

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

OCTOBER 21, 2014

The Ames City Council met in special session at 7:00 p.m. on the 21ST day of October, 2014, 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: Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Matthew Goodman, Chris Nelson, and Peter Orazem. *Ex officio* Member Lissa Villa was also present.

NEIGHBORHOOD SUMMIT: Mayor Ann Campbell said a number of topics that affect neighborhoods will be discussed which will be followed by a presentation on Historic Preservation. Mayor Campbell introduced Fleet Services Director and Former Public Works Operations Manager Corey Mellies, who updated the group on the Emerald Ash Borer response plan and urban forest diversification and reforestation. He said the Emerald Ash Borer has been confirmed in Story and Boone counties, and described the response plan as being a 20-year plan that will treat and remove the Ash trees that are public street trees and park trees in maintained areas (next to trails and trees that are mowed around). He said the reforestation and diversification plan will be going at the same time, and said the inventory of trees that was created will be used to ensure the trees will be replaced with species that keep the inventory diverse. A property owner asked if City employees could diagnose Ash trees on private property. Mr. Mellies said someone could look at the tree, but the Department of Natural Resources must be contacted to confirm Emerald Ash Borer. He told the group that on the City website under Doing Business – Licenses and Permits, residents can see all tree surgeons that are currently permitted to do business, and which ones have a certified arborist and commercial pesticide applicator. Council Member Orazem asked if property owners that have public property behind their property would be able to call the City regarding Ash trees that they are willing to care for. Mr. Mellies said the City would first determine if the trees are public and if they are a hazard. Erv Klaus asked about the inventory. Mr. Mellies said about 26% of the trees are Maple trees and about 14% are Ash trees. Mr. Klaus recommended using native species to prevent bringing in more pests and create native habitats for birds. A property owner asked how long it takes to see a decline in a tree affected by Emerald Ash Borer. Mr. Mellies said 3-7 years. Discussion ensued regarding the cost of injections and removal of Ash trees.

Mayor Campbell introduced Civil Engineer Eric Cowles, who discussed public outreach to neighborhoods before and during Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) projects. He said for every project Public Works contacts property owners, businesses, residents, tenants, and when needed other entities such as ISU and CyRide. Mr. Cowles said for smaller projects with minimal impact a letter will be sent with details, map, restoration information, contact information, and a thank you for helping make the project a success. He said for larger projects a letter is sent that includes a link to a virtual meeting where the project is highlighted and more details are given during a video, or a letter is sent with details that include a meeting in the neighborhood to discuss the project. Mr. Cowles said Public Works also reaches out to neighborhood associations and will attend neighborhood meetings. A Lynn Avenue resident thanked him for a recent meeting, and asked about reseeding of grass, noting the appearance along Knapp Street. Mr. Cowles said that area has not been seeded yet and explained that a City-wide restoration will take

place in the spring of next year for projects that took place this year. Council Member Betcher asked if restoration of the parking is retroactive. Mr. Cowles said areas can be touched up if needed, and asked residents to let the City know about areas of concern. Council Member Goodman asked if there is a way for residents to contact him after viewing the virtual meeting. Mr. Cowles said his email and phone number are listed in the letter.

Construction Supervisor Justin Clausen told the Council that Public Works uses message boards at least 48 hours in advance of construction projects to alert residents. He said door hangers and fliers are also distributed at least 48 hours in advance with information including the day the work will begin, anticipated duration, alternate areas to park, a description of what will happen, and at least three points of contact including the Contractor, Project Inspector, and his own information. Mr. Clausen said there is also a link to the City's Construction Project Update web page that is updated at least once per week and a map showing the area affected and alternate areas to park. He said Public Works also uses social media to alert residents of major street closures or major disruptions. Mr. Clausen said a Thank You note is mailed to the neighborhood after the project with restoration details, and starting next spring projects will be restored more quickly since they will be done City-wide.

Police Chief Chuck Cychosz discussed the Safe Neighborhoods initiative by the Police Department. He said Ames is divided into four patrol areas with officers assigned to each area. He said some officers work in the same neighborhoods for 5-10 years. Chief Cychosz discussed common police calls and encouraged neighbors to call the non-emergency number (515-239-5133) if anything suspicious is seen, even if it is not an emergency. He introduced Community Resource Officer Ny Saadiq, who manages Citizen Police Academy and works with property managers on issues and Officer Eric Snyder of the Safe Neighborhoods Team, which moves around the community to get to know residents and work through problems with neighbors. He said relationship building and problem solving are important to these programs.

