

Staff Report

**REQUEST FROM JANE GRAHAM TO ADDRESS TO CONFLICT BETWEEN
THE WESTERLY LANDSCAPING AND MURAL IN TOM EVANS PLAZA**

September 14, 2010

Background:

At the last Council meeting a letter from Jane Graham, the co-artist of the Ames Historical Mural, was discussed. Ms. Graham expressed her concern that the trees that were planted on the west side of Tom Evans Plaza have “slowly reduced the visibility of the Mural.” She has asked to Council to “address the westerly landscaping and art element problem and arrive at a workable resolution of these two conflicting elements of design.”

At the meeting, the staff was asked to report on the opinions of the Public Art Commission and Downtown Cultural District regarding this issue.

Staff Comments:

Tom Evans Plaza was designed as a green space where people can go to read, eat, relax, gather, etc in the midst of concrete and bricks. The trees in question are Japanese Tree Lilacs, which are considered ornamentals trees (not shade trees). Standard maturity is listed as 20 - 25 feet in height, and 15 - 25 feet in width.

Public Art Commission (PAC)

The August 4, 2010 minutes of the Public Art Commission indicate that the Commission, “recommends supporting the City seeking alternatives to improving the visibility of the mural with minimal impact to the other landscaping or artistic features in Tom Evans Plaza.”

Downtown Cultural District (MSCD)

A from Angela Moore dated September 9, 2010 states, “the park was designed and the trees were planted prior to the Mural being painted. While the MSCD appreciates the value the Mural brings to the park, the MSCD Board of Directors feel that cutting down the trees is not necessary so that the Mural in its entirety may be seen from much farther back. People who appreciate the mural often walk up to get a closer look at all the details. If the trees are able to be trimmed slightly to allow more viewing of the Mural, that would be terrific.”



September 10, 2010

Sam Stagg & Public Arts Commission
City of Ames
515 Clark Ave
Ames, IA 50010

Sam Stagg & Public Arts Commission,

The Main Street Cultural District (MSCD) is pleased with the public art, streetscape and park landscape that exists downtown. Public Art along with beautification create an atmosphere that the community enjoys and encourages economic vitality. Tom Evans Park is home to the Tune In to Main Street 10-week summer concert series, monthly AM in the Plaza, as well as other occasional events. It is also a place where people come to enjoy the outdoors, eat lunch and relax. The Mural inside the park showcases the history of Ames in a unique way that encourages people to stop and look at it. During events in Tom Evans Park, the Mural creates a wonderful backdrop for concerts nestled between the trees.

Jane Graham has been in contact with MSCD regarding her request to cut down the two trees that are partially blocking the mural. The park was designed and the trees were planted prior to the Mural being painted. While MSCD appreciates the value the Mural brings to the park, the MSCD Board of Directors feels that cutting down the trees is not necessary so that the Mural in its entirety may be seen from much farther back. People who appreciate the mural often walk up to get a closer look at all the details. If the trees are able to be trimmed slightly to allow more viewing of the Mural, that would be terrific.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued support of the Main Street Cultural District.

Sincerely,

Angela Moore
Executive Director
Main Street Cultural District

Cc: Jeff Benson