

Present: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

Absent: None.

Work Session began at 5:30 p.m.

City Manager Schooley presented the June 7, 2019 Newsletter for discussion.

Agenda Items

Informational

Cat Resolution Recommendation

There has been a lot of information brought to the staff and Commission over the past month or so about feral and stray cats in the City. I stated at the last meeting that I thought we needed to identify what the problem is in our community. Do we have feral and stray cats? Yes. Do we have domesticated cats that are also roaming the streets? Yes. To what extent? Still needs to be determined. My concern is the City quickly attempting to legislate some of these matters may be impossible and could make the situation even worse.

I would ask that the discussion center around two things:

1. Responsible pet ownership
2. Individual property rights

While some cat owners allow their domesticated cats outdoors, measures must be taken to ensure the cat does not create a nuisance and that the cat is identified as belonging to an owner. Cats allowed outdoors are susceptible to many dangers--fast moving cars, predatory wildlife, parasites, acts of cruelty, and more. It is not illegal to trap stray animals in Alma. Cats that are allowed to roam at large, outside the control of their caregivers, are indeed considered stray.

From a practical standpoint, once an unidentified cat ventures beyond its own property, it belongs to no one. Furthermore, cat owners aren't as likely as dog owners to immediately go looking for a lost pet at the local shelter, so the number of cats returned to their owners is disproportionately low. In the absence of identification, others have a difficult time distinguishing between cats who have owners and those that are stray or feral. Consequently, some cats are placed or euthanized before their owners can find them. An owner-initiated voluntary cat identification program helps to protect cats and their owners. Cat owners shall ensure that their cat, if outdoors is identified as having an owner by some form of identification tag, or other means to allow easy determination of the owners. This system of owner initiated voluntary identification provides responsible cat owners a better chance that their pets will be returned. Just as importantly, it provides the general public a means of distinguishing between cats whose owners are more dedicated to them than others that may be considered stray or feral.

Voluntary, owner-initiated identification should not be seen as a regulatory scheme but as a pact or service agreement between responsible cat owners who want to increase their odds of getting a lost pet home and the community, which agrees to treat such cats with greater concern by making defined efforts to contact their owners.

Individual property owners do have the right to trap nuisance animals on their property. They also have an obligation by State of Michigan Law to notify an owner of a trapped animal if it can be identified. Voluntary identification is the only way I can see that can work.

Gratiot Animal Control will accept cats for a fee at their facility. There are volunteer groups in the area that are more than willing to work with our residents.

At this point in time I would like to discuss the possibility of a resolution of some sort that spells out a voluntary, owner-initiated identification program. I believe it is the best initial step to the concerns that have been expressed.

City Attorney Costanzo stated that he reviewed the City of St. Louis Animal Ordinance. The dog running at large also relates to cats at large. He cannot remember that a cat at large case has gone to court. He feels that enforcing a Cat Ordinance would be more than we as a City could handle.

Commissioner Piccolo encourages citizens to identify their cats. Possibly asking the volunteer groups to provide the identifying chip as a voluntary incentive.

Commissioner Stahl feels we need some sort of enforcement to stop these cats, just asking owners to be responsible is not enough.

City Manager Schooley stated that a Resolution defining responsible ownership is a good start.

City Attorney Costanzo suggested that we open dialogue with the County to lower the drop off fees. A possible discussion on charging the owner a greater fee for getting the cat back.

Wright Mansion Discussion

Potential Plans: Discussion with the property owner to see if there are any updated plans for the building. Aeric and I had a conversation with the property owner who still has a strong desire to see the property developed. That being said, we need explained the need of the City to fully explore where the structure is today in terms of a danger to the community. We obtained permission to allow the building official access (see below) to inspect the structure for an assessment. Plans were discussed to replace the fenced area around the building. The property owner also advised he would be able to attend a commission meeting in June or July to talk further about the future.

Discussion with the Commission to get your overall thoughts about the structure. Staff will put in the time and effort to explore all options and to educate everyone involved but ultimately, I believe the decision concerning the fate of this property needs healthy discussion. What have you heard? I will say just bringing the topic up in various meetings over the past couple weeks has been interesting. There are very strong opinions and a deep love for the building. Any decision made about the Wright Mansion has ramifications for the rest of the City. While this is the most high-profile structure, there are others that would need the same attention. We would need to examine our resources and commitment level to such a program.

