

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

JANUARY 31, 2023

The special meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor John Haila at 6:00 p.m. on the 31st day of January, 2023, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law. Present were Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Amber Corrieri, Tim Gartin, Rachel Junck, and Anita Rollins.

HEARING ON PRAIRIE VIEW INDUSTRIAL CENTER WATER AND SANITARY SEWER CONNECTION FEE DISTRICT: Mayor Haila opened the Public Hearing.

Richard Deyo, of 505 8th Street #2, expressed his opposition to the ordinance.

Randy Brekke, of 6020 E. Lincoln Way, sought clarification that his property on Parcel 42 would be subjected to the onetime connection fee. Public Works Director John Joiner responded, stating Parcel 41 was eligible to be included in the exemption, but Parcel 42 would be subjected to the full connection fees as the ordinance was currently written. He furthered that Mr. Brekke would have the opportunity to put in a septic system and be considered a continuing customer with the IRUA if he was 200 feet or more from the new infrastructure. Municipal Engineer Tracy Peterson clarified an opportunity for an exemption of the property, where instead of treating Parcel 42 at the per acre cost, the property owner could request the residential rate for Parcel 42. She stated the City Council could pass the ordinance as is, followed by a motion to allow one residential connection on 42, or could direct amendments to the ordinance to include Parcel 42 to be treated as an existing residence. She also noted these situations were planned for in the ordinance by allowing individual properties to be brought before the City Council for an exception. City Attorney Mark Lambert confirmed there was language in the ordinance allowed for an exception. He stated Section 5A could be amended to include Parcel 42 to that list, which would solve the problem and recommended a motion to amend the ordinance.

The Mayor closed the Public Hearing when no one else came forward to speak.

Moved by Gartin, seconded by Betcher, to amend Section 5A to include Parcel 42.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Corrieri, to move on first passage as amended.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN: Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer opened the presentation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan by explaining Public Input would be gathered through the email address walkbikeroll@cityofames.org. He noted emails would be forwarded to the consultant for the project, Adam Wood, of Toole Design. Mr. Wood noted there would be three main sections to his presentation:

- Public Input
- Existing Conditions
- Wayfinding Concepts

Mr. Wood stated the project is currently wrapping up Public Input-Phase One, which focused on raising awareness and identifying needs. This phase has been impacted by COVID-19 and has led to a focus on virtual and online engagement. Toole Design and the City of Ames reached out to city groups, conducted polls, and utilized social media. The compilation of responses identified themes such as ease of use, accessibility, and safety as important values from community respondents. The survey was open for a month and received 393 responses. Mr. Wood noted the survey results were very underrepresented in the ages of 18-24. Due to this, a tabling event was done at ISU where approximately 40 students provided input.

Council Member Gartin questioned how the City Council should think about the needs of those under 18. Mr. Wood responded a key aspect of considering the ways in which people walk or bike is whether people are alone or with another person or family member which factors into willingness of the distance they will cover. He stated the design team is keeping in mind the needs of children, and their parents concerns, as they evaluate the responses received. Council Member Betcher questioned the low percentage of feedback that was attributed to college student age. Mr. Wood clarified his understanding is that it is a recurring challenge to get large numbers of people to respond to these projects. He explained that despite low participation, the link was shared with various ISU organizations to share with their membership. Engineer Pregitzer added that this situation demonstrated one of the reasons staff has the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to provide input and stated staff is open to new outreach strategies. He also noted that this current set of statistics gives a strong starting point to evaluate further efforts.

Mr. Wood explained most participants live and work in Ames. Walking and running, as well as biking, were utilized by the majority of people who took the survey. Half the population who responded to the survey are walking or running daily. Survey participants said they would like to walk or bike more. Top destinations listed were parks and green spaces, with schools and entertainment also ranking as popular destinations. Entertainment and restaurants were identified as areas where people would like to walk or bike to more. Priorities put forth by survey participants were more places to bike followed closely by safer places to cross the street.

Student feedback at the Iowa State Sustainability Fair consisted of about 40 people, with 90 percent of those participants being students. Identified issues were path surface conditions and facilitating better car interactions.

The CAC was identified as a partner for the project. They have participated in a vision and goals survey and will have further meetings from February to April to address conditions, facility types, network recommendations, wayfinding, and priorities of the project.

