Work Session began at 5:30 p.m.
Present: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
Absent: None.

City Manager Schooley informed the Commissioners of the following items:

**WOLVERINE TOWER**

The City has been in talks with Wolverine Pipeline since 2013 in an effort to take possession of the radio tower on their Bridge Street site. There have been a number of agreements drafted back and forth between the parties. He believed we had finally come to terms with some of the easement issues and asked the city attorney to forward the information the back to Wolverine. At that time, we began to make plans to take possession of the tower. In 2014, JJ Tower Services completed a Tower Inspection Report for the City. The report indicated that the tower was in good shape, but would require the following maintenance:

- the cable tensions were above specs (thus causing the tower to be not in plumb)
- Tower must be repainted
- Anchor heads are partially buried and the lower turnbuckles are buried. They must be above ground.
- The anchor cages around the tower need to be replaced
- Tower photo cells are nonoperational and the side markers are out.

Alan Leute and paid a visit to the site after discussing easement and access. We believed upon inspection that:

- power for the tower currently comes from Wolverine. The electric would need to be re-run from the Transportation Center.
- The location of the agreed access to the site would require a drive to be constructed from the Transportation Center drive north to the site.

Our estimated cost of taking possession of the tower and making it functional is in the $50,000 - $60,000 range. This does not include the cost of renting a crane in order to work on the tower. Alan has talked with the DPW staff and found that they are not having any communication issues in the city. I have contacted our radio vendor who advised he could lease us space on a tower for transit at $2000 per year. I believe this is a more cost-efficient way to operate, and I suggest we terminate our pursuit of the Wolverine tower.

**BUILD A DREAM PARK UPDATE**

As you know the Dream Park Committee has had remarkable success and reached their goal for the rebuilding of Wright Park. We are very fortunate to have such committed, caring volunteers in our community. This is a project has brought our community together and will be enjoyed by all. The Committee has sent a couple items for our consideration. First of all, the commission will be asked to approve payment of $73,238.41 for the last of the actual playground equipment. That will be a part of the April 10th agenda. The committee would like to be able to include poured in place rubber flooring under the entire project. Currently the rubber flooring is only scheduled for certain parts of the playscape. They are requesting we consider a $10,000 contribution to assist with the $144,636 total cost. This would negate the need for the City to put down, and maintain wood chips in the playscape area. They have obtained a quote for port-a john’s from Guietts’s Port-a john. The Committee would like input as to the City’s interest in this discounted rate for this summer and next. To be noted, the parks board has had discussion of cleaning up and refurbishing the Wright Park bathrooms for this
summer. There also is talk of signage for the bathrooms that would explain the pending DNR Grant that was presented by Aeric Ripley last month.

**MEDICAL MARIHUANA**

After hearing the comments from the public at the March 12th Special Meeting of the Planning Commission, and information obtained at a recent Michigan Municipal League Conference, I have listed some items that the City Commission may want to consider for discussion.

- Is the issue to be discussed medical marihuana, or the regulation of medical marihuana? These are two different issues. Staff was asked some time ago to develop an ordinance under the MMFLA for consideration. That ordinance has been introduced and was discussed in a public hearing. Is it the Commission’s intent to discuss the merits of medical marihuana in our community, or to regulate it?

- Development of the Application Process: staff has not developed the application process at this time as there is no clear direction as to the approval or denial of the draft ordinance. The development will take a lot of staff time and effort and we felt it would not be an efficient use of our time without such direction.

- The City of Battle Creek’s Ordinance under their general provision states: The Medical Marihuana Facilities Permit issued under this chapter is valid only if the permit holder also holds a valid current State operating license, and a copy of the valid current State license has been provided to the Application Coordinator by the MMF permit holder. This language would require any City of Alma Applicant to first obtain their State Operating License. Using this language would help staff in verifying needed information, such as background checks and financing, reducing time needed for the local investigation.

- Looking at the number of allowable dispensaries by ordinance.

- Moving all setbacks to 300 feet.

A discussion followed indicating that regulation of medical marihuana is the right thing to do by writing and approving an Ordinance. The Commissioners liked the idea of the applicant having a State issued license before coming to the City for a permit. Moving the setbacks to 300 feet was agreed upon.

April 2nd is the next Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Schooley will bring these amendments for their consideration.

**MEIJER WASTEWATER TIE-IN TO PINE RIVER TOWNSHIP SEWER MAIN**

In 2013 the Meijer Store was built with cooperation between the City and Pine River Township. As we all know the gas station for the store is located in the Township, while the store itself is in the city. The store was connected to a sanitary sewer system and potable water main on Cheeseman Road. It appears that there was confusion at the time as to who owned the system. Over time it was determined that Pine River Township owns that portion of the system. We have been in discussions with the Township to resolve some of the costs associated with this connection. There appears to be some draft agreements that were never acted upon.

