

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
COUNCIL CHAMBER - CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2021, AT 6:30 PM

Approved December 27, 2021

Board Members Present - KarenMarie Peltier, Chair (via Zoom); Evan Champagne, Vice Chair (via Zoom); Stephen Poston; John Morrie; Ric Lavallee (arrived 6:42 PM).

Board Members Absent - Erik Johnson, Alternate; Elizabeth Reed, Alternate.

City Staff Present - Sara Gabaree, Property Services Manager; Angela Bernard, Minute Taker

B. Open Meeting - K. Peltier called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

1. Pledge of Allegiance - Pledge was recited.
2. Assign Alternates (as necessary) - None.
3. Consider any additions or deletions to agenda - None.

C. Design Review – Consideration of the following applications:

1. Case 2021-007 / Champlain Housing Trust / 11-13 Lake Street / Parcel # 23049011

Applicant seeks review for a new awning. Property is in the B-1 Central Business Zoning District and the DR-1 Traditional Downtown Design Review District.

K. Peltier introduced the case and opened the floor for questions and comments from the board.

S. Gabaree introduced a fabric swatch that the applicant submitted to represent the color and type of fabric of the new awning. Color is dark green.

E. Champagne asked what color the frame would be. S. Gabaree answered aluminum, based on the applicant's supplied information. E. Champagne suggested black or dark green would be nice.

K. Peltier pointed out that there's no other aluminum on the building, which is a historical structure. She mentioned that the plans don't indicate whether or not the aluminum would be covered.

S. Poston said it's a straightforward plan but that he agrees with K. Peltier and E. Champagne that the frame should be black.

J. Morrie said most awning frames are aluminum but said that doesn't mean the board can't specify and ask for either black or green. He suggested that green would be better because it would blend.

K. Peltier commented that the applicant wasn't present to answer questions and she would like to postpone. J. Morrie said the board could make the recommendation and then if the applicant doesn't like the recommendation, then they can come back to answer questions. K. Peltier said the board could make the motion with conditions in place. E. Champagne said he would like to make conditions to include that it's a black, straight-edge frame.

K. Peltier suggested tabling or postponing the case until the board can get all the answers they want.

J. Morrie asked about size of the awning. E. Champagne said there were two different sizes presented to the board in two different documents. J. Morrie said it's a big awning.

E. Champagne agreed that the subject should be postponed until the applicant or someone acting as their agent could appear in person.

Motion by E. Champagne to postpone the case pending participation of the applicant and until the board can get more information. Second by J. Morrie. Case was postponed at 6:41 PM.

D. Other Business

1. Approve meeting minutes

K. Peltier asked for correction on previous minutes, and requested for all future meeting minutes, to indicate who is present in person and who attended via Zoom.

E. Champagne requested additional clarification that the board was requesting a light fixture that is "dark sky compliant."

Motion by E. Champagne to approve the minutes with the included notation of "dark sky compliant" and to include which members attended online vs. in person. Second by S. Poston. Minutes approved with K. Peltier abstaining at 6:47 PM.

2. Sign Updates

S. Gabaree told the board that she recently approved two new signs for Nourish at the business's new building (the Ralston Building) on Main Street.

E. Champagne requested an update for how long signs can stay up once a business has closed. S. Gabaree told the board she found the regulation regarding this subject and cited it for the board, stating that signs "shall be removed within 30 days of written notice," and that any surface from which the sign is removed should be restored so that no remnant of the previous sign remains.

K. Peltier asked about enforcement. S. Gabaree said the city can give written notice and follow up per letter of inquiry but after that there is no enforcement procedure in the regulations.

E. Champagne said there needs to be a timeframe for when the written notice is sent out, signaling the start of the 30-day notice, or the board should recommend that one be established.

K. Peltier said there also needs to be an enforcement procedure in place that indicates what the consequences are if compliance with the regulation is not met. J. Morrie asked how the board would go about issuing a change the enforcement procedure. He questioned if the board should go before City Council to change it.

K. Peltier said she and S. Gabaree could look into it to see what the procedure for implementing an enforcement would be. E. Champagne said the timeframe is the missing piece for him. He suggested proposing to the city that a solid timeframe should be established that includes a more consistent window for when the written notice goes out.

3. Enforcement Updates - None.

4. Other -

S. Gabaree brought up the case for T. Minor from the previous meeting and told the board that, while the board gave a favorable recommendation, the DRB denied the case. T. Minor is planning to appeal to the DRB after making changes, but he and his engineer are wondering if the case needs to come before the DAB again, even though he isn't changing anything in the design that was previously approved of by the DAB. The DRB denied the proposal on the grounds that the site plan didn't specifically address the removal of snow or specifically demonstrate the plan for storm water runoff. R Lavallee suggested the applicant doesn't need to come back because the two issues that are in the DRB case don't involve the DAB. J. Morrie, S. Poston, and E. Champagne agreed that if there is nothing changing in the criteria that they reviewed there's no need for the applicant to return to the DAB. K. Peltier abstained from comment.

R. Lavallee asked about business signs and temporary signage. He said he has noticed that a few businesses leave banners, or temporary signs, up for an extended amount of time. He questioned how long should banners should be allowed vs the presence of a real sign. K. Peltier said she would have to look it up. R. Lavallee suggested the board should consider in the future whether there needs to be a rule for how long a banner should be in place of a real sign. K. Peltier requested the S. Gabaree look into existing regulations regarding temporary signage / banners / sandwich boards and how long they're allowed to stay up. E. Champagne said during the height of the pandemic there was a temporary allowance for different / additional signs for businesses. He questioned whether that temporary allowance is still in place and whether extra signage is still allowed.

5. Confirm next meeting date: **December 27, 2021, at 6:30 pm**

S. Poston said he might have a conflict.

E. Public Comment - None.

K. Peltier adjourned the meeting at 7:03 PM.