

Mayor Greg Mapes called a regular meeting of the Alma City Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. The virtual meeting was held via Zoom.com and livestreamed through the City of Alma's YouTube channel. A quorum of the Commission was present via Zoom for the meeting.

Mayor Mapes led those present in a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

Roll Call

Present: Roger Allman, Roxann Harrington, Greg Mapes, Larry Mott, Nick Piccolo, Michelle Pitts, and Audra Stahl.

Absent: none.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Vice-Mayor Harrington, seconded by Commissioner Pitts, to approve minutes of the regular meeting of May 12, 2020 and the budget review session of May 7, 2020 as presented. Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.

Hearings

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo, seconded by Commissioner Pitts, to open a public hearing at 6:05 p.m. to consider an application for an Obsolete Property Rehabilitation Exemption Certificate from Gemini Capital Management V LLC for 313 North State Street. Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.

Assistant City Manager, Aeric Ripley, briefly explained the \$2.3 million dollar project to add a boutique hotel and apartments, and the process for obtaining an OPRA certificate.

Mayor Mapes opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Mott asked about parking, and Ripley explained parking will be in Lot 3, and the property owner will purchase parking passes from the city for use of the spaces. No questions from the public were received.

Motion by Commissioner Piccolo, seconded by Commissioner Allman, to close the public hearing for review of an OPRA Application for 313 North State Street at 6:09 p.m. Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.

Motion by Commissioner Allman, seconded by Commissioner Pitts, to open a public hearing at 6:10 p.m. to consider the establishment of a Commercial Rehabilitation District for 319 E. Downie. Motion carried with a roll call vote.

Yes: Allman, Harrington, Mapes, Mott, Piccolo, Pitts, and Stahl.

No: none.

Ripley briefly explained that this hearing is simply to establish the district. There have been multiple meetings between the developer and MEDC. This act is the best fit for the proposed development and the State Tax

Commission is willing to work with us on this. The property is located within the federal Opportunity Zone. There are still several steps before the proposed development can move forward.

Ryan Smith of Gemini Capital Management explained that this tax abatement is similar to an OPRA, but the abatement is for 10 years rather 12 years.

There were no Commission questions, so the Mayor opened the floor for public comment.

Murray Gross asked how this approval might affect other issues such as density or building specifics or if there would be requirements for the population for the apartments in terms of income.

Ripley said the Planned Unit Development plan would encompass all of that. In an Opportunity Zone, the idea is to take capital gains from other projects and reinvest them back into areas such as this, which have been deemed by the federal and state government as low to moderate income areas. This Commercial Rehabilitation District wouldn't extend to any other areas or adjacent properties.

Murray Gross asked if approval of the district would provide automatic approval for other areas of the planned unit development.

City Attorney, Tony Costanzo, answered that establishment of the Commercial Rehabilitation District doesn't affect the process required for approval of the Planned Unit Development. This just a preliminary step.

Smith explained the tax abatement doesn't put any stipulations on anything regarding the Planned Unit Development. It is two separate issues.

David Justin asked if this was simply an administrative step in identifying federal monies and such.

Mapes and Costanzo explained that this provides for a tax abatement and helps make the development more financially feasible for the developer. The development still has to meet requirements for approval.

Julio Benitez offered a follow up on the initial density question. He asked if there have been studies about how this will affect sanitary sewer and water utilities.

David Ringle, Public Services Director, answered the lines in that area would have been developed to handle such a development. The size there is a common size for a residential neighborhood.

Julio Benitez asked if the tax abatements are for local, state or federal taxes.

Ripley answered the district being established tonight would be related to local taxes. This would provide for a reduction in tax for up to 10 years.

David Justin asked how this would affect local school taxes and such.

Ripley noted this will be an increase in tax revenue, because in the past, the property was owned by a non-profit school district who didn't pay taxes. Mapes agreed.

Julio Benitez asked if the City would see more taxes long term with this development than if these were single family houses.