Dangerous Building (Chapter 12, Article V of the City of Alma Code of Ordinances

As opposed to speculating about the condition of the structure, I believe we should request the building inspector to make some determinations as to the extent of the “dangers” of the building, then take appropriate action.

As stated in Chapter 12, Article V of the City of Alma Code of Ordinances: The building official shall examine or cause to be examined every building or structure or portion thereof reported as unsafe or damaged, and if such is found to be a dangerous building, as defined in this article, he/she shall commence proceedings to cause the repair, rehabilitation, demolition or removal of the building or structure.

After a determination is made by the building official we would have a better idea of the condition of the building. That allows us to make informed decisions to move forward. From all I have heard it seems the structure itself is rather sound, but the façade and some other outer structures may be failing. These are not facts, just conjecture. If that is the case, can we work with the property owner to remedy some of the most pressing identified issues while maintaining a goal of seeing the property be preserved? I would like to examine this option first. I would like the opportunity to work this from the dangerous building ordinance first, prior to looking at blight and abatements. I think the questions being asked about the dangers of the building need to be addressed first, as they should have the highest priority. It is my belief that this process will put us in a better position to make good, sound decisions in the very near future.

Commissioners want to see the building inspector’s report. They would also like to see the fence put back in place and give the property owner a time line to fix the problems that the building inspector may find.

Finance Director Hiring Process

The hiring process was initiated on June 3rd as the job posting was placed in numerous publications. Applications will be accepted until June 24th. A tentative schedule is to conduct the administrative and community interviews on July 11th. I would like to make my recommendation to the commission at the July 23rd meeting. The job posting is available for review.

Department of Treasury Audit of Minimum Assessing Requirements

Attached is the notice from the Department of Treasury advising that the City of Alma has been selected to be reviewed as a part of the 2019 audit program. The audit will be for our 2019 assessment role.

Assessor Kathy Roslund has provided for you the State Tax Commission Launches New Assessing Reform Web Page & FAQ with most of the information from the site.

Beginning of Summer Cookout – June 14th 5:30 pm -6:30 pm at Scotland Yard/Farmers Market

Back in April, the City of Alma Volunteer Program conducted an Alma Parks Spring Madness poll to crown Alma's favorite park. The Riverwalk was the winner, edging out Wright Park. We will honor the Riverwalk with our Beginning of Summer Cookout starting at 5:30 pm at Scotland Yard/Farmers Market. We will be cooking some hot dogs on the grill and taking the time to recruit some more volunteers! Also, this will be the start to our summer Road Show that will see staff going into neighborhoods to have discussions with the community. Anyone who can make it for a half hour – hour on the 14th please let me know. A great way to start the summer!

Airport Tour

Adam Raycraft, a local pilot who has been flying extensively out of the Gratiot Community Airport has extended an invitation to us to come out and take a look at what the airport has to offer. He is looking to make us aware and better understand what a great facility we have and its strengths also how it's used. If you are interested, please let me know and I will make the arrangements that work best for the majority.

Iowa Street Speed

We have received a letter from Mark Prout, 1006 Iowa referencing some options he feels could help with speeding traffic on Iowa. I know there were some discussions last year about utilizing the St. Louis Police Department Speed Trailer. There were some technical issues and I am not sure if we were able to get any of the information from the time the trailer was placed. I will check on that and have a report for Tuesday. I will get with Public Safety Administrator Williams on other options.

New Website

The work on the City's new website through City Web Central is set to begin on June 13th. We are very excited to get this project started. A new site will allow us to get information out in a more efficient and user friendly manner. Here is a link to the template that will be used: Alma.CityWebCentral.com This is only a template to give you an idea of the feel for the site. Pictures and graphics will be updated since the proposal.

Commissioner Pitts presented to the City a City of Alma logo designed by Chris Brown, Alma High School Art Teacher incorporating the City, agricultural, industry, Alma College and Alma Public School. Mr. Brown has given us permission to use this logo.

The June 11, 2019, City Commission work session concluded at 6:15 p.m.

**Alma, Michigan
June 11, 2019**

Mayor Mapes called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:15 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

Present: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

Absent: None.

Mayor Mapes asked the City Commission and members of the audience to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Motion by Commissioner Pitts as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2019 Budget Review meeting and the May 28, 2019 regular meeting.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

A Public hearing was held at 6:16 p.m. to consider a special assessment roll for unpaid charges for noxious weed cutting, sidewalk replacement, frozen meter and utility billing charges for 2018. All unpaid charges on the roll as of June 11, 2019 will be placed on the July 1, 2019 tax roll, subject to review by the Finance Department.

There being no questions or comments, Mayor Mapes asked for a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman to close the public hearing at 6:18 p.m.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

The following preamble and resolution was offered by Vice-Mayor Harrington as supported by Commissioner Allman:

Whereas, certain invoices have remained unpaid during the year 2018 and,

Whereas, the City of Alma wishes to recover its costs by not supplementing these invoices with City tax funds.

Water Accounts

Parcel #	Service Address	Owner	Amount
2951-			
042-276-00	404 W Center	David Maybee	133.90
342-785-00	707 Chatterton	Courtney Lumdsen	56.36
344-571-00	205 E Downie	Alma United Methodist Church	21.25
344-571-00	205.5 E Downie	Alma United Methodist Church	78.98
344-766-00	330 W Downie #1	Tim Barczak	374.55
344-766-00	330 W Downie #1	Tim Barczak	12.00
344-766-00	330 W Downie #3	Tim Barczak	8.12
344-766-00	330 W Downie #2	Tim Barczak	274.72
021-030-00	1035 Eastward	Elizabeth Fowler	552.34
344-006-00	308 Elwell	Kevin Root	71.42
031-517-00	204 Ely	Linda Apple	84.11
344-270-00	215 E End	Darrow & Kathy Parker	41.22
354-051-00	1108 Ferris	KAN Prop.	32.13
354-051-00	1108 Ferris	KAN Prop	108.60
032-838-00	222 Valley	Cassandra Scott	30.00
333-317-00	709 Wright	Glen Testa	302.80
333-317-00	709 Wright	Glen Testa	133.15
344-058-00	721 First	Terri Atkinson	35.14
041-314-00	215 Golfside Dr	Russ & Patricia Berry	115.09
031-789-00	114 Hill	Heather Hamburg	78.65
033-048-10	613 E Hillcrest	Rosemary Hinchey	141.17
333-034-00	945 Iowa	Shana & Curt Dancer	46.20
343-084-00	416 Liberty	Cathy Cameron	73.13
344-105-00	201 Orchard	Bryan Grasso-Shonka	87.89
344-318-00	813 Pine	Jordan Faber	110.60
343-772-00	618 N River	Josh & Bethany Nation	227.26

021-765-00	1213 Rosedale	David Goodrich	80.69
344-753-00	623 N State	Paul Lux	116.63
344-253-00	228 Washington	Fred Burlingame	70.84
344-574-00	514 Woodworth	Durocher/Campos	102.56
031-302-00	236 N State	Clear Dynamics	518.61
034-296-00	321 Rockingham	Jim & Amy King	481.09
031-556-00	128 Rockingham	Terry Thelen	161.73
343-027-00	613 Richmond	Andrew Young	73.96
344-533-00	621 Pine A	Joanne Ferguson	60.10
031-505-00	120 Moyer	Jim Wetzel	389.25
354-299-00	749 Massachusetts	Clear dynamics	274.81
021-337-00	128 Linwood	Mikek Prop	243.04
354-335-00	1709 Hickory	Real Alliance	66.75
034-564-00	410 Hawthorne	Real Alliance	183.95
Water Acct Cont.	Service Address	Owner	Amount

Parcel #

2951-

354-065-00	630 Hannah	K & B Jones	350.44
344-579-00	116 E Downie	Lizmar	117.53
354-756-00	608 Bridge	Stelecorp	<u>189.35</u>

Total **\$6,960.83**

Non-Water Accounts

Parcel #	Service Address	Owner	Amount
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2951-

024-751-00	515 S Grover	Ryan Weatherby	11.32
033-256-00	516 S Grover	Allison Day	303.68
033-507-00	520 S Grover	Rey Castellon	303.68
033-508-00	600 S Grover	Isreal Valedz	303.68
031-805-00	129 Hill	Robert Mephram	<u>893.02</u>

Total **\$1,815.38**

2017 Sidewalk

Program

Parcel #	Service Address	Owner	Amount
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042-039-00	185 Westview	Alex & Consuelo Ortiz	98.75
344-585-00	119 E Superior	Greg Mapes	80.82
344-582-00	127 E Superior	Greg Mapes	3,102.57
344-623-00	311 E Superior	Gary Sych LLC	722.70
344-621-00	319 E Superior	Klumpp Management	<u>1,113.75</u>

Total **\$5,118.59**

Frozen Meter

Parcel #	Service Address	Owner	Amount
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342-785-000 Allison	707 Chatterton	Courtney Lumsden	<u>\$164.76</u>
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Total **\$164.76**

Noxious Weeds

Parcel #	Service Address	Owner	Amount
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032-274-00	Ely	Virginia Camp	\$228.31
032-274-00	Ely	Virginia Camp	\$256.62
042-320-00	225 Lincoln	John & Heidi McDaid	\$252.85
031-548-00	236 Ely	Greg Bott	\$275.50

034-090-00	123 W Hillcrest	Michael Gillis	\$381.20
034-090-00	123 W Hillcrest	Michael Gillis	\$281.20
034-090-00	123 W Hillcrest	Michael Gillis	\$100.00
344-332-00	309 Walnut	Glen & Sun Hozeska	\$217.00
031-310-00	212 N State	C & O Railroad	\$350.05
031-310-00	212 N State	C & O Railroad	\$200.04
031-310-00	212 N State	C & O Railroad	\$100.00
033-251-00	Valley/Grover	Valley Street Rentals	\$240.48
		Total	<u>\$ 2,883.25</u>

Grand Total **\$16,942.81**

Now, Therefore Be It Resolved, that the Special Assessment Roll be confirmed and that the unpaid charges as of June 11, 2019 will be placed on the tax roll, under the respective tax roll items after final review by the Finance Department.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Resolution Declared Adopted.

Motion by Commissioner Mott as supported by Commissioner Allman to approve the request from the All Class Alma High School Reunion, to allow the placement of porto-potties, the use of a golf cart for transportation, the use of a small P.A. system, additional trash containers, barbecue grill and allow attendees with vintage automobiles to park their cars in a designated area within Wright park on Sunday 8/18/19, depending on the conditions of Wright Park due to the wet weather we are experiencing.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Motion by Allman as supported by Commissioner Pitts to adopt a resolution approving the sale of vacant City property at 511 & 513 N. Court Ave to the owner of the adjacent property at 555 E Downie, William Miniard in the amount of \$800.00.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Motion by Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman to approve a resolution introducing Ordinance #811 to amend the Zoning Map of the City of Alma as it appears in Section 32-32 of the Ordinances. The named properties adjacent to Michigan Avenue currently zoned as R-1 Single Family Residential District be rezoned to R-3, Multi-Family Residential District.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Harrington as supported by Commissioner Allman to receive the following reports and place them on file: Alma Police Department May 2019 Report, May 2019 Building Report, Alma Planning Commission By-Laws, May 2019 Transit Report, Alma Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2019 and the Zoning Board of Appeal Meeting Minutes of May 28, 2019.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve Warrant No. 19-23 and to authorize the City Treasurer to issue checks in payment of all claims.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Mayor Mapes asked for Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Pitts wanted to remind all of the volunteer program cook-out on Friday.

City Attorney Costanzo reported he had received a call from the Sisters of Mercy in regard to keeping miniature sheep as therapy animals in the City of Alma. He will investigate with the Commission permission. All acknowledged to investigate.

Mayor Mapes opened the floor for Public Comments.

Mark Prout, 1006 Iowa expressed his concerns on the speed of cars traveling on Iowa. Iowa needs speed control. Drivers are using Iowa more and more as a route to get from Charles to Wright Ave. He presented in his letter options for speed deterrents that he would like to see the Commission investigate. Speed tables will slow down drivers. He wants to know what the Commissioners will do.

City Manager Schooley along with Public Safety Director Williams will check on getting the speed trailer again for a speed study on Iowa.

Being no further Public comment, Mayor Mapes asked for a motion to adjourn to executive closed session.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to adjourn to executive closed session to discuss personnel matter at 6:35 p.m.

City Clerk Letourneau took a roll call vote.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Returned to the regular meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:16 p.m.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts & Stahl.

No: None.

Gregory S. Mapes

Sheila Letourneau, City Clerk