

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

AMES, IOWA

JUNE 15, 2021

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 6:00 p.m. on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2021. Council Members Gloria Betcher, Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and David Martin were present. *Ex officio* Member Trevor Poundstone was also present.

Mayor Haila announced that the Council would be working off an Amended Agenda. Added was a Resolution to set the date of public hearing regarding granting an Easement to Interstate Power & Light for a gas pipeline near Maxwell Street.

**EASEMENT TO INTERSTATE POWER & LIGHT FOR GAS PIPELINE:** Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Martin, to adopt RESOLUTION NO. 21-338 setting the date of public hearing for June 22, 2021, regarding granting an Easement to Interstate Power & Light for a gas pipeline from the right-of-way at the intersection of E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street and Maxwell Street south for 40 feet along the east side of Maxwell Street.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Resolution declared adopted unanimously, signed by the Mayor, and hereby made a portion of these Minutes.

**WORKSHOP ON PROPOSED EXTERIOR PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CODE:** Mayor Haila stated that the workshop would begin with a short presentation by Fire Chief Rich Higgins and Building Official Sara VanMeeteren. Goals of the proposed Ordinance were reviewed, as follows:

1. Public safety
2. Healthy living conditions
3. General community welfare
4. Consolidation of Code sections
5. Clearer regulations to help citizens understand Code requirements
6. Eliminate violations in a timely manner

It was noted that the proposed Ordinance would apply to both residential and commercial properties.

Building Official VanMeeteren stated that enforcement will be complaint-driven. The complaint process was explained. Ms. VanMeeteren advised that the City received 704 complaints in the last four years; 524 of those were violations (74%). Internal policy is to send three notices of violation with a compliance deadline. If the property owner fails to comply or has not agreed to an alternate compliance schedule with staff, a citation may be issued. There were 23 citations issued in the last four years with 13 of those issued to habitual violators. A brief description of each regulation that will be contained in the proposed Ordinance was provided, including:

Garbage Receptacles at Curb. The proposed Ordinance prohibits garbage receptacles from being kept on the curb for longer than 24 hours. This currently applies to rental properties. There is an average of five complaints/year on rental properties.

Outdoor Storage of Garbage. The current Ordinance requires garbage to be kept in a hard water-tight receptacle. An average of 14 complaints/year have been received over the last four years.

Outdoor Storage of Junk. The current Ordinance prohibits the outdoor storage of items for more than 72 hours; the proposed Ordinance changes the time frame to 48 hours. There has been an average of 23 complaints/year received over last the four years.

Outdoor Storage of Yard Waste. The current and proposed Ordinances allow yard waste to remain on a property for up to seven days. Composting in accordance with the Iowa Code is exempted from the seven-day time frame. An average of 13 complaints/year have been received over the last four years.

Stagnant Water. The definition of “standing water” is that which is trapped and does not circulate. A time frame to allow rainwater to dissipate after heavy rain events could be added.

Debris on Sidewalk: The proposed Ordinance prohibits debris from being on a sidewalk. A time frame could be added to allow it to be removed.

Right-of-Way Vegetation. The proposed Ordinance limits the height of vegetation in the right-of-way to 12 inches, but it does not limit species. Three possible alternatives were given.

Right-of-Way Encroachment. The current Ordinance requires owners to maintain adjacent sidewalks and parking.

Dense Vegetation: The proposed Ordinance prohibits dense vegetation; however, they could limit it to just vegetation that impedes ingress/egress.

Turf Grass. The proposed Ordinance prohibits turf grasses from exceeding 12" in height. There has been an average of 35 complaints/year over the last four years on non-rental properties.

Dangerous Trees. The proposed Ordinance requires removal of dangerous trees. The City Forester will make the determination if a tree is dangerous; the tree must present an immediate danger to people or property in the public way.

Excavations/Holes. Excavations or holes would be prohibited from remaining on a property for more than 30 days in the proposed Ordinance. This would not include egress window wells or fire pits.

Vacant Structures. The proposed Ordinance requires vacant structures to be secured.

Structural Maintenance. The proposed Ordinance requires structures to be maintained free of holes, chipping paint cannot dominate the structure, and gutters and other appurtenances must be secured.

Graffiti. *Graffiti* was defined by Building Official VanMeeteren. It becomes a violation once it has been on the property for 48 hours. After receiving a complaint, staff will work with the owner toward removal.

