

MINUTES OF THE ALDEN CITY COUNCIL MEETING – July 13, 2023

A public hearing was held for the purpose of receiving public input on proposed amendments to the current zoning map. The Public Hearing was opened at 6:01 pm by Mayor Reyerson.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Council members present were Mayor Reyerson, Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Ms. Pedersen. None were absent. The city staff present were Fire Chief Thunstedt, Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, Clerk-Treasurer Knutson, and Maintenance worker Burris. Others present: County Commissioner Eckstrom, several members of the community for input/information regarding the zoning including Jon Jahnke, Mr. & Mrs. Jon Behle, Bernie Bias, Edda Kassel, and Jamie Christianson.

The rezoning is being considered to align the zoning map with the Minnesota Basic Code, not because of any requested changes from the property owners. There will not be changes to property taxes as a result of the zoning update. Jon Jahnke spoke regarding the zoning of the property on West Main Street previously known as the Creamery. That property's zoning is changing from Light Industrial to Industrial, and there is concern about that because it is the lone property zoned Industrial in the middle of all residential property. We will reach out to the property owner before the next meeting. Bernie Bias asked about his taxes on the portion of his ag land that is within city limits. Others present were there for information and did not choose to comment. No action will be taken regarding the map at this time.

The Public Hearing was closed at 6:23pm

The Alden City Council met in its regular session, July 13, 2023.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Reyerson at 6:23pm, and he read roll call. Council members present were Mayor Reyerson, Ms. VanEngelenburg, Mr. Reindal, Mr. Wichmann, and Ms. Pedersen. City staff present were Fire Chief Thunstedt, Public Works Superintendent Wuerflein, Clerk-Treasurer Knutson, and Maintenance worker Alex Burris. Others present: County Commissioner Eckstrom, Edda Kassel, and Jamie Christianson.

Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2023 meeting. Carried.

Motion by Reindal and seconded Pedersen by to approve the Treasurer's report as presented. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Reindal to approve the Hours report as presented. Carried.

Fire Chief Thunstedt reported that they had 1 fire call, 2 fire false alarms, and 7 medical calls in the month of June. The county meeting was in Conger, and they discussed the multiple agency wildland fire by Pickerel Lake. MN DNR forestry division was also there to add input. He has submitted the MN DNR 50/50 grant for a new reel and hose to update the grass rig. The grant is \$4000, so the city would pay \$2000 if awarded. Consortium medical training was held on Wednesday, June 21. Morin Lake Days went well from the Fire Department standpoint. In the future, we will make sure the committee Chairperson is available to make the decision if the fireworks need to be cancelled due to weather. Chief Thunstedt also informed the council that the Air Compressor that fills the SCBA bottles has been having issues. They have been able to make repairs as they have come up, but it will need to be replaced in the next few years at a cost of around \$35,000. We will consider adding it to the Budget for

2024. Monthly Fire Department bills were presented. Thank you to the fire department for the work they did with the recent house fire in town, and all the work they do for the city. Motion by Wichmann and seconded by VanEngelenburg to approve the Fire Report as presented. Carried.

Superintendent Wuerflein reported that they have begun treating Ponds 1 and 3. The sanitary sewer cleaning started on July 5th. They have found several issues, mostly small in nature, but good information that will be helpful while researching the proposed infrastructure project. Letters will be sent to the residents notifying them when sewer line issues are found on their property. We needed to move a camper and pick up in the alley behind one property so that we were able access the manhole for cleaning. We have been having issues with the payloader. Jerome will be calling to schedule repairs on that. Roughly 2 weeks more of sewer cleaning. Motion by VanEngelenburg to approve the Public Works Report and seconded by Wichmann. Carried.

Correction noted during the September 13, 2022 meeting, the Chairperson of the Morin Lake Days Committee was available the night of this year's fireworks display to make the decision on cancelling due to the weather. She was in direct contact with the Fireworks company, not the contractor who was in Alden that evening to light them off.
KK 9-22-2023

Ben from Bolton Menk presented an update on the infrastructure project. Ben, Jerome, Mayor Reyerson, and Kim met with the USDA RD Specialist on June 28th. We discussed setting up authorization for financing. We are hoping they will be able to use the 2010 Census Data while calculating the estimated amount of loan capacity. There are a couple of more exploratory items that we will be finishing up. Next steps will include a public notice, and hold a Public Hearing, possibly in September, informing the residents of our intent to apply for the funding. He also presented an opportunity for a grant for Lead Service Work. This is a federal grant to help communities update some of their Lead Service lines. Application will be filled out by July 20th.

A thank you was read from the Morin Lake Days Committee for the support on the Morin Lake Days Celebration.

Edda Kasel addressed the council regarding her house in town. The basement wall collapsed due to flash flooding in 2022. The house is being foreclosed on, and she would appreciate the council's help in expediting the process, if possible. The city will try to contact the lender to see if there is anything we can do to help in the process.

The resident at 205 S. Broadway has reached out regarding flooding in his basement and the storm water drain below his house. The city did investigate the issue previously and did not find any issue. The city will send a letter reporting those findings.

Discussion was had on the new Cannabis Law and possibly putting an ordinance in place for regulating it as much as we are allowed within the city. We will continue to gather information on the law.

Employee Job Descriptions and reviews were discussed. The most current Job Descriptions available were from 2004. Employees will review and add input for any changes before the next meeting. Employee reviews will all be done in January and raises will go into effect on January 1st.

Discussion was had on the process for adopting the entire updated MN Basic Code and adding the Chicken Ordinance and Point of Sale Building inspection to our list of ordinances. We will work with the attorney on the timing and process in getting that done. There was also discussion on possibly re-adopting the Minimum Housing Standards Ordinance that was previously in place. The council will review the Model Ordinance for Fees and come back with ideas at the next meeting.

Discussion was had on property cleanup issues and processes with our Call for Service Agreement with the Albert Lea Police Department. The Council agrees we will go ahead with the abatement on the 2 properties that have received notice and the time limit has expired. Discussion was had on the other properties that have been notified of violations. We will continue to follow the process we have in place.

Discussion was had on delinquent utility bills and turning off the water. The council has decided to follow our ordinance regarding shutoff stating the water bill must be paid in full along with the reconnect fee before the water is turned back on. We will check with the county also to see if there is a time limit on when utility bills can be assessed to property taxes.

A date of October 13-14 was set for a city-wide cleanup day. Mayor Reyerson will call Thompson Sanitation to make arrangements for them to bring in dumpsters.

Discussion was had on County Environmental Services recycling services and disposal of appliances/electronics. Information can be found on the County Website and in the Shopper. Animal welfare was also discussed. If anyone has issues that they are concerned about, they can reach out to our county commissioner.

Motion by Wichmann and seconded by Reindal to approve the bills totaling \$143,639.81, EFT payments totaling \$4,216.35, payroll of \$4,544.36 and disbursements on behalf of the LeVerne Carlson Foundation totaling \$9,000.00. Carried.

Motion by VanEngelenburg and seconded by Wichmann to adjourn at 8:32. Carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Knutson
Clerk-Treasurer