

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

AMES, IOWA

JULY 21, 2020

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 6:00 p.m. on the 21st day of July, 2020. The Mayor announced that it is impractical to hold an in-person Council meeting due to the Governor of Iowa declaring a public health emergency because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this meeting is being held as an electronic meeting as allowed by Section 21.8 of the *Iowa Code*. Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and David Martin and *ex officio* Member Nicole Whitlock joined the electronic meeting. The Mayor described the options available to those who wanted to offer public input.

On behalf of the City of Ames, Mayor Haila extended deepest condolences to the family of Representative John Lewis and noted that flags were being flown at half-staff to honor him.

**WORKSHOP REGARDING MULTI-FAMILY COMPONENT OF 321 STATE STREET DEVELOPMENT:** Mayor Haila said Council discussion will ensure the project can move forward, though no final Council decision will be made this evening.

Ms. Baker-Latimer said that, in December 2017, Council directed staff to create a development concept for single-family homes in this area, which is now called Baker Subdivision and includes affordable multi-family housing on the site. In January the budget process time frame was laid out. She said staff met with the surrounding neighborhoods and Civil Design Advantage (CDA) to come up with six concept designs, which were shared with Council on February 25, 2020, and Concept F was selected. Ms. Baker-Latimer said single-family homes would be located on the north side and multi-family rental housing on the south side. She said Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program details, Q&A's, and 2020 income guidelines are included in the Council packet information. Ms. Baker-Latimer said this meeting will include Council discussion and public input from members of the neighborhood regarding the south side to assist staff in drafting a Request for Proposals (RFP). Planning and Housing Director Diekmann said staff is recommending the RFP be broad in order to receive proposals with different options.

Council Member Martin said there has been interest from neighbors on a lease-to-buy concept and asked what impact that would have on housing type and density. Ms. Baker-Latimer said she visited two sites in Des Moines and one site in Bondurant that were rent-to-own programs with tax credits, and they are eligible projects under the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) criteria. She said all sites had on-site management for maintenance. She said she is unsure how many units would need to be proposed for the project to be financially feasible. Mr. Diekmann said that within the three available acres about 12-18 single-family homes could be accommodated, and any other configuration is hard to speculate. Mr. Martin asked how that compares to the multi-family construction targets. Mr. Diekmann said with two to three stories 40 units could fit comfortably. Ms. Beatty-Hansen asked about duplex or triplex options. Mr. Diekmann said that would be hard for staff to project. Ms. Beatty-Hansen asked about the on-site manager. Ms. Baker-Latimer said the maintenance staff had office hours. Ms. Betcher asked about the definition of multi-family. Mr. Diekmann said multi-family is three or more units connected in a building. He said the Des Moines Greystones project has 26 four-bedroom homes.

Council Member Gartin said single-family homes or duplexes will most likely not achieve the desired density. He said it makes sense to consider an apartment-like building and create condominiums. Mr. Diekmann said he doesn't believe that to be precluded by rules, but he hasn't seen it before.

Council Member Martin asked if the RFP will include the possibility of lease-to-own properties or if that is something that needs done separately. Mr. Diekmann said Council would need to determine if it's willing to consider that type of proposal. Mr. Martin asked about the way a lease-to-own option works. Mr. Diekmann said there's a substantial amount of years the unit must be a rental. Ms. Betcher said the Des Moines Greystones project has a 15-year rental requirement before the unit is eligible for purchase.

Ms. Baker-Latimer said IFA's point system looks at the community and the housing need, so broad requirements would allow developers to submit options. Mr. Diekmann said developers want to know what the City wants in order to put their best proposal forward, yet more options will be submitted if more freedom is given. Mr. Gartin said he's worried that the option of lease-to-own has come up late in the process, and he doesn't want it to constrain the process.

Mayor Haila opened public forum.