Junk Vehicles. There are very specific criteria used for deeming a junk vehicle. The City has averaged nine complaints per year over the last four years. The current Ordinance has provisions for citing the owner and for removal of the vehicle by the City. There are some exceptions, which allow junk vehicles to remain on the property in the current Ordinance.

Storage of Non-Junked Vehicles. The current Ordinance prohibits the storage of non-junked vehicles for more than 15 days with the same exceptions as junk vehicles and one additional exception: Owners who are out of town for more than 15 days, but not exceeding 180 days.

Recreational Vehicle Parking. The current Ordinance allows one travel trailer, recreational vehicle, boat, or boat trailer to be parked on an approved surface for up to 72 hours behind the front-yard setback as long as it is not being used for living purposes. The City has averaged two complaints/year over the last four years.

Council Member Gartin shared that he is concerned about the impact the proposed Ordinance might have on older commercial properties that have been in their current state for a very long time. To bring the properties up to Code could cause a significant financial burden for the property owners. He suggested that perhaps having a staggered enforcement date for residential and commercial could be considered.

Building Official VanMeeteren gave some differences between what is being proposed for residential and what is being proposed for commercial.

Mr. Gartin asked if there was there anything being considered to help those property owners who will be caused significant financial burdens by the proposed Ordinance. He suggested that perhaps the City could consider a loan-type grant. Mr. Gartin stated that he does worry about the potential of weaponizing the Code based on a dislike for a certain property owner.

Council Member Corrieri noted that Story County has a trust fund that could help pay for larger repair projects for property owners. She shared that \$186,000 had been allocated last year, and additional funds were recently allocated to trust funds.

At the request of the Mayor, Ms. VanMeeteren explained the process staff follows when a complaint is received.

Ms. VanMeeteren emphasized that what is being proposed in the Ordinance is the minimum standard. After being asked, she commented that the vegetation height requirement will pertain to properties on Main Street. There currently is no exception; however, the intent is not to prevent people from having hostas or other types of taller vegetation; the primary concerns are visibility and safety.

According to Ms. VanMeeteren, the City's Community Codes Liaison responds to complaints and educates property owners. Those calling in complaints may remain anonymous; however, staff will not be able to follow up with the complainant.

The question was asked if a property owner could find out how many times a property had been

reported as violating an ordinance. Ms. VanMeeteren advised that an Open Records Request may be submitted. The City also has a Citizen Permitting Portal, which contains that type of information.

Mayor Haila reiterated that the proposed Ordinance would be complaint-driven only.

Public Input. The Mayor welcomed those who wished to provide their thoughts; however, there will not be dialogue with the Council at this meeting. Speakers will be allowed to talk for up to four minutes.

Ed Lyon, 725 Hodge Avenue, Ames, Iowa, advised that he has over 300 feet of right-of-way that he has attempted to beautify. He stated his belief that rights-of-way should be regulated; however, he believes that the proposed Ordinance is too vague and asking too much too quickly. The City has allowed different types of gardens to be planted in the rights-of-way, and to suddenly go from that to not allowing plantings to be higher than 12 inches is too much. Mr. Lyon commented that he has a real issue with turf. Turf is the biggest consumer of water and causes issues with chemicals. He noted that turf grows to about a maximum of about 12 inches at maturity, which is what is now being proposed in the Ordinance. That means that people don't have to mow turf until it exceeds 12 inches, which is going to be far less attractive. Where the plantings are not creating visibility issues, Mr. Lyon would like the City to encourage people to plant and beautify the rights-of-way and help with sustainability.

Jessica McDaniel, 1521 Kellogg Avenue, Ames, noted that the City has built a community of diversity and inclusiveness, which is laid out in the Ames Vision and strategic goals. The proposed Code creates a conflict with that message. If the Code is implemented, homeowners would lose their right to manage their property as they see fit or can afford. She reminded the Council that the City already has a safety code that every homeowner is supposed to adhere to. Ms. McDaniel believes that the proposed Code goes above and beyond the issue of safety and is geared toward achieving aesthetic uniformity. She questioned who the proposed Code is going to impact the most. Ms. McDaniel thinks that the proposed Code disproportionately disadvantages low-income property owners. Many of these owners are already at risk. Instead of "looking down on those properties," Ms. McDaniel suggested that people donate a few hours to help their neighbor. The City should utilize its funds to help those low-income homeowners, don't shame and penalize them. She urged the City Council to move on to more important items.

