

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

AMES, IOWA

DECEMBER 2, 2006

The Ames City Council met in special session at 8:04 a.m. on the 2nd day of December, 2006, in the Parks and Recreation Activity Room, 1500 Gateway Hills Park Drive, pursuant to law with Mayor Ann Campbell presiding and the following Council members present: Doll, Goodman, Larson, Mahayni, Popken, and Rice. *Ex Officio* Member Buske was absent.

TEAM-BUILDING EXERCISE: City Manager Steve Schainker introduced Julie Popken, Human Resources Consultant with Wells Fargo. Ms. Popken facilitated, gratis, a team-building exercise to identify personal temperament patterns and shared tools for strengthening team relationships and effectiveness.

The meeting recessed at 9:35 a.m. and reconvened at 9:47 a.m.

COUNCIL MEMBER WISDOM SHARING: The Mayor and City Council reflected on their service, what they have learned, and their views on the process.

Discussion ensued on techniques for making the meetings shorter. Council Member Rice pointed out that there is a fine line between making the meetings shorter and allowing enough time for input. It was suggested that the Mayor ask if there are additional comments. Council Member Popken welcomed the Mayor contacting individual Council members to have dialogue. Referencing public input, Council Member Larson said he thinks that there is a fine line between allowing everyone to speak and calling them out of order when the information becomes repetitive. The Mayor agreed that it is difficult to make the decision to call anyone out of order; however, per State Code, it is important to address only the item that is listed on the agenda. Council Member Doll recommended that, when a time limit is being given to each respondent, an audible alarm should sound so that everyone is given the same amount of time. City Attorney Marek suggested that a type of lighting system be used instead of an audible alarm. Council Member Goodman said that he would like the Council to error on the side of hearing repetitive information rather than not hearing it at all.

Assistant City Manager Bob Kindred told the Mayor and City Council that it is the goal of staff to help the City Council make the best decisions possible and then to accept those decisions. He pointed out that, now more than ever, there are others in the community who have expertise on particular issues, and those experts are conveying their opinions to the Council; they perhaps have "Council's ear" more so than ever in the past. Mr. Kindred said that staff now needs to determine how they can better connect with members of the public who have expertise on issues.

City Manager Schainker reminded the City Council members that staff is at their disposal to answer questions; however, if a Council member is directing staff to

conduct a study or perform other time-consuming tasks, he prefers that the Council member go through him. Mr. Schainker said that the City continues to have a very qualified staff who understands that there is a political aspect to issues; however, if the City Council does not support staff on a continuous basis, staff members will become frustrated and move on to other organizations.

Mayor Campbell pointed out that it is best if Council members do not visit City staff on "Council Fridays," as it is a very busy time for them trying to get the meeting packets together.

Mr. Schainker recommended that if any Council member had a philosophy that he felt strongly about on any issue, he should bring it up at a Council meeting for discussion by all members.

The meeting recessed at 11:45 a.m. and reconvened at 12:10 p.m.

City Manager Schainker reviewed the present goals and gave the background and current status of same, as follows:

Create a Common Community Vision.

Solicit Support for Sponsoring a Community Visioning Summit. The Mayor and City Manager met with the Presidents of the Ames School Board and Iowa State University (ISU) to discuss the Council's desire to create a community vision process. Both entities support that goal and have agreed to appoint three representatives to serve with City representatives on a steering committee. The steering committee will design a community visioning process. The Mayor is awaiting notification of the names of the appointees.

It was noted that the original directive from the City Council was to also include Story County and Mary Greeley Medical Center (MGMC). In the course of meeting with the School District and ISU, it appeared that those two entities had the most in common with the City organization, and the inclusion of the other two groups might make the leadership less focused. The Council was asked if Story County and MGMC should be asked for their support for sponsoring a community visioning summit. It was the general consensus of the Council to ask the Story County Board of Supervisors to participate in the planning stage. Mary Greeley Medical Center will not be specifically asked to join in the planning stage.

Explore How Other Communities Have Conducted Similar Visioning Efforts. The City will be exploring how other communities have conducted similar visioning efforts. This will be performed by an intern in the City Manager's Office. The current intern has been working on many other projects and will

be leaving shortly for a new job; however, hopefully, another intern will soon be hired who will be able to take on this task.

Major Stakeholders to Plan and Carry Out the Summit. This will occur in the Spring of 2007.

Determine Community Vision and Identify Action Steps to Achieve Vision. This will occur in the Fall of 2007.

Facilitate One Community Through Physical and Relationship Connections.

Continue Successful Techniques Initiated in 2005/06. The “Welcome Back Student” event, 4th of July pancake breakfast, many round-table discussions, Citizens Academy, Citizens Police Academy, Joint Meeting with the Government of the Student Body (GSB), and Student Affairs Commission meeting have occurred.

Future meetings with the Story County Board of Supervisors, MGMC Board of Directors, Ames Community School and Gilbert School Board need to be scheduled.

Lead a City-Wide Wi-Fi Feasibility Study. The next steps will be for City staff to meet with current internet providers to determine what they would be willing to provide to citizens in the way of free wireless service and engage the services of a consulting firm to determine the costs of the City installing a wireless internet system in selected “hot spots.”

Explore the Use of Blogs, Listservs, Etc. Staff is suggesting that it not sponsor blogs. Other cities have been concerned with the time it takes for ongoing scrutinizing of tasteless comments and the appropriateness of censorship. An alternative suggested was that neighborhood associations be trained to establish their own blogs that can be housed free on existing commercial sites. The blog addresses for the Neighborhood Associations could be listed in a newsletter. Currently, there is no software available to do word searches and then send the appropriate information on specific items. Other cities have hired a person to manage their listservs. It is possible to break it down into more general categories and send out the applicable agendas. The first step to be taken now is to notify the public that they can request to receive agendas, either by e-mail or by mail.

