

**St. Albans City Council
Minutes of Meeting
Monday, January 13, 2014
City Hall, Council Chambers**

A regular meeting of the St. Albans City Council was held on Monday, January 13, 2014, in council chambers at City Hall at 6:30 pm.

Council Present: Mayor Elizabeth Gamache; Aldermen: Chad Spooner, Ryan Doyle, Tim Hawkins, Aaron O'Grady, Jim Pelkey and Jeff Young.

Council Absent: None absent.

Staff Present: Dominic Cloud, City Manager; Sue Krupp, City Clerk and Treasurer; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Zoning; Martin Manahan, Director of Business Development; Gary Taylor, Police & Fire Chief; Kelly Viens, Director of Recreation and Peg Strait, Director of Finance and Administration.

Visitors: See attached sign-in sheet.

1. Budget Work Session.

a. Fire.

Mr. Cloud explained that revenue is up by 1.3% and expenses are down by 9%. There is a 25% reduction under the salary line item as well as increases in health benefits from \$34,000 to \$46,000 assuming that the health officer hired is on a family plan. Repair maintenance is rising slightly due to the aging of equipment. There is a onetime expense for the purchase of a vehicle in the CIP and otherwise, remains unchanged. Chief Taylor stated that he is working on fundamental/policy changes. Mr. Spooner asked how the new pickup truck will fit into the fleet. Chief Taylor responded that it is needed because neither a fire truck nor an ambulance will be able to fit into the parking garage. Mr. Doyle asked if a pickup truck would be purchased for any use other than the parking garage. Mr. Taylor responded that it can be used to transport air packs, personnel and can be used as a utility vehicle. Mr. Doyle asked if there is a reason vehicle fuel is predicted to be lower than previous years. Chief Taylor stated that because the Fire Department does not have a fulltime staff, there will be less fuel consumption. Mr. Young asked Chief Taylor which position will be added to personnel. Chief Taylor responded that the opening is for a Fire Inspector/Health Officer. Mr. Hawkins asked Chief Taylor who is currently responsible for fire safety inspections. Chief Taylor responded that Capt. Matt Mulheron can inspect public buildings. Mr. Cloud added that the hope is to have the new Fire Inspector/Health Officer take on the role of inspecting commercial buildings as well.

b. Planning and Development.

Mr. Cloud stated that the biggest revenue source for Planning & Development is zoning revenues which are set at \$30,000 but also very hard to predict. Mr. Hawkins commented that he would prefer to budget on the low end than high. Mr. Cloud stated that on the expense side, the salary line item has been reduced by 15%. Storm water planning has been set at \$15,000 to hire the consultants needed to ensure compliance with MS-4 permitting. Mr. Hawkins asked why that line item would not be covered by water/sewer. Mr. Sawyer responded that MS-4 is more of a planning project at this point. Mr. Young stated that he believes it would be most appropriate to come up with a funding mechanism than to allot to the General Fund. Mr. Doyle asked if the operation of utility changes the amount of money contributed. Mr. Cloud responded that it changes how it is paid for and also who pays for it. Mr. Cloud stated that the other expenses are Other Professional

Services (OPS) which are up to \$20,000. Mr. Sawyer noted that it is almost budget neutral due to a reshuffling of other expenses. Mr. Cloud noted that holiday decorations, summer concert series and general events expenses are broken down to clearly see where money is being spent and to calculate the return for each type of event. Mayor Gamache asked if revenue is anticipated from any events. Mr. Cloud responded that there is the potential to raise money from such events. Mr. Cloud added that the budget for Planning and Development as a whole is down 2.5%. Mr. Spooner asked Mr. Sawyer what the status is with the revision process of zoning by-laws. Mr. Sawyer responded that the types of changes being worked on are not going to create an increase in permits, and grant funds are paying for a Regional Planning staff member to work with the City on the revision process. Mr. Sawyer stated that they are focusing on changes to make the permit process easier and not harder. Mr. Hawkins commented that the Maple Festival should be charged more than \$1500. Mr. Young stated that instead of calling that line item, "Maple Fest Revenue," perhaps it should be called "Event Revenue."

c. Administration (Finance, Legal, Assessing, County/Regional/Non-Profit).

Finance

Mr. Cloud stated that total expenses are down by nearly 3%. Property and Casualty insurance is also down. Working capital contingency is up slightly from last year. Mr. Young asked Mr. Cloud how the railroad tax works. Mr. Cloud responded that a statute defines that property must be used toward the rail business to be tax exempt. Mr. Hawkins asked Mr. Cloud to comment on salary increases. Mr. Cloud responded that salaries will be discussed on Monday after the budget discussion is complete.

Legal/Assessing

Mr. Cloud stated that the legal/assessing budget is essentially level-funded at \$70,000. To date, the City has spent \$16,000.

County/Regional Functions

Mr. Cloud stated that staff has budgeted for basic appropriations for the Historical Museum and added in a onetime appropriation of \$5000 for the St. Albans Raid. AmCare increased from just under \$11 per capita to \$18 per capita. Mr. Young asked what alternative the City has. Mr. Cloud responded that the City would have to create its own ambulance service and is a difficult task considering AmCare is the only provider. He added that the City can ask a representative to come in and explain their increase from \$80,000 to \$125,000.

2. Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Gamache called the meeting to order and led the pledge of allegiance at 6:35 pm.

3. Public Comment.

Nancy Hudak introduced herself. She believes that the plan proposed for the parking configuration on Maiden Lane is a band aid solution to what is going to be a growing challenge; creating safety issues for pedestrians and traffic, eroding the quality of life in the neighborhood and would destroy the historic character of Maiden Lane. Ms. Hudak stated that all parking on Maiden Lane should be removed and the parking lot behind 13 Maiden Lane should be used instead. Ms. Hudak noted that during a discussion of the Owl Club at a previous meeting, a councilor made the comment that he or she did not want to second guess the City's boards and all of council seemed to be in agreement on this point. She continued to explain that during the last council meeting, a member of the Design Advisory Board (DAB) reminded council that the board voted unanimously against the proposed changes to parking on Maiden Lane.

Mr. Dermody commented on the Planning Commission interview scheduled during this meeting. He stated that the Planning Commission needs diversity on the board. In terms of open government, he asked if there was a universal policy that could be enforced or made available to members of all boards so the public can feel that they are being well served by the boards. In regard to the proposed parking configuration on Maiden Lane, Mr. Dermody expressed that he is hopeful that the council could encourage the library and the Connor's to work together toward a common goal that the community can benefit from.

Loli Berard introduced herself and noted that she has great concerns about the pace at which the Maiden Lane project is moving.

4. Presentation of plaque to David McWilliams (City Manager & Mayor).

Mr. Cloud noted the difficult job of Union Steward which is a position that David McWilliams held since his employment began with the City. In addition, Mr. McWilliams served the City as Wastewater Plant Operator for nearly 38 years and was very dedicated to the City of St. Albans. Mayor Gamache presented Mr. McWilliams with a plaque in honor of his service to the City and thanked him for his hard work.

5. Recreation Interviews (one vacancy).

Mayor Gamache noted that there is one vacancy on the Recreation Commission and one applicant, Justin Wright. She added that a decision will be made later in the meeting. The following questions were posed to the applicant.

1. What has motivated you to apply and serve on the Recreation Commission?
2. What experiences in your background have influenced your desire to serve on this board?
3. What contributions do you think you will make to the board?
4. What are the qualities of a successful Recreation program?
5. What is your vision for the department?

a. Brianne Heyer.

Ms. Heyer was not present and withdrew her interest.

b. Justin Wright.

1. He grew up in St. Albans and recently moved back. He was a soccer coach and teacher at BFA and now works from home for a company in Washington D.C. He takes great pride in the City and wants to give back to the community. He noted the Recreation Department's positive influence on himself as he grew up.
2. He participated in Rec programs as a child, worked as a summer camp counselor as a young adult and added that his family highly valued the program in the community. He has a desire to give something back.
3. He has a solid grasp on motivating factors and understands it's a changing dynamic. He believes community outreach is very important. His background is in technology which is an intricate part of the future and believes his knowledge of technology could become a valuable asset. Professionally, he has held a large variety of management positions and values fiscal responsibility and transparency.
4. Participation, fiscal accountability, community outreach, attendance of events and being proud of them and community discussions.
5. To bring success with the use of technology. He is impressed with the state of the department now and would want to continue providing quality programs while increasing attendance.

6. Planning Commission Interviews (one vacancy).

Mayor Gamache noted that there is one vacancy on the Planning Commission and three candidates. Mr. Doyle identified himself as a current member of the Planning Commission. Mayor Gamache added that the open seat would expire on 12/31/16. The following questions were posed to the applicants.

1. What has motivated you to apply and serve on the Planning Commission?
 2. What experiences in your background have influenced your desire to serve on this board?
 3. What contributions do you think you will make to the board?
 4. What are the qualities of a successful Planning Commission?
 5. What is your vision for the Planning Commission?
- a. David Barber.
1. He has a desire to give back to the community and has interest and a background in historic preservation.
 2. He served on the Waterfront Board in Burlington for several years, previously worked for the Burlington Dept. of Parks and Recreation for 9 years and took a Historic Preservation course at UVM.
 3. He has been working on form-based code over the last year on the board and would like to see that through to its completion. There are also some quality of life issues such as greenbelt and street trees that he is concerned with and is hopeful that he can help create a greenbelt ordinance.
 4. Attendance is important and he has not missed a meeting. He believes that a successful Planning Commission must be committed.
 5. He would like to see more done with bike paths, green belt and street tree issues. He would also like to see that future developments are thought out and fully-utilized with mixed-use. He would like to see the momentum continue.
- b. Michael Gawne.
1. He believes more attention could be paid toward the preservation of certain neighborhoods in the City and believes planning and zoning are places where the community can make a positive contribution toward the City as a whole.
 2. He did an internship with a Planning Commission in a town in Michigan; he majored in Geography at Middlebury College and did his senior thesis on open space planning in Montreal. He attended law school in Michigan and since being in St. Albans, has been a municipal attorney for many towns in Franklin County. He sat on the Zoning Board of Adjustment in the City several years ago. He has also represented a number of municipalities and individuals in connection with zoning cases and has helped write some of the by-laws for local communities.
 3. By virtue of being a lawyer, he is very experienced in the legal process as well as working with municipalities.
 4. Must have a vision of the future and have good ideas about what's worth preserving in order to honor the past and the future at the same time.
 5. His vision is to incorporate ideas that come before the commission into a solid plan and to be a good listener.
7. Jack Tremblay.
1. He is committed to public service in the City. He has been involved with SAFF, Creative Communities, the Save the Ladies foundation and helped raise funds for the City pool.
 2. He is an Art Director at an ad agency and has worked with architects and sign makers to ensure that his clients have met compliance with their signage. He feels that with his background, he has a good understanding of what does and doesn't meet compliance.