Helen Gunderson, 1626 Burnett, Ames, presented a short video to illustrate a well-managed prairie patch (prairie forbs and grasses, prairie grasses and flowers, native forbs and grasses, and native grasses and flowers) growing in a right-of-way in Ames. She asked that the City promote healthy prairie patches and suggested that a prairie patch permit be created. Ms. Gunderson shared that she favored the City having consistent standards for rental and owner-occupied homes. She also hopes that the Council would ensure that the rationale for a standard is not based on an urban myth and that a decision is not one of simply siding with the prevailing biased thinking. She explained that she has a prairie patch in the right-of-way on her property with a prairie management system that includes cutting the height of the patch twice in June and July, again just before school starts, and again in the spring to begin a new season.

Ms. Gunderson shared that a big concern of hers is seeing toddlers, teenagers, and adults riding bicycles

on the sidewalks, which she believes is illegal. She has been told that riding on sidewalks is actually more dangerous than riding on the street. Ms. Gunderson said that if the Council members decide to limit the height of plantings in the right-of-way to 12 inches, they should not only set minimums, but also engage in conversations about how to promote positives, e.g., establishing a permit program to promote creating and maintaining prairie patches on volunteer rental owner-occupied properties. She also believes that if the City has the authority to set standards and to respond to complaints and issue fines for violations of the proposed Ordinance, the City should also have the authority to do something about the unsafe nature of turf grass and the chemicals used on it. According to Ms. Gunderson, she realizes that the City cannot go up against the EPA, but that doesn't mean the City can't engage in conversations and start educating that residents can have a healthy, robust lawn by starting to mow later, mowing less often, mowing shorter, and stop mowing earlier in the fall.

Ann Kinzel, 720 Duff Avenue, Ames, noted that there are a lot of opinions as to what a property maintenance ordinance is. She pointed out that this is the beginning of a process. The Council is here to take input from citizens, and at the end, she hopes that it will result in an ordinance that does regulate private property in Ames. Citizens should think about broader questions, i.e., "What is important to the community in regards to property maintenance and value and safety." The Council's job is to find a just balance of that. Ms. Kinzel noted that a very important concern is about expenses. As a community, Ames should find creative ways to make funds available in the form of forgivable loans for those who want to improve their property and make it safe in such a way that is fair and equitable. She asked that the Council members listen to their constituents and for the citizens to listen to each other. The goal is to find a way to protect both the rights of the community and the rights of individuals.

Matthew Panthani, 307 - 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Ames, said that he was shocked that the City wanted to create the Ordinance after looking at the justification. One of the reasons was aesthetics, which is subjective, and the other one was motivation to not have a disparity between rentals and homeowners. Equity was also brought up. In regards to equity between homeowners and rentals, he believed the correct term would be equality - to have the same laws applied to each. Equity would mean that homeowners and landlords would have the same means. Mr. Panthani said the City should strive to be equitable. Three areas that Mr. Panthani found lacking or wrong in the proposed code are:

1. Enforceability. It is improper to have a code where it won't be enforced in the way it is stated. According to Mr. Panthani, history has shown that these types of laws disproportionately affect those who are black, brown, or poor. Laws should be clear in their intention and how they will be enforced.
2. Purpose. Oftentimes people who are renting out properties do not live in Ames. Also, he did not believe that there had been that many complaints.
3. Some of the proposed regulations are philosophical. He noted that people should be able to do what they want with their property as long as it is safe and doesn't harm anyone.

Mr. Panthani pointed out that there is already a mechanism in place if people want certain standards for their property: Residents may get together and form a Home Owners' Association (HOA). Personally, he talks to his neighbors about the possibility of doing things, e.g., raising chickens, on his

property. Again, it is important for the Council to think about equity and enforceability. Unclear laws could disproportionately affect certain people.

