with all local groups to share a common message promoting Ames and to identify a list of specific organizations that would help spread the word. Staff asked to have a report from the BRAG Team as a Council presentation.

Enhance interactions between ISU students and permanent residents. It was suggested that members of the Student Affairs Commission be asked for recommendations to revamp the Commission.

Work with ASSET funders to identify and address service deficiencies in human service delivery. Discussion centered around whether the Objective needed to be changed to

“Review the Needs Assessment annually (with City’s ASSET volunteers)in the summer prior to the budget hearings and possibly set new priorities.”.

Explore issues related to youth in the community. Council Member Szopinski said that she will talk to YSS, Ames and Gilbert School Systems, United Way, etc., to share information and see if there is any interest in developing a youth master plan and report back to the Council.

- **MITIGATE FLOODING IN OUR COMMUNITY.** Staff was asked to provide recommendations regarding possible City policies regarding overland (non-river) flooding. It was decided that staff would continue to work on developing a strategy to educate the public regarding the impacts of future intense rainfall events and how they can take to prevent and/or ensure against damage.
- **ENHANCE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ISU THROUGH ADDITIONAL PARTNERSHIPS.**

Revitalize Campustown. Council concurred that staff should continue to work with Campus Action Association and ISU to assist in their efforts to revitalize Campustown.

Foster negotiations between ISU and CAA to help Campustown businesses be viable. City Council members concurred that this task should be removed.

Explore convention center funding feasibility. Council Member Larson suggested that they talk to the Governor about options other than a beverage tax. It was also recommended that this task be moved under Economic Development. It was decided that the Mayor and City Manager should work with the ACVB and Iowa State University about alternate funding sources.

It was decided to add a new task under Enhancing Relationships with ISU through Additional Partnerships: Host a working lunch (informal setting) with the ISU President Leath and his key staff to get a brief review of the University’s goals, discuss Town & Gown, share information about Airport, etc.

Council Comments: Mayor Campbell shared with the Council that after the Legislature went back into Session, House File 9 was introduced that would deregulate the number of unrelated persons who may live in a unit. She said it was a Bill that would be watched carefully by the City. She invited anyone who desired to listen in on a telephone conference that she and Assistant City Manager Kindred have regularly with the Iowa League of Cities.

Attempts were made to find alternate dates for workshops on the Flood Study #2, Inspection of Greek Houses, and the Gasification Study. Council Member Larson asked that the City Manager request Fire Chief Shawn Bayouth to be present at a meeting to be held in the afternoon on February 2, 2013, to discuss inspection of Greek houses with fraternity/sorority Board Presidents. Discussion occurred as to whether to schedule the Council meeting regarding the inspection of Greek Houses during the morning of February 2, 2013, and perhaps opening up Saturday mornings for Council workshops. No further action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor