

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

Date: January 3, 2012	Debra Lee	2012
	*Chuck Jons	2012
Call to Order: 5:00 p.m.	Elizabeth Beck, Chairperson	2012
	Norman Cloud, Vice-Chairperson	2013
Place: Ames City Hall	Mark Stenberg	2013
Conference Room 235	Jeff Johnson	2014
	Troy Siefert	2014
Adjournment: 7:04 p.m.	*Absent	

MAJOR TOPICS DISCUSSED:

1. Discussion of Planning & Zoning Commission Initiatives

CALL TO ORDER: Elizabeth Beck, chairperson, called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Steve Osguthorpe, director, reminded the Commission that every year we sit down with the Commission to identify any ideas, thoughts, or priorities that the Commission might want to be considered for the coming year, which is followed up with a meeting with the City Council in the spring. The City Council will be holding its goal-setting session this coming weekend and the Commission wants to get something to them prior to that meeting. He suggested that the Commission consider stepping back and assess what the product is they are trying to get to the Council. As the Commission goes through these items tonight, that they consider not feeling constrained to identify tasks that need to be done, but consider raising awareness to the Council that there are topics that they want to have as a conversation with them.

Mr. Osguthorpe gave an overview of the summary from the last discussion of the five topics the Commission expressed concern about.

1. Some items listed may not be task oriented as much as goals to keep in mind as we move forward with day-to-day issues. It was suggested that the Commission's job is to help the City think in longer terms with citizen's voices, and that this may be seen as a conversation with Council about things they might think about in the next 10 years.
2. Industrial land was discussed at length, focusing on the importance of industrial land as a tax base issue, a community growth issue, and a diversification issue. It was stressed that we need available industrial land in and under the City's control for when we have a potential customer that wants to develop a large parcel.
3. Diversification of the tax base was next discussed. Discussion focused on whether the City's development standards encourage or discourage development, and whether we should annex land before it's ready to be developed so that we can have it available for development.
4. Quality of life issues were next discussed. It was suggested that we should consider quality of life issues when planning and zoning decisions were made. Example of quality of life issues included the impacts of recently approved development on Roxboro, and the intersection of South 5th and Duff Avenue with the challenges of pedestrians getting across the street.

5. The Commission generally agreed that a broader conversation-type approach with the Council over the issues of concern would be a good approach so that the Council can consider these concerns as they are engaging in things that may relate to those concerns.

Each Commission member gave a brief explanation of their individual priorities.

Elizabeth Beck

1. Industrial Lands.
 - No specifics but believes the Council should spend energy on this concern.
2. Traffic and Transportation.
 - It's moving people but in what manner, which involves mass transit, cars, bicycles, walking paths.
3. Quality of Life.
 - It's Roxboro and Hyde Street.
 - We need to be paying attention to the traffic and pedestrian issues on South 5th Street and Duff Avenue.
 - Concerned about the large amount of traffic at 13th and Grand and 13th and Ridgewood.
4. Planning for a Specific Area.
 - Focus is on Campustown but there is also the Main Street Cultural District, Historical Downtown, and Historic Old Town (niche districts).

Norman Cloud

Suggested that the Commission craft a message to the City Council about why the Commission keeps bringing up the same concerns.

1. Industrial Lands.
 - Ames does not have enough large parcels available for a large company to come to Ames (e.g. Ball Plastics, Sauer-Danfoss).
 - Years ago Ames had large empty parcels available, which have since been carved up.
2. Planning for Specific Districts (or an awareness of those districts).
 - People identify where they live in Ames.
 - There needs to be a plan for how to move between those districts.
3. Transportation and Traffic.
 - How to get somewhere and where do you park once you get there.
 - It's important to think about transportation and traffic as the city grows and not after the fact.
4. Diversifying the Tax Base.
 - There is a need to raise revenue because of the large amount of government land that doesn't generate revenue.
5. Growth Priorities.
 - Money is lost for both the city and the school district when we develop north of Bloomington.

Mark Stenberg

1. Industrial Lands.
 - The City Council seems to be looking into this issue with the look at moving utilities to the east.
 - Installing utilities to the east will open up more land for industry, residential, and the school district.
2. Transportation and Traffic.
 - Poor planning may have happened on Hyde. Someday there may be houses north of there and maybe that street should have been larger.
3. Housing Density.
 - Larger lots for housing are as important as larger lots for industrial so that people do not have to move outside of Ames to live in the house they want to live in (quality of life).