Carol Stuve, 218 Hilltop, Ames, said that she was here specifically concerning a property on Tripp Street. She would like to have an appointed official stop and talk to the people at that address, which is full of junk. Ms. Stuve also believes that people are living in their cars on the street. In addition, there are people constantly coming and going; it appears to be a haven for the homeless. She stated her desire for the City to have an appointed official who could stop at that address and tell the residents there that some of the things they are doing are not allowed. Most people do not even walk on that side of the street anymore because the sidewalk is always congested and full of junk. This has been going on forever and needs to be addressed. According to Ms. Stuve, the houses around the one in question are being sold because they can't stand the commotion and junk. She requested that the City have an official who would stop at the address in question, talk to the residents, and address the issues. Ms. Stuve sees the residence as a "haven for the homeless."

Peter Hallock, 114-8th Street, Ames, said he was speaking on his own behalf as well as in his role as President of the Old Town Neighborhood Association. He said the Old Town Neighborhood Association partners with Parks & Recreation on a program where they have been planting "corner gardens," or "sign gardens" since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In 2005, the Association received a Neighborhood Improvement Grant to add limestone edging around the gardens. According to Mr. Hallock, most of the corner gardens are within the vision triangle, and currently, they have to be maintained to the three-foot maximum. The Association is very much opposed to changing that to a 12" maximum height for plantings in the rights-of-way. Mr. Hallock noted that, personally, he is in favor of the Ordinance, in general, and in favor of regulating vegetation, both on properties and in the right-of-way; however, he does not like the 12" proposal in the rights-of-way. He shared that he walks around town a lot, and he is very much concerned about the encroachment of vegetation and "muck" on sidewalks. Therefore, he is in favor of treating that just like the City treats snow so that sidewalks are made passable.

Tom Niehall, 1515 Maxwell Avenue, Ames, said he was in favor of having the same regulations for owner-occupied and rental properties - of having a uniform standard. He recognized that the fine-tuning of it will be difficult to do, but he is in favor of it.

Norm Hawkins, 5115 Todd Drive, Ames, voiced his support of the Ordinance to say to people that they just can't let their property go. He believes the purpose of the Ordinance should not be aesthetics; it should be safety. Mr. Hawkins noted that his residence is by a house on the east side that was shown in the Power Point as not being maintained. They have seen wildlife (raccoons, woodchucks, opossums) going in and coming out of that house.

Patrick Schmidt, 1006 Roosevelt Avenue, Ames, stated that he was not in favor of the proposed ordinance due to the impact it would have on the climate. He thinks that Ames should have higher standards than small town Iowa and be adaptable to change. The younger generation wants native natural habitats. Climate change is real; it is estimated that the Earth will only continue to exist for another 150 years unless something is done, e.g., putting carbon in the ground through plants. Mr. Stewart does not believe the 12" height maximum for plants in the rights-of-way is reasonable. He

noted that people who don't maintain their properties sometimes suffer from depression, disabilities, or illnesses; the community needs to help them. Those people also might not have much money. He is not in favor of changes and asked why the changes were necessary.

Tim Stewart, 1004 Roosevelt, Ames, commented that he agreed the community needs to have some safety standards. He said that he has a lot of plants in his yard and often has to trim along the sidewalk in his front yard to keep a path open for pedestrians. Mr. Stewart is particularly concerned that the Ordinance would address dense vegetation and vermin. To some extent, he is also concerned about vegetation in the rights-of-way. He stated that both dense vegetation and vermin need to be very well defined. In his opinion, vermin includes brown rats and mice; it should not include opossums or snakes, which actually eat mice. The dense vegetation provides a habitat for certain types of vermin. Plants provide many benefits to people; they are the primary mitigation against environmental crises and climate change. Plants absorb carbon dioxide and put it into the ground where it is stored and provide many other benefits. Mr. Stewart shared his concern that the proposed ordinance is not environmentally-responsible; plants should be left alone. He asked that the community "move to a new era where "turf grass is not king and bio diversity is."

David Brenner, 1214 Marston Avenue, Ames, said that he enjoys looking at the vegetation as he walks around Ames; that includes the area between the sidewalk and the street. If there are those who do not have that, the City perhaps should work with them and help them to have it, which "might be more fun."