The March 27, 2018, City Commission work session concluded at 6:10 p.m.
Mayor Mapes called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:10 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

Present: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
Absent: None.

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

Motion by Commissioner Ayers as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2018 regular meeting.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

A Public Hearing was held at 6:12 p.m. to consider an application for an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate for Gemini Capital Management, LLC at 210 E Superior Street. The purpose of the OPRA is to assist with the creation of three new upper story apartments. The OPRA District was established on November 9, 2004.

Aeric Ripley, Assistant City Manager/DDA Director spoke to the Commission that this Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate for Gemini Capital Management, LLC is a program to help offset the costs of the rehab. Staff is recommending 12 years for the exemption certificate. The OPRA will only be for the second story at 210 E Superior. Alma School taxes are not part of the exemption certificate. Two of the proposed apartments will be low to moderate income. On April 2nd the Planning Commission will have a Hearing to discuss a Special Use Permit for the upper apartments. The City has previously approved five OPRA certificates.

Mayor Mapes asked if the Planning Commission could look at the Special Permit process. He feels that the Building Permit process is the way these upper story apartments should be handled.

David Justin, 305 Hastings, asked what happens to an OPRA if the property is sold. Mr. Ripley answered that the OPRA would go to the new property owner until it terms out.

Being no further comments, Mayor Mapes called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman to close the public hearing at 6:20 p.m.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Mott as supported by Commissioner Allman:

WHEREAS, the City of Alma has been deemed a Qualified Local Governmental Unit, according to Section 2(k) of PA 146 of 2000; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to PA 146 of 2000, after a duly noticed public hearing held on November 9, 2004, the City Commission by resolution established the Alma Renaissance Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District, as
requested by Alma Renaissance LLC and said district has been deemed an obsolete property according to PA 146 of 2000; and

WHEREAS, Gemini Capital Management, LLC has filed an application for an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Certificate with respect to the rehabilitation of facilities located in the Alma Renaissance LLC Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District; and

WHEREAS, before acting on said application the City Commission held a public hearing on March 27, 2018 at 6:12 p.m. at the City Commission Chambers, 525 E. Superior Street, at which hearing the applicant, the Assessor and a representative of the affected taxing units, having been given written notice, were afforded an opportunity to be heard on said application; and

WHEREAS, the property located at 210 East Superior Street Alma, Michigan is found to be obsolete property for the following reasons:

a) It is functionally obsolete for the reasons that the mechanical systems and barrier free access are inadequate for the highest and best use of the property.

b) The second story floor plan is inappropriate for the highest and best use of the property. The second story interior portion of the building will undergo extensive renovation to accommodate three new apartments.

WHEREAS, the rehabilitation of the facility had not occurred before the establishment of the Alma Renaissance LLC Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District on November 9, 2004; and

WHEREAS, the aggregate taxable value of real and personal property exempt from ad valorem taxes within the City of Alma, after granting this certificate, will exceed 5% of an amount equal to the sum of the taxable value of the unit, plus the taxable value of personal and real property thus exempted.

WHEREAS, said applicant Gemini Capital Management, LLC is not delinquent in any taxes related to the facility; and

WHEREAS, the City of Alma has been supplied with the following: a general description of the obsolete facility; a description of the proposed use; a work-plan for the rehabilitation; a list of the fixed building equipment that will be a part of the rehabilitated facility; a time schedule for the rehabilitation; and a statement of the economic advantages of the rehabilitation of the facility; and

WHEREAS, the scope of rehabilitation as stated in the above documents includes improvements aggregating 10% or more of the true cash value of the property at commencement of the rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, upon completion of said rehabilitation there is a reasonable likelihood that one of the following will: increase commercial activity, create employment, retain employment, prevent loss of employment, revitalize urban areas, or increase the number of residents in the community in which the facility is situated; and

WHEREAS, this Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Certificate shall not exceed twelve (12) years.

Now Therefore Be It Resolved by the City Commission of the City of Alma:

1. The City Commission finds and determines that the granting of the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Certificate considered together with the aggregate amount of certificates previously granted and currently in force under Act No. 198 of the Public Acts of 1974 and Act No. 146 of 2000 shall not have the effect of substantially impeding the operation of the City of Alma, or impairing the financial soundness of a taxing unit which levies ad valorem property taxes in the City of Alma.
2. The application of Gemini Capital Management, LLC for an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Certificate with respect to the rehabilitation of facilities located on the following described parcel of real property situated within the Alma Renaissance LLC Obsolete property Rehabilitation District at 210 E. Superior Street, Alma, Michigan, to wit:

Lots 25, 26, 27 and 28 and the East 2.35 ft of lot 29, except the South 40 feet of the East 2.35 ft of lot 29, Block 23, of the map of Alma, City of Alma Gratiot County, Michigan

Be and the same is hereby approved.

