

**City of Alma  
Planning Commission Minutes  
September 13, 2021**

Chairman Ayers called the special meeting of the Alma Planning Commission to order at 6:00 PM on September 13, 2021, at the Alma Municipal Building.

Pledge of Allegiance to the United State of America was recited.

Present: Pitts, Schooley, Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Ayers.

Absent: Wheeler

Others Present: Aeris Ripley, City of Alma Zoning Administrator  
Nancy Gallagher, 120 E Superior Developer  
Zack Everitt, 120 E Superior Developer  
Raul Ramirez  
Robbie Rodriguez

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Pitts and seconded by Therrien to approve the minutes of the August 4, 2021, Planning Commission meeting.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.

No: None

**Buffer Fence Scottish Heights Park**

Public Works is requesting permission to install a 5' screening fence to block vehicle lights on the west side of the parking lot at the Trail Head on Charles Avenue. Since the fence would be in the front yard of the parcel zoning only allows for a 3' fence. The Planning Commission does have the discretion to allow a higher fence to screen between uses.

The parking spaces face east and west. As vehicles pull in and out of the west spaces the headlights are disturbing the homes across the street, there are no homes to the south. Staff investigated the option of installing a mowable berm, but a berm would cause issues with site drainage.

The proposed fence is 5' high, black vinyl, steel bracing with a wind rating of 130 Miles per hour, located along the west side of the parking lot. The reason for the 5' height is to insure that all possible headlights are blocked, and not have to add height later. A 4' would block all cars and light pickups but would not block the larger pickups and SUVs.

Staff was asked about the color of the fence. Could the color fade, staff has to check and get back to the Planning Commission.

A motion was made by Pitts and seconded by Therrien to approve the requested 5' high screening fence at the Trail Head on Charles Avenue.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.

No: None

### **Site Plan Review 903 Michigan Avenue**

Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing plans to add a 2,000 sq. ft. powder coat building between the existing loading structure and Production B Building. The property is zoned LI, Limited Industrial, the proposed addition is permitted in the LI District and requires a site plan approval by the planning commission.

The location of proposed powder coat facility meets all required setbacks and lot coverages. Building permit has been received. All other trades run through the State of Michigan. Staff received verification that the new facility will not add additional staff requiring more parking. If parking needs change, a plan may need to come back to the Planning Commission.

Chuck Griffith representing Avalon to the location of the powder coat facility and the benefits to the on-site process.

A motion was made by Mapes and seconded by Therrien to approve the site plan as presented by Avalon & Tahoe Manufacturing.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.  
No: None

### **Public Hearing Special Use Permit**

A Special Use Permit Request has been received by 120 E. Superior Street, LLC for 116-120 E Superior Street. The applicant is proposing to develop twelve (12) residential units on the second floor. The property is zoned B-1, Central Business District. The B-1 district does allow residential uses provided they are on the second or higher floors of a permitted use through the issuance of a Special Use Permit.

A motion was made to open the public hearing by Pitts and seconded by Richter.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.  
No: None

The following proposed upper story apartments were presented to the Planning Commission.

- Second Floor Primary Building – Twelve (12) units:
  - 201: 734 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 202: 624 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 203: 914 sq. ft. – 2 bedroom
  - 204: 712 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 205: 633 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 206: 754 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 207: 747 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 208: 906 sq. ft. – 2 bedroom
  - 209: 930 sq. ft. – 2 bedroom
  - 210: 700 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 211: 701 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom
  - 212: 570 sq. ft. – 1 bedroom

Units 202, 205 and 212 are under the required 700 sq. ft. minimum and will need variance from the ZBA.

Parking: According to ordinance structures in the B1, Central Business District may utilize municipal parking lots within 500 ft., once all on-site parking is utilized. Parking lots within 500 ft. of the proposed project are Lots# 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7.

Trash receptacle to be located on the south-east portion of the 120 E Superior Street parcel. Owner to provide staff with final location and the ingress and egress plan to empty the dumpster before the building permit is issued.

The structure was built lot line to lot line. The only available parking will be the municipal lots. The tenants of the building will have to be ok with walking to and from their home. There is no on-site parking.

Gallagher spoke to the project's historic elements that would be retained as part of the project. The project requires a complete update of the electrical, mechanical, and plumbing. An elevator will also be a part of the project.

Richter asked about light to the interior units. Everitt stated the project is keeping and upgrading the sky lights for natural light to those units. The building will also be fully fire suppressed.

The overall plan also shows two ground floor rear entrance residential units. The Planning Commission would need to review and approve a text amendment to the zoning ordinance in the coming months, to allow for this use.

The Planning Commission thanked Gallagher and Everitt for their plan to invest in the downtown.

A motion by Mapes and seconded by Schooley to close the public hearing.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.

No: None

A motion by Mapes and seconded by Therrien to approve the special use permit for the 12 upper story residential units at 116, 118 and 120 E Superior Street, with the approval of units 202, 205 and 212 contingent on receiving a variance for the 700 sq. ft. minimum floor size from the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.

No: None

### **Public Hearing Zoning Text Amendment**

A special use permit request has been received for a new tattoo establishment, which is located within a 1,000 ft. of an established tattoo location. The proposed ordinance text amendments would reduce all tattoo and body-piercing buffers to 300 ft.

Under the current ordinance a tattoo or body-piercing establishment cannot be within 1,000 feet of another tattoo or body piercing establishment. The only tattoo establishment currently located within the City of Alma is in Downtown at 408 Woodworth Avenue. Measuring from the outermost boundary of the parcel of the existing tattoo establishment to the outermost boundary of the parcel of the

proposed tattoo shop is 346'. The 1,000' radius from 408 Woodworth Avenue takes out almost 75% of the commercial space within the downtown.

The requested zoning amendment would reduce the buffer between tattoo and body-piercing establishments, schools, library, and public parks or public playgrounds to 300'.

Ramirez stated he likes the space he would have at 223 E Superior Street (Old City Hall) and would appreciate the opportunity to do his work that location.

If the ordinance amendment was approved Mr. Ramirez would need to come back before the Planning Commission for approval of a special use permit.

The current setbacks were put into place as a result of concerns of how these types of establishments would affect the downtown.

A motion was made by Pits and seconded by Therrien to close the public hearing.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.

No: None

A motion was made by Pitts and seconded by Mapes to recommend a zoning amendment to reduce all buffers within the tattoo and body-piercing establishments ordinance to 300' and to send this recommendation to the City Commission for their consideration.

Yes: Richter, Mapes, Therrien, Schooley, Pitts, Ayers.

No: None

### **Other Business**

No other business.

### **Invitation to Public**

Robbie Rodriguez, St. Louis – spoke about an effort to create a new ordinance that would be voted on by the public regarding future refugee centers.

A motion was made by Pitts and seconded by Therrien at 7:03 PM to adjourn.

Yes: Wheeler, Therrien, Pitts, Richter, Schooley, Ayers.

No: None

Respectfully submitted,



Aeric Ripley

Planning Commission Recording Secretary – 9-13-2021