

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
AMES CITY COUNCIL AND THE IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT GOVERNMENT**

AMES, IOWA

MARCH 4, 2020

The Ames City Council met at 5:34 p.m. on the 4th day of March, 2020, in the Campanile Room of the Memorial Union, Iowa State University, pursuant to law. Mayor John Haila and Council Members Gloria Betcher, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and David Martin and *ex officio* Council Member Devyn Leeson were present. Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen and Amber Corrieri were absent. City Manager Steve Schainker, City Attorney Mark Lambert, Assistant City Manager Deb Schildroth, and Public Relations Officer Susan Gwiasda were also in attendance.

2020 Census.

City Public Relations Officer Susan Gwiasda explained that the City is partnering with the University for a complete and accurate account of the Census in Ames. She advised that, as ISU students here in Ames, the students will claim Ames for the Census. She said that they need students who will help get that message out; students are a hard to enumerate demographic. Ms. Gwiasda also reported that \$675 billion dollars of public funding is distributed every year via the Census. CyRide is funded a good amount by that amount. It is important, safe and easy; it is the first time you can fill it out online. According to Ms. Gwiasda, students are helping in the effort, and the City/University is also partnering with Model Farm.

At the question of Devyn Leeson as to what the last Census funding allocation paid for, Ms. Gwiasda advised that a lot of grant money comes through the federal government for different street and public area improvements, buses, and bike paths.

Ms. Gwiasda stated that they are looking for a large number of part-time jobs this summer, which is a great way for students to get involved.

Mayor Haila stated that he knows affordable housing is important to the student body. The City recently received money for that because of the Census. He noted that some Census forms are long; this one is short. There is no citizenship question on the form, and students' help is needed to quell fears that this will be used to check up on people. The Mayor commented that the University benefits significantly from this, and businesses also look at population to see if the population meets their threshold number of people before they come to a city.

It was asked by Student Government Member Johnson what should be stated to those who wish the money would go to their home town. Ms. Gwiasda said that a lot of people take pride in their home towns, but the rules state that you claim where you sleep and eat the majority of the year.

Council Member Betcher pointed out that everybody counts, it doesn't matter if you are an international student or not. It is hard to count group quarters, like an apartment with one mailbox and four residents. She asked that students get their house mates to also fill out the

form, as not everyone gets a form; it is sent to every address. Ms. Betcher also asked that students check their mailboxes in the next couple of weeks for the form. She also noted that public safety is one of the things that is funded with Census dollars

Council Member Blair asked if they can work with landlords to work with their tenants. Ms. Gwiasda commented that that was a great idea; however, until spring break is over, it will be difficult to get students' attention.

Student Government Member Hoffman, who is a CA for Friley Hall, commented there has been hesitation from residents. Some students don't see the dorms as much as a house as apartments. Ms. Gwiasda stated that the City works with the Department of Residency to get the Census forms out. Student Government Member Hoffman asked if residents then do not have to fill the form out individually. Ms. Gwiasda replied that she did not believe so.

Ex officio Member Leeson suggested that the Student Government do a resolution emphasizing the importance of the Census filling out the form.

Council Member Betcher stated that it is required by law to fill out the Census; it is a legal obligation.

Campustown.

City Manager Steve Schainker pointed out that the summer is almost here, and the City tries to get a lot of street work done in the summer before August 15. One of the big projects for this summer is the reconstruction of Welch Avenue. Mr. Schainker stated that the water and sewer systems there are over 100 years old and will require excavation from building to building. There will be wooden paths. Mr. Schainker advised that the bids for this project came back almost \$800,000 over the estimate, so the project has been redesigned. The bad news is it will lapse into the fall now. He asked that the students bear with the City during that time. The City is going to try to keep the businesses open. According to Mr. Schainker, the City did a safety study and have incorporated a lot of those ideas into the plans.

Mr. Schainker also stated that the City is looking to put in \$1.2 million a year into bike paths. He also advised that the extension of Grand Avenue is going to start this summer to help take away from traffic on Duff.

At the suggestion of the Mayor for students to explain to prospective students what it will look like and to turn the negative of the inconvenience of the construction to a negative, Student Government Member Hanyang said that might be something that could be brought to the attention of the Office of Admissions. Mayor Haila commented that, when leading tour groups, it would be helpful to mention the improvements. He pointed out that the businesses in Campustown depend on students and visitors.

City Manager Schainker said that micro-mobility is something people have been talking about, and a lot of towns are getting scooters. Scooters can be left on streets and sidewalks and can impair mobility. The City is looking to get an indepth study on this. The City Council will only

make a policy for the City; the University may make a different decision regarding the Campus. The Council has not been introduced to it yet.

