

**Alma, Michigan
October 8, 2019**

Vice-Mayor Harrington called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

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

Absent: Mapes.

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

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2019 regular meeting.

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

No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Pitts to adopt a resolution proclaiming Thursday, October 31st as "Halloween" in the City of Alma and to set the trick or treat hours between 5:30-7:30 p.m.

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

No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Pitts to adopt a resolution approving the Final Change Order #1 to Seifert Concrete, LLC for the 2018 Sidewalk Replacement Project to decrease the amount of the contract by \$4,848.90 and to approve the disbursement of the final payment application #2 in the amount of \$2,351.89.

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

No: None.

A City Commissioner may remove any item within the report section for individual discussion and vote.

Commissioner Allman requested that the City Manager's report be open for discussion on the issues of the Sign Ordinance.

City Manager Schooley addressed the issue of amending the Sign Ordinance in a manner that fits standards set forth since Reed vs. the Town of Gilbert (2015). In Reed vs the Town of Gilbert, the US Supreme Court ruled that Municipal governments may not enact laws that "restrict expression because of its message, its ideas, its subject matter, or its content". Sign ordinances must be content neutral. We have spent time looking at a number of ordinances and would like to receive feedback on the following language as an amendment to our current ordinance that would allow the type of sign without a permit:

- **Sign defined:** Any structure or part thereof, or devise attached thereto or painted or represented thereon, or any material or thing, illuminate or otherwise, which displays or includes any numeral, letter, work, model, banner, emblem, insignia, device, code mark or other representation used as or in the nature of, an announcement, advertisement, direction or designation, of any person, firm, organization place, commodity, service, business, profession, or industry, or any backlit building area, which is located upon any land or in or on any building, in such a manner as to attract attention from outside the premises.

- **Election and Free Expression Signs.** Election Signs/Free Expression Signs, subject to the following conditions:
 1. Each sign shall have a maximum height of forty-eight (48) inches from the ground, maximum width of ninety-six (96) inches, including the support structure, and no more than six (6) square feet in area.
 2. Such signs shall be set back at least ten (10) feet from the road right-of-way. Permission to locate such signs on private property shall be obtained from the owner or occupant of the property on which such signs are located.
 3. Signs which advocate or oppose a candidate for public office or a position on an issue to be determined at an election shall be removed within seven (7) days after the election.
 4. Free expression or ideological opinion signs not related to an election shall not be subject to any specific time limit but must be removed if they become unsafe or otherwise prohibited by ordinance.

Staff will work on bringing the amendments to the Commission at the next meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Stahl as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to receive the following reports and place them on file: Alma Transportation Center September 2019 Report; Alma Police Department September 2019 report and the October 4, 2019 City Manager Report.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mott, Piccolo, Pitt & Stahl.

No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Pitts as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve Warrant No. 20-07 and to authorize the City Treasurer to issue checks in payment of all claims.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mott, Piccolo, Pitt & Stahl.

No: None.

Vice-Mayor Harrington asked for Commissioner comments.

Commissioner Allman praised the Opera House dedication. Such a great step for the City. The name of the building is now called the Wright Leppien Opera House Block. A really great day for the City.

Commissioner Stahl and Commissioner Pitts were also happy to have witnessed the dedication, it was a wonderful celebration.

Commissioner Piccolo wanted to note that leaders from the Community will be meeting tomorrow for Economic Development for the future of Alma.

City Attorney Costanzo echoed the comments on the Opera House but also want to acknowledge the Leppiens for the countless things they have done, that we don't know of, for the Community. They are selfless wonderful people.

City Manager Schooley wanted to acknowledge Aeric Ripley in all he has done in getting the Opera House project to completion. He reminded the Commissioners of the meeting of Community Leaders scheduled for October 9th at the Opera House for a conversation about how we can strengthen Alma's future in the next 30-40 years.

On October 1st and 2nd a group of administrators from the City joined Kasey Zehner from Greater Gratiot Development in Ludington for the 2019 Connecting Entrepreneurial Conference. The conference was very educational and a great team building experience for staff. We were able to meet the organizers of the

conference to discuss the possibilities of bringing the 2020 or 2021 conference to Alma. He believes that we made a very good first impression. It was a worthwhile two days.

He also reported on the fence at the Wright Mansion. The weather has caused delays in getting the fence up. It should be in place next week.

Vice-Mayor Harrington expressed her appreciation on the collaboration between the City and Alma College. It is mutually beneficial and she hopes that it continues in the future.

Vice-Mayor Harrington opened the floor for Public Comments.

Laurie Wilson, St. Louis thanked the Firefighters for saving the Opera House Block. She again wants to remember safety first. She feels that an option for the Wright Mansion could be a homeless shelter.

City Manager Schooley stated that the Alma Firefighters were acknowledged at the Dedication for their great efforts in saving the Opera House Block.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Pitts to adjourn the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

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

No: None.

Roxann Harrington, Vice-Mayor

Sheila Letourneau, City Clerk