

**MEETING OF THE ST. ALBANS CITY DOWNTOWN BOARD &
BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ST. ALBANS FOR THE FUTURE
6:00 PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2017
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN ST.**

Approved January 16, 2018

Board Members present: Chair Katy Collin, Emily Richards, Vice-Chair Erik Johnson, Sharon Holcomb, Maureen Brown, Jes Stumpf, Mike Blouin and Donna Howard,

Board Members Absent: Laz Scangas, Jeff Young and Rachael Sink

Staff Members Present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Marty Manahan, Director of Operations and Business Development; Wendy Coy, Minute Taker

Public Present: John Collin

1. **Call to Order** – Chair called meeting to order at 6:04
 - a. Additions or Deletions
2. **SAFF Financial Report** – Very positive month. Festival of trees brought in money that covered the expenses. The Merchants and the Arts lines are down. As a whole, SAFF will end up with more money than it did last year. Member Brown asked what the \$1500 was spent on for the Chair Affair last month. It seems to be a late expense for Chair Affair. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would need to look into it.
 - a. Discuss finance policy for the Festival of Trees – Member Stumpf questioned if the Festival of Trees should contribute to SAFF-wide expenses as it is a SAFF event. It should stay separate so that if it ever spins off we will know how much needs to be spent to maintain it. Does the FOT benefit from SAFF wide activities and should it contribute to expenses SAFF-wide? FOT currently uses SAFF as its 501C3 fiscal agent. It is currently managed by SACA so that the overflow money that was held in reserve from the last FOT was donated to SACA. The FOT net revenues would be split between whatever organizations that FOT decides to spend it on. Chair Affair is an event of the merchants and is not a separate line from the merchants line. The reason that FOT remained separate is because it came in from the outside and it might go again someday. Member Blouin asked if there an expectation that FOT will be leaving. Mr. Sawyer thinks it should be tracked as a separate line item. When the Board discusses SAFF-wide things and what should be paid for, it should be decided on a case by case basis what will pay what. Member Howard mentions that they pay two fees – they pay as the FOT and they pay as SACA. Chair Collin believes that we should keep it on a case by case basis. Member Stumpf is concerned about setting a precedent before the next event comes up. Member Stumpf would like to know how we bring more money into unencumbered funds. Mr. Sawyer stated that they have not had to do that yet. Some SAFF expenses that do not widely benefit SAFF programs are charged solely to the unencumbered fund line. It was asked if a percentage of event funds should go into unencumbered. Erik Johnson mentioned that we could set a precedent so that people are not upset and committees don't feel attacked. He is concerned that the people raising money might be

unhappy with raising money for one event and having it considered part of the general fund. Chip Sawyer said that a motion like that could be made, but it would not be permanent fix: it could always be reversed by the board in the future. Sawyer feels that everything is working for the time being and if people want to have a voice in expense decisions, they should come to the Board meetings and state their issues.

3. Training on storefront accessibility inventory and next steps – Jonathan Collin from Arnold & Scangas Architects. Currently all the surveys down the western side of the street from movie theatre to TD Bank North are done. The survey assesses what the door looks like when you approach it and the what it looks like. It asks you to figure out which conditions you have. There are specific numbers that a new building is required to have by the ADA to be up to code. A few basic things –

- Door panel width and height
- Clear opening – if it is above 56” it isn’t relevant
- Height of the threshold – ADA only allows a ½”. Most vendors will fail this.
- Swing direction - Is either out or in. By code, most doors in commercial spaces will swing out.
- Yes / No questions – You will have some yes / no questions about door closure and automatic openers
- Material – Concrete, paved stone, brick. Uneven material can have an impact
- Slope – Does the ground slope up towards the door?
- Handrails – Not a lot of handrails on Main Street. They are usually on ramps.
- Level Landing at doorway – If it doesn’t have a level landing that is a problem. Does the landing size the need to be the width of the landing? No. The width of the door is in the same plane as the door. Will need the measurements right and left of the door and out to the sidewalk.
- Pulls – Knob or pull? Can use a pull but not a knob.
- Steps – how many
- Ramps – How long and how wide?

At the bottom, is a small space for a drawing so that people can draw the doorway. Member Holcomb asked who is collecting them? Mr. Sawyer stated that he or Member Scangas would collect them. Congress to Bank, Hudson to Hoyt, Lake to Stebbins, and Lake street needs to be done. We should also do Kingman around Dirty Nelly’s. Member Blouin asked if it will be done before or after the upgrade? Mr. Sawyer stated that we should do the existing spaces and also see what would need to be done. Raising the curb and making sidewalk wider would feather out the issues. Each survey takes approximately 6 – 8 minutes. Looking for volunteers to do addresses.

