

August 15, 2024

PUBLIC HEARING

5:15 p.m.

Mayor Richard Champeny opened the public hearing to the public regarding the amendment to the City of Alma's Noise Ordinance.

No citizens spoke in favor of the ordinance.

The following people spoke against the noise ordinance:

Ben Hillig-S2000 Vulture View stated that he was against the ordinance because the decibel level was increased in the proposed ordinance.

Geraldine Hillig-S2000 Vulture View stated that she was against the ordinance because the ending time for noise is going from 10:00 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. and the decibels were increased.

Hearing no further testimony for or against the ordinance, Mayor Champeny closed the public hearing.

August 15, 2024

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

5:30 p.m.

Mayor Champeny called the Informational meeting to order regarding the proposed Xcel substation at 1300 S. Main St. Champeny instructed the public on the rules of the meeting in regard to length of time to speak, conduct, etc.

The following representatives from Xcel Energy were present: Dawn Schultz, Bob Schultz, and Curt Frank.

Photos superimposing the substation on the site showing what the substation would look like were available for public review for the past two weeks.

Dawn Schultz went over the reasoning and the plan for the substation and informed those present that the current substation is 70 years old and had reached its end of life. The new substation will not fit in the current substation's location. The road to the current substation is narrow and steep and damage to the road is incurred when the trucks have a difficult time getting to the substation.

Dawn Schultz stated that Xcel has been looking at sites over the past four years and when the property at 1300 S. Main became available, it was the best site to suit their needs.

Allen Burt, resident at 321 N. Main Street, inquired if cost was a big factor in choosing this location.

Dawn Schultz responded that it was one of the factors considered in selecting this site.

Jan Schreiber, resident at 1111 South Main Street, suggested a playground for this property instead of a substation.

Jerri Schreiber, business owner, stated that the City of Alma is on the National Register of Historic Places, the Great River Road and the National Scenic Byway and feels that putting a substation on the entrance to the City of Alma is not a good idea.

Dawn Schultz from Xcel did inform the public that she had contacted the Great River Road and National Scenic Byway, and this parcel was not in the scenic byway.

Allen Burt stated that he did not feel the proposed substation benefits the City of Alma.

Jennifer Griffith, resident and owner of the Burlington Hotel and employee of Collins Plumbing, stated that the City of Alma is tourist based and did not want to see the substation across from her place of employment because it would block her view of the river.

Jake LaDuke, resident at 100 N. Main St, stated that Xcel could look elsewhere and suggested on the bluff over CTH E and/or out at the city property off of CTH I. If placed across the wooded area, LaDuke stated that vegetation management could be implemented.

Lance LaDuke, father of Jake LaDuke, stated he felt the location for the proposed substation is in the wrong location.

Sherri Collins, 200 S. 2nd Street, inquired if the substation would have a hum. Xcel stated yes, however, not as much of a hum as the larger substation of Dairyland Power's located behind where the proposed substation would be.

Mayor Richard Champeny closed the informational meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS

6:00 p.m.

Mayor Richard Champeny called the regular monthly meeting of the Common Council of the City of Alma to order.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Clerk Linda Torgerson took roll call with the following members present: Mayor Richard Champeny, Davie Meier, Larry Grisen, Randy Brommer, Larry Farl (zoom), Loren Mueller, Gary Jepsen, and David Earney.

Motion by Mueller seconded by Brommer to approve the public hearing minutes of July 11, 2024 regarding Ordinance 24-03 amending the ordinance regulation of all-terrain vehicles in the City of Alma, Ordinance 24-04 amending the sewer service ordinance, Ordinance 24-05 amending the sidewalk ordinance to include removal of debris and vegetation from the sidewalks by the adjoining property owner and the conditional use permit application for a twin home on Shawnee Estates Lot #30. All members voting yes.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Grisen to approve the July 2024 Financial Report as presented. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Motion by Earney seconded by Jepsen to approve the July 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented. All members voting yes.

Citizens comments: None.

SERVICES COMMITTEE

Chairperson Loren Mueller went over the committee minutes of August 6, 2024. Mueller stated that the committee reviewed the proposed noise ordinance and recommends approval of the Council.

Gary Jepsen went over the proposed noise ordinance. He stated that the County has been looking for an enforceable noise ordinance and felt that the City's version would be one they could implement as well.

Jepsen stated that the decibel reader would be held at the property line vertical to the line. Decibel levels will be enforceable per the ordinance, Jepsen commented.

Motion by Earney seconded by Brommer to adopt Ordinance #24-06 amending the existing noise ordinance for the City of Alma. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Mueller stated that the committee discussed property maintenance. Ken Passow, Code Enforcement Officer, will be inspecting properties with Mueller to compile a list of residents who should receive letters regarding property maintenance upkeep.

Mueller stated that the committee denied the request for rolling dumpsters for residents and stop signs were suggested for coming out of the recycling center and cemetery on Shawnee Drive.

Sherry Collins was present to discuss the formation of a Friends of the Cemetery committee. Sherry will be contacting others and will report back to the committee.

