

MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
6:00 PM MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 2020
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN STREET

Approved February 25, 2020

Board Members Present: Stan Bradeen, Chair; Denise Smith, Vice-Chair; Luke Richter; Amy Paradis; Michael Gawne

Board Members Absent: None.

Public Present: David Barber, Mark Needleman.

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

1. Open Meeting – Chair Barber called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

a. Introduction of Public Attendees – David Barber; Mark Needleman

b. Public Comment on issues not on the agenda – Mr. Needleman owns properties on Congress and High. The building between 65 Congress has been vacant for a while. He would like to purchase 65 Congress and combine the parking with his property at 61 Congress as well as an entrance on High Street. He would like to have it be a three unit but it is now non-conforming due to being vacant for so long. There would need to be discussions about lot density and the size of the lot. There would be issues with minimum parking, lot size and curb cuts. Mr. Sawyer stated this is timely due the density conversations. Chair Bradeen asked if it would be viable as a two unit. Mr. Needleman stated that it would not be. Member Gawne asked what Mr. Needleman would like the Planning Commission to do. Mr. Needleman stated that he wasn't sure. He just wanted to get the Commission's opinion. Mr. Sawyer stated that this is one of the most historically challenged lots in the City. It is hemmed in with grading issues on the downhill side. The lot is too small for a duplex under the current rules. Chair Bradeen asked if there were tolerances for the grandfathering. Member Richter asked if there could be an easement created for the parking. Member Gawne stated that a boundary line adjustment would be easier to obtain than a sub-division. Mr. Sawyer stated that easements don't count toward the minimum lot size. Member Paradis asked if the Commission could change the grandfathering rules. Chair Bradeen clarified the issues that he would like more information on: more information on the lot itself; Non conformity of the lot; challenges that are keeping this from working. Member Richter asked if the Commission could be given a list of vacant properties that are out of date due to the grandfathering clause.

c. Discuss additions or deletions to the agenda – None

2. Approval of Minutes:

- a. **December 19, 2019 Meeting Minutes – Member Parardis made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Member Gawne seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor except one abstention: Member Richter.**
- b. **November 18, 9019 - Member Gawne made a motion to approve as presented. Vice-Chair Smith seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.**

3. Other Business –

- a. **Planning & Development update –** No additional updates
 - b. **Update on State Housing Bill –** The Senate sponsored a bill that took the language verbatim from the proposal that the Commission had reviewed earlier, however Mr. Sawyer had heard that State officials no longer supported the local zoning pre-emptions. The House has sponsored a version of the bill that does not contain the local zoning pre-emptions. Mr. Sawyer gave a link to the Commission so they could review the House bill.
 - c. **Discuss February 17 President’s Day Meeting date –** The Commission agreed to move the meeting date. The Commission agreed to meet on February 25th.
 - d. **Other –** None
- 4. Discuss priorities for 2020 –** Chair Bradeen stated that he met with Vice-Chair Smith and Mr. Sawyer to focus the discussions that the Commission wants to have. The City Council does a list of priorities every year. He presented the City Council priorities to the Commission and highlighted the items that might be of interest to the Commission. Mr. Sawyer reviewed the items being worked on and under consideration. Chair Bradeen asked the Commission if there were any other items that needed to be on the list. Member Richter asked if the Commission has looked at the traffic impact of the new building downtown. Mr. Sawyer stated that the topic was looked at and the information was brought before the DRB who asked that the City keep an eye on it. Mr. Barber asked that demolition of historical buildings be added to the item of Historic Preservation and buildings on State Registry. Mr. Sawyer stated that the new Historic Preservation Committee would be updating the lists. Chair Bradeen asked the Commission which items were further enough along for Mr. Sawyer to continue his work and which items needed more discussion before Mr. Sawyer can formulate any proposal for the Commission to review. Member Richter asked if the Commission wanted to start with updating the business corridors. The Commission agreed. Mr. Sawyer stated that he wouldn’t want to go to the City Council until March. The Transitional Business Districts involves rezoning peoples’ properties which involves more process. Chair Bradeen stated that the changes reflect the actual state of the properties now. Mr. Sawyer suggested that the Density bonuses move up, as that seems to be what people are talking about now. He asked that the Commission review the November 15th and the December 18th memos and send him their comments. The comments would be included in the February meeting packet. Member Richter asked if the February meeting packet could go out early.
- a. **Time allowing, continue discussions on topics of choice -** None

5. Discuss commission training/development – No update.

6. Adjourn

Member Paradis made a motion to adjourn at 7:52 pm. Member Gawne seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.