

**City of Alma
Planning Commission Minutes
August 3, 2026**

Planning Commission Chairperson Therrien called a regular meeting of the Alma Planning Commission to order at 6:00 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building. A quorum of the Planning Commission was present.

Present: Joshua Cromer, Justin Fonley, Jessica Gilkins, David Justin, Greg Mapes, Michelle Pitts, Tim Rath, Ellen Richter, and Heather Therrien.

Absent: none.

Chairperson Therrien led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Justin, seconded by Mapes, to approve the minutes of July 6, 2026, as presented. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

Public Hearing/Special Use Permit Request

Chairperson Therrien explained that a request had been received from EightCap, Inc. for consideration of a Special Use Permit for a childcare center at 608 Wright Avenue, described as parcel number 29-51-344-752-05. She added the zoning for this parcel is OS (Office Services) which permits childcare centers with the issuance of a special use permit and licensing through the State of Michigan.

Motion by Pitts, seconded by Justin, to open a public hearing at 6:02 p.m. for consideration of a special use permit application from EightCap, Inc. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.

No: none.

City Manager Aeris Ripley provided the following information:

Applicant: EIGHTCAP, INC. 5827 Orleans Road, Orleans, MI 48801

Located at 608 Wright Avenue within the Gratiot Integrated Health Network Annex Building on the south end of the parcel.

The parcel is zoned OS, Office Services; Child Care Centers are permitted in the OS Zoning District as a special use, and licensing through the State of Michigan.

The Annex building is a total of 4,430 sq.ft. Parking: When the building was constructed in 2013, an additional 8 regular and 1 accessible space was created, as well as a canopy for pickups and drop-offs. There is additional parking to the north within the Gratiot Integrated Health Network parking lot.

(1) Operators must be licensed by the State of Michigan.

- The applicant is applying for licensure through the State of Michigan.

(2) A compliance/occupancy permit must be obtained from the building department before operation commences.

- A walkthrough with the City Fire Inspector will be completed to receive an Occupancy Placard.

(3) Site plan approval by the Planning Commission must be obtained.

- Taking place on August 3, 2026.

(4) Outdoor play areas shall be fenced, and such play areas shall be made and kept safe by the caregivers.

- The Wright Park Playscape is within 170'. The toddler play area is completely fenced. The playscape is also used by St. Mary's School.

(5) Maintenance of the property consistent with the visible characteristics of the neighborhood.

- The structure has been on site since 2013 and has been well maintained.

(6) A childcare center shall comply with all fire and traffic safety standards set by the State of Michigan and the City of Alma as determined by the Alma Chief of Police and Fire Chief.

- Before the facility can open the State Fire Marshall and the City's Fire Inspector will complete their walkthrough and approvals.

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- (7) Care-givers shall maintain control of noise to protect the surrounding neighborhood.
- The facility is adjacent to an existing city playground and elementary school. Children at play is a common occurrence.
- (8) All day care centers shall be currently registered with the 911 Dispatch Center on forms provided by Dispatch Center.
- Will be completed before opening.
- (9) License holder and all employees shall be subject to a background check and approval by the Alma Chief of Police.
- Will be satisfactory completed by the Chief of Police before opening.
- (10) Adequate ingress, egress, and circulation shall be provided. Vehicles must be able to easily circulate within and through the site to a designated pick-up and Drop-off area without impeding circulation on the site or traffic on nearby roads.
- The proposed structure has an existing canopy for pickup and drop-offs. The facility is located to the interior of the parcel.
- (11) Child Care Center located within industrial zoning districts (LI, GI) shall maintain the following setbacks:
- This parcel is not within a LI or GI Zoning District, this condition does not apply.

Ripley indicated staff recommends approval.

Cromer asked if this is a new use for the facility and Ripley responded. No other questions or comments were offered.

Motion by Cromer, seconded by Justin, to close the public hearing for consideration of a special use permit application from EightCap, Inc. at 6:07 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.

Motion by Mapes, seconded by Cromer, to approve a Special Use Permit application from EightCap, Inc. for a child care center at 608 Wright Avenue, also known as 29-51-344-752-05. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.

Parcel Division/Split Request

Chairperson Therrien provided the following information: an application for Parcel Division has been received from Consumers Energy and the City of Alma for the property identified as parcel number 29-51-009-001-00, which is currently a 19.65 acre vacant parcel, zoned as LI, Limited Industrial. The Planning Commission is responsible for approving all splits/divisions, unless it is just a property line adjustment.

City Manager Ripley added the following information:

Consumers Energy has submitted a Parcel Division application for the property identified as Parcel Number 29-51-009-001-00, which is a 19.65-acre piece of property, currently vacant land, and is zoned LI, Limited Industrial. Consumers Energy and the property owner, the City of Alma, propose to split off 10.84 acres for use and ownership by Consumers Energy for a new substation to replace the soon-to-be-retired substation on Mill Street. The remaining 8.81 acres will remain with the City of Alma for the lime removal process of the adjacent lime lagoon.

Copies of the Parcel Division Application, Legal Descriptions, and Survey for the proposed new parcels requested in this split/division were provided.

The Planning Commission is responsible for approving all divisions when the new parcel or parcels are not just a property line adjustment. Based on the information provided, staff would recommend approval of the proposed land division and newly created parcels with the following comments:

1. Option Agreement for the purchase of 10.84 acres was approved and signed on June 9, 2026.
2. The proposed split/division is located in the LI, Limited Industrial District. The proposed uses are permitted in this zoning district.
3. The proposal includes a shared driveway from VanBuren Road to the south, which provides access to both newly created parcels.

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4. The City Assessor has requested a copy of the final certified survey and certified legal descriptions.
5. All newly created Property Deeds shall be recorded at the Register of Deeds after parcel division approval.

Ripley noted representatives from Consumers Energy were present to answer any questions.

Motion by Fonley, seconded by Rath, to approve the application, as presented, for a Parcel Division from Consumers Energy and the City of Alma for property identified as 29-51-009-001-00, currently 19.65 acres, which proposes to split off 10.84 acres for use and ownership by Consumers Energy for a new sub-station. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.

Request to Rescind PUD

Chairperson Therrien provided the following information: Gemini Capital Management LLC has requested to rescind and repeal the ordinance approving the Planned Unit Development, PUD, at 319 E. Downie Street, and all related PUD Development agreements between Gemini Capital Management and the City of Alma and restore the property to the original underlying zoning layer of R1, Single Family Residential.

City Manager Ripley added Gemini has previously requested extension twice, but they are now hoping to take advantage of housing TIFs and build single family homes.

Motion by Mapes, seconded by Pitts, to recommend approval to the City Commission of Gemini Capital Management LLC's request to rescind and repeal the ordinance which approved the Planned Unit Development at 319 E. Downie Street and all related PUD Development agreements between Gemini and the City of Alma and restore the property to Zone R1, Single Family Residential. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.

Other Business

Chairperson Therrien noted the special meeting scheduled for August 18, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Invitation to Public

No public comments were offered.

Adjourn

Motion by Justin, seconded by Fonley, to adjourn the meeting at 6:17 p.m. Motion carried.

Yes: Cromer, Fonley, Gilkins, Justin, Mapes, Pitts, Rath, Richter, and Therrien.
No: none.



Sara Anderson, Alma City Clerk

Date of Approval: August 18, 2026