Mr. Wood continued his explanation by noting the study is based on the diversity of people, with consideration to different characteristics such as physical ability and age that influence experience. He also stated that nationwide statistics indicate roughly 33 percent of people say they are not comfortable or interested in biking no matter what the conditions are. Mr. Wood expanded on a Vision and Goals survey taken by CAC and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). He put forth a draft that had been designed from discussion around this survey. Respondents wanted an emphasis on inclusivity. There was consensus that the most important aspect of the proposed statement was “every resident, regardless of age, ability, or identity.” A revised statement was derived from this survey feedback which will be shared with the committees for further work or approval before Toole Design returned for direction from the City Council.

Improving safety by eliminating crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries were part of the goals respondents were hopeful to see accomplished by an improved bike and pedestrian plan. Equity was also examined as an element of the survey and participants were able to state why equity in the plan was important to them.

As a result of the survey and public input Mr. Wood put forth the revised goals of the project:

- Safe and Comfortable
- Connected and Easy
- Healthy and Sustainable
- Equitable and Accessible

Engineer Pregitzer added there will be a policy review as a part of this plan as staff want to ensure the plan is implemented for both retrofitting and new construction. He noted in the final plan there will be a range of accommodation options for the City Council to consider.

Mr. Wood then moved to the Existing Conditions portion of his presentation with three main focuses: plan and policy review, network evaluation, and a state of active transportation report. Key themes were wanting to see a multimodal vision, safety and comfort of all users, expanding transportation choice, identifying priorities for investments, designing with best practices, crossing/intersection safety, and connectivity.

Network Evaluation examined maps that showed existing bikeways, existing sidewalks and gaps, bike trip origins, bike trip destinations, which areas were seeing the most annual pedestrian and bike trips, trips taken, and the length (distance) of trips. Locations with bike and pedestrian crashes were shown and discussed, as well as stress areas and crossing gaps. Mr. Wood and Engineer Pregitzer shared with the City Council that these maps and data points were one piece of the puzzle that was being evaluated in totality as they examined the big picture. They stated this data was to help identify hotspots, give staff a way to measure progress moving forwards, and give starting points for the study to consider as they worked to evaluate what is needed to make the project successful. Engineer Pregitzer stated this study and data was taking a fresh look at current standards and best practices. The City Council engaged in thorough conversation regarding their

reactions to the data, relevant experiences and observations, and what it may mean for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

The final emphasis of the presentation, wayfinding, was showcased as following five steps: planning, orientation, decision making, confirmation, and destination recognition. Mr. Wood explained, for the purpose of this study, the main focus was on orientation, decision making, and confirmation. Best processes were shared, as well as potential design concepts. Mr. Wood then concluded his presentation with a potential timeline for the rest of the project. Engineer Pregitzer encouraged the community to continue to provide input via the Walk Bike Roll Ames webpage.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: Mayor Haila noted that there were four items to consider.

The first item was an email from Alan Hulsebus regarding concern for the City's use of LED lights. Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Betcher, to get a memo from staff on current night lighting policy (Night Sky) and which types of light fixtures were utilized by the City and why.
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The next item was from Will Nye, who was following up from his previous comments on the South Grand Extension crossings during Public Forum during the prior meeting. Mayor Haila stated Director Joiner would follow up to let Mr. Nye know his correspondence has been forwarded to Engineer Pregitzer.

The third item was from Mike Templeton regarding downtown parking. Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Corrieri, to respond to Mr. Templeton that no action will be taken at this time.
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

An email from Steve Martin regarding the need for a sidewalk on North Hyde and Grant Avenue was the final item. Mayor Haila noted the area in question was included in development agreements and if the City was to put in the sidewalk it would make the agreement null and void with the developers. Director Joiner stated he would follow up and inform Mr. Martin of this.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Council Member Gartin shared his thanks to Director Joiner, Engineer Pregitzer, and Mr. Wood for their work and expressed appreciation for the leadership of Director Joiner, and the way he was taking care of the safety of citizens.

Council Member Betcher stated Thursday is George Washington Carver day and invited everyone to a celebration event on campus.

Mayor Haila extended his thanks to RAGBRAI for selecting Ames as an overnight stop, and shared he is looking forward to welcoming everyone to Ames. He also reminded everyone that the City Council was kicking off budget review Friday, February 3, 2023 at 2 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

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