3. He is a creative problem solver and a good listener, and believes this board would allow him to further that.
4. Any board should be considered a partner, not a barrier. Ability to work well with others and to ensure that by-laws are met and upheld.
5. His family intends to stay in this community long-term and it is important to him that his children are raised in a community that they are proud of. He'd like them to be aware of what is happening in the community.

Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Gawne and Mr. Tremblay if they are familiar with form-based code. Mr. Gawne responded that he is only vaguely familiar and hasn't made up his mind yet whether he is for or against it. Mr. Tremblay responded that he is not very familiar with form-based code but feels that he could be brought up to speed quickly. Mr. Barber commented that he is for form-based code. Mr. Doyle noted recent discussions about the type of housing and the type of ownership for housing in the City and their effects. He asked the candidates if they have any thoughts about housing. Mr. Gawne responded that as good of a job as Champlain Housing Trust has done rehabilitating structures, it has taken some of the better tenants out of other residential neighborhoods. He also believes that the out of town landlords are an issue as they are not keeping up with their properties. Mr. Tremblay stated that he has always been an advocate for family-oriented communities. Mr. Barber believes affordable public housing is a good thing and believes private landlords charge too much for rent. He noted several housing properties in the City that are well maintained with longstanding tenants. Mr. Doyle noted that the Planning Commission also serves as the Design Advisory Board.

8. Recess for Liquor Control (see separate agenda).

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to adjourn from regular meeting and convene as liquor control board at 7:28 pm. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

9. City Manager Report.

a. Analysis of parking/sidewalk proposal for Owl Club Redevelopment.

Mr. Cloud reiterated that at the last meeting, council asked staff to have the proposed parking plan on Maiden Lane reviewed by an engineer which took place. He further explained that in fully understanding this project, it is worth reviewing the zoning districts within the City's by-laws. The project is located in the Central Business District (B1). The by-laws provide that it is the intent of this district to protect and enhance the function of the downtown area as the primary commercial, financial, retail and governmental center of the region. It is designed to accommodate a wide variety of commercial activities particularly those which benefit from pedestrian activity and access. Mr. Cloud noted that the chief appellants, Mark and Sue Prent, own property located in the High Density Residential District. The purpose of that district is to maintain within the City a moderately dense residential development and growth while maintaining a safe and healthy atmosphere for the district's residents.

Mr. Cloud noted that the other issues that have arisen are parking issues and the argument that the Connor's parking lot in the rear is more than enough space. Mr. Cloud explained that the proposed building is 11,516 square feet with 34 parking spaces in the rear and the national standard for office buildings is 4 spaces per 1,000 square feet. He stated that all of the parking on-street is shared parking and most of the City's employers have some portions of their parking offsite.

Mr. Cloud explained that the Ruggiano site plan was run by VHB, a well respected comprehensive engineering firm who is the lead firm on the Streetscape and Federal Street project. They noted that the crosswalk that goes across Maiden Lane on Congress Street would be too close to the proposed parking spaces and recommend the reduction of at least one parking space. VHB also recommended

switching the one-way traffic flow from the current southbound direction to a northbound direction which would allow the on-street parking to remain and would allow the turn from Maiden Lane into the parking spaces to be a more natural turn for drivers. VHB looked at the aisle between the parallel parking spaces on the west and the proposed diagonal spaces on the east and noted that the width is more than adequate. VHB also recommended that due to bumper overhang of approximately 2 feet, sidewalks are suggested to be 7 feet to achieve an unobstructed 5 feet for pedestrians.

Mr. Cloud recapped that there are currently 5 public parking spaces and 5 City owned spaces on 13 Maiden Lane. Under the initial proposal, the Connor's would build 10 spaces. The City would keep 5 of the 10, the Connor's would improve the aesthetics of the area and sidewalk and eventually the remaining 5 spaces would come back to the City. There was a concern then that the City preserve the continuity of the street and the library who is an abutter to the Connor property also expressed an interest. The next proposal was to take the 6 library-owned parking spaces in front of the library and relocate them onto the street. The Connor's would build 10 spaces and the library would build their 6 spaces, the Connor's would then give 5 spaces to the library for a total of 11 spaces and they would keep their 5 spaces. Mr. Cloud expressed that the proposal wasn't a good fit for the City who would be giving up the right-of-way as well as 5 parking spaces indefinitely. He met with the Connor's and MaryPat Larrabee of the library this morning to discuss an alternative proposal. The library expressed that they are not sure if the project would be favorable if they do not retain their 6 designated parking spaces plus additional spaces designated for library parking only. Mr. Cloud added that Ms. Larrabee also hadn't had a chance to meet with her board to discuss their options. Mr. Cloud stated that there is no proposal before council tonight to act on behalf of the spaces in front of the library and read the following language as a possible motion for council to consider: Motion to approve re-configuration of parking in front of 13 Maiden Lane consistent with VHB's suggested design changes, such that five (5) public spaces remain and the balance are designated to Connor Group LLP for a period of ten (10) years after construction is completed, after which Connor's spaces shall revert to the City. Connor is also encouraged to work with the library in their efforts to propose complimentary improvements for Maiden Lane.

Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Cloud if the sidewalk in front of the Connor's property would also revert back to the City. Mr. Cloud responded that the motion could be approved to clarify that the City has agreed to maintain the sidewalk. He stated that the goal is to find a win-win between pedestrians, development, parking and neighborhood character. Fred Connor stated that they are proposing to grant an easement to the City for 60% of the land necessary to create the parking spaces and the sidewalk. Mr. Doyle asked if that is effectively different from the City having a full right-of-way change. Mr. Cloud responded negatively. Mr. Doyle asked if the City has received a legal opinion. Mr. Cloud responded that he is not sure that fee ownership versus an easement for a sidewalk is any different but will get a legal opinion. Mr. O'Grady asked Mr. Cloud if changing the direction of traffic on Maiden Lane is up for consideration as well. Mr. Cloud responded that he is not asking for council to approve that tonight and if it was ultimately decided, it would come back before council with an ordinance change. Mr. Pelkey asked if the number of parking spaces that the Connor Group would have would be reduced from 46 to 40 spaces. Mr. Cloud noted that they have 34 spaces in the rear of the building now and this proposal would give the Connor Group designation to 4 or 5 additional spaces for a period of 10 years, one of which would be a handicap space. Tenants of the office building would also have access to the public parking spaces in the front of the building, as would the library. Mr. Pelkey asked if there is any other business in the City where on-street parking was reserved for one particular business and not the general public. Mr. Cloud responded negatively and stated that redevelopment in an urban core is extremely difficult and if you want high-dense,

maximized building spaces, you must provide the parking to go with it. He stated that the condition of the current property as well as the condition of Maiden Lane is a unique circumstance. Mr. Doyle noted that when a commercial business abuts a low-density neighborhood there is a 15 foot buffer required and asked Mr. Sawyer if that buffer is also required when commercial properties border high-density residential. Mr. Sawyer responded affirmatively. Mr. Doyle also asked if that buffer exists in this proposal. Mr. Sawyer responded that he would have to look at the site plan that was approved. Mr. Doyle commented that he is in favor of improvements to Maiden Lane but still believes that making changes to the entire corridor is the best way and wondered if staff could do its due diligence in seeing what the cost would be to extend the project down the length of Maiden Lane. Mayor Gamache noted the high expense associated with the Streetscape project. Mr. Cloud stated that this is a redevelopment opportunity with a time element that staff is trying to facilitate. He worries about separating the project from the development proposal and noted that the budget is tight. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Cloud if it is vastly more complicated to have the same engineers who worked on the Streetscape project, put out a plan using the same model for the remainder of Maiden Lane. Mr. Cloud noted that the Streetscape project was all done within the City's right-of-way and becomes much more complex when it enters the Federal right-of-way process. Mr. Doyle stated that he believes doing a project in the most complete way possible satisfies a lot of the concerns about the safety and access of pedestrians as well as continuity. Mayor Gamache stated that prioritizing realistically what the City can do with streetscape style redevelopment is important.

Mayor Gamache asked Mr. Cloud what it would mean to exclude the library from the proposal. Mr. Cloud gave the Barlow Street Community Center as an example and noted that the City carved out additional parking spaces when parking issues arose. Mr. Cloud stated that currently there are 5 parallel parking spaces on Maiden Lane with a crumbling curb and sidewalk but it is all in a straight line. Council can stay true to that disposition which would limit the number of tenants in the proposed development building. Conversely, the City can preserve its 5 parking spaces and move them at an angle, gain an additional 5 spaces after 10 years and will have a new sidewalk built on the Connor's dime. Mr. Cloud stated that the downside is that the sidewalk would have a kink in it and if the library comes forward and wants to extend their sidewalk that can be done. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Cloud if the Connor's would still manage the library's project if they decide to move forward at a later time. Mr. Cloud responded that the management from the Connor's can still be present if the library decides to move forward. Mr. Young stated that if council agrees to the proposed changes and the library decides to move forward with their project, the right-of-way is seeded to the City and once the project is completed, the City will own it with the exception of the 5 parking spaces that will be redeemed in 10 years. Mr. Cloud responded that it would depend on the deal agreed to with the library and they are not able to make any decisions until their board meets. Mr. Cloud stated that if for the sake of argument, council agrees to accept the proposal of the Connor's building 10 parking spaces with 5 being retained by the City and the remaining 5 acquired by the City in 10 years, he believes the logical extrapolation of that deal to the library be similar to the Connor's where their 6 parking spaces be acquired by the City after 10 years. Mr. Pelkey asked why a period of 10 years was chosen. Mr. Cloud responded that it would allow for the Connor's to pay for the added parking up front and there is a point at which that investment has been fully recaptured which has been defined as a 10 year period. Mr. Cloud noted that the City has a need for parking and it would be problematic if the City gave away some of its parking forever.