Tony Ramey, 425 Hilltop Road, Ames, said Joanne Pfeiffer contacted him about the Des Moines Greystones project, which is the first project he has heard about with the lease-to-own option. He said he feels something similar would be good for the city and the neighborhood.

Debbie Ramey, 425 Hilltop Road, Ames, asked for clarification on the acronyms being used. Mr. Diekmann reviewed the acronyms being used and explained IFA is the state agency reviewing and awarding the LIHTC, which help lower the cost of producing lower income housing. He said it's a competitive program across the state with more requests than funding. Low density was defined as up to seven units per acre, medium density was defined as seven to 22 units per acre, and high density as up to 40 units per acre.

Sheila Riggs, 405 S. Wilmoth Avenue, Ames, thanked the Council for its service. She asked how Ames distributes housing to low-income families in different wards of Ames.

Jan Flora, 1902 George Allen Avenue, Ames, said he likes the direction of the discussion and appreciates the rent-to-own idea. He said accumulating equity from the beginning would contribute to stability for renters.

Marilyn Clem, 3306 Morningside Street, Ames, said she's not in favor of high rises in the area. She asked if anyone is willing to build the five houses planned on Wilmoth Avenue. She said she would like to see the neighborhood beautified and she doesn't believe a high rise complex would do that. She suggested row houses.

Michael Petersen, 3302 Morningside Street, Ames, asked the council members if they would vote in favor of more multi-family housing if they lived in the neighborhood.

Joanne Pfeiffer, 3308 Morningside Street, Ames, thanked Council for the conversation and for reading the letters that were submitted. Mayor Haila said he knows they have been received and will be taken seriously.

Ms. Baker-Latimer told Council that developers get funded by IFA, Iowa Economic Development, or Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to build subsidized housing where they already own land or where land is available. She said food, groceries, and transportation must be readily available in the area. Ms. Baker-Latimer said families receiving Section 8 assistance are spread out all over the community. Mr. Diekmann said this property was purchased with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to pursue affordable housing. Council Member Corrieri said the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice has shown a need for affordable housing in Ames. Ms. Baker-Latimer concurred, and noted the challenges of cost and availability in Ames.

Ms. Baker-Latimer said CDA has been hired and the lot layout is complete. She said on July 28 staff hopes to bring plans and specifications to Council so construction can begin on the north side. Mayor Haila asked when she estimates they will break ground. Ms. Baker-Latimer said it's possible by the end of the year or the first of next year.

Mayor Haila closed public input.

Council Member Gartin asked when the units will shift to market value rental units. Ms. Baker-Latimer said it depends on the stipulation period. Mr. Diekmann said the rental project is expected to be affordable housing for 30 years. Mr. Diekmann said staff needs to know if Council wants to entertain options for standard rental property and lease-to-own property. He said Council can dictate that appearance from the street be as a smaller scale building.

Council Member Betcher said she believes the benefit to families is important along with the view from the street.

Council Member Gartin said Council is tasked with the responsibility of providing low-income housing. Mayor Haila asked if direction is not clarified, would a developer try to fit in as many units as possible. Mr. Diekmann said developers will ask immediately about the zoning, and in this instance the property will be rezoned to fit the property type. Mayor Haila asked if it's possible to not receive any proposals. Mr. Diekmann said he's unsure if there's enough viability for exclusively rent-to-own units.

Mr. Martin said there's a lot to like about the lease-to-own idea, and he doesn't want to take it off the table. He said he's not concerned that the buildings on the south side would be in anyone's sight line.

Ms. Junck said she's interested in seeing both options.

Ms. Beatty-Hansen said she would like to see both options.

Ms. Corrieri said she would like to keep it flexible, though she's skeptical that developers will come forward with rent-to-own options.

Ms. Betcher said she would like to look at rental only or a combination of rental and rent-to-own for the multi-family units. She said the way the property looks is important.

