

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE  
AMES CITY COUNCIL AND THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
GOVERNMENT OF THE STUDENT BODY**

**AMES, IOWA**

**NOVEMBER 13, 2013**

The Ames City Council met at 7:00 p.m. on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2013, in the Sun Room of the Memorial Union, Iowa State University, pursuant to law with the following Council Members present: Matthew Goodman, Jami Larson, Victoria Szopinski, and Tom Wacha. Council Member Peter Orazem arrived at 7:13 p.m. Council Member Jeremy Davis arrived at 7:31 p.m. *Ex officio* Council Member Alexandria Harvey, City Manager Steven Schainker, City Attorney Judy Parks, and Management Analyst Brian Phillips were also present. Mayor Ann Campbell was absent.

**SAFETY CONCERNS:** Following introductions of the Council Members, Government of the Student Body (GSB) Vice- President Hillary Kletscher introduced the topic of student safety concerns in the community. *Ex officio* Alexandria Harvey expressed concerns about the lack of lighting along Mortensen Road and noted that her car had been vandalized three times in the last month. She suggested that the change in lighting in the 100 block of Welch Avenue had improved visibility.

A GSB senator indicated a concern about the lack of lighting along the southern portion of Welch Avenue. City Manager Steve Schainker indicated that he had met with Warren Madden and the Ames School Superintendent on this issue, and outlined the differences between city, state, and institutional roads. Mr. Schainker estimated the cost to install lighting along Mortensen to be between \$50,000 and \$160,000. He explained that, although it is an ISU road, the University does not have funding to pay for the lighting. However, ISU may be willing to split the cost three ways. This proposal would not light the bike path. Mr. Schainker also noted that the same issue exists with State Avenue, although new development along that road may address the lighting situation. Council Member Larson pointed out that the City's portion of S. 16<sup>th</sup> Street is the four-lane road, while the University controls the road where it is a two-lane. The two-lane portion is where the lighting is deficient on that road.

**FIRE CODE:** *Ex officio* Alexandria Harvey expressed concern that there was no requirement in older buildings to install fire alarm systems. Mr. Schainker noted that the new edition of the Fire Code was anticipated to be adopted in January. The new codes allow for exceptions. The City will have to evaluate the codes to see what they require.

A GSB senator asked how the codes would apply to Greek housing. Mr. Schainker responded that Greek housing is extensively inspected. Council Member Wacha noted that sometimes code provisions have unintended consequences. It was not the Council's intent for the Rental Housing Code to apply to Greek housing. Council Member Orazem noted that in the Greek system, the residents manage the houses, unlike a typical landlord-tenant relationship. There is a distinction between renting to members and renting to non-members. Council Member Goodman stated that he did not know what the Council's final decision would be. No one

wants to end Greek housing. He offered that Greek students should be brought in to talks about how the pieces of the Rental Housing Code affect them. A GSB senator asked about the City's timeline for making a decision. Council Member Goodman responded that Greek housing had been exempted from the Rental Housing Code for now, but further discussion is needed.

**PAVING OF ROADS AND BIKE PATHS:** GSB Speaker Gabrielle Williams inquired about what happens to issues that are raised at the Campustown Safety Walk. Management Analyst Brian Phillips responded that the different concerns are divided out and sent to the appropriate City departments or property owners to be addressed. Council Member Larson expressed interest in being copied on the list of items that are sent to the departments to resolve. Mr. Phillips noted that he would note that for the future.

A GSB Senator asked if there were plans to expand the City's bike path system in the future. Council Member Orazem stated his desire to organize volunteers to add trails and bike paths in Ames. He also noted that, on the lighting situation in Campustown, GSB was supportive of installing cameras. Council Member Orazem noted that he also supported cameras.

Mr. Schainker pointed out that the path by the Intermodal Facility was gravel because the Iowa State University Cross Country track crosses it, and the Cross County track must not be paved.

A GSB senator asked what influence Kingland Systems had over installation of cameras in Campustown. Council Member Orazem responded that Kingland could put up private cameras if it so chose.

