

**AMES PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**City Hall Council Chambers – 515 Clark Avenue**  
**Thursday, February 19, 2026**

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC:** The Parks and Recreation Commission welcomes public comments during meetings. Standards of Decorum, posted at the door and available on the City website, define respectful conduct for public participation. Comments should be limited to items within the jurisdiction of the Commission, and the Commission will not engage in dialogue during public comment.

If you wish to speak, please complete a green card and hand it to City staff prior to the meeting. When your name is called, please step to the microphone, state your name and address for the record, and limit your time to three minutes so others have the opportunity to speak. Time limits will be strictly enforced. Applause, shouting, or other disruptive behavior is not permitted.

The normal process on an agenda item includes: staff gives a report, Commissioners ask questions, public input, a motion is placed on the floor, Commission discusses the issue, and a vote is taken.

Individuals requiring special accommodations should contact City staff prior to the meeting. In consideration of all, please turn off cell phones or put on silent mode. This meeting may be recorded.

1. Call to Order: 4:00 PM
2. Approval of Minutes from January 15, 2026
3. Public Forum (For items not on the agenda)
4. Additional Ada Hayden Heritage Park Heritage Stones
5. Expanding Park Boundaries and/or Establishing Greenways
6. Vintage Cooperative of Ames Fitness Agreement
7. City Council Goals Discussion (Attachment)
8. Project Updates
  - a. Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center
  - b. Steven L. Schainker Plaza
  - c. Ada Hayden Heritage Park Trail Replacement
  - d. Daley Park Splash Pad
  - e. Homewood Golf Course Hole #9 Crossing

9. Monthly Report
10. Commission Member Comments
11. Next Meeting:
  - a. March 26, 2026, at 4:00 PM (Regular Meeting)
12. Adjournment

**CITY OF AMES  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE** January 15, 2026  
**COMMISSION PRESENT** Jeff Iles, Janet Rathe, Duane Reeves, Hannah Sappenfield, Nathan Shimanek, Debra Tapp, Jeff White  
**ABSENT**  
**STAFF** Keith Abraham, Joshua Thompson

**1. CALL TO ORDER: 4:00 PM**

**2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

MOTION: (Iles/Rathe) to approve the December 18, 2025, meeting minutes.

*MOTION PASSED: (7-0)*

**3. PUBLIC FORUM**

None

**4. PARK RULES AND POLICIES**

Abraham provided an update on changes to Chapter 19 (Parks and Recreation) and Chapter 4 (Bicycles) of the Municipal Code approved by the City Council on January 13, 2026. Third reading and adoption of the ordinance changes is anticipated to occur at the Council's January 27 meeting. Abraham indicated most of the changes recommended by the Commission were approved. An updated Parks and Recreation Rules and Policies document combining ordinances and park rules could be approved or amended by the Commission. Abraham asked for feedback and a motion to approve as written or motion(s) to amend.

*MOTION: (Iles/Reeves) to propose a 15 MPH maximum speed limit for bicycles, tricycles, unicycles, and personal transportation devices on identified trails.*

Iles shared he heard from several citizens who specialize in data analysis. As a cyclist, Iles is not sure speed limits have much to do with safety unless greatly exceeded, and going too slow may be just as dangerous. He suggested it may be easier to establish a higher speed limit and then scale back if needed.

Abraham said staff's opinion had not changed from 10 MPH. Like other park rules, a speed limit cannot be strictly enforced and must rely on self-policing. Some people will exceed the speed limit, whatever it is. Park user survey data revealed relatively light support of a speed limit of 15 MPH or higher.

Shimanek stated the reason for a speed limit, even if unenforceable, is to set an expectation, and on a multi-use trail slower speed should be the expectation. Setting a 10 MPH limit may invite creep to 13- or 14 MPH, and a higher speed limit would invite higher creep.

Sappenfield spoke about setting the expectation for trails as shared use, that one should expect to encounter walkers, strollers, etc. using a shared use trail. A lower speed limit sets an expectation of encountering other users.

Reeves said a 10- or 15 MPH limit, either one, would be the maximum allowable speed and would mean you should slow down when you see other trail users. He stated it may seem counterintuitive, but riders may have more control and maneuverability when going faster and may be more cautious when going faster because they look out farther. Shimanek cautioned that stopping distance increases exponentially with greater speed.

Iles said this amounts to trying to legislate good behavior on trails. Bad behavior can occur at any speed. In his view, users will be more inclined to follow a rule when it seems reasonable, and 10 MPH is a pretty conservative speed, even on a multi-use trail.

Shimanek stated he spent 20 years commuting through Ames by bicycle. For him, there is a big difference between restricting speed on trails through the parks versus bike trails.

White noted very few people have speedometers. He supported the 10 MPH speed limit to keep speeds reasonable near other trail users.

*MOTION FAILED: (2-5). Opposed: Rathe, Sappenfield, Shimanek, Tapp, White*

Abraham reviewed other updates to the Parks and Recreation Rules and Policies document, including rules regarding fires, fishing, horses, motorized vehicles, skating, swimming, and tobacco and electronic smoking devices.

Reeves noted horse riding along the river west of Moore Memorial Park and the presence of horse owner properties near Ontario Park. He wondered if those areas would be open for horse riding once park development activities occur. Abraham stated it would need to be examined but he suspected staff would not allow horse riding in those areas.

Reeves asked if Miracle Park is considered a hard surface court. Abraham suggested the rule prohibiting skating/skateboarding/bike riding/scooters could be expanded to include poured in place rubber surfaces.

*MOTION: (Iles/Reeves) to add a bullet point 'Not allowed on poured in place rubber surfaces.'*

*MOTION PASSED: (7-0)*

Abraham noted the prohibition of swimming in any lake or pond on City-owned property is now contained as an ordinance within Chapter 19. White asked if it would be waived for a triathlon. Abraham stated swimming waiver requests would likely continue to come to the Commission for a recommendation followed by a City Council approval action. Rathe asked if rivers are included in the swimming prohibition—Abraham said no.