Shannon Kelsem, 3312 South Bell Avenue, Ames, shared her concerns about many of the proposals as they seem overwhelmingly aimed towards the poor, elderly, and disabled. Most people would take care of their property if they are able. She sees it as pitting neighbor against neighbor, instead of incentivizing community-building and relationships. In her opinion, many of the proposed regulations are so vague and undefined that they could be used in almost any way imaginable to harass certain homeowners. Ms. Kelsem said that her property abuts two apartment complexes, and she is very concerned about those entities weaponizing the proposed Ordinance against her for trees or whatever else they choose. She believes that her property is very desirable on which to construct an apartment complex. If that is the case, she wants that to be at her choosing, not dictated by someone else. Her property, when purchased in 2007, was probably in violation of a number of the items proposed in the new Ordinance. Its dilapidated state was one of the reasons they were able to purchase a property in Ames. According to Mr. Kelsem, the former owner was elderly and was unable to deal with the issues, but was simply trying to remain in her home as long as possible. She shared that over the past 14 years, they have been able to bring their property into compliance with most of the items; however, there was no way that that would have been possible in a short period of time.

Ms. Kelsem expressed her concern again about the vagueness of the proposed Ordinance. She noted that the City has stated that it does not go out looking for violations, which might be the case with this Council and the current City government, but another Council might decide to deal with it in an entirely different way. Ms. Kelsem stated that it is not realistic for every property in Ames to be well-kept. People are dealing with a lot of issues and do not have the time, energy, or money to address these types of property issues. She believes that the proposed regulations will mainly incite neighbor against neighbor; that is not bringing Ames into unity.

Ms. Kelsem noted that she was shocked about the regulation concerning having a working car that is not moved for 15 days. She shared her personal experience where her son was in the hospital and his car did not move for weeks. Ms. Kelsem believes that regulation is targeted toward the poor because they are the ones who would not have a garage or enough garage space to store vehicles. She asked whose business it is whether her car hasn't moved for 15 days.

Bill Kelsem, 3318 South Duff Avenue, said he shares the views of his sister Shannon Kelsem, who lives next door to him. He believes that the large apartment complexes that were built nearby his property have de-valued his property. Mr. Kelsem described some of the issues that he has encountered with disrespectful and inconsiderate neighbors since the complexes were built. He stated his belief that what the City is doing is wrong, and he disagrees with it.

Carol Williams, 628 - 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Ames, said that homeowners are not landlords. She shared that she has spent 15 years adding and subtracting from the gardens at her home. Ms. Williams commented that she would support reviewing some of the Codes for landlords if they are as much "turf-eccentric" as the proposed Code seems to be. Ms. Williams believes that some of the proposed regulations seem to be very much targeted towards lower-income homeowners, but yet the City has stated that it would like to create lower-priced homes for citizens. She asked why the City wants to punish those lower-income citizens who don't have garages. In Ms. Williams' opinion, the proposed Code was not written for this vibrant community; the rights-of-way should be used for much more than grass. The proposed regulations are too vague and only open up the possibility of unhappy neighbors tattling on each other. She pointed out that not everyone is going to agree on what is aesthetically pleasing. Ms. Williams asked the Council to vote no on the proposed Ordinance or re-write it to address the problems that Council members are really worried about. If the concern is visibility at intersections, the Council should include that. She urged the Council to consider how the proposed Code will affect low-income homeowners.

Elias Simpson, 1011 Clark Avenue, Ames, said that he thinks that the proposed Ordinance represents a narrow segment of the population. Mr. Simpson commented that it is hard to respond to such an Ordinance and suggested that the City hear the voices of gardeners and environmentalists and advocates for social justice. He noted that he chose to live in a "garden" neighborhood that encourages vegetation. The proposed Ordinance threatens pollinators that attract bees and butterflies. Mr. Simpson believes that the proposed Ordinance targets persons who are financially insecure, overworked, elderly, and handicapped. He suggested that, rather than threatening those individuals, the City should try a cooperative approach and offer trash services, towing, mowing with electric mowers, lawn maintenance, planting, and labor that might be needed. Mr. Simpson recommended that, if changes are needed to the Code, the Council should do so in a way that demonstrates sensitivity, sensibility, ingenuity, generosity, and a cooperative spirit.

Porter Kelsem, 3312 South Duff Avenue, Ames, stated that the proposed Ordinance is probably the most vague document he has ever read. He does not believe the City has the right to tell property owners what they can do on their property. The junk vehicle section bothers him the most. He noted that there is no real definition of what a junk vehicle is. According to Mr. Kelsem, the City makes it impossible to build a shed large enough to work on a vehicle and store it at the same time. He believes it is none of the City's business whether residents have multiple vehicles, whether they are being



worked on or not. He pointed out that if someone has six to ten vehicles, having to move them every 15 days is a pain and having them all stored in one location is a pain. This City makes it a “nightmare” to build anything.

