

**MEETING MINUTES  
ST. ALBANS CITY COUNCIL AND  
ST. ALBANS RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL WORKING MEETING  
6:30 PM WEDNESDAY JULY 11, 2018  
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN STREET**

**DRAFT**

**City Council Members Present:** Tim Smith, Mayor; Michael McCarthy; Chad Spooner; Kate Laddison

**Recreation Commission Members Present:** Bryan DesLauriers, Morrell Bunbury, Peggy Manahan, Megan Manahan, Mike Zemianek,

**Staff Members Present:** Dominic Cloud, City Manager; Kelly Viens, Recreation Director; Andrew Gratton, Recreation Program Director; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Wendy Coy, minute taker; Mark Mariano, Weston & Sampson.

1. **Open Meeting** – Meeting called to order at 6:30 pm
  - a. **Consider any additions or deletions to the agenda** – Mayor Smith stated that they would like to move the public comment to the end of the meeting
  
2. **Working Meeting:**
  - a. **Goals of the Study:**
    - i. **Brief explanation of what we have currently and, ultimately, the end goal** – Mark Mariano, Project Manager with Weston & Sampson started the presentation. The ultimate goal tonight is to provide a sense of direction as to where the project is going; to weigh the pros and cons and to explore the features that the City would like to see at the pool. The pool was constructed in 1981. It was a cast in place concrete pool. It is used for competitions, day camps and the City. It is at the west end of town near the school. The building is original with the pool. It is a single wide with a timber roof. It has locker rooms, center concourse area, bathrooms and a life guard area. Major upgrades were done to the filter system and every year, general maintenance was provided. The fact that the general maintenance has been enough in thirty eight years is impressive but the technology and use has changed.
  - b. **Review of Current Facility:**
    - i. **Description of Findings** – A lot of water is lost each year due to cold pool, wasted money and wasted chemicals. If it is not actively managed, it could become a health hazard. It can continue to operate but it will continue to fail. There are issues with the control joints, expansion joints and the pool wall. Once water penetrates the grout, it is hard to stop. The original gutter pipe was cast iron. Cast iron and chlorine are not compatible. Between the grout and piping most of the water is lost. There is a crack around the entire deck. Water has infiltrated out due to original construction practices. The joint is at or below the current water level. Water is getting behind the gutter and causing a void.

There is no expansion joint around the pool deck. The deck itself is in okay shape. There are parts that have cracked and shifted. Every freeze thaw cycle it will move. The fencing around the pool is not up to current standards. It is a two inch gap not a one inch gap allowing someone to climb the fence. Sand filters are pulling from the collector tank. The room is a small tight room for an operator. There is not a lot of ventilation. The building may not have the proper freeze protection that is required. There is not a large enough building to provide all of the programs that the Rec department is offering. There is no hot water at the facility. In terms of ADA compliant, Vermont doesn't have their own codes so they deferred back to the National Standards. There is a 3 inch rise not a ¼ inch at the entrance which makes it hard for handicap access. Some of the turning radii are tight. Each section of the report provides recommendations for repair or states that there is no recommendation to repair it. It provided estimates for rehabilitation costs. The estimated service life on the current pool is 1-3 years. It will take an estimated 1.4 million to bring the facility up to code compliance and will give another 15 years to the facility. A majority of costs would be demolition. There is \$200,000 in repairs required to the existing pool. They held 10% for project contingency. The estimate is based on other projects that they have done in the area. Rutland and Winooski has a situation where it was no longer safe to have a person in the pool. Rutland built on a dump site and had an 8-10 inch gap on their deck. They were losing thousands of gallon of water each year into the river. The pool at Winooski was a masonry block wall with a liner. They were losing 4 inches of water per day in the pool. Rutland decided to replace the pool. They closed in 2014 and reopened this year. Winooski closed in 2016 and their bond vote is coming this year. It is hard to cut up a pool and patch it back together and get what the City want out of it. Alderman Spooner asked how long does construction usually take. Mr. Mariano stated that in this area, the physical building can be done at any time. The building of the pool can only be done during 3 months of the year. Alderman Spooner stated that if the City moved the location, the pool could still be used while it was being rebuilt. Alderman Lassiter asked if the other cities built the same size pools as the original pools. Mr. Mariano stated that they didn't. They provided a separate pool with zero depth entry and a lap swimming pool. Alderman Spooner asked what percentage of time is lost by providing pool time to the public. Ms. Viens stated that the pool is closed 4 evenings a week during to swim meets. There are also private rentals. They try not to rent more than once a week so about 30%. Mr. Mariano stated that St. Albans has a high attendance rate. Ms. Viens stated that on a regular day about 600 use the pool; on a swim meet day there can be 2000 or more. The City only provides 28,000. The main loss that St. Albans has is in water and chemicals. There was not an evaluation done on the dollar value on the yearly budget. Mayor Smith asked if the Recreation department paid for the water. Ms. Viens stated that there was a line on the rec budget that pays for water. Mr. Cloud stated that the City could check on that. The larger opportunity for cost savings

is the maintenance costs. Alderman Spooner stated that when he was younger, the entire family went to pool. Now very few parents go to pool. The water is cold and it is a small facility. He believes that if the City built a bigger pool there would be more people going. Mayor Smith asked if an estimate was done as to what the water loss was per day / week. Ms. Viens stated that there is a 1 inch pipe running for twenty-four seven so they could be losing up to 2 million gallons per year. Alderman Spooner asked that the part of the report stating that the starting blocks need to be removed be taken out of the report as there are no starting blocks. Ms. Viens stated that they cannot host events that are a part of USA Swimming due the pool not being up to standards. Mayor Smith asked how much larger the pool could be if the current filter system was reused. Mr. Mariano stated that they would need to run numbers.

