

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

**AMES, IOWA**

**OCTOBER 1, 2025**

The Regular Meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission was called to order at 7:00 p.m. on October 1, 2025 in the Council Chambers at 515 Clark Avenue. Commission Members present were Cheryl Moss, Mike Clayton, Mike Sullivan, Mike LaPietra, and Matthew Voss.

### **APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Moved by Clayton, seconded by Moss, to approve the Agenda for the meeting of October 1, 2025. Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion passed.

### **APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 17, 2025 MEETING**

Moved by LaPietra, seconded by Voss, to approve the Minutes of September 17, 2025. Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion passed.

### **PUBLIC FORUM**

Chairperson Sullivan opened the Public Forum and closed it when no one came forward speak.

### **ZONING TEXT AMENDMENT TO AMEND MATERIAL STANDARDS FOR OFF-STREET PARKING AREAS AND DRIVEWAYS FOR AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT**

Planner Amelia Schoeneman presented the staff report and said under the current paving standards, all vehicle maneuvering and parking areas are required to be paved. She explained the requested amendment is to allow gravel to be used as a paving surface for agricultural equipment in the RI zone (Research Park Innovation District) at the Iowa State University Research Park (ISURP), which is generally located along Collaboration Place. Ms. Schoeneman stated the recently annexed parcel to the south of the Research Park will likely be rezoned to RI and is the site of a potential new development which will involve agricultural equipment, storage, and testing, and would include a significant amount of maneuvering area for equipment and vehicles. It would also require a substantial amount of paving, so the opportunity to use gravel in the area would be a considerable cost savings.

Ms. Schoeneman explained that with the proposed amendment, the main site access and vehicle parking areas would still be required to be paved; storage areas and testing areas for agricultural equipment already are not required to be paved. The areas at hand are the shared spaces between buildings where agricultural equipment might be taken out of a building and maneuvered to a test track or a storage area outside. In the RI zone, the objective is to have a high-quality environment that reflects the goals for innovation and research together with higher design and landscaping standards; the amendment was tailored to ensure those qualities were met and not negatively impacted. Ms. Schoeneman summarized the main points of the proposed amendment outlined in the staff report emphasizing that other heavy equipment uses would not be eligible and unpaved areas would be required to be located behind the principal buildings.

Matthew Voss asked if consideration was given to setback requirements for the unpaved lot. Ms. Schoeneman said with the lot being located behind the principal building, setbacks would be covered as the principal building would have to meet setbacks. Director Kelly Diekmann explained the intent is that the unpaved area will not be in front of any building, so the customary appearance from the street will be the same with front yard landscaping; if there is parking between the building and the street, it would be paved.

The applicant, Rick Sanders, with ISURP stated the amendment request is not speculative; it is based on a real, substantial project that greatly leverages the expertise, capabilities, and intellectual properties available at Iowa State University. Mr. Sanders pointed out ISURP owns the properties surrounding the site, so they would be the closest neighbor. He added ISURP wants the ability to continue to be at the forefront of what the future of digital and precision agriculture looks like, and in order to do that, they need more testing capabilities. Additionally, there would be a cost savings on the project of between \$500,000- \$700,000, and it simply makes sense to have agricultural equipment moving on gravel rather than pavement.

Chairperson Sullivan opened Public Comments and closed it when no one came forward to speak.

Moved by LaPietra, seconded by Clayton, that the Planning & Zoning Commission recommend that City Council amend paving requirements to introduce an exception in the RI Zone for agricultural equipment, subject to approval by the Planning Director, as presented. Vote on Motion: 5-0. Motion passed.

### **COMMISSION COMMENTS**

None

### **STAFF COMMENTS**

Director Diekmann stated the second phase of the Planned Unit Development near the Tedesco Learning Center will most likely be on the agenda at the next meeting. He then gave a brief update about development incentives for single family homes.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Moved by Voss to adjourn at 7:16 p.m.

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Mike Sullivan, Chairperson

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Eileen Carter, Recording Secretary