Mr. Phillips noted that a task force had been established to address bicycle-car and bicycle-pedestrian collisions in Campustown and look at ways to improve safety among a variety of transportation options.

**RENTAL HOUSING:** GSB Speaker Williams expressed a desire for students to be made aware of their rights as tenants. *Ex officio* Harvey noted that students have complained that they cannot address issues with landlords. She noted that, in 2008, an initiative to develop a tenant-landlord service was started, but did not become established. Council Member Orazem responded that something like that is in place at the University of Iowa, and it could mediate disputes over deposits. He noted that former *ex officio* Tor Finseth had worked on this. A GSB senator mentioned that he would work with Tor on this topic. City Attorney Judy Parks noted that Iowa State Legal Services can assist students with lease issues and that code violations could be brought to the City's attention.

A GSB senator asked what the frequency of rental inspections was. Mr. Schainker responded that the frequency varies, but that it is more frequent when more violations are found. Students can help by calling in complaints about violations. Council Member Goodman noted that students are often exploited because they are less experienced in handling leases and contracts. He noted that he would be supportive of GSB asking the City to look into this.

A GSB senator asked what the direction of rental housing growth was in Ames. Council Member Wacha responded that there is a market to build student housing. The Council's challenge is to balance that need to build with potential fluctuations in enrollment. The City must grow, but not too quickly. Council Member Larson added that non-student residents have different views that must be accommodated. Neighborhood associations help with that. ISU is growing very fast, and there is a need to open up land for businesses that can employ graduates and for all types of housing. Council Member Davis stated that ISU did not anticipate ten years ago that it would be this large. He noted his concern that a drop in enrollment could be difficult to handle if housing is built up too quickly. STEM jobs will come here if students are willing to stay. Council Member Orazem stated that older properties that were converted to rentals will become less attractive with growth and may be on the market in the future. The City Council could make it easier to convert these houses into owner-occupied homes. Council Member Goodman stated that the City needs new land, must renovate existing areas, and needs more jobs. The more efficiently this can be done, the better it will be for future generations. He would like to build the community in a more progressive way to accommodate that.

GSB Senator Vos asked whether it would be possible for landlords to apply to the City to allow more occupants in larger homes. Ms. Parks responded that spot zoning is frowned upon. There is no way to get special exemptions for just one lot like that. Senator Vos asked what the requirements of the University Impacted Area overlay district were. Ms. Parks explained that that Area has additional requirements to help maintain a particular character of the neighborhood. Council Member Goodman noted that families and independent adults have different lifestyles, and different lifestyles must be balanced. Council Member Larson stated that people buy houses with the expectation that the zoning will stay the same. He wants to make sure that home owners do not lose value, but rather get what they purchase.

GSB Senator Vos expressed concern about insufficient insulation and high heating bills in rental housing, and stated that landlords have no incentive to upgrade. He encouraged the Council to consider methods to spur improvement. Council Member Davis responded that individuals have a right to request the previous year's utility bills for a rental property. Students can choose to not rent from a landlord whose bills are too high. Council Member Goodman noted that the City offers incentives to install energy-efficient appliances, and Alliant Energy does the same. Energy audits are also offered. Council Member Larson stated that a rental inspector may require inspection of a furnace by a special inspector if there are safety concerns. Senator Vos responded that there is a difference between safety and efficiency. He would like to see landlords cited when they don't comply rather than incentivizing change. Speaker Williams noted that the problem in Campustown is that if you don't take an apartment, someone else will.

GSB Senator Khayree Fitten pointed out that the student situation is such that the City outlasts students. He asked how communication could be established so institutional memory is not lost. Council Member Szopinski stated that although a student comes to the City Council, the Council could come to the students. She explained that the Iowa Supreme Court has held proceedings in different cities. Council Member Larson explained that the City

Manager serves as a form of institutional memory for the City. He stated that it is difficult to lose that memory from year to year. Council Member Davis asked whether GSB asks other schools how they address this. GSB President Spencer Hughes responded that GSB has at least four advisors, but that it recently lost a long-time advisor.

