

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL

AMES, IOWA

APRIL 16, 2024

The Special Meeting of the Ames City Council was called to order by Mayor Pro Tem Amber Corrieri at 6:00 p.m. on the 16th day of April, 2024, in the City Council Chambers in City Hall, 515 Clark Avenue, pursuant to law. Present were Council Members Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Gloria Betcher, Rachel Junck, and Anita Rollins. Mayor John Haila and Council Member Tim Gartin joined the meeting telephonically. *Ex officio* Jeff Clark was absent.

CONSENT AGENDA: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Beatty-Hansen, to approve the consent agenda.

1. RESOLUTION NO. 24-182 setting April 23, 2024, as date of Public Hearing to approve the sale of Lot 27, in the Baker Subdivision (321 State Avenue), to Townhomes at Creekside, LLLP, an Iowa Limited Liability Partnership, (affiliated with Hatch Development Group) in conjunction with a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) application for Multi-Family Housing Development

Roll Call Vote: 6-0. Resolution declared adopted unanimously, signed by the Mayor, and hereby made a portion of these Minutes.

SECOND PASSAGE OF ORDINANCE FOR THE CITY-WIDE DESIGNATION OF THE URBAN REVITALIZATION AREA (URA): Moved by Beatty-Hansen, seconded by Rollins, to pass on second reading an ordinance for the City-wide Designation of the Urban Revitalization Area (URA).

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

WORKSHOP ON WALK BIKE ROLL MASTER PLAN: Traffic Engineer Damion Pregitzer noted that the Master Plan would return to the City Council at a later date for adoption, so no action was requested at this time. He then introduced Consultant Adam Wood of Toole Design, who presented the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, known as Walk Bike Roll Ames (WBRA). Building on existing City facilities and assets, WBRA contains recommendations for programs, policies, and facility treatments to promote active transportation based on analysis of safety, traffic stress, and input from the public. Consultant Wood and Engineer Pregitzer answered questions from the City Council throughout the presentation.

Council Member Gartin inquired about how to balance the competing demands of recreational and functional uses of facilities, as those commuting may have different priorities than recreation. Consultant Wood shared that the philosophy at work in the Master Plan was creating a network of corridors that can serve both recreation and transportation functions. Engineer Pregitzer added that in heavy-use areas the focus would be on widening facilities to respond to the demand for both functions.

Council Member Betcher asked about the causes behind several problem areas in the safety analysis. Engineer Pregitzer emphasized that many of the safety issues at crossings correlated to transit routes and bus stops.

Next, Council Member Rollins inquired about the categorization and regulation of electric bicycles and scooters. Consultant Wood explained that electric bicycles and scooters are included in the category of bicycles for the purposes of the plan. Some additional regulatory steps like adding speed limits to shared use paths may be warranted given that some electric bicycles can travel up to 28 miles per hour. Council Member Rollins also asked about the benefits of installing physical structures to separate paths from motorized traffic. Consultant Wood noted that, while such barriers do help to reduce the stress level for bicycle and pedestrian traffic, the space required to install the barriers results in a narrower path.

Mayor Pro Tem Corrieri asked about the logistics involved in locating a shared use path along Lincoln Way near Iowa State University (ISU). Consultant Wood explained that adding a continuous east-west corridor to the network was a high priority, and Lincoln Way serves as a convergence point. He noted that the north side of Lincoln Way had the best chance of success and would require coordination with ISU. Mayor Pro Tem Corrieri followed up with a question about the feasibility of the treatments included in the plan, such as fully separated bikeways or traffic-calmed bike boulevards. Engineer Pregitzer stated that the plan represents practical, feasible extensions of current infrastructure, although engineering and design of specifics would have to wait for projects to be scheduled into the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

Council Member Betcher inquired about whether separated bike lanes like on Ash Avenue would be included in the plan, and Engineer Pregitzer explained that it was unlikely since residents are hesitant to give up the on-street parking needed to construct such facilities. Council Member Betcher next posed the question of how much input ISU had on the plan. Engineer Pregitzer highlighted that the aspects of plan located on ISU property were contributed by the ISU members of the Technical Advisory Committee to reflect what ISU is already specifically working toward.

Following up on the question of parking removal for bicycle facilities, Council Member Beatty-Hansen asked if bike boulevards involved removal of on-street parking. Consultant Wood indicated that bike boulevards do not generally include parking removal, as on-street parking has a calming effect on traffic, contributing to the low-speed conditions needed for a bike boulevard.