Council Member Rice asked that newcomers to Ames be asked if they would like to receive Council agendas. The Mayor suggested that people be asked if they would like to receive Council agendas when they apply for utility hook-ups. Council Member Mahayni suggested that a message be sent by the Mayor to those new to Ames welcoming them and asking if they want to

receive information. City Manager Schainker will check to see if e-mail addresses are requested on the utility application.

Expand Entertainment/Shopping Opportunities in Community.

Meet with Main Street Cultural District Regarding Downtown Catalyst Project. Many meetings have been held, but nothing has been finalized. The City Manager has, per Council direction, worked with the Main Street Cultural District on a catalyst project involving the Town Centre building; however, no financier has stepped forward to purchase the building.

According to City Manager Schainker, no developer has rejected the possibility yet, but there is no proposal on the table. Council Member Goodman reminded the City Council that there is still the possibility of moving forward with the project suggested by the consultants east of City Hall; the City already owns that land. Discussion ensued as to whether the City should purchase the land or allow the project to move forward on City land. Council Member Popken said that he was uncomfortable with the City purchasing land for private use.

Continue to Provide Financial Support for the Main Street Cultural District. A request for \$75,000 from the Main Street Cultural District will come before the City Council during budget wrap-up (in February). Council has approved the transition of the Downtown Facade Program from a no-interest loan to a grant program for the 2005/06 available funds.

Mayor and City Manager to Meet with ISU Administration Regarding Planning Class's Proposed Organizational Model for Campustown Revitalization. One meeting has been held. Additional meetings will be scheduled.

Council Member Mahayni pointed out that Campustown formerly had an organization similar to the Chamber of Commerce. He recommended that something similar be reinstated.

Mr. Schainker said that additional discussion needs to be held regarding the model (indicating that the University would take the lead in redevelopment) that surfaced during the visioning meeting.

Council Member Mahayni recommended that the Student Affairs Commission be made aware of this project. City Manager Schainker indicated that he and the Mayor first needed to talk to President Geoffroy.

Review the Safe Venues Committee Recommendation. This will be added to the list of round-table discussions to occur early in 2007.

Staff to Meet Separately with ISU and Ames Community School District Facilities' Staff to Review Long-Range Plans/Determine Where Joint Recreation Facilities are Feasible. The various options that had surfaced were outlined.

City Manager Schainker pointed out that the Mayor recently received a letter from President Geoffroy stating that there would not be an opportunity for the City to partner with ISU on a future facility. Based on information from ISU and the Ames Community School District, it appears that only the City of Ames has the desire to construct an outdoor aquatics facility; however, both the Ames Community School District and ISU have shown an interest in a competitive indoor pool.

Encourage Innovative and Attractive Community Development.

Four objectives had previously been agreed upon, i.e.:

1. Staff to explore how other cities are accomplishing quality design
2. Hold a City Council workshop to review what other cities are doing to accomplish quality design
3. Hold a City Council workshop with development community to identify barriers to, and suggestions for, reaching quality design
4. City Council to define what quality design will mean and initiate steps to achieve attractive and innovative development

City Manager Schainker stated that the above objectives will be very time-intensive and will need to be prioritized with the many other projects that the Council will be assigning Planning staff.

Council Member Larson pointed out that continued support of the bio-economy initiative was important to the community. He felt that economic development and growth in the City's tax base should be included in the Council's goals, especially if there is an opportunity for the City to partner with Iowa State University and the state of Iowa on that initiative. Council Member Popken recommended that the City send the message that it supports the "cool city" concept and the initiative of renewable resources.

Council Member Mahayni said that it was his understanding that the goals that were established last January were in addition to the ones previously set. Other Council members concurred. Council Member Goodman described the process that had been followed when the Council members initially decided on their goals; it was very intensive. In his opinion, to just start adding goals without setting the time line and specific steps to be followed for each would not be advisable.

Assistant City Manager Kindred pointed out that the economic development goal is listed under the Council's vision for the community. Council Member Goodman believes that the connection is that the Council supports the expansion of bio-renewables through investments and actions. Council Member Larson did not see economic development listed under the City Council's stated goals, and he would like the City to show its support along with ISU and the state of Iowa. City Manager Schainker stated that that goal as well as affordable housing dropped off the list of goals when new priorities were set during the Council's last goal-setting session. Council Member Goodman suggested that economic development be listed as an action step. Council Member Popken believes that is important to make those statements visible to the public. Council Member Larson asked that the statement read that the City supports the state of Iowa's bio-economy initiative. Council Member Goodman felt that "bio-economy" was too broad.

Council Member Goodman suggested that the specific action steps be added during a subsequent Council meeting. City Manager Schainker stated that he would make specific suggestions for action steps and provide same to the Council at a later date.

Council Member Larson said that he would like to add affordable housing back to the list of Council goals. Council Member Doll asked to know the difference between the Council's vision and its goals, as he thought that affordable housing was part of its vision.

Council Member Goodman asked for the members to vote on the addition of the above-stated goal. The City Council unanimously agreed that "Support the Iowa Bio-Economy Initiative" would be added to their goals.

COUNCIL COMMENTS: After checking their calendars, it appeared that April 4, 2007, would work for the Council members' joint meeting with the Mary Greeley Medical Center Board of Directors.

Assistant City Manager Sheila Lundt stated that Heartland Senior Services is nearing a crisis situation regarding their need for additional space. She indicated that a group is in the process of trying to determine how many non-profit agencies are interested in relocating to a joint site. Ms. Lundt wanted the City Council to know that, in the near future, the City may be asked to help fund a feasibility study for a larger building to be occupied by several non-profit agencies.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

Diane R. Voss, City Clerk

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor