

MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF THE AMES CITY COUNCIL AND IOWA STATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT

AMES, IOWA

OCTOBER 19, 2016

The Ames City Council and Iowa State Student Government met in Special Joint Session at 7:00 p.m. on the 19th day of October 2016, in the Sun Room at the Iowa State Memorial Union, 2229 Lincoln Way, with the following Council members present: Tim Gartin, Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, Chris Nelson, and Peter Orazem. *Ex officio* Member Sam Schulte, City Manager Steve Schainker, Assistant City Manager Brian Phillips, and Public Relations Officer Susan Gwiasda were also present.

Ex officio Member Sam Schulte asked the Council Members and City staff to introduce themselves. He then introduced the topic of housing concerns.

Senator Cody Smith stated that the main concern involves international students in particular, since gap periods between leases result in their having no place to live for a period of time. For those who come from Iowa communities, they are able to live back home during that time. Council Member Beatty-Hansen mentioned that she had not thought about it from that perspective. She indicated she could not think of a specific way to resolve that issue.

Senator Smith asked if there was something that could be done to start the conversation on the topic. Council Member Orazem said that this topic had not been brought up before, and it might be difficult to regulate leases. He said it would be helpful to know information about the scope of the problem.

Senator Roberto Ortiz stated that last year, the City Council spoke about how rent regulation did not work, and asked what the Council had done to address the rising rent since. Council Member Nelson said he hears feedback regarding the number of apartments being built—both pros and cons. He expressed that the best thing the City could do is affect supply. He said there is a one year lag behind the Iowa State demand, but that the City was trying. Ames is starting to see more rent signs appear.

Senator Danielle Nygard inquired about Rent Smart Ames and asked what Council wants the students to do with it. She asked what the City has done to keep it up. Council Member Orazem said the City is happy to house it, but feels the students should promote it. Council Member Gartin mentioned that there is a lot of information there about tenant rights.

Council Member Orazem said students should engage Iowa State to help fund dispute resolution. He mentioned that landlords would be interested in low-cost dispute resolution as well. He indicated that there is an issue with consistency since there is a rotation of student leaders. Assistant City Manager Brian Phillips said he is happy to take feedback on what should be on the website and where it is promoted.

It was asked if the Council could estimate when the market will catch up with demand. Council Member Nelson said there is no way to know. Council Member Orazem said that no one

anticipated growth like this. Council Member Gartin said there is an undersupply of owner-occupied housing. Also, young people are less interested in buying. The ISU Research Park is adding more people who may be here only 3-5 years and want to rent.

Senator Abhijit Patwa stated that last year, rent went up 22%. There is a combination of availability and affordability issues. He said students must sign their contract early and at high prices. Council Member Gartin stated he shared that concern, and that there was no stomach on City Council for rent control. He encouraged the students to hang tight. There have been signs of downward pressure on rent.

Senator Eric Wirth asked what can be done to prevent situations where tenants have to sign next year's lease in the fall. Council Member Beatty-Hansen said that is true of prime rentals, specifically in Campustown. But other areas of town may not share that trait. The trade-off is the distance to campus. Senator Danielle Nygard said that even in West Ames, it is encouraged to sign lease before November at some apartments.

Senator Aimee Rodin echoed others' comments on housing. The other issue is that most leases are 12 months, while students are only here for nine. She asked if the Council could foresee any changes to the 12-month cycle for rental housing. Council Member Nelson said this was not likely to happen. Council Member Orazem said students were likely to see change in cost as more housing becomes available. Council Member Gartin mentioned there aren't a lot of open parcels waiting to be turned into housing. He added that when development happens, there are neighborhood and infrastructure issues that must be addressed.

Senator Roberto Ortiz stated that there have been lots of changes to Campustown. He asked what other developments are planned and what impacts were anticipated to businesses. Council Member Beatty Hansen mentioned developments planned for the 2700 block of Lincoln Way, and the Jensen development. She stated that "Mom and Pop" places are important to her. Rent is tricky, though. Some are able to move back in, but others can't come back. City Council looked at incentive to encourage non-chain businesses, but it did not pass.

Council Member Gartin asked the students what they thought of the flower pots. Senator Carter McNew said that some feedback he had received is that people feel safer because there is less traffic congestion. Senator Eric Schultz stated some of his constituents have communicated the flower pots make them feel safer. He asked that the Council look at statistical data regarding accidents.

Senator Abhijit Patwa inquired as to whether there was any update on making parking spaces available from 3:00 to 6:00 a.m. Council Member Orazem stated there are the same regulations on Main Street, with no parking 3:00 to 6:00 a.m. City Manager Steve Schainker explained that clearing the parking spaces during that time facilitates cleaning, snow removal. He stated the City Council has asked this year to discuss Campustown parking regulations.

It was mentioned that there would be a benefit from installing speed bumps on Welch. They would slow traffic around pedestrians. Council Member Orazem replied that speed bumps may

be more dangerous in a pedestrian-heavy area. He encouraged the attendees to send suggestions to City Council members, which they would forward to Traffic Engineer.

City Manager Steve Schainker stated that a study was underway for pedestrian travel along Lincoln Way. He expressed that the City will see recommendations from that regarding safety.

Senator Cody Smith asked what the progress was on City Council's discussion regarding solar energy. Council Member Orazem stated that there was a meeting last night regarding community solar. He said the goal is to get something in place by the end of next year. He mentioned the City also has energy from wind. Council Member Gartin added that the Power Plant was converted this year from coal to natural gas.

Senator Abhijit Patwa asked what the long-term plan is for CyRide with the increase in enrollment. Council Member Gartin stated that a consultant had been retained to review how the service is delivered. He expressed that CyRide was working extremely hard to keep service working.

Senator Eric Wirth indicated that at Hayward and Mortensen, CyRide buses wait a long time. He asked if there was any plan to install a signal there. Council Member Nelson explained that there are institutional roads in the community, and that intersection is controlled by Iowa State.

Senator Cameron Thomson stated there was a big increase in traffic on Ash from Lincoln Way to Mortensen. He asked if there were any plans to address that. City Manager Steve Schainker stated that he was not aware of any. He stated that the bike lane that was added acts as a traffic calming device. Council Member Gartin suggested that the students send the City Council an email. The Police Department may be able to spend time there to address this hot spot.

Ex officio Sam Schulte thanked the group for the discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

Ann H. Campbell, Mayor

Brian Phillips, Assistant City Manager