Mr. Young commented that if the direction of traffic is changed on Maiden Lane, he is concerned it will dump traffic onto Congress Street and create more congestion for left hand turns from Congress onto North Main. Mr. Cloud responded that staff would conduct a traffic study before that decision was made. Mr. Young added that the timing allowed for parking is also a significant consideration.

Mr. Cloud agreed and stated that he discussed that point with the Connor's this morning. Mr. Young stated that the way the Connor's proposed office space is configured; there is no travel between floors so tenants entering from the rear will need to park in the back of the building. Mr. Cloud noted that he has felt increasingly comforted with the way that the City of Montpelier handled a similar agreement with the Connor's. He added that the notion of communities partnering with private developers to build public infrastructure that might be used for one purpose with a given time period before reverting to the municipality is very common. Mr. Hawkins agreed with Mr. Doyle that there should be continuity along the length of Maiden Lane. He also agreed with Mr. Young that traffic would be disastrous if the direction of traffic changed on Maiden Lane, dumping traffic onto Congress Street. Mr. Hawkins noted that he does not see anything in the proposal tonight that states parallel parking would be permanently eliminated or that Maiden Lane would be just a northbound lane and believes there are too many variables for council to make a decision based on the proposed motion. He added that he likes the concept but would be nervous about giving someone the ability to do something without hearing what the library wants to do with their parking situation.

Mr. Doyle proposed non-residential parking on Maiden Lane and wondered if that would help alleviate some of the problems. He would rather see the library retain 11 parking spaces for 10 years in order to remove their current parking configuration which is unsafe. Mr. Doyle added that he would prefer to make a decision over both entities at the same time. Mayor Gamache noted the importance of the VHB analysis which brought up important issues with regards to safety. She asked Mr. Cloud what the downside would be to wait for the library board to meet and make a decision. Mr. Cloud responded that before that occurs, it's important to gage council's preference. He stated that council could adopt a motion to approve a reconfiguration of parking in front of 13 Maiden Lane and the library consistent with VHB's suggested design changes such that up to 11 spaces are created and designated to the library and the Connor's for a period of 10 years after which time they will revert to the City. Mr. Pelkey asked if it's correct that an ordinance change would need to take place in order to change the direction on Maiden Lane. Dom responded that there is nothing before council tonight that requires them to reverse the parking and added that if travel continues north to south, VHB stated that one parking space would need to be removed as it would be too close to the crosswalk and create a safety hazard. Mr. Cloud noted that the Connor's would like to get all of the issues consolidated with the rest of the legal proceedings that are taking place. Mr. Young added that he has some strong reservations about reversing the direction on the street and would like to hear from someone with expertise on traffic patterns.

Mayor Gamache opened the floor for public comment. Fred Connor noted that if the library decides to move forward with their project, they would work together to have all of the parking spaces built. He noted that the library would still have to go before the DAB and DRB for approval which they'd like to do during the winter and are hoping for litigation to conclude in the spring.

Mr. Dermody asked how the green space would fit into the project and in terms of parking, he wondered if turning the parking configuration on Church Street to angular parking would help some of the issues, putting parking on west side and not east side. He noted the scenario where there is handicap parking on a public street and asked who it would belong to. Fred Connor responded that it would be beneficial for both themselves and the library to keep parking on the same side of the road. He added that the Connor's did look into moving the parking to the other side of the street and determined that it would not be feasible or as safe.

Ms. Prent reiterated that she is opposed to the proposed modification of Maiden Lane and feels that there is a lot of conversation about vehicles and little mention of the people that live there. She also

asked that the letter submitted by herself and her husband when the project was first proposed be included in the record of minutes (see attached letter). She is opposed to diagonal parking as it would compromise access to her driveway. Ms. Prent added that she is surprised that no one has raised any quality of life issues and strongly believes Maiden Lane to be a residential area regardless of what the zoning defines it as. She does not feel the proposal is a safe configuration for pedestrians or children. Mayor Gamache commented that she believes some of those concerns were alleviated by virtue of the VHB study.

Anne Levy commented that she is happy to hear council commenting on the adjoining streets to Maiden Lane and noted that even without inclement weather, it is nearly impossible for two vehicles to pass one another in opposite directions on Bank Street. She believes the VHB study is a good report but didn't take the new Ace building or the neighboring roadways into consideration. Ms. Levy stated that before any decision to take away the Smith Home is made, parking should be addressed. She added that looking into diagonal parking on Church Street may benefit this project and is opposed to a piece meal plan.

Mike Connor stated that he is thrilled that so many members of the public agree that there is a parking issue in that area of the City. He explained that these are the issues that they are trying to alleviate and are for responsible growth and development. Mr. Connor stated that this is a unique opportunity for council where two private land owners are willing to pay for improvements, giving value back to the City, to solve a public parking and safety issue for vehicles and pedestrians. He could restore the sidewalks and build his project and leave the 5 spaces for the public to fight over.