Jeff Johnson

1. Industrial Lands.
 - Is comfortable with what has already been identified through the discussion (size, use, being proactive, future large parcels).
 - Thank you Council for investigating the movement of utilities to the east of Interstate 35.
2. Diversifying the Tax Base.
 - Recognizing that we have a lot of government land in the community.
 - Need more retail.
 - Get back to being a regional center (entertainment, health care).
 - Think about flat space (convention centers).
3. Planning for a Specific District.
 - We need to think that each district we have has a character. Likes what we are doing downtown, but we need to think about doing that in Campustown and other areas.
 - The vibrancy should not mean that one district succeeds at the expense of the other. Each district has their own character and we should be doing everything we can to enhance that so that it is a vibrant community and not cookie-cutter.

Troy Siefert

1. Factoring Quality of Life Implications into Zoning Decisions.
 - It is common sense that we take this into consideration as we make decisions. Decisions are made based on the rules and laws that are in place and sometimes those decisions can affect others. Give the Commission the tools that they need to address a situation that is not working when making those decisions.
2. Evaluation of the Land Use Policy Plan (LUPP).
 - Even though the process for updating the LUPP has been approved by the City Council, the Commission should propose that this update be done sooner rather than later.
3. Growth Strategies and the Implications for Annexation.
 - Look at our current strategies and make decisions to move quickly to get the types of people that we need to get into the city. Allow a thoughtful way to annex land.

4. Examine New Livability Strategies.
 - Federal money will become available through the Federal Office of Livability and the City should poise itself to be ready to look at those things as it relates to quality of life and multi-modal transportation (traffic).
 - There will be different grant programs available that can be utilized to do the kinds of things we are talking about. We should look at this concept of livability to see how it fits into what we are already doing within the Long Range Transportation Plan when development occurs for providing intermodal transportation (bikes, pedestrian, bus, automobile).

Debra Lee

1. Land Use Policy Plan Update.
 - The Council has approved a process for amending and revising the LUPP and would like to encourage that the next step be the implementation of a first major review.
 - Believes there are still differences of opinion within the community about what represents positive growth and would like to encourage the use of the data gathered during the visioning process when reviewing and updating the LUPP.
2. Diversifying the Tax Base.
 - There appears to be a declining support for government institutions within the community and we need to generate revenue if we want to keep those services.
 - She hears the strong opinions about the industrial lands. We have the AEDC and others promoting this community and would feel presumptuous to say that she knows the answers for how to grow the community or diversify the tax base without hearing from them.
3. Flood Mitigation.
 - It appears that there are plans in place for flood mitigation efforts since a report went to Council in December on this topic. However, there is still the question of if there is some party responsible for reviewing the wide spread impact for any construction decisions that are made before we have research results. Is there anyone responsible for reviewing the wide spread impact of construction decisions while research is ongoing (South Duff redevelopment).

The following topics of concern were identified during the discussion:

1. Industrial Lands
 - Size and use
 - Where are future large parcels
 - Ball
 - Sauer-Danfoss
 - Thank you for investigating the movement of utilities east of 13th Street
 - In light of growth strategy and annexation
 - Olde Main Brewery
 - Pet Resort
2. Traffic Impacts and Intermodal Transit
 - Examples from past years
 - Moving people in what matter?
 - 13th & Grand/Duff & South 5th Street
 - New neighborhoods creating arterials

- Livability concept
 - eg: Walmart – shopping carts, pedestrians, CyRide
 - Long Range Transportation Plan needs to support long-term arterial streets
 - Hyde
 - Roxboro
3. Tax Base Diversification
- The space dedicated to non-taxable land
 - Flat space (convention centers)
 - Regain our “regional center” place in the region
 - As government agency funding declines
 - Rose Prairie and Olde Main (we would have lost these had we not approved them)
4. LUPP/Codes Review for Consistency with Sustainability
- Consider update process and frequency now rather than later
 - What represents positive growth using data from visioning process
5. District Planning -- Niches
- Recognize them and improve their identify, purpose and importance “character”
 - Is the LUPP supporting the vision?
 - Large traffic volume through residential areas
6. Flood Mitigation Efforts
- While research is ongoing, who is paying attention to see if current construction along South Duff Avenue and South 5th Street has any future impacts?

The Commission agreed that they would like to include an overarching message along with its list of topics to the Council. It was decided that the Chair will craft a draft memo to share with the other Commission members for feedback. A decision will be made on the final product at the Commission meeting scheduled for January 4.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

MOTION: (STENBERG/SIEFERT) to adjourn the meeting.

MOTION PASSED: 6-0

The meeting adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Elizabeth C. Beck, Chairperson
Planning & Zoning Commission

Cindy L. Hollar, Recording Secretary
Department of Planning & Housing