Linda Feldman asked if the Police Department notifies neighbors if there is a problem in a particular neighborhood. Chief Cychosz said not unless it's a long-term issue that is being worked on, then the Safe Neighborhoods Team may ask for help communicating to the residents in a particular area. Discussion ensued on drug use in Ames and other trends to be aware of. A resident asked how to report dangerous dogs that are not leashed. Chief Cychosz said residents should call Animal Control, and Animal Control will educate pet owners. *Ex officio* Member Villa asked about the flamingos that used to be set outside of parties as an early warning sign. Chief Cychosz said that was used in the build up to VEISHEA for a couple of years. He said he would like to hear more about the effectiveness of the flamingos from the students. Council Member Betcher asked about Citizen Police Academy. Chief Cychosz told the group it is an 8-week program on Thursday nights consisting of 12-25 people and it takes participants through a mini experience of police officer training.

Mayor Campbell introduced Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann and Planner Jeff Benson. Mr. Diekmann said a survey of neighborhood associations was conducted over the summer. Mr. Benson said there are 27 registered neighborhood associations within the city. Mr. Benson said of the 19 that responded, residents were overwhelmingly satisfied with their neighborhoods. He also said the three most important programs to the respondents were free

yard waste days, the Street 'N' Greet block party trailer, and Neighborhood Improvement Program grants. Mr. Benson said the survey discussed communication, and the most important form of communication to neighbors is email. Council Member Betcher asked if any NIP grant money is left over. Mr. Schainker said there is money left some years. It was discussed that getting neighbors to work together is the best part of the program and that new neighborhoods should apply.

One resident said email correspondence is much easier to forward and share with others. Sharon Guber asked if there is a group of neighborhood association representatives that gathers periodically. Mr. Benson said the annual Neighborhood Summit is currently the only meeting for neighborhood association representatives. Linda Feldman asked if it would be worth getting at least one neighborhood representative from each association together a few times per year. Debbie Lee said at one time there was a neighborhood association coalition, and it was eventually disbanded because attendance was dropping to near zero. Council Member Goodman said that Council tries to involve neighborhoods in solutions to neighborhood issues. Mayor Campbell opened the discussion to concerns of residents.

Barbara Pleasants, South Campus Area Neighborhood (SCAN), said parking is an ongoing issue as the streets around her home have become daytime parking for many students. She said it is very hard for anyone in the neighborhood to have guests. Ms. Pleasants expressed concern that 500 new beds will soon be added to the area, which will exasperate the problem. She said her other major concern is the future of Crawford School. Fern Kupfer, SCAN, said Crawford is a historically significant property, and she would like to talk with the School Board about what the building could be. Mr. Goodman asked if the neighborhood has a solution to the parking problem. There was discussion regarding the Intermodal Facility. Sarah Cady, Arbor Street, said the Intermodal Facility is farther away and more expensive for students than parking in neighborhoods. Mike Peterson, College Creek area, said a Brookside Park area resident asked him to discuss the speeding on Brookridge and Ridgewood Avenues during high school hours. He said the concern is for other families with children home during those times.

Sarah Cady, Arbor Street, said she lives in an area that is about 50% rental properties and the residents of the rental properties leave trash and trash cans on the curb all week long, which becomes unsightly as cans are dumped and litter ends up in the street. She said she has been working with Sarah Van Meeteren in the Inspections Division who tried door hangers, which helped some. Ms. Cady said she wonders if there is a more effective way to handle the problem than a Municipal Infraction. Council Member Betcher asked if there are other neighborhoods experiencing this. No other neighbors commented.

Dylis Morris, Oakwood Forest neighborhood, asked about fireworks. She said she has noticed fireworks going off for 30 minutes or longer on weeknights. Mr. Schainker said applications must be reviewed by the Fire Chief for safety and location and authorization is needed by the City Council. Mayor Campbell said one exception was the request for Homecoming. Robert Sill, Edwards Neighborhood Association, said he is voicing support for an additional liaison for neighborhoods, such as an ombudsman. He said his neighborhood is facing a school closure, and is interested in ways that the property could be repurposed. He said he is concerned a developer

could buy the property. Mr. Sill thanked the City Council for its work on the Breckenridge development.

Lisa Magner, Campustown area, said she believes there has been too much growth in Ames. Peter Hallock, Historic Old Town neighborhood, thanked the Council and City staff, specifically Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer, for working with them on hospital traffic during construction. He also expressed thanks for the work on the Duff Avenue Traffic Study.

Debbie Lee, Oak to Riverside neighborhood, said the attendance at this Neighborhood Summit is very impressive. Ms. Lee expressed concern about Squaw Creek flooding, especially with the new development near Riverside Manor. She also said City Council is looking at revisions to the Land Use Policy Plan, noting that Ames continues to face challenges with village suburban areas, and said her concern is between avoiding sprawl and the intensification of land use in already-developed areas. Dylis Morris, Oakwood Forest neighborhood, expressed concern about the landscaping and maintenance of new parking lots. Mike Peterson, College Creek neighborhood, asked about the vegetation along the Skunk River near Deery Brothers. Mr. Diekmann said channel widening was authorized to mitigate flooding, and that $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of wetland forest mitigation will be added back to the site.