*MOTION: (Rathe/Sappenfield) to recommend Alternative 2, which states:*

*Approve the Park Rules as amended by the Parks and Recreation Commission.*

*MOTION PASSED: (7-0)*

## 5. BUDGET

### a. 2026-27 Requested Budget

Abraham provided an overview of Parks and Recreation funding and program budgets. City Council approves the budget, and the Commission approves fees and charges. Most department activities are supported via General Fund. Enterprise Funds include Ames/ISU Ice Arena and Homewood Golf Course. Projected FY 26/27 expenses of \$5,988,872 against \$2,677,127 in revenue shows projected \$3,311,745 subsidy, or 55 percent, for the department, with 36 and 95 percent subsidy for Recreation and Parks, respectively. Abraham noted proposed State legislature property tax limits could create municipal budgeting challenges and potential impacts on public services and amenities. Abraham reviewed projected expenses, revenue, fund support, minimum fund balances, and unreserved fund balances for Ames/ISU Ice Arena and Homewood Golf Course. Both Enterprise Funds are healthy. The department budget also includes right-of-way and cemeteries—neither fall within Commission jurisdiction.

Parks and Recreation Admin projects include Daley Park Splash Pad, Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center (FFIAC), Ontario Park Master Plan, and a Rec Center study. Highlights for Instructional programming include youth golf lessons, summer camps, and rock climbing via a new partnership with Bluestem Boulders. Athletic highlights include partnerships with Sixty Forward and Harvest Pickleball and Tennis. For Aquatics, Abraham highlighted FFIAC and the Schinker Plaza and Daley Park Splash Pads. Community Center and City Auditorium issues include, respectively, open gym demand and Hope Lutheran Church rentals ending in Fall 2026. Wellness highlights include new classes, virtual class options, Sixty Forward Center activities, and FFIAC programming. [Abraham noted Nancy Shaw will retire in March 2026 after more than 20 years with Parks and Recreation.] For Homewood Golf Course, Abraham highlighted more rounds played, Sixty Forward Golf League, Hole #9 bridge renovations, and additional parking. Ames/ISU Ice Arena items include fee increases and revenue exceeding expenses.

Park Maintenance items included Daley Park Splash Pad, engineered wood fibers for playgrounds, and continued work to eliminate trimming in the parks. Rathe asked if the Daley Park Splash Pad will be free or have a fee like the Brookside Park Splash Pad. Abraham indicated it will be free because the Daley Park Splash Pad will utilize remote monitoring and timed activation buttons and can operate without staff onsite at all times.

### b. Fees and Charges

Fees and charges will increase across 37 percent of activities and programs, down from 42 percent the previous year, Abraham reported. The presented schedule includes fees and charges for both Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center (FFIAC) and Furman Aquatic Center (FAC). Abraham reviewed Season Pass discounts for both facilities and a new Aquatic Facilities pass enabling purchasers to receive discounted admission to both FFIAC and FAC. Daily admission rates will be same for both facilities.

Sappenfield asked if the multipurpose and walking track areas at FFIAC will be handled separately from aquatics – yes, Abraham replied, noting there will be no charge for using the walking track. The multipurpose space will be used for classes with program fees. Rathe asked how staff will know someone who asks to use the walking track does not slip in and use the pool. Abraham replied control desk staff will be attentive and trained to intercept anyone attempting to avoid paying for admission to the pool area. White asked if the wellness pool is included in the Aquatics Pass – Abraham said yes. There will also be rental opportunities for the wellness pool.

Abraham stressed that programming and fees at a new facility may require adjustment.

*MOTION:* (Iles/Tapp) to recommend Alternative 1, which states:

Approve the fees and charges as presented.

*MOTION PASSED:* (7-0)

## **6. CIP OVERVIEW**

Abraham presented a 'Year in Review' slideshow of 2025 accomplishments and thanked the Commission for its support of Parks and Recreation projects.

Projects in the Parks and Recreation 2026-31 Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) include: Ontario Park development; park system improvements, including North River Valley Park (NRV) soccer field parking, Tom Evans Plaza mini-shelter and lighting upgrades, canoe/kayak accesses at NRV and Southeast 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and NRV Cottonwood Shelter; playground equipment improvements; Miracle Park surfacing; solar panels at Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center; Moore Memorial Park bridge; ADA transition plan improvements; additional parking at Homewood Golf Course; solar panels at Steven L. Schainker Plaza; Ada Hayden Heritage Park pond renovation, solar aerator, fishing dock, and north parking lot replacement; and Furman Aquatic Center light fixture replacement and pool basin painting.

White asked about parking lot painting at Ada Hayden Heritage Park. Thompson stated parking lot restriping would occur in the spring.

Abraham indicated staff would present the CIP at the January 20 City Council meeting. He encouraged the Commission to formalize its discussions with a recommendation vote.

*MOTION:* (Rathe/White) to recommend the City Council approve the CIP as presented.

*MOTION PASSED:* (7-0)

## **7. CAMERAS WITHIN THE PARK SYSTEM**

Thompson described problems with vandalism and damage to park property and facilities. Staff have had some success using game cameras to catch perpetrators and seek feedback about purchasing additional cameras to use within the park system, as needed and temporarily. It is hoped that additional cameras will deter vandalism and damage and reduce both the cost of dealing with problems and the negative impacts on the park system.

Abraham noted areas where structures and dwellings continue to be erected. Staff recently had to clean an area requiring removal of 10 tons of debris. Game cameras with cellular data can help staff monitor areas remotely and respond sooner when needed to avoid larger problems. Also, some areas adjacent parks are public property not designated as parks or greenbelts (e.g., Stuart Smith flood buyout area, South River Valley Park trail going to Lincoln Way). A designation would allow application of park rules to these locations. Staff will bring a list of locations to the February 19 meeting for Commission consideration.

Iles shared his general suspicion of cameras but supported cameras in this case, assuming solid legal ground. Thompson noted use of cameras within City facilities. Abraham cited use of cameras along Welch Avenue as precedent within the City. Staff will check with the City's Legal Department but are confident there are no legal issues with using cameras in the park system.

Iles anticipated public complaints. Iles and White encouraged development of written policy. Thompson indicated existing indoor policy may be amended to add policy for outdoor cameras.

Tapp asked if cameras would go up and stay up. Thompson said the idea is more an as-needed basis to help get on top of recurring problems, reduce ongoing staff deployments to check on numerous problem areas, and to improve safety. Staff is not considering permanent camera installations in all cases.

Rathe appreciated the safety aspect afforded by cameras. She asked if signs need to be posted to alert the public to the presence of cameras. Thompson said signs are typically not posted.

Reeves supports use of cameras and spoke about how extensive use of cameras throughout the Iowa State University campus protects resources and people. He encouraged City Council to support and fund more robust and integrated permanent installations.

Shimanek shared that the City of West Des Moines added Flock license plate reader cameras to every park in response to the volume of criminal mischief and crime against people. He said he was almost shocked to learn the City of Ames does not have any cameras.

