

Iowa State University Student Government Senate

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Taken by Trevor Poundstone

## **Joint Ames City Council and Student Government Meeting**

March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021

The Great Hall, Memorial Union, Iowa State University

Present: Mayor John Haila, Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, and David Martin. Council Member Rachel Junck was absent. Ex-officio City Council Liaison Nicole Whitlock was also present. City Manager Steven Schainker, Assistant City Manager Deb Schildroth, and Assistant City Manager Brian Phillips were also present.

### **5:00:00 PM- CALL TO ORDER**

**5:00:42 PM- HAILA:** We are excited to hear from you as students are a part of our population as well. You can start when you are ready.

**5:00:55 PM- SCHRADER:** Hello, we will get started then. We will follow the agenda prepared by Nicole Whitlock, our Ex-Officio to the Ames City Council. There will be a few times for open discussion. I will call on one or two people during this time to make sure to stay on schedule. Then we will have presentations from each council member on topics they care about. Then we will wrap up.

### **5:01:45 PM- DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN AMES**

**5:01:56 PM- SCHRADER:** What can the city council be doing to improve in this area? If you have any questions, please raise your hand.

**5:02:27 PM- WHITLOCK:** After last week in student government, I feel that students are not feeling good, whatever side you are on. I think the city does a good job of making people feel included. An example is when the BLM movement had a bigger wave last fall, and we planned a workshop with them later this year. Continuing to reach out first is important. We need to be aware of all the groups in the community. Making sure we are there for them.

**5:03:51 PM- HAILA:** Thank you Nicole and I cannot agree more. I think that a barrier can always be a challenge. I believe our website is multilingual. Brian, can you comment on that?

**5:04:27 PM- PHILLIPS:** Our website is translatable. We also have a service that if people call any city related office or come in a talk, we have a phone translation service available.

**5:05:07 PM- HAILA:** That is one thing we are doing right now. Another thing we are doing is bringing in the inclusive cross walk, which was voted on unanimously in favor. This was meant to show the cities support for marginalized groups. I had a discussion, pre COVID, where a Latina student came in and started talking about a Latin/x festival in Ames to celebrate that culture. We asked what else we could do. We could support so many groups. COVID stopped some of these things. The Human Relations Commission is extremely diverse, by intention. We have five people who serve on it. We always want to reach out to those from marginalized

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groups as well. The council is a governing body, it takes the whole community to create a welcoming space for people of marginalized communities. We need to recognize their challenges and make sure to cater to them. It is an ongoing opportunity. I will defer to other council members.

**5:08:11 PM- BETCHER:** I would like to follow up on the idea of barriers. Any city in the nation is experiencing a lack of trust in government. When you have a government that is made up of middle-class white people, it is hard to build trust with marginalized communities. It is difficult to make them want to be part of city government. It may be because our jobs do not pay well. You need to be in a good spot. There are a lot of barriers in getting involved in city issues and government and I would love to see us get more people of marginalized communities to be a part of our governmental system. Anyone who has done this work knows this has to continue., We gave to keep working at it. That barrier of trust is huge, and we are going to keep showing up and trying to show that. Nicole pointed that out as something we are working on.

#### **5:10:11 PM- INFORMATION TO NEW STUDENTS IN AMES AND ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS**

**5:10:15 PM- SCHOLTE:** My name is Senator Scholte, and I am a second year in BioSystems and I am the chair of the civic engagement committee. We have been focusing on how we will be interacting with the community. One thing we have been working on is utilizing the Ames libraries. Every student who takes Lib 160, will receive resources for Ames Public Library. Next year we will do marketing for the library. The second project is the amazing race. We want to have a scavenger hunt around Ames to get students involved with local businesses. This will probably be next semester.

**5:12:31 PM- FAHEEM:** First Gloria, I am happy you talked about reaching out to communities. I would suggest reaching out to the Grad Student Council. Students make up half of the population and grad students spend the most time in Ames. A few weeks ago, the city council sent out a climate survey and only had one student involved. How are you working to get students more involved?

**5:13:48 PM- SCHILDROTH:** That document is a work in progress. That was the first-time City Council had seen it. There is an expansion on student representation. We wanted all the community segments covered. What is a manageable number to serve on this committee? Council did ask to expand on this. We are planning on doing this. There will be lots of areas to get involved with this. We are looking at selecting a consultant, we are down to three firms. Once they are selected, they will look at this and who is on the committee and whether the engagement plan is effective. If you have further questions or input, please let us know.

**5:16:35 PM- HAILA:** I had a conversation with a Senator about offering a tour for freshmen that would utilize CyRide and show these new students around Ames. I love the scavenger hunt idea. This could expose people to all areas of Ames. This would require a lot of coordination and cooperation, but it would expose people to what Ames has to offer and is a great thing. At

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welcome fest, we have participated previously. We really enjoy it and have a lot of representation there. We get a lot of people who come in and ask questions. The more we can get people exposed, the better. Ames has a lot to offer.

**5:20:08 PM- GARTIN:** I am very impressed with the amount of volunteer work that the students of Iowa State provide to the community. It is important for college students to be doing this. I also want to create paths for students to make change. I do appreciate the role of students serving in the community.