4. Around Our Town calendar update – The page layouts are underway. They have Downtown and Swanton. There is a meeting in January of places around the County. They would like to have a page for each of the major boroughs. It will sort be location so that everyone can see what is happening in their neighborhood but there would be featured events so that you could see what is going on in other places as well. Next steps – Committee is meeting at the beginning of the New Year. Social Media - working with Rachael for the soft launch in February. Servers - soft launch will help determine the server side needed. Revenue – Cost of annual domains, backups, monitoring and hosting will be broken down month by month. Mr. Sawyer stated that he told the group that St.

Albans was paying for the start-up but would need to have the conversation as to how each town would help to maintain the Around the Town calendar. There will be a regional meeting on January 10, 2018 in Enosburgh.

5. **Discuss social media platforms** – Rachael sent an update. She has been working on sites backgrounds. Post engagement up by 34% which is huge. Yost premium is \$89.00 per year should be purchased and added to the site. It gives us the tools to get everything posted correctly. Member Richards isn't sure that she is willing to commit more money to this. She believes premium is worth it but not sure the money should be spent during the test phase. Member Richards believes that Rachael should be here to discuss what she is doing. Member Brown has concerns with using a blog to promote events. In her experience, a blog isn't the best way to promote things. Member Johnson stated that Rachael is concentrating on Facebook and that the blog is more a tool than her focus.
6. **Update on Open Flag project** – Member Holcomb has the poles and the brackets and was supposed to be coming around to set locations for the poles. Flags are beautiful. Will there be a flag per season? Not sure how many merchants want to pay \$40.00 per season. At the moment, there is one for spring and summer
7. **Update on National Life Main Street Grant application** - They had a meeting and would like to focus the grant on City Hall performances basically lighting, sound, and stage length. Stage is raked forward and slightly tilted to stage left. They would like to extend it out past the arch.
8. **Committee Reports**
 - a. **Community Arts / Festival of Trees** – Everything went well. Still waiting for a couple of bills to come in so the committee can see how much was made. The FOT is looking at a revamp next year as it will be the 10th annual FOT. There will be an art festival in January in City Hall. Franklin County quilters are going to do a raffle and try to get more members. The Burrow rent is around \$90.00 per month basically based on utilities used.
 - b. **Design** – The focus is on Kingman street. Any other design related issue will be done on an Ad Hoc basis. Member Howard asked if the design committee be looking at the covered walkway or will the city be doing that? The City is putting up lights.
 - c. **Economic Restructuring** – Member Blouin stated that for all intents and purposes they are a defunct committee. City Hall has taken over most of the things that they were working on. The last time a meeting was held was over a year ago and nobody could make it.
 - d. **Merchants / Promotion** – Member Holcomb reported that the committee is working on the flags. The Holiday raffle is going well. They are considering a brochure to be placed at the interstate stops describing St. Albans City.
 - e. **Organization** –
 - **Discuss 2018 Organizational meeting** – Supposed to have an annual meeting when officers are elected. April 17th was agreed upon as a date.
9. **Other Business**

a. Approval of Minutes – Vice-Chair Johnson made a motion to approve the minutes of January 21, 2017, as edited by the Board. Member Brown seconded, and the motion passed with all in favor, except Stumpf and Blouin abstaining.

b. Other –

Members asked who is responsible for the Christmas decorations. Heath McAllister has the contract to do the Christmas decorations. There is zero décor on some of them. Holcomb had this discussion last meeting. We need to discuss with him the sparsity of the decorations in places. There is nothing on City Hall. Member Richards mentioned that Eaton's had to buy the wreath that they have on their door. The trees are very sparsely lit. The Board would need to talk to Marty Manahan. Member Richards – Why weren't more trees done this year? Is there a reason that the decorations are less? Member Stumpf suggested that a tree light inventory be done at the end of each year so that we know what will be needed at the beginning of next year.

Chair Collin started a discussion about getting free Wi-Fi downtown. The merchants get a lot of requests for it. Ms. Viens-Liese also mentioned that getting music downtown and in City Hall park would make people want to spend more time there. Mr. Sawyer stated that he would look into what options are available.

10. Public Comment – Chair Collin read a letter from Vicki Eaton requesting that business owners and employees stop parking in the downtown business district. Vicki Eaton would also send to the St. Albans Messenger. She is bringing it to the police chief. Member Holcomb would like free parking in the garage on Saturday and Sunday. It was said that Vicki Eaton is going to talk to Dominic Cloud – City Manager. Enforcement of the two-hour parking limit was criticized.

11. Adjourn – Member Holcomb made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:40. Member Richards seconded it. It passed unanimously.