

**MINUTES  
CITY OF AMES  
PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

Date: June 3, 2009	Norman Cloud	2010
	Keith Barnes, Chairperson	2010
Call to Order: 7:00 p.m.	Kori Heuss, Vice-Chairperson	2011
	Jeff Johnson	2011
Place: Ames City Hall	Justin Platts	2012
Council Chambers	Chuck Jons	2012
	* Elizabeth Beck	2012
Adjournment: 8:57 p.m.		
	*Absent	

**MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED:**

1. Subdivision Ordinance Text Amendment Related to Plats of Survey, Boundary Line Adjustments, Retracement Surveys, and Subdivision Review in the Urban Fringe
2. Recommendation on Proposed Amendments to the Planning & Zoning Commission Bylaws
3. Report on Renewable Energy Workshop
4. Land Use Policy Plan Goals Discussion

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CALL TO ORDER: Keith Barnes, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

MOTION: (JONS/PLATTS) to approve the Agenda for the meeting of June 3, 2009.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAY 20, 2009:**

MOTION: (CLOUD/JOHNSON) to approve the Minutes of the meeting of May 20, 2009.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

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PUBLIC FORUM: There were no public comments.

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**Subdivision Ordinance Text Amendment Related to Plats of Survey, Boundary Line Adjustments, Retracement Surveys, and Subdivision Review in the Urban Fringe**

Steve Osguthorpe, Director, gave an overview of the proposed amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance. Approval of the text amendments to the Subdivision Ordinance is recommended.

A brief question and answer period occurred clarifying the process of the proposed amendments.

Nobody from the public addressed the Commission about the proposed text amendments.

Chuck Jons asked staff if they could think of any reason that an action of approval tonight by the Commission could be met with resistance in the future even though we haven't seen any resistance tonight (nobody from the audience speaking for or against the proposed code changes).

Mr. Osguthorpe explained that we did receive comments from individuals that didn't believe the City has authority to review plats of survey, particularly in the fringe area, and the Ames City Attorney was quick to respond stating firmly that we do have the authority, which is what we are claiming here. He stressed that these changes are of great benefit to people who right now have what are essentially illegally created parcels in subdivisions in which permits cannot be issued until this issue is resolved.

Norman Cloud asked if the proposed revisions have been reviewed by the City Attorney.

Mr. Osguthorpe explained that the City Attorney has been involved in this process from the very beginning.

MOTION: (JONS/PLATTS) to accept Alternative #1, which states:

The Planning and Zoning Commission can recommend that the City Council approve the subdivision ordinance text amendments as proposed in the attached three ordinances, based upon the stated purpose, intent, and legal basis described in the preambles of the ordinances.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

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### **Recommendation on Proposed Amendments to the Planning & Zoning Commission Bylaws**

Steve Osguthorpe, Director, gave an overview of the proposed amendments to the Commission Bylaws. Approval of the amendments to the Bylaws is recommended.

MOTION: (PLATTS/JONS) to accept Alternative #1, which states:

The Planning and Zoning Commission can approve the proposed amendments to the Planning and Zoning Commission Bylaws.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

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### **Report on Renewable Energy Open House**

Sam Perry, Planner, gave an overview of the outcome of the open house pertaining to renewal energy that was held on May 18, 2009.

Mr. Barnes asked staff if they vision that most of the applications will be for new buildings versus existing neighborhoods based on the comments received at the open house.

Mr. Perry said most of the inquiries have been more from existing neighborhoods, although there have been a couple inquiries for new construction, which may change as developers become interested in creating a subdivision or a development that is oriented toward renewal

energy. He said there was also an inquiry about the possibility of several people in an existing neighborhood pooling their resources to generate power for themselves.

Mr. Jons ask what the next step is for this project.

Mr. Perry explained that staff will bring back draft code amendments for the Commission to review at a future meeting, which will include process.

Mr. Osguthorpe asked if there was anything the Commission would like to see incorporated in this first stab at creating an ordinance.

The Commission made the following suggestions:

- See what has been attempted by other cities, which may also give staff a chance to find out where the resistance might be
- Contact Columbia, Missouri or other university cities similar to Ames
- Contact states outside of the Midwest that are known for solar power, such as California, Arizona, and New Jersey
- Contact the State of Iowa, who is in the process of creating codes pertaining to renewable energy
- Contact Roy Stanley, Iowa Director for the Office of Energy Independence

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### **Land Use Policy Plan Goals Discussion**

Mr. Osguthorpe reminded the Commission that this is the final opportunity for Commission discussion before the joint meeting scheduled with the Council on June 16. He explained that staff compiled the comments received from the Commission identifying what issues the Commission believes could be tweaked or changed. He then summarized the following issues the Commission considers to be a priority:

- Verify and Update Trends
- Changing Energy Sources
- Linkages
- Housing and Residential Development
- Importance of Downtown and Campustown

Mr. Osguthorpe stated that the Commission has taken what was originally seen as a daunting or overwhelming task, and narrowed the focus down to something that could be easily discussed with the Council. The Commission's recommendations on the changes are quite succinct and focused, and formatted in a way that will facilitate a good discussion.

