

ST. ALBANS CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Monday, June 13, 2011 City Hall, Council Chambers

A regular meeting of the St. Albans City Council was held on Monday, June 13, 2011, in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Council Present: Mayor Martin Manahan, Aldermen: Tim Hawkins, Joseph Luneau, , Richard Peters, Chad Spooner, Jeff Young.

Council Absent: Alderman Aaron O'Grady

Staff Present: Dominic Cloud, City Manager; Peg Strait, Director of Finance and Administration; Sarah Duffy, City Accountant; Susan Krupp, City Clerk/Treasurer; Jane Kiser, Community Development Manager; Allen Robtoy, Public Works Director; Jim Tischler, Director of Planning & Community Development.

Visitors: see attached sign-in sheet.

1. Work Session with the Planning Commission. Mayor Manahan explained that he opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m. with a work session between the Council and Planning Commission in the conference room on the second floor of City Hall.
2. Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Manahan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Mayor amended the agenda to include a public hearing regarding the City of St. Albans receiving a VCDP grant in the amount of \$18,500 from the State of Vermont. He then read the public hearing notice aloud. Ms. Kiser reiterated that the City applied for and received a planning grant in the amount of \$18,500 which was then conveyed to the Samaritan House. Ms. Ryan, Executive Director of Samaritan House, reviewed what the money was spent on: schematic designs and engineering studies, preliminary cost estimates, environmental and historic reviews, plans for integration of efficiency measures and preparation of applications for funding. She explained that the City also applied for an Implementation Grant on behalf of Samaritan House which it received approval. She stated that Samaritan House is very thankful for these grants and is now seeking other funding sources available and is in the process of launching its capital campaign.

Mayor Manahan asked if there was any input from the Council or public. Seeing that there was none, he closed the public hearing.

3. Reports

- a. Public Safety Committee—Alderman Spooner stated that the three main items the Committee reviewed at this time was: approving the Public Works Director's summer paving project; re-allocating money that was initially set aside for sidewalks in residential neighborhoods to addressing the sidewalks in the downtown area to be in sync with the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Amy Bruer came in and addressed the issue of smoking in the parks which might include a possible ban. Future agenda items for the committee include: greenspace, parking, jaywalking, and traffic speeding issues.
- b. Finance Committee—Alderman Hawkins gave an update on what the Committee had been working on which included a water/wastewater budget. Future agenda items for the committee are: insurance policies for the City, zoning fees, liquor control and a community trash system citywide.
- c. Mayor—nothing to report.

4. City Manager and Finance Report. Mayor Manahan explained that there was a detail report in their packets and asked the Council if they had any specific questions regarding the report. There were none.

- a. Presentation of Student Committee on Pedestrian Lights. Peter DesLauriers and students. This item was tabled for a future meeting.

Mayor Manahan amended the agenda to address item 7.

7. Introduction and Overview of Recreation Department.

- a. Kelly Viens, Recreation Director gave an overview of the Recreation Department. She stated that it is the mission of the department to provide quality recreation to everyone in the community. She reviewed the statistics of her report that was included in the packet. She also updated the Council on several summer projects planned for the summer including the resurfacing project at Houghton Park and the floor refinishing for the gym floor at City Hall. She also gave a preview of the summer programs that are being offered throughout the summer. She then addressed the funding of the pool and stated that at a previous Council meeting when this particular item was addressed, she explained that she didn't fully understand the question that was posed by Alderman Hawkins. She further explained that other Recreation programs go hand and hand with the pool. She then reviewed some of the fundraising events that help raise money for the pool. She concluded her presentation and explained the value the pool is to the community. She also explained some of the repairs that have been done thus far and reported that \$24,000 in revenues has been received has been brought in since June 1.
- b. Mike Smith, Recreation Commission Chair stated that we were fortunate to have Kelly as a recreation director. He said that she is fiscally responsible. He also stated that the easy decision would be to close the pool—the difficult decision is to keep it open and have it be successful. He highlighted the accomplishments of the department since Kelly has been director. He said potential resources for revenue could be soliciting grants. Alderman Hawkins stated where he stood regarding closing the pool. He said he never advocated closing the pool, but would like to explore opportunities of making it more

