

**MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING VIA REMOTE CONNECTION
6:00 PM MONDAY APRIL 27, 2020**

Approved May 18, 2020

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

Board Members Absent: None

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

Public Present: None

1. **Open Meeting – Chair Bradeen called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.**
 - a. **Introduction of Public Attendees – None**
 - b. **Public Comment on issues not on the agenda – None**
 - c. **Discuss additions or deletions to the agenda – None**

2. **Approval of Minutes:**
 - a. **March 16, 2020 Meeting Minutes – Member Gawne made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Vice-Chair Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor, except Member Richter and Member Paradis, both abstaining.**

3. **Other Business –**
 - a. **Planning & Development update –** Mr. Sawyer submitted the 5 year Growth Center update to the State of Vermont. The City has issued 200 new housing permits in that time period. Chair Bradeen asked if that growth would help the City in terms of the State Housing Legislation.
 - b. **Update on State Housing Legislation –** Mr. Sawyer stated that any bill like this probably would not make it out of State House at the moment due to COVID-19. The legislature may reconvene in the fall to deal with financial issues and the summer issues that come up. The Legislation is currently in the Finance committee which is not the committee that the City is concerned with and it may not leave that committee any time soon. Member Gawne asked about the response that the Chair was composing that the Planning Commission would send to the State. Chair Bradeen stated that he will work to complete the response. Member Gawne asked if the City wanted to talk to our representatives, McCarthy and Toof as well as Eileen Dickinson from the Town as this legislation will affect the them as well. Member Gawne suggested inviting the representatives to our next meeting. Mr. Sawyer suggested that the Commission wait until the legislation is active again before bringing them to a meeting so the Commission’s opinion would be fresh in their minds.

- c. **Next Meeting Date** – May 18, 2020 6:00 p.m. The Commission agreed to keep this meeting date. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would check in with each member to make sure the meeting tool works for them individually.
 - d. **Other** - Member Richter asked about the City projects that were supposed to be active. Mr. Sawyer stated that all of the City’s projects are underway. Kingman Street project may be delayed but the federal funding dollars are still there. They won’t go away. Delays are more likely to happen than retraction. He thinks there will be lay-offs here in there in the community but that has been happening throughout the community since COVID-19.
- 4. Discuss proposals for Land Development Regulations** – Mr. Sawyer reviewed his memo that addressed the proposals that the Commission had at the last meeting.
- a. **Lot Coverage Percentages** - He presented his analysis of the lot coverage percentage and lot sizes. Member Paradis asked if the properties on Federal were legal and conforming. Mr. Sawyer stated that they were. Chair Bradeen asked that he was wondering if the west side of Federal should be a different district due to their lot coverage. The properties on the west side of Federal are currently zoned as Service – Industrial. Mr. Sawyer stated that he was concerned with having the west side of Federal become more Industrial as it will eventually lead to conflict between the two districts. Vice-Chair Smith stated that keeping a mixed use on both sides of the street will help keep traffic down and she believed that the Commission should maintain the status quo. Member Richter stated the there needs to be a buffer zone somewhere and that he agrees with Vice-Chair Smith. Member Paradis also agreed with Vice-Chair Smith. Chair Bradeen stated that he wanted to maintain the street and not see it get more run down. Mr. Sawyer clarified that the George Wood and the Good Stuff building would not be grandfathered. Chair Bradeen asked why those businesses would not be grandfathered. Mr. Sawyer stated that if they are grandfathered then the businesses cannot expand.
 - b. **Lot Sizes** - Mr. Sawyer stated that some of the lot sizes were a little smaller in the B2 district but he didn’t think that it would have a large impact. He stated that if there was a lot that was going to be subdivided under the new rules they probably could have been subdivided under the current rules.
 - c. **Transverse Divided Lot Rule** - Mr. Sawyer presented the Districts on No. Main, Fairfield and Lake. The new regulations would state that the lot that is divided transversely the front would be guided by the District and the back of the lot would be guided by the District that it is in. He provided examples of properties on Fairfield and Fairfield/Ferris. He also showed a proposal stating that the primary structure cannot go any deeper than the average depth of the surrounding properties. This proposal would be downzoning some lots in the City but it is a defensible change. Chair Bradeen stated that he felt the lot coverage use was too high. Mr. Sawyer stated that the lot coverage percentages are the same as they are now and he didn’t see a compelling reason to change it. Some of the lots in the City are already being downzoned.
 - d. **Issues with the Undefined Uses** - Member Gawne stated that the definition issues should not be put off and, if the Commission is not going to tackle the definitions, then the definitions shouldn’t be used in the new districts. He suggested that all of the

undefined uses should be removed until they are defined. He states that the Webster's Standard dictionary doesn't exist and that a specific edition should be referenced. Mr. Sawyer stated that he didn't think the situation was that dire. He felt that you can never define every single use that could come up. He believed that the City can navigate the situations that might come up with undefined uses. Vice-Chair Smith stated that she agreed with both as she sees why we need to be as clear as possible but she is not sure that everything can be defined right now. Member Paradis asked how frequently the uses come up as a point of contention. Mr. Sawyer stated that the City hasn't had an issue with an undefined use yet. Chair Bradeen suggested that with the new proposals the Commission make sure they are drafted as best as possible and then the Commission spend a week dealing with the definitions.

- e. New District Proposal Mr. Sawyer reviewed the new district, changes and new proposals. Vice-Chair Smith stated that she is looking forward to the next step. She asked if this was going to be discussed at the next meeting. Mr. Sawyer stated that he thinks the next step would be to bring it before the Council. Vice-Chair Smith asked if the names would be changed. Mr. Sawyer stated that this wasn't yet the time to change all of the names for all of the districts. Chair Bradeen stated that he thought Mr. Sawyer would pull together the memos and put together a proposal to present to City Council. Chair Bradeen asked if the work had been finished on South Main. Mr. Sawyer stated that he hadn't finished the South Main work yet. Chair Bradeen asked what the action plan would be moving forward. Mr. Sawyer stated that the City Council be told that the Planning Commission was working on it and that the Council would probably have some input. After the City Council, flyers would be distributed to the neighborhoods and the Planning Commission would hold a couple of large public meetings.

5. Adjourn

Member Righter made a motion to adjourn at 7:53 pm. Vice-Chair Smith seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.