Sappenfield was curious what others had done for signage and spoke about privacy concerns, especially in park locations adjacent to houses. Reeves noted camera views can be precisely configured. He advised against signs because people look for cameras to disable them.

*MOTION:* (Tapp/Iles) to recommend Alternative 1, which states:

Purchase and place cameras, when necessary, as determined by staff.

*MOTION PASSED:* (7-0)

## **8. PROJECT UPDATES**

### **a. Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center**

Abraham indicated staff anticipates State of Iowa inspection of the facility in early March followed by opening the aquatic center in April. Construction continues and looks good.

### **b. Steven L. Schainker Plaza**

At its January 13 meeting, City Council directed staff to correspond with the plaza contractor. Abraham cannot disclose details at this time.

## **9. MONTHLY REPORT**

Thompson reported:

- Staff filled the outdoor ice rinks on January 15. An announcement will be made when the ice is ready for skating.
- The Christmas tree drop off site at 1015 E 13<sup>th</sup> Street is available through January. Iles asked if this would become permanent. He thought it works better and is less muddy than the previous site south of the Parks Maintenance Building. Thompson agreed but was unsure how long the new site would be used. Abraham indicated Christmas tree drop off at the E 13<sup>th</sup> Street site would likely happen at least one more year but may eventually move to the Resource Recovery & Recycling facility under development. This facility will be located on Freel Drive and will include a yard waste drop-off area.

Abraham noted job postings for Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center and Furman Aquatic Center, as well as for various spring and summer seasonal positions. Application review and candidate interviews are ongoing.

**10. COMMISSION MEMBER COMMENTS**

Rathe praised the new shared use paths at Ada Hayden Heritage Park—the increased width will improve users’ experience and reduce conflicts between bikes, people, and dogs. White noted the side slopes are smoother and could help when cyclists veer off the path to avoid collision.

**11. NEXT MEETING:** Thursday, February 19, 2026, 4:00 PM (Regular Meeting)

**12. ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION (Reeves) to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM.

## COMMISSION ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT:** Additional Ada Hayden Heritage Park Heritage Stones

**BACKGROUND:**

Ada Hayden Heritage Park has ten heritage stones placed throughout the park recognizing individuals who have made significant contributions to the conservation of natural resources in Iowa. A sample of the names and faces on the stones include Aldo Leopold, John Lacey, Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, Erwin Klaas, and Ada Hayden, who the park was named after. The Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park (FAHHP), a partner in the management of the park, are proposing adding an eleventh and twelfth stone to the park. They are proposing the name and face on the stones to be Dr. Lois Tiffany and Mr. Paul Johnson.

FAHHP accepts responsibility for selecting nominees for the names of Iowa Conservationists to be placed on the stones at Ada Hayden Heritage Park, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the City of Ames and FAHHP. Placement of stones for accepted nominees will be done in close coordination and agreement of the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Ames City Council.

Attached is the complete request from the FAHHP which details the many accomplishments of Tiffany and Johnson. Staff agree with FAHHP that both individuals deserve this honor. Please note that all costs associated with these stones will be paid by the FAHHP.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the addition of an eleventh and twelfth stone at Ada Hayden Heritage Park and the likenesses and titles to be that of Dr. Lois Tiffany and Mr. Paul Johnson and placed along the trail.
2. Approve the addition of an eleventh at Ada Hayden Heritage Park and the likeness and title to be that of Dr. Lois Tiffany and placed along the trail.
3. Approve the addition of an eleventh at Ada Hayden Heritage Park and the likeness and title to be that of Mr. Paul Johnson and placed along the trail.
4. Do not approve the addition of these stones.
5. Refer back to staff.

**STAFF RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

As stated in the FAHHP's request, Dr. Lois Tiffany and Mr. Paul Johnson have done much toward the advancement of conservation within the State of Iowa and beyond. Tiffany, as did Ada Hayden, forged the way for women to get into the conservation field and serves as an inspiration to all. Johnson was instrumental in getting legislation passed that Ames Parks and Recreation has benefitted from by receiving multiple REAP grants over the years.

All the Heritage Stones serve to preserve the legacy of each of the individuals recognized. It is also important to educate park users of the significance each of these individuals has played in the conservation movement that is critical to the success of Ada Hayden Heritage Park. Therefore, it is recommended the Parks and Recreation Commission adopt Alternative #1, as described above.

## ATTACHMENT A

### **Proposal to add two new rocks for Iowa conservationists at Ada Hayden Heritage Park**

**From Jim Pease, President, and the Board of Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park**

When the park was opened in 2004, there were nine faces in large boulders at the park. They honored nine "Important Iowa Conservationists" that were featured in a pamphlet by the same name. It was published in the early 1990s by the Iowa Association of Naturalists and distributed statewide by ISU Extension Publications. The nine people chosen by the IAN committee were all deceased Iowans who had been judged to have made significant contributions to the history and advancement of conservation in the state. They included scientists, educators, politicians, and artists. Not all were born in Iowa, but all called this state home at some point in their lives. They include Dr. Ada Hayden (the park's namesake), Louis Pammel, Bohumil Shimek, John Lacey, Aldo Leopold, John Madson, Sylvan Runkel, Ding Darling, and Paul Errington. We added a tenth rock to honor Dr. Erv Klaas in 2022.

After much consideration, the Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park (FAHHP) nominate two people who have made highly significant contributions to Iowa's legacy of conservation who have died in recent years. The two people nominated for joining the "Faces in the Stones" at Ada Hayden are Dr. Lois Tiffany and Mr. Paul Johnson. We have contacted Dr. Tiffany's daughter, Jean Tiffany Day, and Paul Johnson's widow, Pat, and both have given their enthusiastic consent and support for the recognition. As with past recognitions, the Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park will pay for all aspects of this project, including any needed artists, securing the stones, laser cutting/sand blasting of the images onto the stones, stone installation at suitable locations, and stickers for the four way-finding signs at the park. Where these stones would be placed in the park is yet to be determined but we believe there is ample room for one along the north lakeshore and one on the south.

We hope to complete the project by late summer or early fall, 2026 and have dedication ceremonies for the public and honoree's families.

We present this to the Ames Parks and Recreation Commission for your approval.

Both of the proposed honorees have been exceptional conservationists, albeit contributing in very different ways.

