

**ST. ALBANS CITY DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
6:30 PM MONDAY DECEMBER 17, 2018  
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN STREET**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Board Members Present:** KarenMarie Peltier, Chair; Evan Champagne, Vice-Chair; John Morrie; Elizabeth Reed; Stephen Poston;

**Board Members Absent:** None.

**Staff Members Present:** David Southwick, Planning Administrator and Wendy Coy, Minute Taker

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting called to order at 6:34 pm
  - a. **Consider any additions or deletions to the agenda** – Chair Peltier added a discussion under Other Business.
  
2. **Design Review – Consideration of the following applications:**
  - a. **Case DAB 2018-024 / 93 Federal Street / Parcel # 23033083** – The applicant seeks a favorable recommendation for a change of branding and signage. John Olson was present as the applicant. At the Breakyard, they are looking at going from an unbranded station to a Valero station. Valero changed their branding earlier this year. It has more of a bluish color and a different canopy. There will be a more traditional price sign with the Valero emblem on the top. He reviewed what the size of the canopy would look like. The pump count will remain unchanged. There will be a curved fascia and will be internally illuminated. There will be a blue light as an eyebrow to the canopy if they are allowed. He showed an example of a newly renovated station in Alburgh, VT that was just finished last month. Member Champagne asked if there would be any lights at the pumps. Mr. Olson stated that there wouldn't be, as the canopy has downlighting that would light the area and the prices would be backlit at the pumps. Member Reed asked how long it would take to make the change. Mr. Olson stated that it would depend on the permitting and the measuring of the canopy. The install would be a two day job. Chair Peltier asked if the picture was an exact look. Mr. Olson stated that it would be an 8x8 sign. They would keep the square footage the same just in the Valero format and more vertical. Member Morrie asked if the sign would be like what is in Alburgh. Mr. Olson stated that it would be smaller. Member Champagne expressed a concern that the signage needed to convey what the business is and what is relevant but doesn't need to go overboard. There does not need to be lights all over the place. Due to the size of the canopy, he does not see the eyebrow as an option. The eyebrow would be for more of a high traffic or high-speed area. He asked if the downlights were controlled by a dimmer. Mr. Olson stated that the lights would stay as they are. They would not change. Member Poston stated that replacing the signage but not increasing the square footage was good. He felt that the picture of Valero station is too bright. Member Poston clarified that there would be no new signage or graphics for the building itself. Mr. Olson stated that the building would stay the same. Member Champagne asked

about the time frame of starting the project. Mr. Olson stated that it takes six to eight weeks for the order to be delivered once the materials are measured. He believes that Valero would like to have it done by the first quarter of next year. Member Champagne stated that he didn't want to have a sign on every face of the canopy. Mr. Olson stated that there would only be signage on two sides. He stated that the signs would be on the front side on Federal street and the side on Kingman Street. Member Champagne stated that the color scheme of the building was green and white. Due to that color scheme, he would like the Valero blue to taper into the white near the building. Chair Peltier stated that the picture of the canopy given to the Board would have the blue going into the building one side. Member Champagne stated that it seems, with the amount of corners on the canopy, it could be arranged so it fades into white near the building. Chair Peltier stated that the Board wanted it to blend and not be an eye sore. Member Champagne asked if the station would still have non-ethanol gas. Mr. Olson stated that it would. Chair Peltier clarified the placement of the logo and the Valero sign. Mr. Olson stated that they have a non-traditional canopy so they would need to be creative. Member Poston suggested that the main canopy receive signage and the canopy near the building needed to be white. Member Morrie asked if they would be doing anything on the back side. Mr. Olsen stated that it would follow the rest of the canopy but would probably not have any signage. Member Champagne stated that the reason the Board was being so critical was that signage was limited downtown and the Board doesn't want the sign to be disproportional with the rest of downtown. Member Morrie stated that this station was one of the few gas stations left in downtown. Member Champagne made a motion to approve the application with the following stipulations: The motion was seconded by Member Morrie. It passed unanimously.