3. The Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Certificate when issued shall be and remain in force and effect for a period of twelve (12) years after completion. The rehabilitation project shall be completed by November 2018

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED

A public hearing was held at 6:21 p.m. to consider the creation of an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District for the property located at 408 Woodworth Avenue, for the purposes of creating upper story apartments.

Aeric Ripley, Assistant City Manager/DDA Director spoke to the Commission that this Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District which is being requested by the owners of 408 Woodworth; Tom and Rhonda Rohrer. An OPRA district needs to be set first before an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Certificate can be applied for. By setting the OPRA district, the upper story of 408 Woodworth is declared obsolete for the highest and best use of the space.

Being no further comments, Mayor Mapes called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to close the public hearing at 6:26 p.m.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Allman:

Whereas, the City of Alma has been deemed a Qualified Local Governmental Unit, according to Section 2(k) of PA 146 of 2000, and

Whereas, a request to establish an obsolete property rehabilitation district was made by Tom & Rhonda Rohrer with the City Clerk, and

Whereas, the property located at 408 Woodworth Ave., Alma, Michigan is found to be obsolete property for the following reasons:

a) It is functionally obsolete for the reasons that the electrical, mechanical and plumbing systems are inadequate for the highest and best use of the property.
b) The second story floor plan is inappropriate for the highest and best use of the property.

Whereas, the City of Alma is authorized under the provisions of PA 146 of 2000 to establish obsolete property rehabilitation districts by resolution, and

Whereas, The City Commission of the City of Alma scheduled a Public Hearing on March 27, 2018 at 6:21 p.m. in the Commission Chambers in regard to this matter and the owner of all real property within the Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District and any other resident or taxpayer of the City of Alma shall have the right to appear and be heard, and

Now Therefore Be It Resolved, that an the City Commission of the City of Alma does hereby establish an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation District for the property located at 408 Woodworth Ave., Alma Michigan, further described as:

Original Town, Block 20, N 52 ft. of Lot 21 and N 42 ft. of W 10 ft. of Lot 20 (408 Woodworth Ave.)
2951 344 608 00

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

Resolution Declared Adopted.

A public hearing was held at 6:27 p.m. to review and consider submission of a Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Grant application for the replacement and rehab of park restrooms located in Wright, Riverside, and Pine River/Conservation Park.

Aeric Ripley, Assistant City Manager/DDA Director presented the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Natural Resources Trust Grant application for the replacement and rehab of park restrooms located in Wright, Riverside, and Pine River/Conservation Park to the Commission

Mr. Ripley began with the Wright Park Bathroom. It is recommended to replace the whole structure with a new facility, to provide 4 universal design, single occupancy bathrooms. The plan is to model after the new restroom on Charles Avenue. The estimated cost would be $200,000 which will include additional updates to the electrical to the pavilions and do needed sewer work. The rehab of Pine River/Conservation Park bathroom is planned for 5 universal designed single occupancy restrooms. This structure also houses a City lift station. Wastewater Fund will be used to do repairs on the roof and brick façade. The estimated cost for the bathroom rehab would be $50,000. The rehab of Riverside Park bathroom is planned for 2 universal designed single occupancy restrooms and to paint the roof and exterior will be at a cost of $45,000. The King Park bathroom is recommended for demolition. The structure is obsolete and hasn’t been used for years.

The total cost for the three bathrooms will be $295,000. A certified engineer needs to be used for the project which brings the total to $339,250.00 Requesting 65% from MDNR in the amount of $220,250. The remaining 35% will need to come from the General fund, grants, etc. in the amount of $118,738. The application is due April 1, 2018.

Being no further comments, Mayor Mapes called for a motion to close the public hearing.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to close the public hearing at 6:39 p.m.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.
The following preamble and resolution were offered by Commissioner Mott as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington:

**Whereas**, the City of Alma City Commission supports the submission of a Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) application titled, “Alma Park Restrooms Rebuild/Rehab” to the Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund for a development project encompassing the rebuilding of the Wright Park Restroom, rehabbing Pine River/Conservation Park and Riverside Park Restrooms, upon completion of the project, the aforementioned park restrooms will be of universal design, single occupancy, family friendly, vandal proof as possible; and,

**Whereas**, the proposed application is supported by the Community’s 5-Year Approved Parks and Recreation Plan; and,

**Whereas**, the City of Alma is hereby making a financial commitment to the project in the amount of $118,738 for engineering and construction, in cash and/or force account; and,

**Now Therefore, Be It Resolved** the City of Alma City Commission hereby authorizes submission of a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Application for $339,250, and further resolves to make available its financial obligation amount of $118,738 (35%) of a total $339,250 project cost, during the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

**Yes:** Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.

**No:** None.

**Resolution Declared Adopted**

Motion by Vice-Mayor Harrington as supported by Commissioner Allman to approve and ratify the consent agenda items for payment in the following amounts of $236,318.99 to The Bank of New York Mellon N.A. for the principal and interest due on the Michigan Finance Authority SRF and SWQF loans; $277,701.00 to Chase for the principal and interest due on the Water and Wastewater loans and $1,613.28 to 21st Century Media for February publications in the Morning Sun.