**Lois Tiffany** was born in 1924 in Collins, IA and graduated from Iowa State College (now Iowa State University) with a BS in botany in 1945. She went on to earn an MS (1947) and a PhD (1950) from ISU in mycology, the study of fungi. As with many of the people honored in the stones at AHHP, the connections between them are numerous. In Dr. Tiffany's case, she worked with Dr. Ada Hayden in the development of the ISU herbarium and received her doctorate in the same year that Dr. Hayden died.

Like Dr. Hayden and many other women scientists, Dr. Tiffany was initially undervalued and underappreciated. The botany department chair at the time offered her a teaching job in the department but thought she should teach for no pay! She refused and did teach but only for the stipend paid to teaching assistants at the time. Despite the discrimination she faced, she went on to a distinguished teaching and research career at ISU. She rose to full professor in 1965 and chaired the department for 6 years in the 1990s. She published over 100 scientific papers, books, and pamphlets, especially in her specialty of fungi. She integrated some 8,000 specimens from her own collection into the herbarium at ISU and taught highly regarded courses in mycology at ISU and Iowa Lakeside Lab. Fungi of Iowa's tallgrass prairies were a particular specialty but she published about all the major groups of fungi.

Dr. Tiffany's contributions go well beyond the bounds of the university, however. She became known as "Iowa's mushroom lady" across the state, owing to her many public talks, workshops, and field trips. She was active in the Iowa Academy of Science, becoming its first female president in 1977. She was a longtime member of the Mycological Society of America and was awarded their first Weston Award for Teaching Excellence in Mycology in 1980. She also received the first Iowa Governor's Medal for Science Teaching in 1982 and was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame in 1991, as well as several other awards at the state, regional and national levels. Dr. Tiffany died in 2009 in Ames. The Nature Conservancy named a piece of prairie land in northwest Iowa the "Dr. Lois Tiffany Prairie" in her honor in 2013. It is an 80-acre parcel situated in glacial hills of the Little Sioux River valley.

Dr. Lois Tiffany was an educator, a botanist, and a researcher who discovered and communicated knowledge about a group of organisms often ignored by the majority of the population. Her numerous contributions to the field of botanical conservation deserve recognition at the park.

**Paul Johnson** was a farmer from northeast Iowa. He and his wife, Pat, bought land along the Upper Iowa River in Winneshiek County and raised kids, crops, and cows there. That is the basis of his love of the land and the people of Iowa. But his influence and career went well beyond northeast Iowa. He was one of the early volunteers in the Peace Corps in Ghana (as was his wife, Pat), served as a state legislator, was appointed head of the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), and as director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). His life was one of stewardship of the land and of public service to the American people.

In 1984, Paul was elected to the Iowa Legislature as Representative from his district in northeast Iowa, encompassing Winneshiek and Allamakee counties. He served three terms, through 1990, and coauthored some of Iowa's most significant environmental legislation. Two of the most important were the 1987 Iowa Groundwater Protection Act and the 1989 Resource Enhancement And Protection Act (REAP).

The Groundwater Protection Act:

- closed and capped agricultural drainage wells in Iowa that were polluting groundwater, from which most Iowans get their drinking water;

- cleaned up and stopped underground storage tanks of petroleum and other chemicals;
- established the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture at ISU, the Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination at the U of Iowa, and the Iowa Waste Reduction Center at UNI;
- established methods for data collection on pesticides and fertilizers used on Iowa land and a certification system for their application;
- established monitoring and limiting contamination from landfills; and provided methods for funding it all.

Importantly, it established groundwater as a *commons resource*, belonging to all Iowans and, therefore, the responsibility of all Iowans to prevent it from contamination. It was a landmark bill, passed in the middle of the '80s farm crisis, and established Iowa as a leader in groundwater protection.

The REAP Act, like other legislation that Paul sponsored and co-authored, was an innovative and balanced way to fund a broad array of conservation measures. Supported by a wide-ranging coalition of organizations, it provided funding and support for public land conservation, water quality, soil conservation, historic preservation, community development projects, and environmental education. Though it has never received the full funding it promised, every county and nearly every community in the state has benefitted from REAP's passage and the funding it has provided.

Those bills and others brought him to the attention of many at the national level. He served on the Board on Agriculture of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the first farmer to ever do so. Having left the increasingly partisan politics of the Iowa Legislature at the end of his third term, he was not absent for long. President Bill Clinton appointed him head of the Soil Conservation Service in 1994 where he spearheaded the agency's transition into the Natural Resource Conservation Service, reflecting a broader and more inclusive mission, one that Paul enthusiastically endorsed. While overseeing a reduction in the number of employees in the agency, Director Johnson oversaw the greatest diversification of its workforce ever undertaken, including more women and minorities in its numbers than ever. This matched the expanded vision of the agency beyond the conservation of soil to include water, land, air, plants, animals, and humans and their integration. That vision translated into a 1996 Farm Bill that revolutionized the federal government's relationship to agriculture. That influence remains today. Implementation of conservation practices on private lands is still a critical focus.

In 1997, during the second Clinton administration, Paul left Washington and returned to Iowa and his farm in Winneshiek County. His days of public service were not over, however. Late in 1998, then-Governor Tom Vilsack persuaded Paul to take over as Director of the Iowa DNR in January 1999. Despite his efforts to strengthen and embolden the IDNR, the Legislature frustrated and beat back nearly every effort. He returned to his farm in May 2000. He died in February, 2021.

His impact at the local, state, and national levels of conservation reflected his strong belief in a Leopoldian land ethic and it is clear in his many writings and speeches. Conservation is a constantly evolving process, influenced by societal changes, philosophical beliefs, and political policies. Paul Johnson influenced all of those and deserves to be recognized at the park with a stone in his honor.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jim Pease, President  
Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park

## Staff Report

**EXPANDING OR ESTABLISHING PARK BOUNDARIES**

February 19, 2026

**BACKGROUND:**

There are several locations where public property is adjacent parks or greenways. Staff are reviewing these areas to determine if it makes sense to expand park boundaries or establish greenways to include these areas. The Parks and Recreation Rules and Ordinances would then be used to manage these spaces. Parks and Recreation already performs mowing, tree maintenance, snow plowing, and other tasks on these properties. Staff is not looking to add amenities or additional maintenance tasks at this time.

Staff is looking to the Parks and Recreation Commission for feedback on this approach to managing additional City owned property.

**POSSIBLE AREAS TO EXPAND OR ESTABLISH PARK BOUNDARIES:**

With the above information in mind, there are several areas staff is considering expanding or establishing park boundaries. Attachment A contains maps for each of these areas and shows the existing park boundaries, as well as proposed expansions. Each area is described below.