**c. Outline Recreation Commission and Public's vision:**

- Competition Pool –
    - a. 8 lane outdoor pool. Meets USA Swim standards can be rented out. Pool would be heated. Very few places in Vermont have that.
    - b. 4-6 lane indoor pool – used for training and smaller scale meets
  - Teaching Pool – Swim classes, physical therapy, aerobics classes. Would be a little bit warmer. Can put a zero entry on the teaching pool but will lengthen the pool.
  - Family Pool\* – zero depth entry with spray features, a slide for kids to play.
  - New locker rooms – space to accommodate 500 people
  - Meeting rooms for up to 100 people
  - Classrooms
  - Lifeguard and first aid areas
  - Concession area
  - Possible cabana for rental and private use
  - Pool Manager office
  - Additional Storage
  - Leasing program for physical therapy
- \*Always recommend two pools for redundancy.

Mr. Cloud stated that, with the current list, he counted four pools. He asked what the feasibility was of a domed pool. Mr. Mariano stated that it was always an option but it is a challenge in this area. The operational costs would be through the roof. Mr. Cloud that if a year round component is a definite element, there would need to be two pools. Mr. Mariano stated that if the City wanted to take the indoor route, there could be a teaching pool and a smaller competition pool. He suggested a minimum two pool approach. The City could also spend a little more on the façade of the indoor pool and have doors that can open. Alderwoman Lassiter stated that she loved the idea of an indoor pool and the outdoor pool is so successful that she couldn't see not having it. Alderman Spooner asked if Brannon's pool was too expensive to use regularly. Ms. Viens stated that it was.

Alderwoman Lassiter asked why Brannon's does not host competitions. Ms. Viens that the pool was not deep enough. There is no spectator seating and no starting blocks. Mr. Sawyer asked if it was safe to say that we cannot do two pools at the current site. Mr. Mariano stated that it would be a tight fit as they would be up against the school and the wetlands. Mr. Cloud stated that they could build an outdoor family pool and an indoor competition pool. Mr. Sawyer stated that the City needs to focus on what is the pool that makes the most sense to use year round. Alderman Lassiter stated that a family area, splash pad and zero entry would be best outside. Mayor Smith stated that a business plan is going to determine what the City goes in. Alderman Spooner asked if the City could do a community survey. Ms. Veins stated that the Recreation Department wanted to get direction from the Council first. Alderman McCarthy stated that a problem with a survey, at this point, is that you will get suggestions for features that are not feasible. Bennington has an indoor rec center that has been there for years. Mayor Smith stated that he would like a timeline as to when a decision have to be made. Mr. Mariano stated that they needed one year for financial feasibility studies. Mayor Smith asked if there should be a bond vote in March. Mr. Cloud stated that he that it was too soon. There needs to be a little more momentum and direction. He asked if the year round component was important. Member Zemianek stated that it was as it would only be a 60 day pool if it was strictly outdoors. Alderwoman Lassiter stated that she had a concern that it will only be used as often as Brannon's pool has been. Member Manahan stated that the Rec department does such a good job with programming that she didn't see that happening. Chair Manahan stated that the hospital could use it. Alderman McCarthy stated that the City could include hospital and Rise VT. Ms. Viens stated that, during the last two weeks of the pool, BFA does PE classes there. They could offer that to BFA year around. There could be people in the pool from 7:00 am – 9:00 pm. If the Rec department had more time they could expand programming. Member Bunbury stated that kids can forget their lessons over the winter months. Ms. Viens stated that there was a potential for people to use the pool for exercise.

**d. Discuss sites for Potential Facility**

- i. **Current Site** – Pros: Current buildings could be reused. Utility infrastructure is there. Parking is shared. The existing filter system could be reused. Cons: It is a tight space. There is high ground water and poor soils. Any expansion would limit green space. It would cost 6-7 million. The site is a challenge as it is a very tight space.
- ii. **DPW Garage Site** – Mr. Mariano stated that he liked this site the most. Pros: The current building is a steel erected building that can be built off of. The current building can be used for the desired indoor elements. It has sprinkler systems, water, gas, three phase power and can accommodate a six lane pool plus a LTS pool. There is also space to expand the program. Cons: There are some environmental concerns. There would need to be a site cleanup. There is high ground water, poor soil and a parking crunch with ball fields. The site is about 5 acres. Alderman Spooner stated that this site would be good for pedestrians.
- iii. **Fonda Site** – **Pros:** This is a large open space with many possibilities. **Cons:** The challenge is that you need to dig into the ground and there is no building to

reuse. This site would also require cleanup. It would have a higher cost of construction. Traffic could be an issue.

- e. **Additional Topics and Discussion** – Mr. Cloud stated that a good place to start was to get an amount for improvements at the existing site. Alderman Spooner asked if there was a reason that Hard’ack was not on the list of possible sites. Mr. Gratton stated that the site is too far away. Chair Manahan asked how much farther away was Hard’ack. Mr. Mariano stated that the challenge is utilities. It would need public water and sewer. It was decided that there didn’t need to be an estimate for building at Fonda. Alderman McCarthy stated that it would be hard for the public to get over the stigma of the Fonda site. Mr. Cloud stated that the DPW could move to Fonda. Mr. Mariano stated that he should have an estimate within 2-3 months.
3. **Public Comment** – Tiffany, a swim mom present at the meeting, can think of at least 50 families that drive to Essex weekly. During the Winter swim, she would drive home to pick up her children then back to Burlington for practice. She would love to have it here as would many parents who do the same thing.
4. **Other Business** – None.
5. **Meeting Adjourned at 8:20 pm.**