

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL**

AMES, IOWA

SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

The Ames City Council met in Special Session at 6:00 p.m. on the 19th day of September, 2017, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell presiding and the following Council members present: Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Chris Nelson, and Peter Orazem. *Ex officio* Member Robert Bingham was absent.

CONSULTANT PRESENTATION REGARDING “COMPLETE STREETS” PLAN: Damion Pregitzer, Traffic Engineer, introduced Tom Huber from the consultant group of Toole Design Group (TDG). Also in attendance was Director of Public Works John Joiner and Tony Filipini, Transportation Planner.

Mr. Pregitzer stated that they would be discussing the importance of “Complete Streets.” He wanted everyone to have a common understanding of the process. It was important to get enough feedback from the Council so that Toole Design Group is able to develop a policy statement that will govern and give guidance throughout the process.

Tom Huber stated that TDG is a national firm that specializes in bicycle and pedestrian planning and design. “Complete Streets” is for everyone no matter who they are and how they travel and is designed to make streets safe, comfortable, and convenient for all modes of travel.

Mr. Huber explained the purposes behind “Complete Streets”, as follows:

- To shift transportation investments so they create better streets opportunistically
- To make streets better each time you touch them
- To ensure every project creates better streets now with current funding
- To save money - retrofits cost more than getting it right initially
- To gradually create a complete network of roads that serve all users
- To give transportation professionals political and community support for innovative solutions that help make active living possible
- To apply solutions across a community and address systematic inequities

Mr. Huber stated that “Complete Streets” is an opportunity to resurface existing streets and the construction of new. “Complete Streets” would not be going back and retrofitting street facilities to get it right. He further stated that the “Complete Streets” Plan will gradually create a complete network of roads that services all users.

He explained that “Complete Streets” is a process for street design that reasonably accommodates potential modes and users, that prioritizes and balances modes that create Complete Networks, that allows different types of streets with different purposes, and that minimizes impacts on the current predominate mode. Mr. Huber further explained that TDG designs transportation that has little or no effect on the street service.

Mr. Huber reported that Toole Design Group would be responsible in developing and adopting a policy, assessing and revising the project development process, developing design decision-making aids, and documenting decisions. He advised that the first order would be to develop the policy that

creates a vision or a purpose. There needed to be principles where it applies, exceptions to what will occur, standards and processes, and objectives and performance measures for the “Complete Streets” Plan.

Mr. Huber stated that there are limitations that will occur, meaning that some modes of transportation can be prohibited on certain streets. He indicated that this Plan does not make every decision, and special cases will be discussed. He advised that it is important to stay consistent with the policy, as it will indicate the reasoning behind its implementation.

Council Member Betcher stated that there is a perception that this will have some negative consequences in other areas. Mr. Pregitzer stated that this Plan still needs to be consistent with the City’s Long-Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Huber said that some solutions are known to work better on certain streets. Council Member Betcher indicated that this is part of the City’s process in making assessments of how it fits with other components of transportation plans.

Council Member Gartin asked how the Plan will be tailored to make it “Ames specific.” It was reported that TDG will be going through a process of classifying streets. Attributes for the typology of the streets would need to be determined; then standards and ranges within each street typology would be created to make it unique to Ames.

Mr. Huber advised that there will need to be stakeholder input, and a Community Advisory Committee will be formed. Membership will include individuals from bicycle groups, students, developers, downtown business groups, and health groups. He indicated that public meetings/open house events will start next month. In addition, on-line media will be used as much as possible in order to notify those individuals not able to attend meetings or those just seeking information on the Plan. Mr. Huber explained why stakeholder input from all groups is important. With priority setting under a “Complete Streets” policy, people will understand the decisions made. The process will provide the ability to help frame the project and deal with any compromises that have to occur. In order to keep the Council informed, Mr. Huber said there will be times that City Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer will come back to the Council and share updates about the project.

Sarah Cady, 2812 Arbor Street, Ames, advised that she is the president of the Ames Bicycle Coalition. Ms. Cady reported that, on the Ames Bicycle Coalition page, she has posted information about the ten-mile urban loop in Ames. There were 17,000 views, many shares, and some comments to this. She said that this is indicative of a desire to have a connected, safe system for bikers and walkers. Ms. Cady stated that there is a push for people to feel included in the infrastructure of the City and to feel safe in any mode of travel they choose.

Council Member Orazem expressed concerns about the three jurisdictions—the City, the University (ISU), and the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) working together and regarding the funding of the “Complete Streets.” Mr. Huber stated that all the major players must come together. “Complete Streets,” being part of the bike and pedestrian plans, will give support when issues do arise and decisions need to be made.