**South River Valley Park** – The current park encompasses two softball fields, parking, two shelters, playground equipment, and a portion of the shared use path (SUP) along the Skunk River. There is additional City owned land to the south that includes the continuation of the SUP from the park and wooded areas. The SUP continues south of the railroad tracks and is on private property. This portion of the path could be part of the Skunk River Greenbelt which hopefully will connect this trail to the existing trail at SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street.

**Stuart Smith Park** – This parkland is leased from Iowa State University (ISU) and is generally west of loway Creek. There is City owned land to the east of loway Creek which is referred to by staff as the flood buyout land. Federal funds were used to purchase several properties after the 1993 floods, and there is a no development/build restriction on these properties. Parks and Recreation have maintained this area as a park for many years.

**Delaware Gardens** – This area was once home to a City water tower. Several years ago, Parks and Recreation added community gardens and maintains the

rest of the area through mowing and tree care. City of Ames Electric owns the electric substation on the south end of the property and would not be included in the park.

**Delaware Avenue and North Dakota Avenue** – This area is maintained by Parks and Recreation, and residents occasionally use it as a park. There is public art on the south end of this area. To reduce maintenance commitments, this area was maintained as a no-mow area beginning in 2025.

**Ioway Creek Park** – This park is home to community gardens and a wooded area. A portion of the park is leased to a company for the use of housing a cell tower. To the west, there are several flood buyout lots and several privately owned lots.

On the east side of Grand Avenue to South Duff Avenue, there is a large section of land along Ioway Creek that is City owned. This area contains a SUP and a retention basin that would be maintained by Public Works.

**Ioway Creek Greenbelt** – With the addition of the SUP along Ioway Creek east of South Duff Avenue, Parks and Recreation have been maintaining this area. This is an opportunity to create an Ioway Creek Greenbelt which at some point will meet up with the future SUP along the Skunk River.

### **COMMISSION DIRECTION NEEDED:**

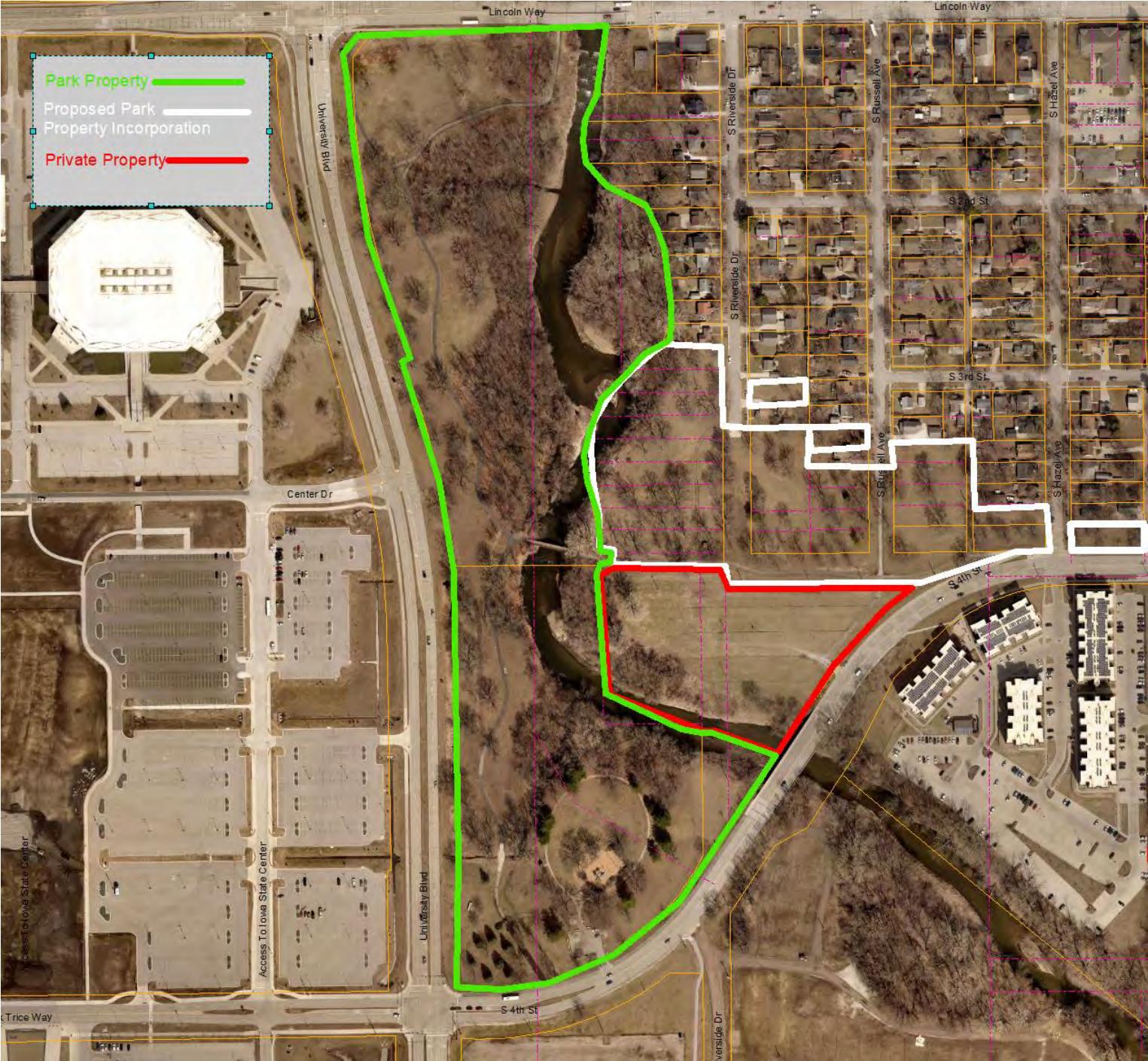
Staff is looking for direction from the Commission on the following items:

1. Does the Commission agree with expanding or establishing park boundaries as discussed?
2. If yes, do you agree with the areas presented?
3. If yes, are there any additional areas you would like staff to consider?
4. Are there any areas presented that the Commission feels should not be pursued?
5. Are there any concerns regarding what has been presented?