Jeri Neal, 916 Ridgewood Avenue, Ames, believes it is a good thing to review ordinances from time to time. She stated that she shared some of the concerns of those who spoke before her and those who responded to the survey. First of all, there seems to be a sense that over-generalized terminology has been used, which gives this a feeling of overreach. To her, the proposed Ordinance feels very “upper middle class.” She asked how the proposed regulations can fairly take into account circumstances that reflect social or lifestyle diversity; to her, that is a “must.” Many of the triggers are subjective, e.g., be aesthetically pleasing. Ms. Neal said she is most concerned about the climate reality. She believes that the City is attempting to make rules and codes that are looking outward and backward, but not forward. What she doesn’t see is encouragement for changes that commiserate with the new climate reality; e.g., rights-of-way, lawns, green spaces need to service ecological niches; that needs to be incentivized. Ms. Neal recognized that water needs to be valued; that fact is totally missing in the proposed Ordinance. She commented that the City actually needs to add an ordinance that redirects how the City thinks about water conservation and management. She suggested that it include that water may not run or spray off a subject property. Potable drinking water is a gift.

Shellie Orngard, 928 Burnett Avenue, Ames, highlighted some parts of the proposed Ordinance that should be re-worked. One of those is that rental property owners believe that owner-occupied properties should be held to the same standards. Ms. Orngard noted that she, personally, believes it is ok to have different exterior property standards for rental property. The second item is the use of the term “vermin.” She believes that word is objectionable and seems designed to override reason by eliciting outright revulsion and makes people think of rats and Black Plaque. She believes more precise terms should be used; i.e., mice, tree squirrels, rabbits, other types of wildlife that are part of a natural environment. Ms. Orngard said the third thing that she questioned was trees that hang over the right-of-way. The requirement of ten feet over the sidewalk seems high to her considering that bikes are not supposed to be ridden on sidewalks. Also, she pointed out that, according to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa has one of the most altered landscapes in the world and the habitat of natural species (butterflies, bees, and other pollinators) has been decimated; Iowa used to be 76% prairie; now it is less than 1%. It was also Ms. Orngard’s opinion that having longer grasses helps with climate change.

Joe Lakowski, 5112 Todd Drive, Ames, said he graduated from Iowa State University with a bachelor’s degree in Horticulture and worked in that field for a year and one-half before returning to Ames. He commented that he does not own property, but hopes to one day. Mr. Lakowski noted that his main concern was with how vague the proposed Ordinance is, especially the 12-inch height policy. He commented that Iowa used to be primarily grasses, now it is filled with pesticides. Mr. Lakowski shared that he understands the need to not create visibility issues, but people should be allowed to plant in their front yards. He commented that he is big proponent of community gardens.

Mayor Haila closed public input.

The meeting recessed at 8:12 p.m. and reconvened at 8:21 p.m.

Council Member Martin pointed out that the regulations regarding what is a junk and a non-junk car are actually in current City of Ames Ordinances; they are not new. Building Official VanMeeteren clarified that staff wanted to bring it to the Council's attention to ensure that the Council still wanted that included. Mr. Martin noted that the Council has not voted on including any of the proposed regulations in a new Ordinance; however, some of the items that appear to have caught the public's attention are already in an Ordinance.

Mr. Martin asked to know the rules about bicycles riding on sidewalks. Council Member Beatty-Hansen answered that it is legal for people to ride on sidewalks unless posted as being prohibited as long as they do not exceed ten miles-per-hour. City Attorney Mark Lambert concurred saying that bicycles are generally allowed on sidewalks with very few exceptions (Main Street, Duff to Clark; Grand Avenue, and on parts of Lincoln Way, Hayward, and Welch).