Mr. Barber noted the suggested sidewalk width of 7 feet mentioned in the VHB report which did not correlate with the Connor's site plan. Mr. Connor responded that it was drawn that way before the library expressed interest and transitioned the wider sidewalk to the existing sidewalk at the corner of the library property. He further stated that if VHB's recommendation is to build a sidewalk with a 7 foot width between the two parking spaces in the drawing, consider it done.

Mr. Doyle asked if it would be possible to table this item and get the clarifications council is looking for in a week's time. Mr. Cloud asked Mr. Doyle what clarifications he is looking for. Mr. Doyle responded that he would like to know about commitment from the library, legal clarification regarding the deeded right-of-way and the possibility of continuing the project down the length of Maiden Lane. Mr. Cloud stated that the direction he believes council is going is that in order to allow the library to function better, they would be willing to allow the 5 parking spaces to go if the original proposal stood ground. Mr. Hawkins stated that he does not agree with that and is concerned with whether the library wishes to move forward based on the proposal from the engineer, whether or not it's worth it for the City to complete an easement and whether or not the proposal eliminates parallel parking on the westerly side of Maiden Lane no matter what direction traffic flows. Mr. Cloud responded that the issue of easement vs. fee simple can be resolved in a day. He further explained that this design before council specifically assumed that the parking did not go away on the westerly side and evaluated the overall width which was 20 feet and stated that vehicles need 16 feet. Mr. Hawkins stated that he doesn't believe this plan would work with parking on the west side. Mr. Cloud reiterated that most of this parking would occur on the Connor property, not in the City's right-of-way. Fred Connor noted that all of the new parking would be off of the current eastern edge of pavement leaving a 20 foot aisle adjacent to the parallel parking spaces. Mr. Pelkey noted that fire equipment would still have a difficult time maneuvering down the street. Mr. Connor responded that both the Fire Chief and Public Works Department approved the plan. Mr. Cloud stated that if council is not ready to make a decision tonight, they can wait for input from the library before moving forward. Mr. O'Grady stated that he is in favor of the proposal presented tonight.

Mr. Cloud stated that it is important to reference the VHB report in any motion made. Mr. O'Grady asked how many parking spaces there will be if angled parking is approved for 13 Maiden Lane, not including the library. Mr. Cloud responded that if the traffic flow stays the same there would be 9 spaces and if the traffic flow changes northbound, there would be 10 parking spaces.

10. Consider motion regarding parking and sidewalks on Maiden Lane (D&V).

A motion was made by Alderman O'Grady; seconded by Alderman Spooner to allow angled parking in front of 13 Maiden Lane with the direction of traffic to be determined; the City will retain 5 parking spaces and the remainder will be retained by the Connor Group for a period of 10 years. Mr. Young stated that he would not want to see diagonal parking in front of the Leahy property and added that because the proposal falls within the B1 Zoning District, he feels council should support businesses regardless of what kind of building is being proposed. Mr. Pelkey commented that he feels it still makes a difference as to which direction the traffic flows. Mr. Doyle noted that the characteristics of the B1 District is that the sidewalk meets the parking area and believes that having discontinuous pedestrian amenities is more deleterious to the neighborhood than losing a green strip. He added that the property is still close by to the park. He feels that pedestrian safety is best served with one continuous sidewalk. **Vote passed 5-2 with Aldermen Pelkey and Doyle opposed.**

11. Finance and Administration Report.

a. Proposed Amendment to Union Contract (D&V).

Mr. Cloud explained that this is a rare amendment coming forth from the Union asking that more discretion be vested with management over promotional eligibility for the Police Department. Mr. Cloud stated that in essence, the amendment states that management can use more than seniority when making promotional decisions. This amendment adds the following criteria to the job promotion process: performance evaluations, supervisors' recommendations, attendance, punctuality and training & experience.

A motion was made by Alderman Young; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve amendment to Union Contract as presented. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Cloud if "management" refers to himself or Chief Taylor as well. Mr. Cloud responded that Chief Taylor would be responsible for making promotional decisions. Mr. Doyle stated that he would like to see the language on the previous contract. **Vote was unanimous, 6-1 with Alderman Doyle opposed.**

12. Planning and Development Report.

a. Consider work plan as recommended by Downtown Board (D&V).

Mr. Sawyer stated that the Downtown Board which is also the Board of Directors for SAFF (St. Albans for the Future) went through a strategic planning exercise which involves all of their committees reviewing and ratifying the vision and mission of the Downtown Program and making sure that in 2014, each of their committee's and staff focus on a discreet set of goals. The Downtown Board approved the presented work plan on December 17, 2013 and is seeking council's approval. Mr. Sawyer explained that the work plan items are organized by the Downtown Committee and include Design, Economic Restructuring, Promotion and Organization. Mr. Sawyer added that for each focal point, there are suggested budgets and comments which are in the proposed General Fund budget for Planning & Development. He added that this exercise will be performed earlier this year so it can be better integrated with the FY 2016 budget process. Mayor Gamache recused herself as a member of the Downtown Board. Mr. Pelkey asked what parts of the suggested budget are in the proposed budget now. Mr. Sawyer responded that included are the estimated \$5,000 for consultation, visuals and outreach concerning the Design Committee's first work plan item which is to facilitate discussion on public facilities. Also, the estimated \$5,000 for consultation, design and copies and other materials included with a business resource guide and the funds to supplement \$4,000 in SAFF funds from their

own account to fund the creation of a Downtown website and other collateral. Mr. Pelkey asked if the \$15,000 would explore grant resources rather than to include it in the City's General Fund budget. Mr. Sawyer responded affirmatively.

A motion was made by Alderman Pelkey; seconded by Alderman Spooner to approve work plan as recommended by Downtown Board. Vote was unanimous, 5-0 with Mayor Gamache and Alderman Young abstained.

b. Resolution in support of VCDP Grant for Streetscape (D&V).

Mr. Sawyer stated that \$125,000 was received from the VCDP (Vermont Community Development Program) in 2009 to fund the Streetscape Project. He explained that they have a very rigorous administrative accounting process. As the project expanded and changed over time, it kept resetting the City's negotiations of the grant and all of the aspects of the grant agreement with VCDP. Mr. Sawyer explained that one of the City's first grant sources is now final and will be used to pay for the Streetscape project. Mr. Sawyer added that the resolution identifies the persons of interest in terms of the grant agreement and names himself as the contact and Dominic Cloud as the CEO and authorizing official.

A motion was made by Alderman Young; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve VCDP Grant for Streetscape. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

c. Public hearing for EPA Grant for clean-up of Lake Street Redevelopment site.

Mr. Sawyer noted the site on Lake Street where staff currently envisions a hotel and stated that it is just as contaminated lightly as the rest of the core lot. Some of the Brownfield activities that staff are undertaking as part of the parking garage and State office building projects that are TIF funded would also have to take place at the Lake Street redevelopment lot. With the announcement of an EPA grant for Brownfield cleanup funds, staff thought it would be wise to take action now. Mr. Sawyer stated that the application is due next Wednesday but a public hearing must be heard first. As with the parking garage, the funds would help manage the soil which has been contaminated over time to make sure it is safely kept on site or properly disposed of.

d. St. Albans Housing Authority: motion to change expiration dates from three to five years for last month's appointment of Desiree Merchant and re-appoint John Newton and Anne Casavant-Bluto (D&V).

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to change term expiration for Desiree Merchant to 12/31/18 and to reappoint John Newton and Anne Casavant-Bluto to the St. Albans Housing Authority. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

e. Police equipment grant.

Agenda item 12.e. was discussed after agenda item 15.b.

Mr. Sawyer stated that the City has been awarded \$14,597 from the DOJ (Department of Justice) to purchase law enforcement equipment, specifically a speed awareness monitor, digital mobile radios, tablets and digital cameras, focusing on law enforcement technology. The goals are to enhance essential law enforcement services. Mr. Doyle asked Mr. Cloud if the digital cameras were for vehicles or location-specific cameras for the park. Mr. Cloud responded that they are vehicle cameras.

f. Certificate of Highway Mileage (D&V).

Mr. Cloud noted that this is an annual certification and no highway mileage has been added.

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Young to approve certificate of highway mileage. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

13. Minutes: Reg. Mtg. Minutes 12/9, Special Mtg. Minutes 11/21 & 12/11 (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Young to approve Regular Meeting Minutes from 12/9/13. Vote was unanimous, 6-0 with Alderman Pelkey abstained.
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman O’Grady to approve Special Meeting minutes from 11/21/13. Vote was unanimous, 6-0 with Alderman Young abstained.
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Young to approve Special Meeting minutes from 12/11/13. Vote was unanimous, 6-0 with Alderman Pelkey abstained.

14. Warrants: 12/18 & 1/8 (D&V).
A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to approve warrant from 12/18/13 and 1/8/14. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

15. Re-open Budget Work Session.
Agenda item 15.b. preceded agenda item 15.a.

a. Recreation.

Mr. Cloud noted that the large item of discussion is the withdrawal from the Town of St. Albans. Overall revenues as a result of that are down by just shy of 18% and the Town contribution pulled nearly \$50,000 out of the budget. Mr. Cloud stated that with total revenues ranging from \$217,000 to \$265,000, a \$50,000 deduction was a big hit. After that occurred in the current fiscal year, rates were increased on non-City program participants on average of 30% and still does not know how that will affect participation rates until the end of the year. The policy objective has been to hold City participants as harmless as possible while increasing rates on non-City participants to the extent that the market will bear. Mr. Cloud explained that there should be a discussion to determine at what extent Recreation should be supported by the General Fund or to what extent Recreation should be supported entirely by fees. Program revenue is up from \$61,000 to \$68,000, basketball is up slightly and Day Camp is up by 14%.