### **5:21:04 PM- COUNCIL MEMBER PRESENTATIONS**

**5:21:12 PM- HAILA:** First I want to share that each topic we are bringing up, we are excited about. Just because some person does not talk about a topic does not mean we are not excited. Two potential projects are what I am going to talk about. The city purchased a property that will include a development for low to moderate income houses and renting. They will have 20-30 homes and about 40 rental units. We want a multifamily complex. There are town houses, apartments and even playgrounds. That is going to be developed. The project is being graded right now. I hope to see that move forward. This has been worked on for a long time. We all hate the traffic on south duff. We have the South Grand extension which will help fix this. 16<sup>th</sup> Street will also be extended and widened in the future. Sometime fall of this year, we will be cutting the ribbon on the South Grand extension. The Council just submitted a proposal for a reinvestment district. This looks at development on Lincoln Way. This will try to put retail, housing, hotel, central plaza, and some other things on Lincoln Way. There are some cool things going on Downtown. A new whiskey bar, a new retail store and these are supposed to be catalysts. Hopefully, we can get funding to replace the indoor aquatic center as well.

**5:25:09 PM- BETCHER:** I am going to use my time to follow up on some questions asked earlier. A project I have been involved on is a partnership of the City of Ames and a city development class. You might have heard a presentation on this at ISCORE, on improving our outreach for those who are underrepresented. The city manager and I spent several days meeting with this class and partnered with many others for this project to make it happen. The students tried to figure out where all our tough to reach people are. They then recommended strategies to us to better reach these people when we are trying to get input. We have not established the lines of communications, but we are working on finding the best ways to do so. In the fall we want to continue this partnership. This was made difficult due to COVID. We hope this helps get more engagement from those who do not normally engage. We hope there will be an improvement from this. Secondly, the city just announced a small new arts pilot program. We have a pool of money of \$10,000 for small projects. We want to see applications for these forms those who want to make Ames more fun and exciting through the arts. Applications are due April 30<sup>th</sup>. I will put the application in the chat. Small grant for big ideas. That is what I got.

**5:30:04 PM- GARTIN:** I have two quick topics. We provide a breadth of services. We provide so many of the things that people in the city use. I am hoping to inspire some of you to run for City Council. A few small things, all our directors are forward thinking and innovative. We have

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a new area coming for kayakers, a new solar project, a composting project, and many others. The other thing is the fact that we are a nonpartisan board. We have never been more divided. We do not have to worry about politics because it does not belong here. It is nice to not have to worry about political affiliation.

**5:32:46 PM- MARTIN:** I would like to bring you up to date on internet developments. I think many people have come to appreciate the internet over the last year. We have taken an interest in improving the internet in Ames. I would say that we undertook some projects to see how the city can improve the services generally. Another company was doing this, so they came to Ames because it was a good market. The dust has not settled yet. We are waiting to see what this is like for the residents of Ames. If you live on campus, you already have service. Iowa State has had the service way longer than anyone else. We are really talking about off campus students, non-students, and business. The next year, council will begin to think about improving internet access to the community. One other thing, the whole world discovered how critical good communication was during the Pandemic. The Federal Communication Commission set aside 3 billion dollars for communications improvements and this should be accessible in a month. This would provide those who cannot normally afford these things get money. This may be available sometime in the future.

**5:36:49 PM- BEATTY-HANSEN:** I wanted to touch on the many things we do to encourage people to get outside. We do a lot of things here. We have made improvements to our bike system, off road trails and many other things. We also have done a lot of improvements to our public water ways. We installed an accessible dock at Ada Hayden. We converted to a tiered dam system at River Valley Park. We are also expanding our community garden spaces. I think all these things help Ames residents live in a healthier way.

**5:38:52 PM- CORRIERI:** The first thing I want to touch on is to say thank you to all the students who volunteer in our community. I work for one of the organizations, and I get multiple emails a week for volunteering at these opportunities. We appreciate having this support and having a readily available pool of people to volunteer. The second thing I want to talk about is assuring all of you and encouraging you to feel comfortable contacting council members. I know it can be intimidating and not a lot of people enjoy doing it. All of us are accessible and want to hear what you have to say. I want to reassure all of you that we are happy to have you contact us. I hope we can be a resource for students as well. All our contact information is on our website and you can reach out to us anytime.

## **5:42:01 PM- CLOSING STATEMENTS**

**5:42:02 PM- HAILA:** I wanted to touch on what Rachel wanted to talk about. We are undertaking a climate action plan. Council is fully committed, and it will take 18-20 months, but we are excited to do it. We are taking sustainability very seriously and want to keep improving it in Ames. Thank you for the partnership that we enjoy. I want to echo what Amber shared. We are accessible and we want to hear. As we come out of this pandemic, we are excited to

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implement some of the projects and recommendations we have had. We have a great community and are excited to keep working together.

**5:44:18 PM- SCHRADER:** I want to say thank you to the members of City Council that could join as well as the city employees. I think it means a lot that you are willing to do this. I would like to thank everyone for helping Nicole put this meeting together. We wanted to make sure information will still be shared the same. Hopefully, next year this will be in person. Thank you all and have a great day. I adjourn our working session at 5:45:13 PM.