

**City of Alma
Planning Commission Minutes
June 5, 2023**

Chairperson Heather Therrien called a regular meeting of the Alma Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building. A quorum of the Planning Commission was present.

Present: Justin Fonley, Sonia Gibson, David Justin, Greg Mapes, Michelle Pitts, Ellen Richter, and Heather Therrien.

Absent: Jessica Gilkins.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Justin, seconded by Pitts, to approve minutes of the May 1, 2023, regular meeting. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.

Public Hearing-Special Use Permit Request-Child Care Center

Chairperson Therrien provided the following information: a request for consideration of a special use permit has been received for a child care center at 6525 Jerome Road, further described as 29-51-352-267-70. The zoning for this parcel is GI, General Industrial. GI zoning districts permit child care centers with the issuance of a special use permit and licensing through the State of Michigan.

Motion by Pitts, seconded by Richter, to open a public hearing regarding a special use permit request for a child care center at 6525 Jerome Road, at 6:02 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.

City Manager Aeric Ripley provided maps of the location and said the current child care center location in St. Louis had become unexpectedly unavailable and they had been lucky to find this location. He reviewed requirements and told the Commission this location meets all the requirements. Ripley said no comments had been received as a result of the required mailing to neighboring locations.

Pitts asked about the number of students. Samantha Mitchell was present on behalf of the Children's Discovery Academy and said they currently have 26 enrolled students.

Mapes asked about the requirements for background checks. Ripley explained that many of the requirements are state-level requirements, and others are included in the local zoning ordinance. Mitchell answered that current law requires staff and unsupervised volunteers to have background checks.

Fonley asked about the opening date. Mitchell said they were facing some hurdles but were hoping for a September 1st opening date.

No other comments were received.

Motion by Pitts, seconded by Mapes, to close the public hearing regarding a special use permit request from Children's Discovery Academy at 6:10 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.

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Motion by Fonley, seconded by Pitts, to approve a special use permit for Children’s Discovery Academy for a Child Care Center, G1 zoning district, at 6525 Jerome Road (29-51-352-267-70), subject to State of Michigan licensing requirements. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.
Absent: Gilkins.

Public Hearing-Special Use Permit-Temporary Outdoor Sales

Chairperson Therrien explained that a special use permit request had been received from The Drift Snow Co. for temporary outdoor sales of snow cones in the parking lot of the former JCPenney building at 1680 Wright Avenue.

Motion by Pitts, seconded by Gibson, to open a public hearing at 6:11 p.m. regarding a special use permit request from The Drift Snow Co. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.
Absent: Gilkins.

City Manager Ripley explained the permit applicant has entered into a lease agreement with Bobenal Investments to locate their truck on the property near the road.

Fonley asked if the truck would be in the same location as a previously approved fireworks tent and Ripley indicated the tent would be in a different area and neither were expected to block any traffic.

Ripley continued, saying the applicant has provided a copy of the lease agreement, insurance information, and a description of use. They understand they must keep the truck in the same location and keep permits on site.

Justin asked how long the truck would be in operation. Applicant Tucker Haynes was present and said, depending on weather, their intention is to remain until mid-September for approximately four hours per day, from noon until 4:30pm or 5pm. Ripley noted the permit allows operation until the end of September.

No other comments were received.

Motion by Mapes, seconded by Pitts, to close the public hearing regarding a special use permit request from The Drift Snow Co. at 6:16 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.
Absent: Gilkins.

Motion by Pitts, seconded by Richter, to approve a special use permit for The Drift Snow Co. to locate a truck for temporary outdoor sales of snow cones in the parking lot of the former JC Penney building at 1680 Wright Avenue for the summer season. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.
Absent: Gilkins.

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Public Hearing-Special Use Permit-Temporary Outdoor Sales

Chairperson Therrien explained that a special use permit request had been received from All Seasons Fireworks to locate a tent in the parking lot at 1700 Wright Avenue for temporary outdoor sales of fireworks from June 22, 2023, through July 5, 2023.

Motion by Justin, seconded by Richter, to open a public hearing at 6:17 p.m. regarding a special use permit request from All Seasons Fireworks. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.

City Manager Ripley explained that this company, in the past, has located their sales tent in the parking lot of the former Big Boy. Since that site is no longer available, they have received permission from Ace Hardware to locate the tent in the parking lot at 1700 Wright Avenue. Ripley provided additional information regarding tent dimensions, lease, insurance, site plan, and state licensing. He noted this will be the third fireworks tent in the area.

Mapes noted there is also a permanent location for sales in the downtown area. Ripley remarked on the dry weather and fire danger. Brief discussion followed regarding rent amounts.

Therrien asked if there were propane tanks in the area. Ripley explained they will be more than 25 feet away from the tent. Mapes asked about ordinance prohibitions. Therrien expressed concern about accidents.

Justin asked if any comments were received from the surrounding neighbors. Ripley said no comments were received from the mailing.

No additional comments were received.

Motion by Mapes, seconded by Pitts, to close the public hearing regarding a request for special use permit from All Seasons Fireworks at 6:24 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.

Motion by Pitts, seconded by Gibson, to approve a special use permit for All Seasons Fireworks for temporary outdoor fireworks sales from a tent located in the parking lot at 1700 Wright Avenue from June 22, 2023, through July 5, 2023. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.

Invitation to Public

No comments were offered.

Adjourn

Motion by Justin, seconded by Gibson, to adjourn the meeting at 6:24 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Fonley, Gibson, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Absent: Gilkins.