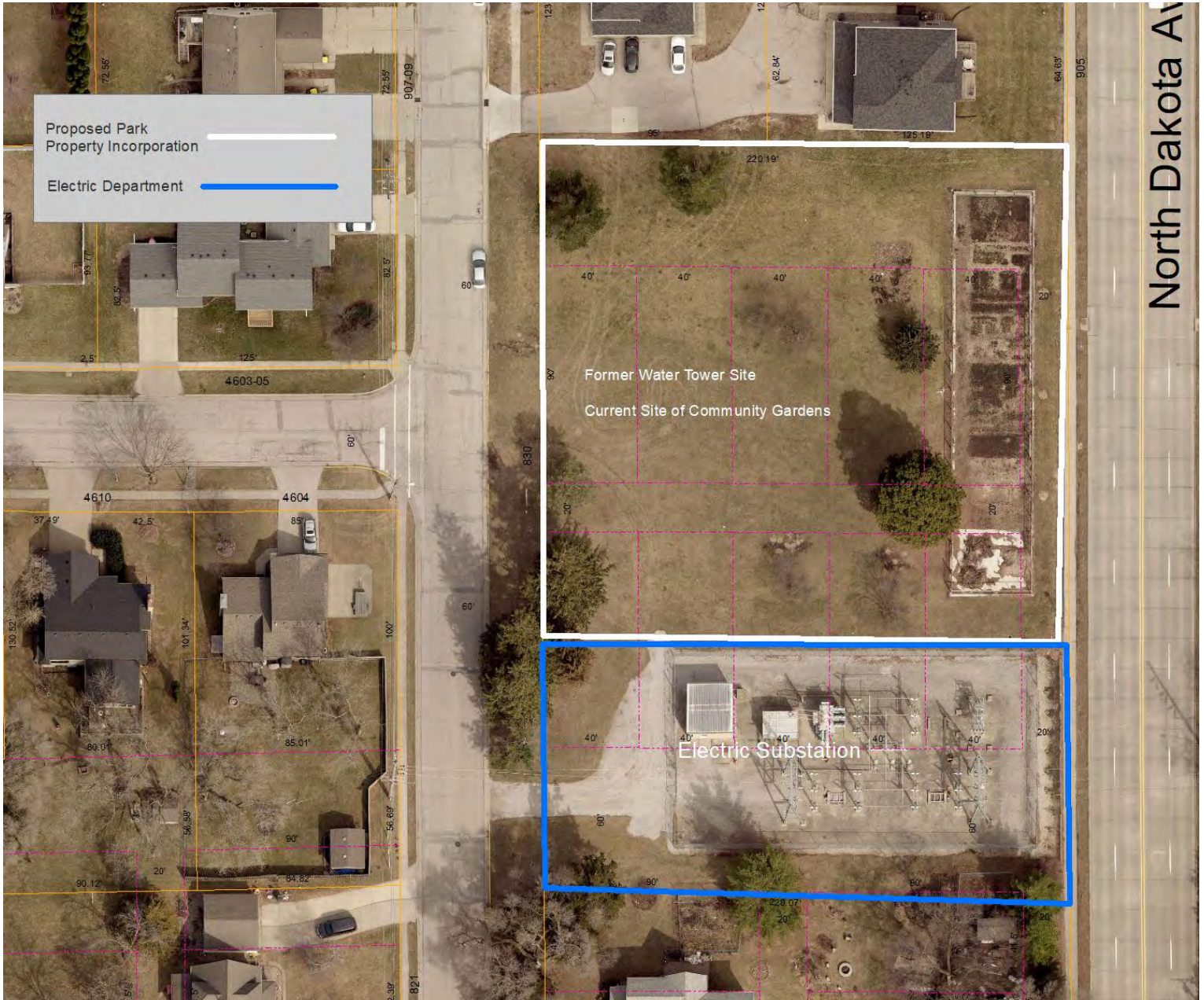
# South River Valley Park



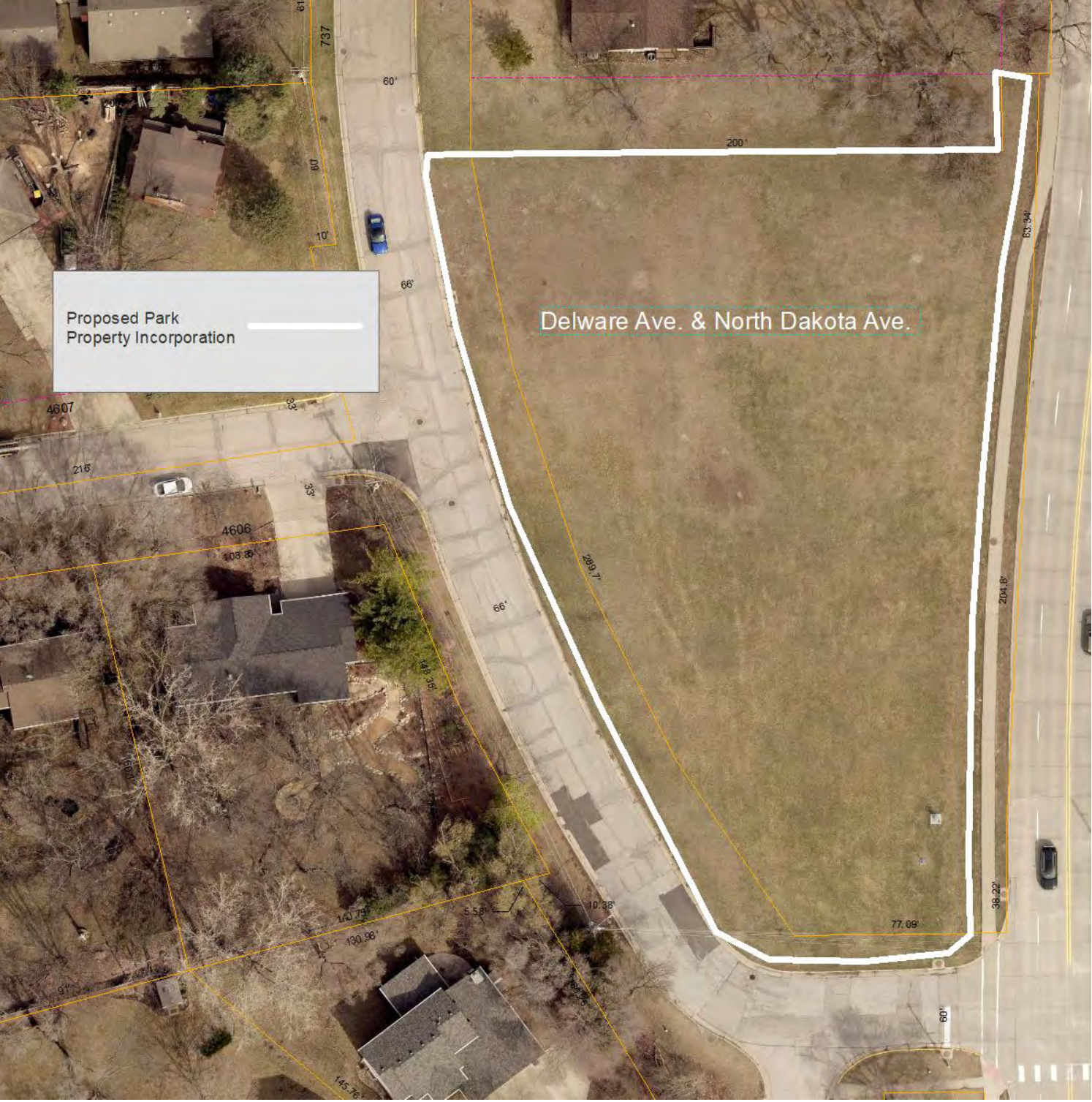
# Stuart Smith Park



# Delaware Gardens



# Delaware Ave. and North Dakota



# loway Creek Park/ loway Creek Greenbelt



## COMMISSION ACTION FORM

**SUBJECT: VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES FITNESS AGREEMENT**

**BACKGROUND:**

Parks and Recreation (P&R) Wellness Program Manager, Nancy Shaw, was invited to speak at Vintage Cooperative of Ames (VCA) in January 2023. Based on positive feedback from VCA's residents, staff began working with VCA leadership to offer 6-week Balance and Strength classes onsite at VCA. This partnership has continued since, with a break in classes in the Fall of 2025. It is the desire of P&R and VCA to continue these class offerings in 2026.

The agreement is the same as years past, with no changes. VCA leadership has agreed to and signed the agreement. The agreement is shown in Attachment A and includes the following highlights:

- City will provide one instructor for each of the six-week classes.
- City will conduct registration, collects all fees, and retain 100% of program fees.
- Fitness classes will be held at VCA.
- VCA must have a minimum of 10 registered participants per class.
- City will provide resistance tubing and VCA members will be responsible for additional equipment, if desired.
- Insurance is provided by City of Ames and VCA
- Each participant will sign a liability waiver

The only change to this agreement is the cost per class to match the current fee schedule.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

1. Approve the Vintage Cooperative of Ames Fitness Agreement December 31, 2026.
2. Do not approve the Vintage Cooperative of Ames Fitness Agreement.
3. Refer back to staff.

**STAFF'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

Parks and Recreation has many successful partnership programs which has contributed to providing a higher level of service than one agency could provide on their own. By offering fitness programs at the Vintage Cooperative of Ames property, it will provide members the opportunity to engage in fitness and wellness activities that they may not otherwise have access to at alternative locations.

Therefore, staff recommends Alternative 1; to approve the Vintage Cooperative of Ames Fitness Agreement through December 31, 2026.



**FOURTH: PAYMENT**

VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES members who wish to participate shall register for the classes and make payment to THE CITY prior to each class session. The fee for each VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES member shall be the current rate for Fitness Classes within the City's Fees and Charges Schedule.

**FIFTH: INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR**

THE CITY represents that it has, or will secure, at its own expense, all personnel required in performing the SERVICES under this Agreement. Such personnel shall not be employees of, nor have any contractual relationship with VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES. THE CITY, consistent with its status as an independent contractor, further agrees that its personnel will not hold themselves out as, nor claim to be, officers or employees of VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES by reason of this Agreement.

**SIXTH: INDEMNIFICATION**

Neither party hereto shall be liable for any damages proximately resulting from the negligent or wrongful actions or omissions of the other party, employees, agents or contractors performing under this Agreement.