**Yes:** Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.

**No:** None.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to approve the request for purchase in the amount of $7,000.00 to IT Right for informational technologies unlimited services for the period April 1, 2018 to June 30, 2018.

**Yes:** Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.

**No:** None.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Harrington as supported by Commissioner Allman to approve the request for purchase in the amount of $2,220.00 to IT Right for the needed cloud and internet storage setup fee for the informational technologies service to the City.

**Yes:** Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.

**No:** None.
Motion by Commissioner Mott as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington to approve the request for purchase in the amount $19,700.00 to West Shore Fire for 3 tools for the Jaws of Life for the Alma Fire District.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington to adopt a resolution approving an Outdoor Café Permit and Indemnification Agreement for Serendipity Frozen Yogurt and doughnuts at 117.5 E. Superior St.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.
Abstain: Mapes.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers as supported by Vice-Mayor Harrington to adopt a resolution authorizing City Treasurer, Karl Hagen to withdrawal the funds held by Independent Bank in a certificate of deposit, Account Number 9019874009 which has reached its maturity date.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman and Piccolo.
No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers as supported by Commissioner Allman to receive the following report and place it on file: Alma Transportation February 2018 report.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, , Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

Motion by Vice-Mayor Harrington as supported by Commissioner Mott to approve the appointment of Mark Williams as the Public Safety Administrator for the City of Alma.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo as supported by Commissioner Ayers to approve Warrant No. 18-16 and to authorize the City Treasurer to issue checks in payment of all claims.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

Commissioner Ayers wanted to congratulate Mark Williams on his appointment. He has earned it.

Mayor Mapes also wanted to congratulate Mark Williams and City Manager Schooley.

Mayor Mapes opened the floor for Public comment.

Walt Segan of 308 E Hazel, St. Louis addressed the Commission on his concerns on Medical Marihuana. It helps a lot of people. The Commission needs to think compassion and think how this could bring funds into the City budget. They need to jump on the band wagon not just sit by and let this opportunity slip away.
Gerald Templeton of 18 Balsam Br., Evergreen Village, St. Louis, spoke that he is a medical marijuana patient with no transportation and has to travel to Lansing to get his medicine. He would like to see a dispensary closer.

Wayne Thumb of Sumner commented that he is on disability of $750. a month. His medicine costs $250. a month. What is the Commission going to do to help people pay for their medicine.

Mayor Mapes responded that the City Commission has no control over those issues.

Robert Young, 624 Seaver, Ithaca, wanted everyone to know that marijuana is the safest substance there is.

Angel Welch, 1050 Bridge, Alma, spoke that she is very supportive of a local dispensary. Having a local dispensary will help patients get their medicine legally and safely close to where they live. Travel time and expenses will be less. Multiple levels of employment and services are an outcome of a local dispensary.

Jeff Painter, Elwell, wanted to apologize for the other speakers for voicing their concerns in such an intense manner. He is a medical marijuana patient and was wondering why pharmacies are not regulated like these dispensaries are, they are both providing medicine to patients.

Ray Kawalski, St. Louis is a pharmacist. He would like to see medical marijuana sold out of pharmacies but the laws do not allow this. We are behind the eight ball with what medical marijuana can do. He is not a proponent of regular use of marijuana but knows it has medical properties to help. The Government is stopping research from getting the facts.

James Wing, N Blair Rd., Breckinridge, uses medical marijuana. He believes that a Compassion Club like the one in Sidney is needed. The generation of taxes by having a dispensary is great. It will help local financing.

Laurie Wilson, Ithaca, has seen many using marijuana and is concerned that they will drive a car after using and cause life threatening accidents. She is not for bringing dispensaries into Alma.

Audra Stahl an Alma resident and Director of Child Advocacy knows that medical marijuana is approved by use in this State. She would like to see more discussions on the City Ordinance. She would like to see stricter limits written into the Ordinance. This is a big issue, we need to educate the citizens.

Mayor Mapes wanted to thank everyone who spoke for being civil. He noted that the State and Federal governments should be making the laws on this topic not mandating that the local governments administer to this issue.

Being no further Public comment, Mayor Mapes asked for a motion to adjourn.

Motion by Commissioner Allman as supported by Commissioner Piccolo to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Yes: Allman, Ayers, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Nyman & Piccolo.
No: None.

Gregory S. Mapes, Mayor

Sheila Letourneau, City Clerk