

**MEETING MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY DESIGN ADVISORY BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
VIA REMOTE CONFERENCE
6:30 PM Monday, May 18, 2020**

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

Board Members Absent: Elizabeth Reed, Dana Scofield

Staff Members Present: David Southwick, Planning and Permitting Administrator; Tammi DiFranco, Property Services Assistant, taking minutes.

Public Present: Laz Scangas, Kristen Shapiro, Amy Demetrowitz, Chris Snyder

A. Open Meeting –KM.Peltier called the meeting to order at 6:29 PM

1. Consider any additions or deletions to agenda- none
2. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Design Review – Consideration of the following applications:

1. **Case #2020-003 / Champlain Housing Trust / 20 Congress Street / Parcel # 11022020. Applicant seeks an amendment to a design element in DAB Case #2018-021 and DRB Case #2018-024. This property is located in the Business 1 (B1) Zoning District, the Traditional Downtown (DR-1) Review District, and the St. Albans Historic District.**

KM.Peltier invited the applicants to describe the application.

Applicants introduced themselves: Amy Demetrowitz for Champlain Housing Trust, Chris Snyder for Snyder Construction, and Kristen Shapiro for Champlain Housing Trust.

C.Snyder stated that they are presenting a potential modification of the materials on the first floor exterior. A.Demetrowitz stated that they had originally proposed pine wood siding for the first floor exterior. They are now concerned with how the wood siding will wear over time. She presented photos of other recent projects in the area that used the proposed pine siding; they have bleached out and dark stained area. The appearance after just a short time is dingy and worn. They propose keeping the wood siding in the covered entrance area, but they would like to change the exposed areas to what is being used on the rest of the building.

S.Poston stated that having the wood color on the first floor brings the scale of the building down and makes it look less tall. He asked the applicant if they are open to a contrasting color on the lower level. A.Demetrowitz stated that she does not want so many colors on the building that it looks stripey. Maybe they could

extend down the same dark brown as the border. J.Morrie proposed using a light tan on the bottom and staining the wood entryway to match the tan siding.

E.Champagne first wanted to commend whoever discovered that this material would not last. He was under the assumption that it was a faux wood. He agreed with S.Poston and does not like the look of bringing the gray down to the first floor. He proposed other products with composite board that have the look of wood that could even be used on the entryway. KM.Peltier also agreed with the look of the pine. It does help with the terms of scale. She was inclined to go with the suggestion to use a faux wood material.

A.Demetrowitz stated that it has been difficult to find a faux wood material that is affordable. C.Snyder stated that a hardie board with a wood front is possible. The problem is that it comes primed and getting it to look like wood is hard. They can pursue something that looks like wood.

A.Demetrowitz asked if they could receive approval to change the material to a wood like material or the cement board painted. KM.Peltier stated that they could not give a blanket approval without seeing the product first. E.Champagne stated that if the material is similar enough, D.Southwick and KM.Peltier could look at it and approve. If the color scheme is going to be changed, it would need to come back before the entire board. He suggested Allura as a brand that he has used for siding that has a wood look. C.Snyder stated that they have used Allura in the past and will take a look at it. S.Poston was in agreement with E.Champagne and was pleased with the thought being put into the long term wear of the building products.

D.Southwick stated that if they could get the samples together quickly, they would be ready to present to the DRB in two weeks. The DRB meets the first Monday of the month, with the possibility of recessing for two weeks. C.Snyder stated that he thought they could pull together some possibilities to present in two weeks.

No Motion.

- 2. Case #2020-004 / Maple Run School District - BFA High School / 71 South Main Street / Parcel # 25079077 Applicant seeks a favorable recommendation for a change of materials and color. *This property is located in the Business 2 (B2) Zoning District and the Downtown Expansion (DR-2) Review District.***

KM.Peltier invited Laz Scangas, representing Arnold Scangas Architects, to describe the application.

L.Scangas stated that he had two requests to present. The first request was presented in sketch SK-A15, the north elevation of the old hospital section as you

come in from Fairfield Street. There is currently no cohesiveness in the building appearance. In sketch SK-A16, they propose to paint the first floor brick the same color as the brick that has already been painted. The old hospital section to the west (right side of the sketch) would remain unpainted brick. The two rows of block under the window will also be replaced and painted to match the building.

S.Poston stated that he likes the proposal and that it is a less fragmented look. L.Scangas stated that it is the least expensive, simple solution to make it look more unified. S.Poston asked how far around the building the paint would extend. L.Scangas stated that they would go all around that end of the building.

The second request referred to the third floor of the old hospital. It is currently not being maintained and has resulted in rotten wood and trim. There is one section that is currently vinyl siding. They are proposing to remove the existing wood clapboards and install vinyl siding to match the paint. They have found a Herring Bone color that matches closely to the paint that is already there. The school is trying to reduce maintenance on the outside of the building, which is why they are requesting vinyl siding and PVC trim. KM.Peltier added that she was able to see the siding sample and that it matched very well to the paint currently there. S.Poston stated a concern that the trim match and be a quality product. With vinyl siding, the trim quality is an important detail.

E.Champagne stated that he does not think vinyl siding has a place on a commercial building and that he does not want to set a precedent by approving its use. He thinks it should be cement board. J.Morrie agreed with E.Champagne. He stated that the cement board will be more expensive, but will look better in the long term. L.Scangas pointed out that cement board has to be repainted at some point. At three stories in the air, you won't really be able to tell the difference between vinyl and cement board. It's also an affordability issue. If they can't do the vinyl and can't afford the cement board, they may just repair what is there and leave it. E.Champagne stated that he understands the maintenance issue. If it is a cost issue, he thinks they should just repair what is there and leave it. S.Poston agreed with E.Champagne that they should not set a precedent by approving the vinyl for use on a commercial building.

Motion by E.Champagne to approve the project with conditions. Approve the painting scheme on existing masonry as presented on SK-A16. The vinyl siding being proposed for the third story is not acceptable. Applicant may either repair what currently exists or use a fiber-cement board that matches existing color scheme presented in SK-A17. Second by J.Morrie. Approved with all in favor.

C. Other Business

1. Approve March 23, 2020 meeting minutes – D&V

Motion by S.Poston to approve the minutes with corrections. Second by E.Champagne. Approved with all favor.

2. Other
 - a. Sign Updates-
 - i. The Frozen Ogre is moving to Kingman Street, new signs
 - ii. Waiting on final sign for new Indian Restaurant at 133 N Main.
 - iii. The Grind and The Main Squeeze are working on joint signage
 - iv. The Drake recently opened and has a new sign
 - v. Rebranding of Century 21 on N. Main
 - b. Enforcement Updates-
 - i. Most of the current enforcement has been parking issues
 - ii. The Colonial has cleaned up their sign. Waiting on removal of old sign.
 - iii. E.Champagne asked about Walgreens window signs. D.Southwick contacted Walgreens and worked on an arrangement for window signs. 4 windows were cleared of window screen signs, the remaining signs reduced their height for a total allowed coverage of 25%.
3. Confirm next meeting date: **June 22, 2020 6:30 pm-** meeting format (at city hall or remote) is to be determined by what is permitted at that time.

D. Public Comment- None

Motion by KM.Peltier to adjourn. Second by J.Morrie and approved with all in favor at 7:18 PM.

On January 25, 2021, a motion to accept the minutes with changes was made by S.Poston, seconded by E.Champagne, carried unanimously.