Council Member Beatty-Hansen asked about something she had seen on the survey regarding pushing snow onto the street. Ms. VanMeeteren answered that she had been told by the City's Operations Manager that once a street has been cleared and people purposely push a lot of snow back onto the street, the City has to send a truck out to re-plow the street before it melts and re-freezes. According to the Operations Manager, there are some people who do it repeatedly and the City would like a way to talk to those people and explain that that is not allowed by Ordinance and they can't do it anymore. Council Member Betcher asked for clarification whether it was a problem with plows pushing the snow back on the street or is it from snowblowing and shoveling. Answering, Ms. VanMeeteren said it was from people snowblowing and shoveling and with those plowing large parking lots of apartment complexes who are pushing the snow from those areas onto the street, where it then re-freezes and becomes a safety issue. With every snow event that the City has had, the City has had to send trucks back out to re-plow the street because of these issues.

City Manager Schainker noted that there is an extensive definition of junked vehicles under Section 30.2.

Council Member Corrieri reiterated that the proposed Ordinance was intentionally left vague since this is the very beginning of the process, this workshop is the starting point. It is important for the Council to listen to the community and the community members to listen to one other.

Council Member Betcher shared her belief that the public input process was working and doing what it is supposed to do; she has appreciated the comments and suggestions. She believes the goal is to find something that works for the community with individuals having different values.

Council Member Gartin commented that some people don't maintain their property due to a mental health issue, depression, or because they are physically disabled and asked how staff would respond to that type of situation. Ms. VanMeeteren shared that the City does have those types of situations. The City has great mental health resource, and when staff recognizes those issues, they reach out to those resources, one of which is the City's Mental Health Advocate, who then, in turn, reaches out to the person. The Codes Liaison also meets with the property owner and tries to help them.

Mr. Gartin noted that no one spoke specifically about commercial properties. He asked staff to address

how the proposed Ordinance would impact lower-tier commercial properties. Building Official VanMeeteren noted staff does hope that they will be able to apply some of the ordinances to some commercial properties, i.e., primarily those that are vacant. It might be an option to specify the type of commercial property, e.g., vacant abandoned properties.

Council Member Gartin shared his concerns about how the proposed ordinance will impact lower-income persons and properties. He said he doesn't have the answers, but he would like to come up with a dynamic approach to set aside funds. If there are models of other communities that have done similar programs, he would like the Council to be made aware which ones. Council Member Beatty-Hansen said that she would like to pursue some type of grant program; perhaps on a point-based system. She also shared that perhaps if two signatures were required on a complaint, it could hopefully prevent pitting neighbor against neighbor.

Council Member Junck shared that she would also like the Council to put a lot of thought into ways to prevent the possibility of future Councils interpreting the Ordinances differently.

Mayor Haila said that the next steps will need to be determined. City Manager Schainker noted that the Council members should have some time to think about the proposed Ordinance and talk through the issues that were brought up. The time line has not been determined, and the next meeting to discuss the proposed Ordinance has not yet been set. Mr. Schainker suggested that the online survey be kept open for the public to comment. The Mayor noted that there are multiple items that the Council has on its docket, one of which is the Ames 2040 Plan that the City is needing to finalize.

Mayor Haila commended the community members who spoke; their compassion showed.

**DISPOSITIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL:** Mayor Haila noted that the Council's June 11<sup>th</sup> Non-Agenda Packet had included the following:

1. Request from the Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) to define "temporary" in the City's Zoning Ordinance
2. Email from Stefanie Day, who serves as a Sawyer Elementary School Crossing Guard, noting her safety concerns about the intersection of Ontario and North Dakota
3. Memo from Assistant City Manager Brian Phillips regarding a broadband infrastructure grant possibility for service to Dartmoor Road.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Betcher, to refer to staff for a memo the request from the ZBA for a definition of "temporary" to be included in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared approved unanimously.

Moved by Junck, seconded by Betcher, to refer to staff for a memo the email from Stefanie Day regarding safety concerns at the intersection of Ontario and North Dakota..

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared approved unanimously.

Mayor Haila noted that the memo from Assistant City Manager Phillips regarding the broadband infrastructure grant possibility to bring service to Dartmoore Road does not need to be referred ;it will be taken under advisement.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:** Council Member Gartin commented that the City of Ames Community Center has phenomenal recreation facilities, and he encouraged people to check them out.

Council Member Betcher shared that she had attended the Black Faculty and Staff Juneteenth event last weekend. She noted that there will be another educational opportunity on Juneteenth at the Ames Farmer’s Market on Main Street on Saturday.

**ADJOURNMENT:** Moved by Betcher to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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John A. Haila, Mayor