Council Member Junck asked Mr. Schainker to talk about the possible relocation of Fire Station 2. City Manager Schainker replied that Fire Station 2 has been in its current location for a long time. At one time, the University actually had its own fire service and then unified with the City. The University pays about a quarter of the City's Fire Department budget to service the University as well. As Campustown grows, the City is looking to move Station 2, possibly to State Avenue. Any movement of the Station will need a 60% vote. The City has been getting questions about what to do with the present Station. It may get renovated, or become expanded plaza area. It is a very expensive piece of property. *Ex officio* Member Leeson believes that having it become a public plaza is a really cool idea; there is desire to make Campustown into a student space.

Mr. Leeson shared that he gets a lot of complaints from the students about crosswalks. He asked if there is a form that the students can use to lodge those complaints. City Manager Schainker replied that the City has an app called "Ames on the Go," or they can call the City Manager's Office. It would be best to make the complaint via email or a letter, if possible, so the City Council will see it. Student Government Member Blair noted that the crosswalk on Welch is terrifying past 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. and is excited to see the Welch Avenue Improvements project. Also, moving the Fire Station and making it a public space would be a really good idea.

Council Member Betcher said, in regards to crosswalks, if you live in Ames, you have three representatives on the City Council. She commented that the Council appreciates getting emails telling them what you think and encouraged the students to send the Council emails. email. City Manager Schainker noted that every street you travel on isn't a City street or crosswalk. If there is City or University property on both sides, it might not belong to the City.

Mr. Schainker stated that the City is trying to divert traffic from South 16th Street down Grand instead of Duff. There is a portion by VetMed that narrows down to two lanes from four lanes. The City approached the University to work together on this project. The City is going to fund (from the Capital Improvements Plan) to widen the lanes. It will be a \$2.7 million project to improve that area.

Student Government Member Advait asked if there are any plans to improve Mortensen and State, as that area can get really bad. Mr. Schainker replied that that is mostly University, and there is a plan for that. Council Member David Martin advised that there is a plan now for a traffic light to be installed there. There was discussion in doing a roundabout there, but a traffic analysis said that shouldn't be done due to the mass number of people exiting during football games.

Student Government Member Kline noted that at 13th and Grand, there is no arrow and only one car makes it through per light cycle. Mr. Schainker said that the City has talked about that, and had a plan to have a full turning lane. However, it would take a major portion of ten household yards out, and it got deferred. The City is looking for ways to redesign that. Student

Government Member Kline then asked if there was a way to have a four-way stop there. City Manager Schainker said that a light could be installed, which would make people stop, but it would be less efficient. He also stated that the City has a \$7 million dollar project for intelligent traffic sensors. In a couple of years, the City will have that new technology that can detect traffic and change signals. Council Member Betcher shared that the City is working to install voice signals to enhance accessibility. However, they would require too much of a delay, and Grand is Highway 69, so it would require input from the State of Iowa.

Sustainability. Mayor Haila stated that Ames has been committed to being sustainable for a long time. The City processes between 2 and 2 ½ million pounds of waste from surrounding towns. That waste would have to go down to Des Moines if the Resource Recovery Plant would not be operating. The City also has the greenhouse gas inventory results back. It has been something that has been front and center for a long time. Five snowplows have been converted to 100% plant-based fuel. Those five trucks are only 10% of the fuel costs. There are different ways and initiatives that the City is trying to get done. City Manager Schainker commented that the City is proud of its efforts to improve sustainability and the impact that they are having in the community. The City is starting a solar panel farm, about a Megawatt to start with. It is a \$300 buy-in fee for a panel, and there is a small rebate associated with that. Council Member Betcher advised that the Rummage Rampage is being expanded this year (July 24th until Aug 3rd). That event is when things people do not want anymore are brought in and sold to people who do want them. Ms. Betcher told the students that if they want to volunteer, student organizations can receive funds from helping out. Nineteen non-profits received funds last year's event.

Student Government Member Conn expressed appreciation of the current plans, but asked if there were plans for carbon removal. There are professors who talk about turning carbon into asphalt and other products. It was asked if there were any plans to do something like that. Council Member Martin answered that the City has mostly finished sending in the raw data and compiling its greenhouse gas inventory. The City's plan is to then go forward and make an action plan to combat that. It is the Climate Action Plan that will take the baseline from the City and issue recommendations to fight that over time. He noted that the City wants to engage the community as much as possible.