The meeting recessed at 8:50 p.m. and reconvened at 8:58 p.m.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGES TO CHAPTER 31, HISTORIC PRESERVATION (HPC): Mayor Campbell acknowledged Peter Hallock and Kim Hanna of HPC and said Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann would begin the presentation. Mr. Diekmann said HPC has been busy working on an update to Chapter 31 of the Municipal Code. He said there was a work group formed in 2010 for input, and in January, 2014 a report was brought to City Council and Council directed HPC to move forward in drafting text amendments, presenting drafts to the public and State Historic Preservation Office, and proceed with public hearings.

Mr. Diekmann said 19 new houses would be impacted, and five of those have responded. He also said that there has not been a lot of participation by the public in the last six months. Council Member Gartin asked if realtors provide information on Chapter 31 to interested buyers in the Historic Old Town Neighborhood. Planner Ray Anderson said he occasionally receives calls from interested clients and realtors about regulations. Mr. Gartin said it would be nice if realtors had more information on specific areas.

Mr. Benson said the proposed amendments to Chapter 31 fall into the categories of Historic District Classifications, Design Issues, Materials, and Administrative Approvals. For Historic District Classifications, Mr. Anderson said the 2003 inventory may be adopted, which includes 130 contributing properties, and 4 not contributing. Mr. Anderson said 19 of the 130 are not currently regulated, but would be under the proposed changes. Mr. Anderson discussed preserving contributing garages. Discussion ensued regarding how the condition of the garages is evaluated.

Design Issues that are being updated include alterations to contributing garages and construction of new garages and outbuildings, egress windows, fences, decks, porches, and ramps. Mr. Gartin asked if a garage in very poor shape was built on the lot line can be rebuilt on the lot line. Mr. Diekmann said if it is removed, then it would be subject to the set-backs. Discussion ensued. Ms. Betcher said decisions made by HPC in her tenure took into consideration what is reasonable and what makes sense, including the homeowner's situation.

Mr. Benson discussed Materials. For substitute materials, amendments would include when they will be considered general criteria, guidelines for substitute materials, and substitute materials permitted. Ms. Betcher said some communities have regulations for only parts of the structure that are visible from the street. Mr. Benson said it difficult to define what is visible, and the purpose of the regulations is to preserve the historic integrity of the building, not just to create a certain look. Ms. Betcher asked if the changes being proposed are more flexible or if they mostly pertain to Old Town. Mr. Benson said it is hard to anticipate what neighborhoods could be affected. Discussion ensued regarding the public benefit of certain improvements versus the structural integrity of a historic property.

The proposed Administrative Approvals allowed for are alterations to principle structure, garages, and outbuildings, and new construction of fences and retaining walls.

Mr. Diekmann reviewed the next steps and said HPC will finalize its recommendation on November 10, 2014, Planning and Zoning Commission will finalize its recommendation on November 19, 2014 and the City Council Public Hearing will be November 25, 2014.

Mr. Goodman asked if the Planning and Housing Department could research some options to make this information more accessible to home buyers.

CITY COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Moved by Betcher and seconded by Goodman to request a memo from Building Official Seana Perkins addressing options for improving the issue raised by Sarah Cady (Arbor Street) of trash and trash containers left on the curb all week.

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

Council Member Betcher said she would like to discuss the letter received from the Main Street Cultural District regarding a possible change in its funding model. Moved by Betcher and seconded by Goodman to add this item to a future agenda for discussion.

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

Member Goodman said Council should start thinking about a permitting process for on-street parking for residents, which would remove the worry about parking requirements. He also recalled a memo on proactive enforcement of snow shoveling in Campustown. Mr. Schinker said it had been adopted. Moved by Goodman and seconded by Corrieri to request a memo on the history and progress of the proactive enforcement.

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

Council Member Gartin thanked the Historic Preservation Commission for its work, and expressed disappointment at the attendance during that portion of the meeting. He also said he was very encouraged by the attendance for the Neighborhood Summit.

Council Member Gartin discussed the letter from John Chesters regarding parking ratios in University-impacted areas. Moved by Gartin and seconded by Goodman to add this item to a future agenda for discussion.

Vote on Motion: 4-2. Voting aye: Gartin, Goodman, Nelson, Orazem. Voting nay: Betcher, Corrieri. Motion carried.

Moved by Nelson and seconded by Goodman to refer to staff the letter received from the City of Marshalltown.

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

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary