

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE AMES COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

BACKGROUND:

On April 24, 2007, the City Council directed City staff to submit an HRDP Grant Application to the State Historical Society of Iowa to fund the preparation of the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.

On June 20, 2007, the State Historical Society notified the City of Ames that the grant application was approved for funding at the amount requested, which is \$30,000. It was stated in the application that the consultant for this project would be William C. Page, public historian, who would complete research tasks leading to the completion of a historic preservation plan for Ames. The approved grant application also included a commitment by William C. Page to be the professional to prepare the Preservation Plan.

Steering Committee Work on the Preservation Plan. A Steering Committee for the Plan preparation has been working with Mr. Page to develop the draft of proposed goals and objectives, which will form the basis for future policies and recommendations in the Plan. Each of the eight members of the Steering Committee serves as a representative for a segment of the population in Ames that is directly affected by historic preservation policies and actions by the City of Ames.

The Steering Committee is composed of representatives of the following segments of the community:

- Ames Development Community (Russ McCullough);
- Ames Smart Growth (Janet Klaas);
- Ames Cultural District (Alan Spohnheimer);
- Old Town Historic District (Sharon Wirth);
- South Campus Area Neighborhood Association (Shawn Bearson);
- West Ames (Eden Schmitt);
- Iowa State University Student Body (Ryan Clemens); and the
- Community at Large (Shellie Orngard).

Joint Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Historic Preservation Commission. On March 4, 2009, the Planning and Zoning Commission conducted a joint meeting with the Historic Preservation Commission to review and receive public input on the draft of proposed goals and objectives for the Ames Comprehensive Historic

Preservation Plan.

At the meeting, suggestions were made for changes to the draft, which were then given to the Steering Committee for their consideration. The Steering Committee met on March 9 and discussed the comments received from the Planning and Zoning Commission and the citizens that spoke at the joint meeting. Additions and deletions were made by the Steering Committee in response to the comments received from both Commissions and from citizens at the joint meeting.

Action Taken by the Historic Preservation Commission. On April 13, 2009, the Historic Preservation Commission reviewed revisions to the proposed Goals and Objectives as drafted by the Steering Committee. The Commission recommended that the City Council accept the proposed goals and objectives for the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan as prepared by the Steering Committee.

The Historic Preservation Commission also requested that the Steering Committee consider adding a recommendation that the City review the ordinances governing preservation, including any ordinances to do with the Old Town Historic District Site Inventory Sheets.

Response and Recommendation by the Steering Committee. On May 4, 2009, the Steering Committee met to discuss the recommendation by the Historic Preservation Commission that the proposed goals and objectives include a recommendation that the City review the ordinances governing preservation, including any ordinances to do with the Old Town Historic District Site Sheets.

The Steering Committee responded by adding to Objective A under Goal #3 as follows: (Words added are shown in bold type. Words deleted are shown with a strikethrough.)

Goal #3: Enhance municipal policy to protect historic resources and implement policy through identification, effective legislation, and efficient regulatory measures.

Objective A: Revise Chapter 31 in the Ames Municipal Code **and related ordinances** to broaden ~~its~~ applicability, ~~and~~ improve ~~its~~ clarity, **and /or make consistent with National Register standards.**

Goals and Objectives for the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. Attached to this report is the set of Goals and Objectives as recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission and the Steering Committee for acceptance.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The City Council can accept the proposed Goals and Objectives for the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, as recommended for acceptance by the Historic Preservation Commission, including revisions by the Steering Committee.

2. The City Council can accept the proposed Goals and Objectives for the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, with revisions as determined by the City Council.
3. The City Council can refer this item back to City staff, the Consultant, the Steering Committee and/or the Historic Preservation Commission for additional information and/or changes.

MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

The Historic Preservation Commission should be commended for their excellent work in developing the attached proposed goals and objectives for the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan. Asking the Council to approve the goals prior to moving ahead with the development of the implementation strategies is a wise course of action.

It should be emphasized that the wording of the goals and objectives is very important because it provides the justification for the forthcoming implementation recommendations from the Historic Preservation Commission. In reviewing this wording, staff identified the following few issues that the Council could decide need further clarification from the Commission before approving the goals and objectives.

-Goal 2. Objective “a” commits the City to provide “substantial” support to the Ames Historical Society.

-Goal 2. Objective “b” commits the City to “increase” and promote economic incentives to encourage preservation.

-Goal 6. Objective “c” commits the City to continue and “expand” local incentives for historic preservation.

All three of the above objectives seem to call for an increased financial commitment. However, there is no indication what level of support is expected. Given the difficult financial times in which we find ourselves, the Council will have to decide if you want to make this type of commitment at this time.

-Goal 3. Objective “a” seeks to revise Chapter 31 of the Ames Municipal Code to make it consistent with the National Register Standards. The Council might want some clarification how this new approach will be different, if any, from our current philosophy.

Overall, the staff is very supportive of the proposed goals and objective being recommended by the Historical Preservation Commission. However, given the wording of the four objectives highlighted above, the Council might want further clarification before approving the total recommendation. If the Council is satisfied with the wording as proposed, then it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council approve Alternative #1. The Council would thereby accept the proposed Goals and Objectives for

the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan, as recommended for acceptance by the Historic Preservation Commission, including revisions by the Steering Committee.

If, however, if the City Council decides that any of the suggested goals or objectives need further clarification or revision, the matter should be referred back to the Commission in accordance with Alternative #3.

Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

(As recommended by the Historic Preservation Commission.)
(Steering Committee Changes to Objective 3a., as noted.)

05/12/09

1. Acknowledge the role of historic preservation in encouraging civic pride, neighborhood identity, economic vitality, and community sustainability.

Objectives:

- a. Adopt strategies to conserve historic neighborhoods, which reflect their organic development, historical roles and traditions, modern needs, and economic health and stability.
 - b. Facilitate the preservation efforts of neighborhood associations.
 - c. Strengthen the role of historic preservation in promoting Ames tourism.
 - d. Inform the public about the role of historic preservation in stabilizing and increasing property values and the community's tax base.
2. Promote the preservation of historically, architecturally, and archaeologically significant resources in the community.

Objectives:

- a. Provide substantial financial support for the Ames Historical Society to assist in achieving the goals of the Ames Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.
- b. Increase and promote economic incentives to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods.
- c. Provide guidance for preserving and improving historic properties to developers, property owners, and others interested in historic preservation.
- d. Encourage private support and commitment for preservation undertakings.
- e. Increase awareness of the potential for archaeological sites within the city and legal protection for them.

3. Enhance municipal policies to protect historic resources and implement policies through identification, effective legislation, and efficient regulatory measures.

Objectives:

- a. Revise *Chapter 31* in the Ames Municipal Code **and related ordinances** to broaden its applicability, ~~and~~ improve its clarity, **and/or make consistent with National Register Standards.**

Additions by the Steering Committee on May 4, 2009, are shown in “Bold” type and “Underlined.”

Deletions by the Steering Committee on May 4, 2009, are shown with a “Strikethrough.”

- b. Identify historic resources significant to the city’s past.
- c. Revise local historic district and landmark design guidelines to clarify their intent and to reflect new materials, technologies, and “green issues.”
- d. Ensure that design guidelines for city re/development incentive programs respect the historic character of the properties and surrounding areas to which they are applied.

4. Educate the public concerning the value and benefit of historic preservation.

Objectives:

- a. Increase public awareness of and support for historic preservation archival materials.
- b. Promote and offer walking tours, lectures, workshops, and other educational opportunities focused on historic preservation.
- c. Utilize website/on-line presence.
- d. Facilitate the dissemination of historic preservation information.

5. Facilitate and strengthen preservation partnerships among municipal, county, state and federal government agencies, including Iowa State University, Ames Historical Society, and local school districts.

Objectives:

- a. Open communication channels among all interested parties to identify common interests and concerns, to explore areas of mutual benefit, and to share historical data and research.
 - b. Develop timely notification and review/comment process for proposed re-use, rehabilitation, or demolition of historic resources.
6. Promote the economic development and vitality of the city through historic preservation.

Objectives:

- a. Assess the impacts of new development on the historic character of existing neighborhoods, commercial districts, and archaeological resources.
- b. Encourage adaptive reuse of existing buildings.
- c. Continue and expand local incentives for historic preservation. [e.g. TIF, facade improvement program]
- d. Provide current information concerning preservation grants and financial incentives.
- e. Recognize the importance of preservation tourism for Ames and support efforts to promote it.