1. The square footage of new signage flag remains the same.
2. The new signage and logo scheme is limited to the canopy over the pumps.
3. The canopy extending back to the building, on both sides, will be white.
4. The canopy over pumps will have the Valero logo and signage. There will be a V logo Federal Street facing North and the Valero sign facing Center street. There will be no illuminating eyebrow.

**Other Business –**

- a. **Approval of November 26, 2018 Minutes** – Member Champagne made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Member Reed seconded the motion. It passed with two abstentions by Member Morrie and Chair Peltier.
- b. **Other –**
  1. **Sign Updates** – None
  2. **Enforcement Updates** – The Grind: The Board received an email response from the owner of The Grind stating that he could not comply with the Board's request for compliance as, when they are roasting coffee, the scent disturbs the neighbors. Chair Peltier previously discussed this response with Member Morrie. Member Morrie stated with the entire situation. The Board gave their ruling in June 2017. There have been numerous attempts to contact the owner concerning the pipe and, when he finally comes back with an email stating that the neighbors living above a coffee shop have trouble with the strong smell of

coffee. They should expect the smell of coffee. He needs to fix the vent. Chair Peltier pointed out that the roasting beans really stinks. Member Morrie stated that three feet isn't going to make much of a difference. The owner should do what the Board originally approved. Member Champagne stated that the Board did specifically go through every aspect of that pipe and the box around it. He stated that the owner didn't seem to have a problem with it at the time and the Board was very clear. It has been over a year. He felt that if the owner had come back immediately, it would be different. Chair Peltier stated that, as a business owner who feels over regulated, she understands how the owner is feeling but, to let it go this long without returning phone calls or showing up at a meeting, he has not been working with the Board. If the owner wanted a compromise, it should have been suggested before now. It has been too long. Member Reed expressed a concern that the Board, in its original ruling, didn't state how long he had to comply. Member Morrie made a motion to enforce the original design of a small pipe, the minimal amount to place a hood on, coming out from the building. Member Reed seconded the motion. It passed unanimously. The Board agreed to give the owner two months to comply.

3. **Member Collin resignation** – Chair Peltier talked to Member Collin at length about her resignation. Member Collin has some frustrations that, early on when all regulations were worked through with Mr. Sawyer, there was a sense of collaboration with the City. The City seems concerned with historic preservation but depending on who is coming with an application, the City wants the Board to look the other way. Chair Peltier doesn't think she is wrong. It seems that certain people have with a hard time with the City but some get a free pass. Chair Peltier disagreed with the one landlord that Member Collin brought up but, since that conversation, she has met different people who have had problems. One landlord has had so many problems that he has sold every one of his rental properties in St. Albans and went to another place where it would be easier to be a landlord. She, personally, has been waiting for five years for a variance from the State for the windows on her property. She feels that there is too much bureaucracy. She wants to make sure that is still affordable to fix up a place in St. Albans. She believes that the Design Advisory Board has a history of being really compassionate and working with people. Member Reed stated that she has a concern with the affordability of living in St. Albans. Mr. Butterfield is slowly buying up everything in St. Albans and Taylor Housing is really expensive. She stated that St. Albans can't afford to have places where the rent is that high. Member Morrie stated that the property was very expensive to remodel. Remodeling is always more expensive than rebuilding. Member Reed expressed a concern about the same names appearing on the applications. Chair Peltier also expressed a frustration that the Development Review Board told a developer that they didn't have to come back to this Board if everything was approved by the DRB.

- c. **2019 Meeting Dates:** Mr. Southwick stated that, at the last meeting, the Board approved the calendar with the knowledge that the November and December dates

would probably change. The agreement was to leave them in their regular spots and that the Board would discuss them as they get closer to those dates.

- d. **Confirm next meeting date: January 28, 2018 6:30 p.m.** Approved, noting that Chair Peltier and Member Reed will not be in attendance. It was further noted that Chair Peltier would not be able to attend the February, 2019 meeting but would return in time for the March, 2019 meeting.

**3. Public Comment – None**

4. **Adjourn** – Chair Peltier made a motion to adjourn. Member Reed seconded the motion. It passed unanimously at 7:31 p.m.

**January 28, 2019 - Motion was made by Member Morrie to accept Minutes with changes, motion seconded by Member Poston, motion passed unanimously.**

APPROVED