Council Member Junck said the composting process is a great thing that students can get involved with. She explained that you can purchase a starter kit and you get a punch card that can be punched and dropped off at two different places. It is a great alternative to burning it. Ms. Junck noted that the City sometimes struggle with the moisture in the burning of the waste and composting would aid that.

Ex officio Member Leeson mentioned that the barriers for both projects are that you have to be the investor in the project yourself. He asked if there was any value in funding or helping work toward assisting in some of these projects and to get more use from these projects from students. It is hard for a student to use the solar rebate. According to Student Government Member Conn there are currently plans for that, like at Freddy Court. There has been a lot of friction with the DOR over who owns the bins. We are trying to have a larger scale pilot program with that, then have the DOR take over.

Mr. Leeson said he felt it would be cool to look into the Student Government helping out with the solar project and talking to the University about that.

Student Government Member Zastrow said, for composting, it sounds like something that the Green Initiatives Fund could help with. Student Government could also be helping subsidize the solar panels. One reason students would help with those panels is due to the long-term nature of the investment.

Student Government Member Searles asked if Student Government would be investing in the solar farm to offset its own electrical usage. Student Government Member Schrader said that a lot of students are interested in that, so after this meeting, they could look into that suggestion.

Student Government Member Hanyang noted that a great resource for off-campus students is property management. Student Government Member Mass said that another area is the Greek life area. They are long-term members of this community and house owners. It is thought that the Alumni boards would be willing to have those conversations.

Student Government Member Conn raised the issue of affordability of the compost bins (\$20/four-gallon bucket and five bags, then \$10 for five bags after that. Member Conn noted one of the people he knows has tens of thousands of worms and they don't stink.

Council Member Betcher stated that, because of the City's type of fuel, keeping those compostables out of the waste stream is important. The City can't use those materials because they are contaminated and wet. Keeping those out in any way is important, composting or not.

Mayor Haila noted that ISU had purchased some panels for their energy portfolios. City Manager Schainker added that they had bought 25% of the panels, and have eight out of the 38KW of wind energy.

Open Forum. Council Member Gartin thanked the students, stating that he had been impressed by the number of ISU students who have been helping out and being involved in this community. He wanted the students to know that the Council sees it and appreciates it.

Mayor Haila asked City Manager Schainker to talk on the City's efforts to combat the spread of the Coronavirus. Mr. Schainker stated that the City of Ames is taking this seriously. During the first meeting with Mary Greeley, the County Board of Health, ISU, the City, and others will be planning and partnering. This group will be focusing on continuity of service. It will be very challenging, because it could happen to you, or happen in the Police Department, so officers can't patrol. The different agencies may have to suspend different programs. The City and University do a great job partnering together and will be as ready as possible. Council Member Betcher added that the Coronavirus is of concern of universities and colleges across the nation. She urged the students to read President Wintersteen's statement that had been sent out. The President is asking for flexibility, if you do not have to be in class do not go when you are sick. Do what you can to remain healthy.

Mayor Haila asked for feedback on how students get information about the City. He said they understand that we can leverage technology more; however, they can only push out so much. Student Government Member Heasley commented that they generally get news from the newspaper or an on-line source, but in an emergency, goes to social media sites to check. The app would be much better and should be pushed by all of us. Student Government Member Ludwig hears about it from other people and local news sources. The app sounds great, and they could work with ISU to push it alongside MyState. Student Government Member Hanyang commented that going through the orientation process and downloading three apps when just getting here at ISU may be a bit much. Feedback through email is good, but having forms that students can submit would be nice and a good idea. Student Government Member Fritz said that ISU uses texts sent to people; they have a text listserv, so if there was a way to subscribe to a mass text listserv, that would help. Council Member Zastrow stated that if they needed to find something out about Ames, they would go to the City's Twitter. Also, the City could look into doing a podcast. A good way is also an alert banner on the City of Ames Web site. Council Member Martin stated that the app is designed as a reporting tool to let the City know about problems. He noted that the Council did agree to look to adopt a civil app that can have all that important information. One possibility that he has hopes for is collaborating with the MyState app developer, but it hasn't gotten anywhere yet. Student Government Member Johnson commented that a user testing experience on the Ames Web site would be nice, as it is hard to navigate the Web site.

Council Member Junck commented that they haven't talked about having students connected to regular business. She believes that they have great reporters that report on it, and input is appreciated.

Ex officio Member Leeson said that he uses Twitter to get info quickly. He suggested that if the City is interested in getting a lot of info out, it could get the email list from ISU to push-out that info.

There being no further topics to be discussed at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:04 p.m.

Minutes taken by Ryan Hillier

John A. Haila, Mayor

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk