

A regular meeting of the City of Alma Parks Committee was held April 24, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

Present: Bill Gorton, Josh Higbie, Jamie Jerome, Blaine Lafler, Aeris Ripley, and Luke Wright.  
Absent: Roger Allman, Kim Alonzi, and Andi Whitmore.

Alma City Manager Aeris Ripley called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m. A quorum of the Committee was present.

Lily Boutwell and Katie Grover from the Gratiot-Isabella RESD were present. Boutwell explained their wish to get more involved with local communities and assist with the Parks master planning project.

*Minutes*

**Motion by Jerome, seconded by Lafler, to approve minutes of March 28, 2023, as presented. Motion carried.**

**Yes: Gorton, Higbie, Jerome, Lafler, and Wright.**

**No: none.**

**Absent: Allman, Alonzi, and Whitmore.**

Ripley provided a brief update on the bump track proposal from Chris Maltby. He explained they are working on a site plan survey which will go to Consumers Energy to provide proof that the track won't interfere with overhead lines.

Ripley also noted he had met with a local Scout, who is working on a merit badge and lives near Holiday Park, to get feedback and discuss ideas for a dog park within existing tennis courts at Holiday Park. Discussion followed regarding possible plans for a solid fence between the tennis courts and basketball courts and improvements to the basketball courts. Public Services Director David Ringle explained that a portion of Holiday Park is a "no dig" archeological site and would have to be considered prior to improvements.

*MEDC Public Gathering Spaces Initiative*

Ripley provided information regarding a grant application opportunity for improvements to the Riverside Park through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation for public gathering spaces. A public hearing is scheduled for April 25, 2023, during a City Commission meeting, to receive public comment on the application. A 10% local match is required for the grant. Ripley asked for a motion in support of the application and said the application would be submitted April 28<sup>th</sup> if approved by the City Commission.

**Motion by Wright, seconded by Jerome, in support of a grant application submission for the Michigan Economic Development Corporation Public Gathering Spaces Initiative Grant for improvements at Riverside Park. Motion carried.**

**Yes: Gorton, Higbie, Jerome, Lafler, and Wright.**

**No: none.**

**Absent: Allman, Alonzi, and Whitmore.**

Ripley also explained that the city was not successful in their application for a SPARK grant for improvements to the Riverside Park and Trail Expansion. He provided recently received scoring information. Members reviewed and discussed results and agreed to focus on the Riverside Park riverwalk project in the next round.

*Park Plan Survey*

Ripley provided a copy of a survey used for the previous parks planning process and asked for suggestions for updates. He said the RESD had offered to assist with sending out surveys. Discussion followed between the Committee, Boutwell, and Grover about electronic and paper surveys and opportunities for getting them out to the public. Jerome asked about creating a QR code that could help residents easily access an online survey. Boutwell agreed it could be easily done. Ripley asked members to provide feedback on the survey, so it could be created and sent out by the weekend.

Discussion followed about the new Farmer's Market location.

*Community Meetings for Public Input*

Ripley asked members about timing for scheduling community meetings. Discussion followed. Members agreed early June, following the end of the school year, would be the best time to catch people. Additional discussion followed about trends for uses of public parks.

*Other Business*

**Motion by Wright, seconded by Gorton, to approve minutes of August 22, 2022, September 26, 2022, October 24, 2022, and December 6, 2022, as presented. Motion carried.**

**Yes: Gorton, Higbie, Jerome, Lafler, and Wright.**

**No: none.**

**Absent: Allman, Alonzi, and Whitmore.**

Brief discussion followed about getting the park plan survey updated and made available.

Ripley noted the next regular meeting date is May 22, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.

**Motion by Wright, seconded by Gorton, to adjourn the meeting at 7:03 p.m. Motion carried.**

**Yes: Gorton, Higbie, Jerome, Lafler, and Wright.**

**No: none.**

**Absent: Allman, Alonzi, and Whitmore.**

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Sara Anderson, Alma City Clerk

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Date of Approval