**CAMPUSTOWN REDEVELOPMENT:** GSB Speaker Williams asked the City Council to explain the proceedings from last night's City Council meeting. Mr. Schainker responded that the Kingland project requires four or five actions before it is finally approved. The discussion will culminate on December 10<sup>th</sup>, when the project and incentives will be approved. Mr. Schainker noted that the first floor retail is still under discussion. There may be a desire to have retail guaranteed for a period of time or to limit the types of businesses allowed. He stated that he welcomed input from the community on this. Council Member Larson pointed out that Kingland came to the Council over a year ago. Some of the student involved in the discussion are no longer here. However, Kingland hear most recently from students that a drive-through window would be a problem, so that proposal is no longer on the plan. Student input was very important on that.

Mr. Schainker stated that two more developers were looking to put large residential buildings along Lincoln Way with commercial on the first floor. Council Member Szopinski stated that student input will continue to be important in the Kingland project to determine how long retail is required on the first floor. She stated her preference for retail to be there more than ten years. Council Member Larson stated that he had a tough time with a retail requirement in perpetuity. He stated that it must be remembered that the TIF length is ten years. To him, ten years is a long time. GSB Speaker Williams asked the Council to define what retail means for this project. Mr. Schainker stated that the City Code defined retail, but he did not have the definition available. It would not mean office use. Council Member Goodman stated his preference for the first floor to remain retail until the zoning changes, because zoning is "forever." In Somerset, many office uses moved in and the vibrancy of the area was diminished. GSB has leverage with the ISU administration to influence how the university invests in this project. Council Member Orazem noted that retail is not Kingland's core business. He did not want to restrict Kingland to the point that it loses money.

Speaker Williams stated that it seemed reasonable to keep retail a long time. Since many businesses have vacated in advance of the project, this was not a fun block to be on. She stated that this would continue if the first floor was all offices. Senator Vos asked about the type of incentive Kingland is receiving, and Mr. Schainker explained the TIF process. GSB Senator Johnson agreed that retail is desired and she would like to see it there for longer than ten years. She stated that more work could be done to fit the style of the building to the area. She also expressed a desire for the parking spaces to be able to be used for those visiting Campustown.

**BIKE SHARE PROGRAM:** GSB Vice President Kletscher described a group of ISU students who are working on a bike share program. This program has the potential to be expanded to the City. She noted that she had been contacted by City residents with an interest in this. Mr. Schainker noted that Management Analyst Brian Phillips has been in contact with GSB on this issue. Council Member Goodman asked whether there had been discussion about

locations within the City. Vice President Kletscher responded that there had been. She would envision this on Main Street and other highly visited locations. There is a high investment of between \$40,000 and \$50,000 per rack of ten bicycles. Council Member Davis asked whether the students had been surveyed about their interest in this service. Vice President Kletscher responded that some surveying had been done. She indicated that the intent was to start small and expand into the City over time. Speaker Williams inquired as to whether City grant funds were available to help fund this project. Mr. Schainker said not specifically, but that he believed some companies were out there that would operate these systems independently.

**CYRIDE:** GSB Vice President Kletscher explained that GSB Finance Director Dan Rediske had sent out a packet explaining the responses to the questions previously raised by a GSB Senator. Mr. Schainker noted that the questions on the agenda were difficult to answer. There was a discussion about how student rent contributes to property taxes. GSB Senator Knee stated that CyRide is at capacity and GSB has historically increased its funding. He asked whether the City would be interested in increasing its contribution. Mr. Schainker noted that this was a difficult topic. When CyRide went fare free, the student contribution went up, but students are still 91% of the riders. He did not expect the students to contribute 91% of the funding, but it is difficult to solve. Federal funding recently became no longer available for bud replacements.

GSB Vice President Kletscher thanked the Council for attending and sharing their opinions.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The joint meeting adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

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Diane Voss, City Clerk

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Ann H. Campbell, Mayor