efficient. He listed several examples like Babe Ruth, SASA. He stated that part of his responsibilities as a public official is to look for ways to improve and ways to save money. For the record, he stated that he's heard the people of St. Albans and the surrounding communities and has taken a step back regarding his initial position on the pool. He said that everything is on the table at this point in time and he would welcome feedback. He explained that it shouldn't be taken as a threat but that in his position, he needs to look at the big picture and where it is as a priority compared to other needs of the city such as public safety and infrastructure. Mike Smith stated that the pool also complements other programs which are large money makers for the Recreation Department such as the day camps and swim team. Alderman Luneau mentioned that after reviewing the current user fees, we were much lower than other comparables. Ms. Viens said that after looking at other towns, we are on the mid to high end. Alderman Hawkins inquired about any foreseeable expenses. She stated that the filter, and determining where we are losing water, resurfacing the pool. She stated that there has not been any maintenance plan in place since the pool was built. The Mayor said that it is the fault of the Council for not having a CIP. Dee Christie, Water Safety Instructor Administrator, stated that in her position at the pool, she helps to prepare students as role models—it's a community thing. She reiterated that the Council needs to consider that aspect of it as well. Loli Berard, School and Community Coordinator for the Franklin County Supervisory District, commented that the pool is an integral part of the school program for kids. Sara Fabrizio, P.E. teacher at BFA, stated that the pool is a component of the high school P.E. curriculum. She said that it would be a tragedy if there wasn't a pool in the community. She also said that she personally uses it with her 18 month child. Lori Pornelos-King stated that she moved from Hawaii to St. Albans because of the community and what it had to offer for her and her family. She used to be president of the Swim Team and when the City hosts the championship swim meets, thousands flock to the area which in turn spend money throughout the community. She stated that there is an estimated 400-500 people at a swim meet. Dorey Myers, Health Nurse for the State of Vermont shared some statistics about community related health issues particularly the high number of children who are overweight/obese in this area. She stated that it's critical for the community to provide opportunities for physical activity to help with the obesity epidemic. Sandy Chagnon, City resident, was on the Recreation Commission when the pool was built. She reiterated the fact that the intentions were never to have the pool be self-funded. She stated that the pool was built to attract business, and families to the area. Kevin Smith, City resident and business owner stated that the pool should not be board run, but municipality run. He stated that there is no other municipal pool in the state of Vermont run like that. Alderman Hawkins stated that the YMCA pool in Burlington is an example of that type. Mr. Smith mentioned the CIP fund for large expense maintenance items. Alderman Luneau wanted to reiterate that the pool is not going to be closed in this budget year. Tim Smith, City resident, said that a majority of the recreation facilities within the City and Town have been donated or purchased through grants. He believed that the charge would be to maintain these facilities for future generations. The Mayor said that he would enjoy seeing this kind of support during budget season and encouraged them to do so.

8. Proposal to consolidate Master Plan Implementation Committee and St. Albans for the Future into one unified board appointed by the City Council (D&V).

- a. Dominic Cloud (City Manager), Liz Gamache (MPIC Chair), and Mike Curtis (SAFF Chair). **A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Peters to accept the proposal to consolidate the Master Plan Implementation Committee and the St. Albans for the Future group into one unified board appointed by the City Council.** Alderman Luneau asked if this was in compliance with the Downtown Revitalization Plan. Mr. Cloud responded by saying that all this does is streamline what the two groups are doing into one. Ms. Gamache gave her input from a volunteer perspective. **Vote was unanimous.**

