**City of Alma**

**Planning Commission Minutes**

**May 6, 2019**

Chairman Ayers called the regular meeting of the Alma Planning Commission to order at 5:30 p.m. on May 6, 2019 in the Alma City Commission Room.

Present: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

Absent: Schooley, Gilkins, and Richter

Others Present: Aeric Ripley, City of Alma Zoning Administrator

Aaron Hale, Code Enforcement Official

David Ringle, Public Works Director

Garrett Whitmore, Alma Optics

Kevin Stedman, Alma Optics

Pete Lorenz, Architect/Engineer for Alma Optics Project

Doug Freed, Citizen (505 Richmond Apt 1)

Tyson Liphard, Lynn’s 24/7 Daycare (716 Bridge Ave)

Lynn Brown, Citizen (720 Bridge Ave)

Deborah Brown, Citizen (720 Bridge Ave)

Jim Blick, Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing

Chuck Griffith, Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing

Charles Stahl, Maverick Environmental Equipment

A motion was offered by Mapes, and supported by Kulling, to approve the minutes of the

Regular Planning Commission meeting held on April 1, 2019.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

**Public Hearing: Special Use Permit for a Group Daycare Home at 716 Bridge Ave**

A request for a Special Use Permit has been received from Linda Liphard to go from a licensed Family Day Care Home to a licensed Group Day Care Home at 716 Bridge Avenue. The location is further described by parcel number 29-51-354-044-00. The zoning for the parcel is R-2, Two Family Residential. R-2 zoning districts do permit Group Day Care Homes with the issuance of a special use permit. This permit is a requirement of the State of Michigan licensing process.

A presentation was given by Ripley outlining the requested Special Use Permit at 716 Bridge Ave.

Ripley communicated that it has been verified that the daycare at this location is the only daycare located within 500 feet and that the daycare license for the property is valid with the State of Michigan. The property housing the daycare meet’s the city’s minimum property maintenance standard. The daycare does not currently utilize signage to advertise its location. If a sign is to be placed in the future, it would require the proper sign permit and procedure outlined in Sec 60 of the city’s zoning code. As a condition of the special use permit, the property owner must manage noise generated by the daycare to the rest of the neighborhood and register the property with 911 dispatch. Background checks of daycare employees must be submitted to the Chief of Police. Notification letters of the special use permit application have gone out to all residents within 300 feet of the property. The property has a shared drive with the neighbor at 720 Bridge Ave. Parking has been an issue with this shared drive in the past. The proposed special use permit would allow the daycare operation to expand from serving 1 – 6 children to serving 6 – 12 children. Ripley commented that a marked scarcity of licensed childcare services exists within the community. The property at 716 Bridge Ave meets the minimum standards required under city ordinance to obtain

Alma Planning Commission

May 6, 2019

Page 2

a special use permit for this use.

The public hearing was opened by chairman Ayers at 5:35 PM.

Brown attested to the commission that parking on the wrong side of the shared driveway has historically been an issue with the daycare sharing the drive.

Liphard responded that he would continue to work with parents using the daycare to park correctly on the daycare’s side of the shared driveway.

Mapes inquired if the home was large enough to accommodate a daycare of this size.

Ripley replied that the daycare meets the State of Michigan’s minimum standards for this type of license.

Ayers affirmed that daycare facilities of this type are regularly inspected by the State of Michigan.

Brown commented that the approach of the driveway is very narrow for utilization as a shared driveway.

Liphard replied that he would be willing to expand the drive approach by 12 feet with the city’s permission.

Pitts commented that sending a parking reminder in writing to clients of the daycare would have a greater impact than a simple conversation.

Mapes commented that the increased occupant load of the daycare would likely expand the parking problem.

Ripley replied that parking is a requirement of the special use permit and the permit could be pulled should improper parking continue to be an issue.

Brown commented that he is open to widening the approach of the shared drive to the 20 feet allowed by the city provided that Liphard cover all costs of the modifications to the drive approach. He further commented that Liphard does not park far enough ahead in the drive pad to allow for daycare guests to properly park in the drive. Because of this, Brown has often had to drive over the curb to have enough clearance to pull into the drive.

Pitts urged Liphard to please communicate proper parking procedures with clients. If the permit is approved, it will be pulled if the parking issues continue.

Ripley commented that the location would allow the drive approach to be widened to either the north or south.

Alma Planning Commission

May 6, 2019

Page 3

Ringle confirmed this fact and offered to treat the location as two drives for the purposes of calculating the maximum allowable width of the drive approach.

Mapes indicated that he is in favor of issuing the permit while reaffirming that the permit will be pulled if the parking issues are not resolved.