Council Member Betcher inquired about how specific treatments like bike boulevards would alleviate safety concerns in nearby areas. Engineer Pregitzer explained that bike boulevards functioned to calm traffic and reduce speeds, which improves safety for bicycle traffic and pedestrian crossings. He also noted that the plan represents all of the work needed to create a complete network. Actual implementation of the plan would be constrained by budgeting and time, but the plan is intended to show the scope of what needs to be done to complete the network.

Mayor Haila inquired whether additional information could be added to the maps in the plan to clarify that the maps represent a conceptualization rather than a promise of specific implementation. Engineer Pregitzer replied in the affirmative.

On the topic of sidewalk infill and extension, Council Member Betcher pointed out that some sidewalk gaps in Old Town were not reflected on the maps. Engineer Pregitzer explained that the plan was generated with the best data available, which he estimated at 95 percent accuracy for high-level analysis. As more data becomes available, the plan will continue to be updated.

Council Member Betcher inquired about distribution of responsibility for installation of the facilities included in the plan. Engineer Pregitzer clarified that the plan identifies all of the work that needs to be done, but it does not specify who is responsible for doing it. For new developments, the Subdivision Code specifies the developer's responsibilities to install facilities, and improvements on institutional land will be the responsibility of ISU. Council Member Betcher welcomed the clarification that the City is not committing to install everything in the plan on its own.

In response to a question from Mayor Haila regarding areas in the plan that may have already been addressed by recent CIP projects, Engineer Pregitzer noted that the dataset used to create the plan did not include projects completed in the past two years, but staff would work with the consultant to update the maps to reflect recent work.

Answering a question from Council Member Betcher regarding capacities of current maintenance equipment, Engineer Pregitzer explained that Parks and Recreation and Public Works staff were consulted to confirm that current equipment can serve all of the types of facilities proposed in the plan. A separate policy governs levels of service for shared use path maintenance.

Consultant Wood reviewed the many ways in which public input on the plan was gathered, including open houses, an online survey, and meetings with a community advisory committee, before sharing specific comments received. Council Member Betcher expressed agreement with comments supporting development of an east-west corridor in addition to Lincoln Way.

Next, Consultant Wood reviewed the total implementation cost in FY 2023 dollars for all of the plan's recommendations, noting that the current level of dedicated funding in the City budget would be sufficient to install only the projects categorized as high priority within 15 to 20 years. Council Member Gartin inquired about how the current funding levels for this type of infrastructure compare to peer cities. Engineer Pregitzer explained that a useful metric to consider is mode share, the percent of trips taken with different modes of transportation. Ames has a 3% walking and biking mode share and spends 10% of CIP transportation funds on walking and biking improvements. Consultant Wood noted that most cities allocate a percentage of funding equal to or less than the mode share, so Ames is ahead of the curve in allocating a greater percentage of funding than the mode share.

Council Member Betcher asked how Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A) Grants related to plan. Consultant Woods noted that the outputs of SS4A blend well with the recommendations of this plan, so SS4A could serve as a valuable funding source for implementation.

Going back to the topic of path maintenance, Council Member Rollins inquired whether adding additional path miles to the network would require increasing the budget for maintenance costs and staff. Engineer Pregitzer explained that the plan does not evaluate those implementation details, so staff recommendations about maintenance will come at a future time.

Lastly, Consultant Wood presented the Wayfinding Guidelines, developed as a supplement to the Walk Bike Roll Plan to offer technical guidance for staff.

DISPOSITION OF COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL: Mayor Pro Tem Corrieri noted two dispositions to the City Council. The first item was an email from Nick Cheney requesting a waiver of the requirement of a master plan for rezoning.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Rollins, to place the item on a future agenda for discussion.
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

The second item was a memo from Planning and Housing Director Kelly Diekmann regarding a referred request for a Zoning Text Amendment for an exception to Minimum Floor-Area Ratio (FAR) and Height for buildings along Main Street.

Moved by Betcher, seconded by Rollins, to place the item on a future agenda for discussion.
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: Council Member Gartin expressed thanks for the public input on the plan and commended staff for their hard work.

Mayor Haila shared that Earth Day on the Airwaves was coming up on April 20, 2024, on KHOI.

Council Member Betcher shared a comparison between CIP budgeting in Ames and Corvallis, Oregon, which is often compared to Ames at International Town and Gown Association conferences.

ADJOURNMENT: Moved by Betcher, seconded by Rollins, to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.
Vote on Motion: 6-0. Motion declared carried unanimously.

Jeremy Neefus, Principal Clerk

John A. Haila, Mayor

Renee Hall, City Clerk