Revenues are level-funded at a total of \$103,500 for the City pool. With pool donations of \$4,000 from the rotary to keep the pool open in the evening for free swimming plus the daily gate fees brings revenue to \$7,500. Mr. Cloud noted that the other action time lies within salaries. He explained that no communities in the State offers anywhere near the amount of programming that the City offers with one fulltime person. Mr. Cloud stated that he is proposing that the Program Coordinator, Joe Calano who is on his parent’s health insurance, works incredible hours and produces great results, be converted from his part time salaried position at 20 hours a week where he picked up another 20 hours in part time to a full time equivalent which allows the Director the consistency needed for program planning. Mr. Cloud stated that the general Recreation budget continues on with existing programs. In terms of pool expenses, staff is trying to budget more closely to what actuals have shown; last year there was an actual of \$51,000 after budgeting \$45,000 and this year propose to budget closer to last year’s actual at \$53,000.

Mr. Spooner asked Ms. Viens if it would be possible to incorporate a sliding scale for pool memberships based on income. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively but said that night swimming is now free with the St. Albans Rotary’s donation. Also, the Chauncey Warner Foundation has never denied a pool membership or swim lesson to a family with low income.

Mr. Hawkins stated that every year, income and expenses are way off and asked why staff doesn’t project more realistically. He believes that staff should budget for a larger amount that the Recreation Department is going to lose. Mr. Cloud stated that expenses typically increase when revenues increase and can provide a 3-year analysis for just the pool at the next meeting. Mr. Young asked if it’s correct that the overall budget is down \$111,000 under net operations. Mr. Cloud

responded negatively and stated that net operations are the amount that the department as a whole books to the General Fund. He added that in FY 14, the General Fund contributed \$75,000 and for FY 15, the proposed General Fund contribution amount is \$111,000. Mr. Cloud explained that the Recreation function is a busy business during a compressed time period that is weather dependent and mostly run on fees. Mr. Barber asked if the City runs the snack bar located at the pool. Ms. Viens responded affirmatively. Mr. Barber commented that it may be beneficial to put that out to bid. He also noted the importance of seeking donations and requesting grants. Mr. Spooner asked Ms. Viens if a wish list for the Capital Improvements Plan could be created. Mr. Young asked Ms. Viens what the amount of revenue earned was for non-residents this year. Ms. Viens responded that it is not broken down in the budget and with the Town pulling out effective July 1st it is hard to determine until a full year has passed. Ms. Viens added that generally, the town/City participation is 50/50. Mr. Young asked if establishing a \$20,000 to \$30,000 reserve fund would be feasible. Mr. Cloud responded that he does not see how it would be possible to inject another \$30,000 in expenses in the budget and remain at 3.4%.

b. Clerk/Treasurer.

Mr. Cloud explained that the City Clerk's revenue is down 5%, budget-to-budget. One of the larger items under expenses is subscription for the COT system which is used for recording the Land Records. Mr. Hawkins added that the system enables a title searcher to easily and quickly retrieve a land record online without handling the books. He stated that it speeds up the research time and allows for off-site review of clerk recordings. Ms. Krupp stated that the next step will allow users to print remotely and pay online for the copies they make.

16. Re-Open Regular Meeting and Enter Executive Session.

a. Consider appointment of a public officer (Planning Commission, Recreation Commission and Downtown Board (D&V)).

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Pelkey to enter Executive Session to consider the appointment of a public officer at 10:08 pm (Planning Commission, Recreation Commission and Downtown Board). Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

17. Exit Executive Session and Adjourn.

A motion was made by Alderman Spooner; seconded by Alderman Hawkins to exit Executive Session and adjourn meeting at 10:38 pm. Vote was unanimous, 7-0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristen Smith
Administrative Coordinator

Mark & Sue Prent 35 Bank St., St. Albans VT 05478 (802) 524-5814

July 12, 2013

SAINT ALBANS CITY COUNCIL
100 N. Main St.
St. Albans, VT 05478

Gentlemen;

Regarding the issue of proposed changes to street parking associated with the medical office building project at 13 Maiden Lane, which is currently under appeal, we have some significant concerns.

The City is considering whether or not to grant the Applicant's request to cede the public right-of-way on the west side of the property to the Applicant, so that the Applicant can increase the number of parking spaces available there by replacing the existing green space with diagonal parking. If we understand correctly, the proposal would permit public use of just five of those diagonal spaces, and for a limited time only, after which the Applicant would lease those spaces to the City for a nominal fee.

When the Applicants' request was discussed at the June 11 City Council Meeting, it was noted in the Messenger that:

"...(Mr.) Cloud also stated the city fire department does have concerns about accessing Maiden Lane with emergency vehicles. The wider lane created by the diagonal parking would make it easier to get emergency vehicles down that portion of the street, Mike Connor has argued."

In light of this information, we believe that it was imprudent ever to allow parking on both sides of Maiden Lane; and that whatever improvement in the situation might arguably be gained by the proposed change in parking configuration along the front of the Applicants' property, the safety issue would remain for the rest of Maiden Lane. It would, indeed, be exacerbated by the increased volume of parking spaces and the manner in which diagonally parked vehicles emerge into traffic.

As the primary vehicular access and egress from our property is on Maiden Lane, this safety situation has great significance for us.

We are therefore requesting that the City return to allowing parking on **only one side** of Maiden Lane.

Under no circumstances should the number of parking spaces or volume of traffic be increased on such an impaired lane without benefit of a qualified independent traffic analysis.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours truly,

Mark and Sue Prent

cc. Hon. Elizabeth Gamache, Mayor