A motion was offered by Kulling and supported by Wheeler to close the public hearing at 5:46 PM.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

A motion was offered by Pitts and supported by Mapes to approve the Special Use Permit to Operate a Group Daycare Home at 716 Bridge Ave, with the conditions outlined by staff and during the public hearing.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

**Public Hearing: Special Use Permit for a Class A-B Vehicle Dealer’s License at 6585 N Jerome Rd**

This Public Hearing is to consider a request for a Special Use Permit from Maverick Environmental Equipment, 6585 N Jerome Road (Parcel # 29-51-352-267-50) The applicant proposes to operate as a Class A-B New and Used Vehicle Dealer, a license from the State of Michigan is required. The property is zoned GI, General Industrial. GI districts permit new and used sales of truck, mowing equipment, recreational vehicles, construction equipment, and farm implements with the issuance of a Special Use Permit.

A presentation was given by Ripley. The ability to operate a vehicle repair and sales facility was added to the GI district as a special use 5 years ago by the city commission. The lot is required to be 1 acre, the lot is 3.62 acres, the lot frontage must be 150’, the lot has 307’ of frontage. Outdoor storage of trash, including new or discarded vehicles parts shall be contained within a solid, unpierced enclosure. Storage or parking of vehicles within the front setback is prohibited, there is a minimum 45’ setback. As a condition of the special use permit, the property owner shall finish the parking lot to a hard-surfaced area. Equipment cannot be parked on grassed areas.

The public hearing was opened by chairman Ayers at 5:47 PM.

Stahl commented that the license for industrial equipment sales covering screeners, chippers and bucket trucks is a natural extension of the existing business at the location. While doing business, Maverick Environmental often comes into possession of such equipment. The vehicle dealer’s license would allow them to process this equipment in a more efficient manner. The proposed process includes a “order to sale” model with no plans for the long-term storage of equipment. Equipment already moves in and out of the location as a process of doing business. A state vehicle dealer’s license would expedite the retitling process allowing equipment to move more

Alma Planning Commission

May 6, 2019

Page 4

efficiently. In the future, the business may have interest in expanding to trailer sales but is unlikely to deal with traditional vehicle sales.

Mapes inquired if the length of time used equipment could remain on the property could be stipulated.

Ripley replied that established setbacks and the requirement of a hard-surfaced lot helps with this issue, but no specific ordinance currently limits the time a vehicle can remain on the property. The GI district does not allow for the sales of passenger sized vehicles.

Ayers commented that the city has a long standing, positive relationship with Maverick Environmental.

Stahl commented that equipment that utilizes tracks for locomotion destroys asphalt surfaces. Stahl noted that he would prefer a surface consisting of crushed concrete. Maverick would extend the existing fence the length of the proposed vehicle parking area to provide for increased visual screening as a condition of the permit.

Wheeler inquired if all equipment on the property would be located behind a fence and to the rear of the building, as proposed in the site plan for Phase I and Phase II staging areas. Aesthetics are a requirement for a Certified Industrial Park in the State of Michigan.

Stahl replied that this was correct. All equipment located on the property would be screened behind the proposed staging area.

Ripley commented that crushed concrete would be an appropriate hard surface as defined by our ordinance and would work with ownership to come up with a plan to build the staging area.

Griffith commented that crushed asphalt is working well as a durable surface for equipment located at Avalon & Tahoe’s manufacturing facility.

Ayers agreed that crushed concrete or asphalt would be a logical solution for equipment of this type.

A motion was offered by Kulling and supported by Pitts to close the public hearing at 5:57 PM.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

A motion was offered by Mapes and supported by Wheeler to approve the Special Use Permit to Operate a State of Michigan Class A-B Vehicle Dealer at 6585 N Jerome Road with the conditions outlined by staff and comments made during the public hearing.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

Alma Planning Commission

May 6, 2019

Page 5

**Site Plan Review: 1321 Pine Avenue (Alma Optics Parking Lot Expansion)**

Alma Optics is planning to expand their available parking by 22 for a total of 49 parking spaces. The property is zoned OS, Office Services, the proposed parking expansion requires a site plan approval by the planning commission.

A presentation was given by Ripley at 5:59 PM. The proposed lot will include 49 parking spaces and include a 70-foot setback with designed green space. A berm will be added to the landscaping to create a storm water retention area to facilitate drainage. An existing county drain is located 30 feet from the property’s lot line. The property is 2.269 acres in size with an existing 5,486 square foot building. The lot coverage is currently 5% which is well within the limit for the district. Parking lots do not count towards lot coverage of a parcel under existing ordinance. The proposed parking space size and lanes meet city minimum standards outlined in ordinance. The installation of proposed lighting also meets city requirements for the lot. Several existing trees will be removed as part of the proposed project.