Mr. Barnes said he understands the direction on the goals and objectives, but is a little fuzzy on the implementation of the regulations from the Council's perspective.

Mr. Osguthorpe explained how the goals in the plan are implemented through the regulations, using the example of how a village is the preferred form of growth in the Plan and referencing the chapter in the zoning code that defines the standards for a village.

Mr. Cloud said he thinks the Commission did an excellent job of paring down what goals in the Plan that need attention or updating so that the Commission can be more specific and focused on taking action from a planning and zoning regulation standpoint.

Mr. Barnes said he is struggling with the process for how to convey to the Council the prioritization of the issues. He said there appears to be some commonality from the Commission on the importance of having good data. He likes staff's summary and then there are the comments from the Commission on the LUPP goals.

Ms. Heuss suggested that the Commission could quickly vote on each item on the list.

Mr. Osguthorpe said Kori is right – going quickly through the list and determining whether you are all in agreement is the first step. Secondly, instead of getting too bogged down about very specific language, it may be better to keep the conversation at a broader level by stating what issues the Commission focused on with some ideas on what may help address those issues.

Mr. Barnes said he got too much into wordsmithing, and a couple of Commission members did an admirable job of getting into the philosophy. He said he personally likes the philosophy approach better, but would like the Commission to walk away from the Council meeting with some kind of direction on how to work with staff.

Mr. Osguthorpe expressed concern about the Commission getting too much into the wordsmithing approach since that usually leads to a very detailed discussion on a specific item and never getting to the big-picture stuff.

Ms. Heuss said the Council has asked for our input on our agreement with the goals, and we as a Commission have to somehow present that input. She said it is up to the Council if they want us to go back and do some work on the LUPP, which she doesn't see happening at the upcoming joint meeting.

Mr. Johnson said he is walking away from this process feeling better about the goal statements, but is still troubled because he doesn't view them as goals because they can't be measured. Goals tell you specifically what it is, what you want to do, and when you want to achieve it. He said he understands the concepts and the philosophy of the goals, but the bigger concern is that they don't necessarily piece together as a vision that tells us what Ames is going to be.

Mr. Osguthorpe said the Plan is assumedly based upon a vision of what we want the community to be; the question is if that vision is clear and do we all hold it.

Mr. Platts said he agrees that there is no point in going in with each goal individually because that conversation could take weeks as every point could be argued either way. He said the way staff has summarized the issues into the five categories is where he thinks we should start. The sixth category that is missing is the vision aspect, which is what Jeff was talking about -- what is the long term vision for the community intended to be? He said the goals are working towards that, but the issue is that there is no overriding intent of what that vision is.

Mr. Jons complimented staff for doing a wonderful job summarizing the issues, and suggested that a paragraph be added to staff's summary about vision. He said we could use this first page as our discussion point with the Council, and use the tweaking we did as a reference if needed.

Mr. Johnson said he would also like a statement added that there is a strong consensus that the Commission feels good about the goals and objectives.

The Commission agreed to forward to the Council the memo (minus the attachment) that staff created summarizing the Commission's comments on the goals and objectives of the Land Use Policy Plan with the following revisions:

- Insertion of a preamble
- Insertion of a bolded heading over the final paragraph pertaining to Downtown and Campustown
- Insertion of a heading and paragraph regarding vision
- The final sentence starting out with policies and programs is rephrased into a question

MOTION: (PLATTS/HEUSS)

The Commission agreed to forward to the Council the memo (minus the attachment) that staff created summarizing the Commission's comments on the goals and objectives of the Land Use Policy Plan with the following revisions:

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MOTION PASSED: (6-0)

The Commission thanked staff for summarizing the Commission's comments on the goals of the Land Use Policy Plan.

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COMMISSION COMMENTS: Mr. Cloud thanked staff for being proactive about renewal energy by holding the open house and getting feedback from the community.

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STAFF COMMENTS: Staff informed the Commission that the Commission meeting scheduled for June 17, 2009, has been cancelled because of the lack of agenda items.

Mr. Osguthorpe updated the Commission on the quarterly meeting staff will be holding with the development community, which will be an opportunity for an exchange of dialogue and listening between the City and the developers.

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With no further business coming before the Commission, the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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Cindy Hollar, Secretary (transcriber)  
for Heather Cromie-Roche, Principal Clerk  
(minute taker)  
Department of Planning & Housing

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Keith Barnes, Chairperson  
Planning & Zoning Commission