

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
6:00 PM MONDAY July 15, 2019
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN STREET

Approved September 16, 2019

Board Members Present: David Barber, Chair; Michael Gawne; Stan Bradeen

Board Members Absent: Luke Richter, Vice-Chair; Amy Paradis

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

Public Present: None

1. **Open Meeting** – Chair Barber called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm.
 - a. **Discuss additions or deletions to the agenda** – Chair Barber asked for an update on the Main Street project. They will start demolishing the Main Street buildings later this week. It will take two to three weeks to remove the buildings; the soil will be done next which will take a couple of weeks; the site work will start sometime in September. The steel work will be done first. The plan is to work on the building throughout the winter. The building will be all steel.
Mr. Sawyer suggested that future agendas begin with introductions of the public and the topics that they wish to discuss. Member Bradeen stated that he would like Other business moved to just after the approval of the meeting minutes.
2. **Approval of June 17, 2019 Meeting Minutes** – Chair Barber asked if there was any municipality that had an ordinance concerning the positioning of satellite dishes. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would look into it. **Member Gawne made a motion to approve the minutes of June 17, 2019 with one small edit to Member Bradeen’s comments on the Handy Lake St. curb cut. Member Bradeen seconded. It was passed unanimously.**
3. **Other Business** –
 - a. **Update on Certified Local Government Status** – Mr. Sawyer stated that the Commission’s comments were sent to the State. The State responded that the City shouldn’t be too concerned with the qualifications specified. The focus should be finding people with the best qualifications they can get. Member Bradeen stated that he would like to see the volunteers used and trained to properly take pictures. Chair Barber asked if everything was digitized in the City Clerk’s Office. Mr. Sawyer stated that he believed all had been digitized. Member Gawne discussed the use of surveys and asked if the surveys were used to update the City’s tax map. Member Gawne stated that a survey is a graphic representation of a deed or a court order and it will not measure how you have been using the property for any number of years. Swanton is now requiring, as part of the sub-division projects, a mylar and a disk for the City. The

Commission discussed boundary lines and reviewed the online tax map that the City provides. Round medallions are geological benchmarks.

- b. **Planning & Development update** – None
- c. **Other** -

4. **Discuss proposals and ideas for Land Development Regulations** – Member Gawne asked what the next steps would be for Spruce Street. He asked if the Commission’s recommendations go to City Council as some of the issues raised were not anything that the Planning Commission could affect. Mr. Sawyer stated that the Commission should determine whether the Commission is going to continue with the discussion or move the discussion to a later date. Member Bradeen stated that he would like to finish the transitional business districts then continue the review of the residential areas. He would like to work on ideas to encourage people to invest in the residential areas. Member Gawne stated that he wanted a response sent to Mr. Arsenault about 7 Spruce St. Chair Barber stated that a response should be sent to the owner stating that the Commission would not be taking any action specific to this request, at this time, but it would be considered along with the overall review of the residential areas. Mr. Sawyer discussed the memo that he gave the Commission reviewing the ongoing items that the Commission has been discussing. Mr. Sawyer stated that the next steps would be to outline a proposal stating what the Commission wants to do and the changes that they would like see made. He stated that Montpelier looked at all their existing developments and changed the rules so that 90% of their neighborhoods are conforming. St. Albans has started the work on Spruce Street. He raised the point that when you have project-based changes proposed, the emotion attached to the project is what is considered not the actual zoning changes. The Commission should consider what is unique to each area. Member Bradeen stated that the Commission should ask what is appropriate for today for the protection and the maintenance of each neighborhood. In each area, there is a character and what is the future character that the Commission is trying to support and protect. Mr. Sawyer stated that Lake Street and Fairfield Street should not be low density residential. It might become a Design Review District as it is in a corridor. The Commission discussed different options on how to encourage rehabilitation of older homes. Chair Barber stated that he would like to get the transitional business districts done before he leaves in January 2020. Next few meetings address the transitional Business Districts. Gawne stated that he considered the residential more important but would like to get something finished off. There was a discussion that the City go from two business districts to four with the densities staying the same. Sawyer stated that he could bring a proposal and map to next meeting. Commission agreed. Member Bradeen clarified what the Commission had previously discussed with Mr. Sawyer. Member Gawne stated that he would still like to look at what the town is doing. Chair Barber stated that the Town has approved two buildings on the South Main street corridor.

The Commission discussed:

Dwellings units per property vs. dwelling units per building

Households vs. lodging homes – In a household, there needs to be some relation either legally or by blood. Member Gawne suggested Mr. Sawyer look at the VT supreme Court decisions.

Accessory Dwelling Units – Mr. Sawyer likes the owner living on the property. He suggested that the City allow the owner to build the accessory dwelling unit for the owner and rent the home. It could only be 30% of the total living space on the lot. Minimum of 1000 square feet or 30% of living space.

5. Public Comment – There was none.

Member Gawne made a motion to adjourn at 7:45 p.m. Member Bradeen seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.