Mr. Pregitzer stated that there have been discussions with ISU staff and how this may affect them. ISU staff expressed concern regarding the integration of City streets into ISU’s streets, and making sure this integration is logical and safe.

Council Member Betcher asked if behavior modification is part of a typology. Mr. Huber stated that behavior modification is not an ultimate goal, but it will have an impact on some projects. The impact would be from more of a design standpoint (how design impacts the speed of vehicles, where people can turn, etc.). Mr. Huber further stated that safety is part of the principles of “Complete Streets.” Mr. Pregitzer explained that the Plan would be about identifying deficiencies, because with deficiencies, safety problems and bad behaviors are recognized. In considering safety, the goal would be to have more natural and integrated movements, and this may cause a change in behavior.

Elizabeth Wentzel, 1125 Marston Avenue, Ames, stated that she is a member of Ames Bicycle Coalition. She felt that “Complete Streets” is a way forward. The Plan would create a vision which would enable everyone to travel more safely—whatever the mode of transport might be.

Chuck Klutho, 312 Hillcrest Avenue, Ames, explained that he represented the Community Regional Planning Club at Iowa State University. He said that this group envisions the Plan as a way to create connectivity with the students and the University.

The meeting recessed at 7:23 p.m. and reconvened at 7:32 p.m.

PLANNING DIVISION WORK PLAN: Kelly Diekmann, Planning and Housing Director, reported that staff presented a Division Work Plan to the City Council in November 2016. He provided a list of committed projects and the status of those projects, as follows:

1. East Industrial Annexation and Master Plan (Master Planning & Zoning steps with infrastructure plans) (Winter 2017-18)
2. Lincoln Way Corridor Plan, (Provide implementation program for Council Review) (September)
3. 321 State Avenue Affordable Housing Development (Old Middle School; finalize development agreement and seek infrastructure bids) (October)
4. Housing Background report (combination of prior Council goals and referrals) (On hold)
5. Wireless Ordinance Update (state and federal law changes 2015, 2017) (On hold)
6. New Comprehensive Plan (Provide Draft RFP to Council) (October)
7. North Growth Gap Area Major Amendment to Fringe Plan and annexation (Council hearing on Fringe Plan) (October)
8. Rental Occupancy Changes (October - January)

Mr. Diekmann explained that Council has a list of 32 other projects to consider in prioritizing the Planning Division Work Plan for the next six months. He said the Council needs to give staff direction on whether these projects are low priorities or longer-term, high priorities. He pointed out that Table 1 indicated the carry-over items that will be worked on. Director Diekmann reported that the Council had asked that the Southwest Master Plan be done by staff and said that staff did not get back to Council on that priority due to the realization that there wasn’t anything more to pursue at this time.

Director Diekmann stated that the priorities on Table 1 may or may not be important this fall—e.g., the Southwest Growth Master Plan and the Housing Background Information. He further stated that he needed reaffirmation that what is shown on Table 1 are priorities that should remain on the list.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Betcher, to remove from Table 1 the Southwest Growth Master Plan and the Housing Background Information from the Work Plan and to direct that staff not pursue

those projects within the upcoming six-month time frame.

Council Member Betcher clarified that that motion was meant to remove those two items from the six-month priorities list, and not from the list completely. Mr. Diekmann indicated that with the upcoming Comprehensive Plan, those two issues will not likely be undertaken six months from now. In addition, in reference to Table 2 (the list of remaining items that have been referred to staff, but not been prioritized) some of these items will likely get folded into the Comprehensive Plan, as these are not stand-alone projects anymore. Ms. Betcher was concerned about the Housing Background Information, which includes “inclusionary” zoning issues, and she wanted to see that item fit in at some point.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Betcher, to amend the motion stating that the Council will remove the Southwest Growth Master Plan completely.

Vote on Amendment: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Vote on Motion, as Amended: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Betcher, to remove the Housing Background component from the prioritized list for the next six months, with the exception of the “inclusionary” zoning information.

Upon the inquiry from Council Member Gartin, Mr. Diekmann explained that the other portion related to this issue is affordable housing funding related to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) policy. The City did not have a policy stating that it prefers one location over another, which is similar to the “inclusionary” zoning. Council Member Gartin said that he is reluctant to do this when affordable housing is one of the Council’s goals. Council Member Corrieri explained that the Council is removing some pieces, but focusing a little more on “inclusionary” zoning. Mr. Diekmann reassured the Council that the Housing Information will be a part of the Comprehensive Plan.

