

REGULAR MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

April 3, 1997

The regular study session of the Des Moines City Council was called to order by Mayor Thomasson at 7:36 p.m. in the Council Chambers, 21630 11th Avenue South.

ROLL CALL - Present: Mayor Scott Thomasson, Mayor Pro Tem Terry Brazil, Councilmembers Bruce Roberts, Bob Sheckler, Dan Sherman, Gary Towe and Don Wasson. Also present were City Manager Bob Olander, City Attorney Gary McLean, Assistant City Manager Tony Piasecki, Community Development Director Judith Kilgore, Planning Manager Corbitt Loch, Assistant City Engineer Loren Reinhold, Transportation Engineer Jim Seitz, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell, Senior Services Supervisor Sue Padden and City Clerk Denis Staab.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

City Manager Olander announced that Council will hold an Executive Session at the end of the regular discussion items to discuss personnel matters and potential litigation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Single Family Residential Building Heights

Planning Manager Loch noted that the purpose of this item is to allow for discussion of Councilmember Wasson's proposed amendment to maximum single family residential building heights. He further commented that if Council would like to consider an amendment other than the one proposed by Councilmember Wasson, staff will prepare additional amendments as directed by Council. He advised that the proposed legislation would allow single family residences to be up to 35 feet in height as long as the structure would not exceed the height of a 25 foot high dwelling at the highest portion of the lot. For sloped lots, a home built on the lower portion of the lot could be 35 feet in height. On level lots, a home could not exceed 25 feet in height. Mr. Loch used a view foil to demonstrate the proposed amendment.

Councilmember Wasson stated he suggested this proposal after several residents of the Woodmont Redondo annexation area requested some relief from Des Moines' current limit of a 25 foot height limitation. He felt that most cases in the newly annexed area warrant consideration due to sloping, small lots.

City Manager Olander expressed some concern that this sliding scale approach may create a lot of arguments between neighbors and would involve a lot of survey work, with the City caught in the middle. He suggested that perhaps a 30 foot height limit would be more workable.

Councilmember Sherman referenced his March 28th memo on this subject. He felt the most important item to remember is the goal of maintaining the quality of our residential neighborhoods. He stated that he took a tour of the Woodmont Redondo area. He feels that a portion of the annexation area is very different in that there are cliffs, and odd lot sizes. He also noted that there are some very special neighborhoods and that perhaps Council should apply different standards to neighborhoods based on neighborhood characteristics and not just do a blanket standard for the whole City, or the whole area of Woodmont and Redondo.

Mayor Pro Tem Brazil expressed agreement with Councilmember Wasson's proposal. He noted that if you really look there are unique neighborhood situations all over the City.

Upon questioning from Council, Community Development Director Kilgore advised that a 30 or 35 foot height is more in keeping with the architectural elements and added design features that today's home buyer is looking for.

Mayor Thomasson suggested that an alternative would be to allow for a peak roof special measurement.

City Manager Olander suggested Council consider directing staff to prepare a 2 option package for a textual code change regarding the building height issue. He noted that first option would be for the whole City. This way staff would do all the necessary SEPA work and advertising, then if it is determined that the issue should be scaled down it still can be done. He cautioned that if Council limits the public hearing to only specific areas, it cannot be enlarged.

Councilmember Roberts noted that he would be more comfortable if the height issue was limited to the gables and peak roofs.

Mayor Pro Tem Brazil stated he likes the idea of encouraging development of the lower portion of a lot and feels this is universally fair.

Community Development Director Kilgore noted that using Councilmember Wasson's example would require verification of surveyor marks with another surveyor, and somehow the City would have to absorb these additional costs.

Councilmember Towe expressed agreement with the process suggested by City Manager Olander. He felt this would provide the maximum flexibility for Council to consider all options in a public hearing format.

After further discussion, **MOTION** was made by Councilmember Wasson, seconded by Councilmember Sheckler, to direct staff to prepare a textual code amendment and schedule a public hearing to consider changing single family residential building heights City wide to 30 feet. Motion passed 4 to 3 with Councilmembers Roberts and Sherman, and Mayor Pro Tem Brazil voting NO.

Public Works 1997 Work Plan

Assistant City Engineer Reinhold and Transportation Engineer Seitz jointly gave Council an overview of upcoming projects and studies. It was noted that the department has twenty-two full time employees and two summer helpers and is split into two primary divisions. They advised Council that the Department is constantly in the process of balancing the ongoing routine duties, planned studies and projects, along with surprises such as the severe holiday storm. Staff reviewed primarily 3 types of engineering priorities which were furnished in Council's packets.

After some discussion concerning the intersection of South 200th and Des Moines Memorial Drive, staff was requested to investigate the possibilities of working with the City of Sea-Tac in speeding up proposed improvements, such as left turn lanes and widening of the roadway.

City Manager Olander pointed out to Council that major new projects only make up about 20% of the work, while the remaining 80% is the on-going necessary work load of the Public Works Department.

9:10 p.m. Mayor Thomasson declared at 5 minute break.

Draft Human Services Plan

City Manager Olander advised Council that this final draft of the Human Services Plan is a reflection of the Council's direction for the City to continue its current role in human services and is before Council this evening for acceptance.

MOTION was made by Councilmember Sheckler, seconded by Councilmember Roberts, that the City Council adopt the Human Services Plan as a guideline for human services direction and focus for the next three years.

Councilmember Towe suggested the following amendments to the five Human Services Policies listed on page 1. These changes were accepted by consensus of the Council.

(2). Human Services Advisory Committee.

The Human Services Advisory Committee shall advise City Council on distribution of the 1% funding for human services as part of the annual budget process as outlined in DMMC 4.48, and other human services related issues as directed by Council.

(5). Human Services Planning.

The City of Des Moines shall participate with local and regional human services planning organizations where participation will further the priorities and policies of the plan, and when authorized by the City Council.

Councilmember Towe questioned whether this document could be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan or at least referenced. He expressed concern that this document would wind up sitting on a shelf instead of having an annual opportunity for review. City Manager Olander stated he would check with the Community Development Director.

VOTE ON MOTION: Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session

At 9:31 p.m. Mayor Thomasson announced that the Council would go in to an Executive Session for approximately 45 minutes to 1) discuss personnel matters and, 2) discuss with legal counsel representing the City litigation or potential litigation to which the City is, or is likely to become, a party and about which public knowledge regarding the discussion is likely to result in an adverse legal or financial consequence to the City. He advised that the Executive Session is expected to last approximately 45 minutes.

At 10:08 p.m. Council reconvened in open session.

City Manager Salary

MOTION was made, seconded and passed unanimously, to advance the City Manager's salary to step D, effective February 1, 1997.

SR 509 Project

Councilmember Sherman distributed a draft letter to Representative Maryann Mitchell from the 509 /South Access Executive Committee requesting additional funding for the project. He noted that the Supplemental Environmental Impact Study is fully funded and will be completed in 1998. This additional funding would be for construction. He feels this request assumes a build alternative will be chosen after the SEIS is completed. A letter requesting further funding is, therefore, premature. He asked if the Council wanted him to sign the letter and indicated he would if Council so authorized.

After a brief discussion, **MOTION** was made by Councilmember Sherman, seconded by Mayor Thomasson, that the City Council authorize him to sign the letter. Motion failed by 0 to 7 vote.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Denis Staab
City Clerk