Mayor Haila asked if a two story limitation would allow the density goals. Mr. Diekmann said two and a half or three story buildings could make it easier to achieve density goals, but he wouldn't recommend more than three story buildings. He said it will not be a strict scoring system, rather more qualitative.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Betcher, that the draft RFP set a limitation on the buildings to be no more than three stories. Mr. Diekmann noted Council will be very involved in all aspects of the buildings.

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

Mr. Gartin asked if the RFP could include an emphasis on aesthetics to ensure the structure is attractive. Mr. Diekmann concurred, and said more qualitative details can be included.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Betcher, to direct staff to include aesthetic elements in the RFP. Ms. Betcher asked if the aesthetics would be compatible with single-family homes. Mr. Gartin said he is hoping for broad language on landscaping and architectural features.

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

Moved by Martin, seconded by Betcher, to express interest in both lease-to-own options and exclusively long-term rental options.

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

**RESOLUTION APPROVING/MOTION DENYING MANDATING MASKS TO BE WORN IN CITY BUILDINGS:** City Manager Steve Schainker discussed current policy. Council Member Martin asked if Council proceeds with requiring face coverings in City buildings how that would work with the shields that have been installed in different areas of City Hall. Ms. Schildroth said those behind the shield could be required to wear masks at all times, or when assisting customers. She said the areas most impacted would be Utility Customer Service, Community Center, and the Library, as those work stations are protected by barriers. She said barriers are available at other offices as well. Mr. Schainker said if face coverings are required and staff members behind the barrier are not wearing face coverings, it could create questions.

Ms. Betcher if employees are comfortable as it is or if employees would be more comfortable if everyone wore masks. Ms. Schildroth said discussions with employees have been going on, and if

anyone wants to wear face coverings more than what's required that is allowed. Mr. Schainker said masks must be worn when social distancing is not possible.

Ms. Beatty-Hansen asked about the process when someone has tested positive for COVID-19. Ms. Schildroth went through the process. Mayor Haila asked if City facilities are following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Mr. Schainker concurred. Mayor Haila said any further requirements would go beyond CDC requirements. Mr. Schainker concurred. Mr. Schainker said masks must be worn in the hallways and in public areas by employees. Member Gartin asked if it's possible to make an estimate on the number of people coming into City Hall without a mask. Mr. Schainker said that's not possible to estimate, but there has been 100% compliance with either wearing a mask into City facilities or putting on a mask when asked. Mr. Gartin asked what would happen if someone came in and said they don't want to wear a mask. Mr. Schainker said they can't be cited or arrested, but they could be asked to leave and if they refuse to leave then the police can be called to remove the person for trespassing. He said it's similar to park rules. Mr. Gartin said there must be an alternative way someone could access City services in if they do not want to wear a mask.

CyRide Director Barb Neal said they have been "expecting" passengers to wear masks, and they have enough masks to offer riders. She said the Board is comfortable moving forward with the term "required" as long as riders don't have health concerns.

Ms. Betcher asked about ridership. Ms. Neal said at this time of year ridership is usually about 4,000 -5,000 riders per day and right now they are seeing about 1,200 rides per day. She said about 95% of riders are wearing masks. Ms. Neal said information coming from ISU says masks are required on CyRide buses. Ms. Neal said ISU has worked collaboratively with CyRide to get the word out on expecting masks.

Parks and Recreation Director Keith Abraham said customers are being expected to wear masks and there is varied compliance. He said when customers are participating in activities, less are wearing masks. He said classes are not being held in the aerobics room, rather the gym so more space is available between participants. Yoga classes and some youth classes are being held outside and participants are not wearing masks.

Ms. Betcher asked if the supply of masks will allow the City to continue offering them. Mr. Schainker concurred, and said when there are enough face shields on hand those will also be made available.