Lorenz commented that he did what he could to save existing trees on the property. Smaller trees located on the north end of the lot will be removed, but the goal of the project is to keep the storm water retention area looking as natural as possible. The proposed berm curves to retain existing old growth oak trees. The constructed berm will be 3 feet in height with a mild slope. A joint storm sewer runs north through the property. The proposed plan has been approved by the County Drain Commissioner. The berm is designed to contain runoff from the expanded lot. The grade from the lot falls off from the road. The berm will trap water and slow its release rate to a small outlet pipe. A small quantity of water will pool during a storm water event. The estimated maximum depth of pooled storm water is not expected to exceed two feet.

A motion was offered by Wheeler and supported by Kulling to approve the site plan review for 1321 Pine Avenue as presented.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

**Site Plan Review: Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing New Building Construction (903 Michigan Avenue)**

Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing is planning to construct a new 1,728 sq. ft. Maintenance Building just east of the B Production Building. The property is zoned LI, Limited Industrial, the proposed additions are permitted in the LI district and require site plan approval by the planning commission.  
  
A presentation as given by Ripley at 6:06 PM. Site plan outlines the construction of a 1,728 sq. ft. building on the eastern portion of the property. The proposed setback to the east is 123 ft of the 35 ft minimum required by ordinance. The lot is 16.8 acres in size and the additional building brings the total lot coverage to 35% of the 40% allowed within the district. A building permit for the project has been submitted. Review of the project’s drainage has been reviewed by the Public Works Director and County Drain Commissioner.

A motion was offered by Wheeler and supported by Mapes to approve the site plan for the new building construction at 903 Michigan Avenue as presented.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

Alma Planning Commission

May 6, 2019

Page 6

**Updated Alma Planning Commission By-Laws**

A presentation was given by Ripley at 6:09 PM. State statute MCL 1285 states that ex-officio commission members cannot chair an established commission. It is proposed to recommend to the city commission to officially include that we will follow all state bylaws in our established planning commission bylaws.

A motion was offered by Therrien and supported by Pitts to make a recommendation to city commission to modify the planning commission bylaws to include all established state bylaws regarding the governance of commissions.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

**Set Public Hearing to Consider the Rezoning of Parcels Numbered: 29-51-352-003-00, 29-51-352-766-00, 29-51-352-004-00 and 29-51-352-001-00 for June 3, 2019**

A presentation was given by Ripley at 6:12 PM. Current zoning designations of properties surrounding an existing industrial park prevents marihuana facilities from locating within the park which is intended as their preferred location. The current surrounding parcels are zoned R-1, Single Family Residential. Enacted zoning provisions prevent a marihuana facility from operating within 300 feet of a single-family residential district. It is proposed that the surrounding parcels be rezoned as a R-3, Multifamily Residential to allow for the development of marihuana facilities within the existing industrial park. It is noted that due to the proximity to existing industrial uses, the multifamily residential designation is a better fit for the surrounding undeveloped land regardless of the need for locating marihuana facilities within the industrial park.

Ayers commented that this was an oversight that was made when the area zoning map was revised several years ago.

Ripley commented that much of the land currently zoned R-1 lies within the flood plain and is flagged “non-development” due to established restrictions within the flood plain. Such land is already exempt for consideration respective to zoning setback restrictions. Ripley will work with the Engineering Department to identify the region of the floodplain restricted from development in future drafts of the city zoning map.

A motion was offered by Kulling and supported by Wheeler to set the public hearing for the parcel re-zonings for June 3, 2019.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

**Revision of the Planned Unit Development Ordinance (PUD)**

A presentation was given by Ripley at 6:17 PM. On April 14th, Don Wortman, City of Alma Zoning Consultant, made recommendations for changes to the City of Alma PUD Ordinance to support future projects. The changes to the ordinance will give considerations to developers for certain design elements in exchange for increased housing density. A draft of the recommended revisions was provided.

Mapes inquired if this proposal has been discussed with the school board.

Alma Planning Commission

May 6, 2019

Page 7

Ripley replied that the school board is in support of the proposal and is willing to assist in any reasonable way requested.

Mapes inquired if the process will include the notification of the effected neighborhood.

Ripley replied that the modification of the PUD ordinance is a city-wide zoning amendment that is not neighborhood specific, but that an ad would be placed in the newspaper notifying all city residents of the proposed change.

Mapes asserted that he would be more comfortable if residents were notified directly.

Ripley replied that direct neighbors of the former middle school property will be notified directly.

The planning commissions voiced a consensus of this approach.

Mapes noted that if the community understands the process more clearly from the beginning they are more likely support the proposed changes.

A motion was offered by Therrien and supported by Mapes to schedule a public hearing to review revisions to the Planned Unit Development Ordinance on June 3, 2019.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

A motion was offered by Wheeler and supported by Mapes to adjourn the meeting at 6:29 PM.

Yes: Mapes, Kulling, Wheeler, Pitts, Therrien, and Ayers

No: None

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron K Hale

Planning Commission Recording Secretary