Motion by Grisen seconded by Meier to approve the Services committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

FINANCE/TAX & LICENSE/ZONING COMMITTEE

Chairperson Gary Jepsen reported on the August 12, 2024 committee meeting.

The committee approved the building permit submitted by Xcel Energy to construct a substation at 1300 S. Main St. pending approval of the Board of Appeals for an area variance. Criteria regarding if the substation is an eyesore cannot be considered when the applicant follows all the guidelines.

Grisen inquired about the construction timeline. Curt Frank, Xcel Energy, stated approximately late 2025 and would take approximately six months. Grisen inquired about the work crew

anticipated. Frank stated approximately 15 people working at a time. Grisen commented that the workers would more than likely be spending money in the City of Alma during this time.

Earney questioned that if it is unsightly the City cannot deny the building permit? Jepsen stated that the City does not have the authority to deny a building permit based on the looks, however, it is based on the criteria.

Jon Seifert informed the Council that the building permit for the substation is in front of the Council this evening and it is in the proper zoning of industrial and Xcel has met all the criteria for the application, the zoning of Industrial is met and it is not appropriate to deny the permit based on the looks of the project. Xcel would have to proceed with the Board of Appeals for an area setback. Seifert stated that the council has to act in accordance with the zoning ordinance. Things in the Industrial District will have different appearances than other zoning districts, Seifert stated.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Meier to approve the building permit to Xcel Energy to construct a substation at 1300 S. Main St. Five members voting yes. Two voting no (Brommer and Earney) by roll call vote.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Grisen to table council agenda 8: Borrowing for operating expenses until additional research has been obtained. All members voting yes.

Jepsen informed the Council that the committee approved a building permit for a twin home on Lot #30 in Shawnee Estates.

Jepsen informed the Council that himself and Linda will be working on an amendment to the room tax ordinance.

Motion by Mueller seconded by Brommer to approve an Operator License to Kirsten Bueling. All members voting yes.

Motion by Meier seconded by Earney to approve the Finance/Tax & License/Zoning committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Chairperson Larry Grisen informed the Council that the committee had met on August 12, 2024.

Judge Gary Schlosstein, owner of Castlerock Museum, was present at the committee meeting requesting three spaces in front of the museum to be two-hour parking, seven days a week. Discussion was held and the committee will be presenting an ordinance amendment for this request.

Grisen informed the Council that the committee approved repairing a collapsed storm sewer behind 500 N. 2nd St. Due to the site's location a crane had to be brought in to make the repairs/replacement of the storm sewer line. The storm sewer did cause damage to the apartment

complex located at 500 N. 2nd St. and the repairs/replacement were urgent. Justin Sass, manager of the housing complex at 500 N. 2nd St. spoke to the Council regarding the urgency of the repairs.

Motion by Mueller seconded by Farl to declare an emergency regarding the storm sewer repairs/replacement that was done behind 500 N. 2nd St. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Motion by Farl seconded by Earney to adopt Resolution #24-03 Authorized Representative to file applications for financial assistance from the State of Wisconsin Environmental Improvement Fund for Lift Station #4. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

Grisen informed the Council that Mary Roiland at 109 S. 2nd Street is requesting a variance to build a garage in the same footprint as the former garage. The garage will be two-story, however, will not encroach any further on Pine Street than the previous garage.

Motion by Jepsen seconded by Brommer to grant an Easement to Mary Roiland, 109 S. 2nd, for a garage encroaching on Pine Street in the same footprint as the previous garage. All members voting yes.

Mayor Champeny read a letter he wrote addressed to Governor Evers regarding funding needed for the City Hall and the sewer costs.

Motion by Mueller seconded by Meier to approve the letter drafted by the Mayor to Governor Evers and authorize the mailing of the letter. All members voting yes.

Motion by Brommer seconded by Meier to approve the Utilities Committee report as presented. All members voting yes.

AMBULANCE

Davie Meier informed the Council that he had attended the Ambulance Board meeting. Meier stated that the Ambulance Board approved increasing the per capita charge from \$25 to \$30 for 2025.

Justin Sass, with the Western Buffalo County Ambulance Service, addressed the Council explaining the need to increase the per capita. Costs for the new ambulance and salary costs (\$3/hour on call time pay) were reasons for the increase.

Motion by Grisen seconded by Mueller to approve \$30/capita for ambulance service in 2025. All members voting yes by roll call vote.

LIBRARY LIAISON

Gary Jepsen, Library Liaison, informed the Council that he attended a meeting on July 29, 2024.

Jepsen stated that the library grants for the State of WI are \$107,000,000 and there were only 17 applications. Jepsen thanked librarian Laura Toone for all her work with the grant for a new library.

Upcoming meetings:

Council September 12, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. with public hearings prior to the meeting.

Services – September 4, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

Utilities – September 9, 2024 at 8:30 a.m.

Finance – September 9, 2024 at 10:30 a.m.

Utilities – Budget meeting at 8:30 a.m.

Earney requested that Justin Sass of the Ambulance Service train the city council on the AED at this time. The council felt this would not be the time to do so. Justin Sass stated that he would like someone else to do this training. This matter was deferred to a later date to be determined.

Motion by Grisen seconded by Meier to adjourn. All members voting yes.