9. Appointment of Alternate to the Development Review Board-Heather Fontaine. Currently working on getting her architect degree. Mayor Manahan asked Ms. Fontaine whether she is planning on attending every meeting even as an alternate. She replied in the affirmative. **A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Luneau to appoint Heather Fontaine as an alternate to the Development Review Board for a three year term, retroactive to March 1, 2011. Vote was unanimous.**

10. First Reading and Public Hearing on proposed amendments to land development regulations re: soup kitchens, determination of similar uses, conversion of single family residences to multi-family residences, change of designation of certain parcels from high to low density, and sign construction and maintenance. Mayor Manahan opened the public hearing. Alderman Luneau stated that he appreciated the changes that the Planning Commission had made on Section 415 entitled Conversion of a Single Family Structure to a Multi-Dwelling Unit Structure due to the fact that a temporary moratorium was placed on this. Secondly, though, he asked whether Section 415b would require properties outside the Design Review District to get approval. Mr. Tischler replied in the affirmative. The Mayor asked for an explanation behind that change. Mr. Tischler addressed the Mayor and referred to other properties within the City specifically, 11 Rublee Street. Alderman Hawkins asked why there isn't another way to address this, possibly with a condition on the conversion. Alderman Hawkins feels that this has the potential of another subjective process depending on whose sitting on the Board at the time. He feels that the conditional use would be the best way to address this issue. Mr. Tischler responded that the DRB does not want to engage in design review outside the Design Review Districts which leaves open the situation of when someone proposes a conversion which looks like "11 Rublee". Discussion ensued about the best possible way to address this issue. Mayor Manahan suggested since this was the first reading, that for the second reading this section either be stricken or modified to creating a condition as opposed to having another board in the approval process. The Mayor stated that he agrees with Alderman Hawkins in that this is another layer of subjectivity that you're creating for people to have to go through. Alderman Hawkins stated that the DRB is charged with this responsibility of enforcing the regulations. **A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Spooner to clarify the language in Section 415b before the second reading. Vote was unanimous.** For the record, Alderman Luneau stated that he concurred with the Mayor and Alderman Hawkins on Section 415b. Mr. Cloud asked if it was a fair summary that the Council finds the rest of the bylaw acceptable. The Mayor said, speaking for himself that he agreed with Mr. Cloud's statement. Mr. Cloud suggested that there be a motion to allow the rest of the document to move forward excluding Section 415b until the details have been worked out. **A motion was made by Alderman Luneau;**

seconded by Alderman Peters to accept the entirety of the proposal with the exception of the one line in Section 415b. Vote was unanimous.

11. Report of Finance Committee on FY 12 Water and Wastewater Budgets.

a. Finance Committee Chair, Tim Hawkins stated that the information that the Council has before them is the culmination of the last three meetings of the Committee. He stated that the main focus is starting up a capital reserve fund for the Water and Wastewater Department. The Committee is proposing to set aside \$100,000 a year in each of the water and wastewater budgets. This money would be raised by increasing the quarterly fixed rate and explained the rationale behind it. He did say that there was much discussion within the Committee regarding this. Alderman Luneau went into further detail about the need to raise the funds to address the maintenance and repairs needed. Discussion ensued about the philosophy behind fixed fees versus user fees.

12. Consider adoption of FY 12 Water and Wastewater Budget and any necessary adjustment in rates and fees (D&V). **There was a motion by Alderman Luneau; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to table this item until a Special City Council meeting scheduled for Monday, June 20. Vote was unanimous.**