Assistant City Manager Deb Schildroth said they have access to Cyclones Care templates and the consistency in messaging has been helpful. Public Relations Officer Susan Gwiasda said there has been 100% agreement with the four basic pillars of healthy choices, which are depicted in symbols and easy to understand. She said broad support has been received. She said the City received high traffic on social media when sharing about Cyclones Care, and the next City Side will feature the

four pillars of healthy choices. She said ISU has open sourced all of the signage so it will be used at the mall, in schools, businesses, etc.

Mayor Haila wondered if, when there are barriers present, if employees would need a mask only when speaking to customers. Ms. Betcher said an email was received about observations on where masks are being worn in City Hall. Mayor Haila said when social distancing it doesn't seem necessary to wear a mask.

Mr. Gartin asked what a bus driver would be required to do if someone takes their mask off. Ms. Neal said the safety of the driver has to be considered, and it's not an enforceable requirement. She said she doesn't expect drivers to police people if riders take their mask off on the bus.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Corrieri, to approve Alternative 1, requiring the wearing of face coverings in all City buildings; allowing staff to determine which Parks and Recreation activities participants are required to wear face coverings; directing staff to make face coverings available to customers in City buildings who don't have one; and requesting that the Transit Board mandate all riders wear face coverings on CyRide buses.

Mr. Gartin said he will be voting no because he is concerned about enforcement and encouraged by current compliance. Mr. Martin said he finds it difficult to understand the difference between expecting masks and requiring masks when there is 100% compliance. He also said the enforcement requirement doesn't sound much different when requiring masks, but he realizes the importance of organizations in Ames sending the same message and will support the motion. Ms. Betcher said her concern is consistency of messaging. Mayor Haila said staff is being sensitive to wearing masks when interacting with others.

Vote on Motion: 5-1. Aye: Beatty-Hansen, Betcher, Corrieri, Junck, and Martin. Naye: Gartin. Mr. Gartin asked Mr. Schainker to notify Council if he becomes aware of any services not available to those refusing to wear a mask.

**DISPOSITIONS OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL:** Assistant City Manager Brian Phillips said a packet was recently received with five event applications from Ames Main Street. He said staff would like to know if they should be evaluated, and if so by what criteria (the May COVID-19 criteria or the regular criteria).

Moved by Martin, seconded by Betcher, for staff to review the applications and place them on a Council agenda for Council to review.

Ms. Betcher said she wants Council to have the ability to cancel events if needed. Mr. Phillips asked if staff should evaluate the events with the COVID-19 criteria or the regular criteria. Mr. Martin said both sets of criteria would be helpful.

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

Ms. Schildroth said the year-end report on the contract with United Way of Story County (UWSC) for capital projects has been received. Mr. Schainker said UWSC is returning about \$31,000 of the funds that were unused. Ms. Schildroth said a portion of those returned funds were used toward a request by Emergency Residence Project for sheltering.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS:**

Mr. Gartin said he sent an email to Council about a potential partnership with the schools and Parks and Recreation to make parks available for learning.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, for staff to reach out to all schools serving Ames children to see if they have any interest in using parks for learning.

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

Ms. Betcher said she participated in a webinar briefing for Capitol Hill for the next aid package. She was happy to highlight the Cyclones Care program.

Mayor Haila said Council directed a letter be sent to the Governor last week regarding cities being able to mandate mask wearing, and he has not received a response yet. Mr. Schainker said letters to bar managers were received well, and police officers assured them they will work together. He said a full report will be provided on Friday.

Mayor Haila said the Chamber of Commerce has an annual fly-in to Washington D.C. in the fall and this year it will be a virtual meeting during the first week of August to meet with Senator Ernst and Senator Grassley. He told Council members to email him if they have any concerns they wish to share.

Mayor Haila said he appreciates Story County Emergency Management staff, and weekly updates with mayors, public health officials, and communications staff continue. He said there are so many people committed to working together to slow the spread of the virus.

Mayor Haila said Thursday night will be the last of the NAACP conversations and will feature ISU President Wendy Wintersteen and him.

**ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

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Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

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John A. Haila, Mayor

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Erin Thompson, Recording Secretary