**SEVENTH: INSURANCE**

THE CITY agrees, at its sole cost and expense, to obtain and keep in force throughout the term of this Agreement, the following insurance coverages and policies:

- Commercial General Liability providing no less than \$1,000,000 combined single limit of liability per occurrence/\$2,000,000 Aggregate.
- Worker's Compensation including Employer's Liability, covering injury to or death of employees as provided in laws of the State of Iowa.

THE CITY shall provide a certificate of insurance naming VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES as an additional insured. VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES shall provide THE CITY a certificate of insurance naming THE CITY as an additional insured.

**EIGHTH: FACILITIES MAINTENANCE**

VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES agrees, at its sole cost and expense, to maintain the facility and fitness equipment in a safe and clean condition.

**NINTH: TERMINATION**

This Agreement may be terminated by either party hereto upon thirty (30) days written notice in the event of substantial failure by the other party to perform in accordance with the terms of this Agreement through no fault of the terminating party.

**TENTH:                    NONWAIVER**

No failure or waiver or successive failures or waivers on the part of either party hereto, their successors or permitted assigns, in the enforcement of any condition, covenant, or article of this Agreement shall operate as a discharge of any such condition, covenant, or article nor render the same invalid, nor impair the right of either party hereto, their successors or permitted assigns, to enforce the same in the event of any subsequent breaches by the other party hereto, its successors or permitted assigns.

**ELEVENTH:                NOTIFICATION**

All notices required or permitted under this Agreement shall be in writing and shall be deemed sufficiently served if served by Registered Mail addressed as follows:

TO THE CITY:

City of Ames  
515 Clark Ave  
Ames, IA 50010  
ATTENTION: Director of Parks and Recreation

TO VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES

VINTAGE COOPERATIVE of Ames  
5900 Hyde Ave  
Ames, IA 50010  
Attn: Lynn Holman, Property Manager

**TWELFTH:                    APPLICABLE LAW**

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Iowa.

**THIRTEENTH:                EXTENT OF AGREEMENT**

This Agreement represents the entire and integrated agreement between THE CITY and VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES and supersedes and replaces all terms and conditions of any prior agreements, arrangements, negotiations, or representations, written or oral, with respect to this project.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this Agreement has been executed by THE CITY and VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES, effective from the day and year first written above.

CITY OF AMES

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair of Parks and Recreation Commission

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

VINTAGE COOPERATIVE OF AMES

By John Kinley, Board President  
Vintage Cooperative of Ames

1-2-2026  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

# City Council Values, Goals, and Tasks

January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2027

## VALUES - GOALS - TASKS

### A. WE VALUE COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE PUBLIC

#### A1. Increase methods and opportunities for public feedback.

A1.T1. Develop an outreach policy setting expectations for the types of outreach that should be used for various types of activities.

### B. WE VALUE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY

#### B1. Increase quantity and variety of single and multi-family housing units at various price points or rental rates related to new construction and rehabilitation of existing housing.

B1.T1. Analyze: 1) resident demographics (including income), 2) target housing price points, and 3) possible incentives to “match” income. Develop a shared understanding of “affordable housing.”

B1.T2. Leverage community partnerships to foster diverse housing developments and rehabilitation of existing housing at various purchase and rental price points.

### C. WE VALUE A FUN, VIBRANT, AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY THAT ATTRACTS AND RETAINS PEOPLE

#### C1. Plan for construction of multiple projects prioritized by City Council.

C1.T1. Complete Schainker Plaza.

C1.T2. Conceptually design and determine funding strategy for (in priority order):

- Indoor Multi-purpose Community Recreation Center for Ames Community Members
- Downtown Parking Ramp
- New Community Park along Ontario Road in west Ames

C1.T3. Continue discussion regarding the Event Center at the LINC and a possible partnership with ISU and IDOT for an entry corridor beautification project.

C1.T4. Remodel the Welch Avenue Tree Trenches to be more aesthetically pleasing and eliminate the nuisance aspects.

C2. Support arts and culture in the community, including community celebrations, festivals and/or events.

C2.T1. Clarify how COTA should evaluate and support events that celebrate different cultures in Ames (e.g., food events, etc.)

C3. Develop additional ways in which funds can be collected for scholarships for participation in City programs.

#### **D. WE VALUE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

D1. Implement a new plan for collection and disposal of waste and recyclable items.

D1.T1. Develop a communication plan to engage the public and solicit feedback as a part of the decision-making process. Educate the public about what has changed from past communications over the decades where “throw everything in your trash” is no longer the case. Cast vision for waste reduction, recycling, and reuse opportunities for the future.

D1.T2. Make decision on organized collection of residential waste and recyclable items. Here again, engage the public and solicit feedback as a part of the decision-making process in accordance with Goal A1.

D2. Explore initiatives that use new and emerging technologies or processes to assist in meeting the Climate Action Plan.

D3. Increase use of public transit and active transportation.

D3.T1. Develop a marketing plan and strategy promoting the use of active transportation modes as well as transit.

D3.T2. Explore options and support initiatives to increase availability of all modes of transportation for those unable to get to work, school, or other desired destinations within Ames.



*Caring People ♦ Quality Programs ♦ Exceptional Service*

**TO: Keith Abraham, Director of Parks and Recreation**

**FROM: Staff**

**RE: Monthly Report February 2026**

**PARKS AND FACILITIES:**

1. Staff maintained the ice rinks at South River Valley Park during the month of January. Unfortunately, with the recent stretch of warm weather, the rinks will more than likely be closed for the rest of the season.
2. Staff have been mowing woody vegetation at Ada Hayden Heritage Park and along shared use paths in the park system. The brush mowing is completed to control invasive vegetation. Staff will continue brush mowing along trails and in the parks through the end of February.
3. The Iowa DNR stocked the north lake at Ada Hayden Heritage Park in late January with approximately 1,500 rainbow trout. The stocking was not publicized as there were concerns with the stability of the ice.

**RECREATION PROGRAMS:**

1. In January Ames/ISU Ice Arena held 14 public skating sessions drawing 1,503 skaters. Figure freestyle sessions saw 29 skaters across six sessions, while 50 skaters participated in eight stick-and-helmet sessions. The arena also hosted six birthday parties and sharpened 58 pairs of skates.
2. A new session of fitness classes kicked off on January 5 at the Community Center with 460 in-person and 34 virtual registrations.
3. Sixty Forward welcomed 198 fitness class registrations for the session beginning January 5.
4. A new fitness class at Vintage Co-operative began with ten participants.
5. Yoga Basics began on January 11 with seven participants. Tae Kwon Do classes saw strong interest with 106 registrations. West Coast Swing kicked off on January 19 with 11 dancers, and Beginner Line Dance followed on January 26 with 14 participants.

6. Two classes of Mobility and Stretch were offered for free at the Sixty Forward Center and Community Center to gauge interest of potential participants. A total of 25 people attended the classes. Due to this interest, this class will be incorporated into the February 16 session schedule.
7. The winter session of swim lessons at State Gym Pool started with 220 participants.
8. Homewood clubhouse hosted a total of five rentals in the month of January: four City of Ames internal rentals and one external rental.
9. The Winter session of Euchre and Cribbage launched, with 28 individuals playing Euchre, 20 joining morning Cribbage, and 11 participating in evening Cribbage.
10. The Youth Dance and Gymnastics session began with 51 dancers and 79 gymnasts. A total of 28 of the gymnasts and 45 dancers in the recital session will perform a recital in April at the City Auditorium.
11. K-2 Basketball started on January 20 at Kate Mitchell Elementary, bringing 48 young players together for skill-building and fun.
12. Smart Start Basketball started on January 17 at the Community Center with 40 participants eager to learn the game.
13. A Duckpin Bowling Clinic was held January 7 with five participants. A Duckpin Bowling League began on January 21 with 19 individuals, 8 teams of 2-3 people.
14. The following were held in the Ames City Auditorium:
  - a. Hope Lutheran Church held four worship services.
  - b. A competition team from Dancenter Dancer held a rehearsal.
  - c. Parks and Recreation hosted Munk Rivers & Kensett as part of the winter concert series.
  - d. Story Theater hosted ten days of rehearsal and three performances.
  - e. The City assisted with the Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration on January 19.

## **PROJECT UPDATE:**

1. ConStruct, Ames, Iowa, started the Homewood Golf Course Hole Nine Crossing Project in late January. Work completed to date includes tree removal, bridge demolition, and storm sewer pipe installation. ConStruct has started constructing the land bridge between hole nine tee and green. Work yet to be completed includes completing placement of the dirt and the granular subbase in order for carts to drive on the path for the 2026 golf season. After the golf season, a concrete path will be installed to complete the project.

2. King Construction, Iowa Falls, Iowa, has completed installing the metal roof, walls, overhead doors, and the firewall of the cold storage building. Yet to be completed as part of that building is the electrical and the exhaust fans. The breakroom renovation is nearing completion and a punchlist will be completed in the second half of February. Staff is hopeful the project will be completed by the end of February.