Vote on Motion:6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

In reference to the Downtown Plan, Council Member Corrieri said that one of the major points involved with this project is whether or not to involve incentives, and if so, what might those incentives be, e.g., parking, storm water, and community space. She indicated that she did not see a value in creating a big Downtown Plan and asked Mr. Diekmann to explain how focusing on specific issues affects his department. Mr. Diekmann stated that it helps the Planning Division know what is wanted, it gives staff specific direction, and it gives the Council more predictable outcomes.

City Manager Steve Schainker added that there are at least three projects that could come before Council: one in Campustown and two in Downtown that could potentially take a substantial amount of time.

Council Member Orazem inquired whether or not there is time to add anything. Mr. Schainker advised that those three projects will take a long time with negotiations, developers agreements, and rezoning. He stated that he would prefer to just leave the extra time as a buffer for the new projects.

Council Member Gartin addressed the item of receiving information on options for incentivizing conversion of rental property to single-family ownership. He said that Ames has such a small supply of lower-level owner-occupied property. Council Member Gartin indicated that there are actions that

the Council could take to incentivize that, and this would be a good time to move that forward.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to move from Table 2 to Table 1 the “incentivizing conversion of rental property to single-family home ownership” item.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to move from Table 2 to Table 1 the Downtown Plan and that the focus be on providing information to the Council regarding potential incentives, e.g., parking standards, storm water, and community space.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

In reference to review of the Downtown Facade Program, Council Member Betcher stated her concern regarding the amount of staff hours this would entail. Planning Director Diekmann reminded the Council that that pertained to the possibility of changing the City’s guidelines or expanding the program to do business improvement grants of some type. It would take time to understand what businesses would take advantage of it, what it would cost, and who would administer it. Council Member Betcher added that this is something the State Main Street Program recommended doing, and she wanted to leave it on the list. She stated that there are some items she wants to keep as a “place holder,” but they are not ready to move to the priority list at this time.

Moved by Nelson, seconded by Betcher, to add the referred letter from the Zoning Board of Adjustment requesting changes regarding garage door widths to an upcoming agenda.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Council Member Corrieri addressed the issue of outdoor displays and temporary uses. Mr. Diekmann stated that if Council wants to address the outdoor display and temporary uses issue, it should be done this winter. The fireworks displays were a good reason to address many little issues that don’t work well in the Zoning Ordinance. The 30 hours would involve going to the next step of discussing options to formulating ordinances. He indicated that the issue should include more than just fireworks; it should involve discussion on any outdoor temporary use and how it is to be conducted on commercial property. It was determined that this item should remain on Table 2.

Council Member Betcher referenced the letter from the Story County Board of Supervisors requesting that the City partner with it to perform a county-wide housing study. She asked if it was asking for funding or staff time.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to obtain additional information from the Story County Board of Supervisors with regard to its request that the City partner with it on a County-wide housing study.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Mayor Campbell inquired about the report on the letter from Martin Stern, who is seeking to develop 230 acres south of Highway 30. Council Member Gartin stated that the idea is unique, but the price tag is a lot of money for a City subsidy.

Moved by Corrieri, seconded by Betcher, to remove the Martin Stern request off Table 2.

Vote on Motion: 5-1. Voting Aye: Betcher, Beatty-Hansen, Corrieri, Gartin, Orazem. Voting Nay: Nelson. Motion declared carried.

Moved by Nelson, seconded by Orazem, to initiate a text amendment to allow for funeral homes within the CCN Zoning District.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Council Member Nelson referenced the request on behalf of Earl May to modify Minor Site Development application requirements for parking lot reconstruction. Mr. Diekmann stated that staff owes the Council a report. He indicated that more internal discussion has prolonged it, and he hoped to have it to the Council later in the week.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Nelson, to add the request from Habitat for Humanity to an upcoming agenda regarding the rezoning of property at 3504 North Grand Avenue.

Vote on Motion: 4-1-1. Voting Aye: Betcher, Beatty-Hansen, Nelson, Orazem. Voting Nay: Corrieri. Abstaining: Gartin. Motion declared carried.

Planning Director Diekmann asked the Council to give direction on a request to initiate a land use policy change for high density on Dayton Avenue. The developer was asking if the City would be willing to change the Land Use Policy Plan from Commercial to High-Density if it was to build a tax credit affordable housing rental project.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Corrieri, to have Planning Director Diekmann indicate to the developer that this request will not be on an agenda.

Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Mr. Diekmann asked the Council about the bicycle memo that was delivered to Council the day before. Council Member Beatty-Hansen and Orazem both indicated that they wanted to leave it on the red chart for further discussion.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Betcher to adjourn at 8:18 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Stacy Craven, Recording Secretary