

MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
St. Albans City Hall, 100 No. Main St.
6:00 PM MONDAY, JANUARY 15, 2018

Approved February 19, 2018

Board Members Present:

Chair David Barber, Michael Gawne, and Stan Bradeen

Board Members Absent: Vice Chair Jackie DesLauriers, Luke Richter and Amy Paradis

Public Present: None.

Staff Present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Wendy Coy, Minute Taker

AGENDA

- 1. Open Meeting – called to order at 6:08 p.m.**
 - a. Discuss additions or deletions to agenda

- 2. Approval of Minutes December 18, 2017** - Member Gawne made a motion to approve the December 18, 2017 meeting minutes as corrected. It was seconded by Member Bradeen. It passed unanimously.

- 3. Land Development Regulations**
 - a. **Discuss proposed subdivision amendment.** Staff recommended that Section B be removed, as it is covered in the minor subdivisions section. The Commission had no issue with this change. Member Gawne would like a standard to be set that, if a permit is issued, a notification should be mailed to the neighbors regarding what is happening in their neighborhood. Currently, Neighbors are notified by certified mail when a project goes before the DRB but not for every permit. Member Bradeen believes that Member Gawne has a legitimate point and does not want this point to be forgotten in the rush to get the amendment to go through. He would like to know the number of notifications that would need to be done. Mr. Sawyer stated that one purpose of the project amendment is compliance with the State statutes and that we need to move this forward. Chair Barber asked if the notifications are required to go out as certified mail. Mr. Sawyer explained that the State insists that a certified letter go out for DRB hearings. A discussion can be had about what type of mailings would be sent out for yellow permits which do not require DRB approval.

 - b. **Discuss design review and form based standards** – Member Bradeen would like to start with a more general discussion asking if this section accomplishes what the Commission

wants it to accomplish. Chair Barber would like to have the historic buildings of this city maintained. He also understands that development needs to happen as well. As a trade-off for demolishing a historic building, it must be replaced with a functional two store building. Mr. Sawyer stated that we have a historic district that needs to be economically viable. Member Gawne stated that we need to consider the economic viability of requiring property owners to put in a second floor. Member Bradeen asked how would you make someone invest when there is no market for that investment? Mr. Sawyer stated that if you demolish a downtown building, the City's rules are going to require that the building is good on the outside and it is not a detriment to the surrounding area. There are height requirements depending on the block. Member Bradeen commented that it is the lack of architectural imagination more than the market that is causing difficulties. Second floors can be opened up with the use of elevators and atriums. Member Gawne mentioned that the Commission was discussing the historic buildings in the Downtown District but the Commission also needs to discuss historic buildings in the residential areas. Mr. Sawyer stated that the City has a very onerous process to demolish any building on the historic register. Chair Barber suggested zoning density bonus with an accessory dwelling rule. Member Gawne pointed out that not all refits are attractive or wanted. Chair Barber reiterated we should not allow someone to tear down a historic building to build a one-story ranch.

- c. **Schedule** Member Bradeen suggested that the Commission start with the items that are glaring holes. The Commission should look at one large item and one small item as a way of managing the large number of items that need to be looked at. Chair Barber would like each member to give him the top three concerns that they have. The Commission discussed it and the top three seemed to be residential, historic preservation and parking / curb cuts. Mr. Sawyer pointed out that there may be places where things can be consolidated. He needs some time to better prepare a cogent compilation of curb cuts and parking. He also needs to put together what the City has and what the staff thinks should be changed.

4. Other Business

- a. **Update on proposed stream corridor rules.** Chair Barber attended the City Council meeting. The City Council adopted the stream corridor rules, and they will go into effect on January 29th, 2018.
- b. **Discuss 2018 organizational meeting.** This meeting will be held in February and will be the election of the officers.
- c. **Planning and Development Update** - None
- d. **Other** – None.

5. Public Comment – None

Member Gawne made a motion to adjourn. Member Bradeen seconded. It passed unanimously.