13. Notice of Award for Demolition and Environmental Abatement at the Former Fonda/ Solo (D&V) – Jim Tischler. Mr. Tischler updated the Council on the status of this project. He informed them that the Northwest Regional Planning Commission voted at their last meeting to grant up to \$200,000 to the City from their RLF funds. Mr. Cloud stated that it's an 80/20 grant meaning that the City is responsible for 20% of the funds. Alderman Luneau asked whether any tax payer dollars would be paying for this phase of the project. Mr. Cloud explained that there are a lot of different funding sources. Alderman Luneau stated that he was only concerned with one. Mr. Cloud said that the City has pledged up to \$40,000 of City dollars for the match. However, the City's portion could be made up of in kind contributions from employees and other sources. He also stated that the NRPC did not want to be on the hook for the \$40,000. Mr. Cloud then referred to an email that he received today from the NRPC along with a memo outlining the four conditions of the grant. Alderman Luneau asked whether the NRPC signs off on the grant money or does the EPA. Mr. Cloud did not know the answer. Mr. Cloud explained that the Site needs to be cleaned up and developed and that we do not have any other alternatives at this time. He said the worst case scenario is that it will cost the city \$40,000. Alderman Luneau requested that this item be tabled until Monday's special meeting so that he could have more time to review the details of the grant requirements. **There was a motion by Alderman Peters; seconded by Alderman Spooner to table the item until the Special Council Meeting scheduled for Monday, June 20.** Alderman Luneau stated that he's concerned with not only with the \$40,000 now but with the idea if someone comes back three years from now demanding that the City pay back the \$160,000. Clarification of the redevelopment plan. Discussion ensued regarding the criteria of the grant and the ramifications if the City fell short. **Vote was unanimous.**

14. Update on Fairfax Dam and Adoption of Action Plan (D&V).

Allen handed out a memo to the Council giving an update of the status of the situation. He then gave a brief overview and the timeframe of when the process began. He stated that the dam was scheduled to be replaced approximately 15 years ago but nothing has been done and

the State of Vermont has turned up the heat. Emergency action plan was recommended by the state. Allen stated our engineers recommended closing the dam. He stated just another thing that has come up due to deferred maintenance. **A motion was made by Alderman Luneau; seconded by Alderman Spooner to adopt the Emergency Action Plan for the Saint Albans South Reservoir. Vote was unanimous.**

6. Liquor Control Board. **A motion was made by Alderman Peters; Alderman Spooner seconded to recess out of City Council and commence as Liquor Control Board. Vote was unanimous. A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Peters to recess out of Liquor Control Board and reconvene as City Council. Vote was unanimous.**

15. Consider adoption of Financial Policies (D&V). Ms. Strait gave an explanation of why this document is needed. Alderman Hawkins requested more time to peruse the document and to meet with her and Dominic to discuss it. **A motion was made by Alderman Hawkins; seconded by Alderman Luneau to table this item until the next Council meeting in July. Vote was unanimous.**

16. Other Business. Alderman Peters thanked the Mayor for informing the public on Channel 16 what the costs associated with the lawsuit filed by the Sheriff regarding the City-Town Police Contract have been thus far. Alderman Spooner said that he received a phone call regarding the Animal Control Officer vacancy and felt that the Police are too busy to handle this added responsibility. Alderman Peters said that it would be an appropriate agenda item for the Safety Committee. Mr. Cloud stated that, for the record, this position has been intentionally left open to help offset the costs of the Sheriff's lawsuit. Mayor Manahan said that he received a call about a parking issue on Stebbins St. He said that we could address this issue over the next couple of weeks.

17. Warrants (D&V):
 - a. Payroll—5/5, 5/12, 5/19, 5/26. **A motion was made by Alderman Luneau; seconded by Alderman Spooner to accept the Payroll Warrants of 5/5, 5/12, 5/19, and 5/26. Vote was unanimous.**
 - b. Accounts Payable—5/18, 6/8. **A motion was made by Alderman Peters; seconded by Alderman Spooner to accept the Accounts Payable Warrants of 5/18, and 6/8. Alderman Spooner excused himself from one check on the 6/8 warrant made out to his father-in-law for a tax reimbursement. Vote was unanimous except for the one exclusion.**

18. Minutes (D&V):
 - a. 3/14, 4/11. **A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Luneau to approve the minutes of 3/14 and 4/11. Vote was unanimous.**

A motion was made by Alderman Luneau; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to adjourn the meeting. Vote was unanimous.

Submitted by,
Sarah Longley, Admin. Coordinator