

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NO. MAIN ST.
6:30 PM MONDAY, JANUARY 3, 2022

DRAFT

Board Members Present: Dick Thayer; Denis LaPointe, Alternate and Acting Chair (via Zoom); Matt Preedom (via Zoom); Emily Biron (via Zoom entered at 6:35 PM).

Board Members Absent: Rebecca Pfeiffer, Chair; Tanner McCuin.

City Staff Present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development (via Zoom); Sara Gabaree, Property Services Manager; Angela Bernard, Minute Taker.

Members of the Public Present: Rob Coburn; Luke Willey; Peter Garceau (via Zoom); Becky Manahan; Mike Connor; Todd Minor; Fred Connor (via Zoom); Dave Blodgett (via Zoom, entered at 6:33 PM).

- A. OPEN MEETING - **D. LaPointe (acting Vice Chair) opened the meeting at 6:31 PM.**
1. Pledge of Allegiance - Pledge was recited.
 2. Assignment of Alternate(s) - if necessary - D. LaPointe was assigned alternate.
 3. Consider any additions or deletions to agenda - None.

1. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SEGMENT – PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case #2022-001 / Jolley Associates / 139 South Main Steet / Parcel 26079139.

Applicant Seeks Conditional Use Review. This property is located in the B2 Transitional Business Zoning District and the DR4-Gateway Design Review District.

D. LaPointe introduced the case and opened the hearing.

S. Gabaree entered the staff report into the record. She asked the board if they would like her to go in-depth on the report or enter the written report as is. D. Lapointe, E. Biron, and D. Thayer all agreed that the written report is sufficient.

There were no conflicts of interest declared from board members.

The floor was opened up to questions from the board. M. Preedom asked if the city would have approved the permit without having a hearing if it weren't for regulations. S. Gabaree said she would have gone through an in-depth review of the request and then would have granted the permit.

The oath was administered.

R. Coburn testified on behalf of the applicant. D. LaPointe asked for a summary of the project. R. Coburn explained that the existing bathroom for the store is not ADA compliant and they would like to put a bathroom elsewhere on the other side of the store and then they would take the current bathroom out. Not adding any new bathrooms, just exchanging one for the other. R. Coburn explained the bathroom as is not safe or ADA compliant because it is only accessible via a step up and a long hallway. D. LaPointe asked if the board has any questions. M. Preedom asked about the size of the new space and bathroom. R. Coburn said 7'X9'. M. Preedom asked if the store is gaining any square footage. R. Coburn answered yes, 7'X9'. D. LaPointe asked how big the old bathroom is, R. Coburn estimated around 2'X4'.

D. LaPointe asked for comments from the public. None.

D. LaPointe closed the hearing.

2. **Combined Review: Case #2022-002 for Conditional Use Review and Case #2022-003 for Site Plan Review / City of St. Albans / 15-21 Lower Newton Street / Parcel 22054015.** This property is located in the Service-Industrial Zoning District and the DR3-Residential Design Review District.

D. LaPointe introduced the first case (#2022-002) and opened the hearing.

No conflicts of interest from the board.

The oath was administered.

S. Gabaree entered the staff report into the record.

D. LaPointe asked if the board had any questions for city staff. E. Biron asked about the existing parking lot that will be on lot 1 and whether it will connect to lot 2. C. Sawyer said no because of a hill and grading. E. Biron asked what that section (future lot 1) is used for. C. Sawyer said it used to be the parking lot for the former building on the site. It is currently being used by the city occasionally as a parking lot and for storage.

D. LaPointe asked about the lines indicating boundaries for the property. P. Garceau shared his screen with an image of the plans indicating the boundaries and where they would be removed, as well as where the new boundaries would be. C. Sawyer pointed out where this made the project a lot without frontage and made it have to go before the DRB.

M Preedom asked about a proposed easement and asked where it would be. P. Garceau indicated where it is. M. Preedom asked about another easement on the property. P. Garceau said it is an existing one already there. M. Preedom asked if it was going to stay or go. P. Garceau said that's a good question and that it would probably go. M. Connor commented that the easement would be asked to be extinguished.

D. LaPointe invited the applicant to explain what the case is about.

P. Garceau said the city staff report covered a lot of it but used the screen to highlight areas of the project for the board.

D. LaPointe asked if members of the public have questions for the applicant. S. Gabaree read from the list of members of the public present. No questions or comments from the public.

M. Connor explained that project would be moving around 60 railroad jobs from Federal Street to a newly constructed building. He said they are excited to be there and happy to work with the city on the project.

D. LaPointe asked how many employees. M Connor said around 60-70 fulltime employees working on railroad lines and switches around the country from this location.

D. LaPointe asked for further questions from the board. None.

D. LaPointe closed the hearing.

D. LaPointe introduced the second case number (case # 2022-003) for this application and opened the hearing.

No conflicts of interest.

The oath was administered.

S. Gabaree entered the staff report into the record. S. Gabaree went through the report section by section, indicating highlighted city staff notes and recommendations for consideration and closer examination by the DRB, including those on lighting, vegetation, grading, parking, etc.

D. LaPointe asked if the applicant received a copy of the report before the meeting. S. Gabaree said yes.

D. LaPointe opened the floor to questions from the board for the city. E. Biron asked about a section on the plan that indicated a lot 3 and whether there is a lot 3. C. Sawyer explained there are only two lots but that lot 2 was once called lot 3 and any remaining lot 3 mentions are leftover.

C. Sawyer said that a construction sequence and schedule was submitted earlier in the day the day of the meeting and sent to the board.

D. LaPointe asked the applicant for a summary of the project. P. Garceau once again shared his screen with the drawings of the site plan. He highlighted the differences

between the access points, including the current access point and the alternate access, which would go away if and when the city constructs a planned, new abutting road in the area.

P. Garceau highlighted areas of the site plan, including the parking area and the layout plan with utility locations, sewer and water enter from the west side, power and electrical come through the front. Stormwater is original to the site. P. Garceau showed the board a grading plan and how the elevation will change because the building itself is proposed about ten feet lower than the property line. P. Garceau indicated areas for snow storage and explained that there are plans to export snow from the property as needed. P. Garceau indicated vegetation and what screening would remain once the construction is complete. P. Garceau then highlighted where lighting would be placed, followed by a lighting illumination sheet that showed how none of the lighting would spill off the property.

D. LaPointe asked if the board had any questions for the applicant.

M. Preedom asked about the timing of the lighting. M. Connor said they would use daylight sensors and a timeclock backup for automatic lighting. M. Preedom asked if the lights would be on all night. M. Connor said yes. M. Preedom asked about the parcel number. P. Garceau said it is on the application. M. Preedom asked about the eastern setback and the staff note on it. P. Garceau indicated the setback. C. Sawyer asked P. Garceau to speak to how the setback would block the lighting for neighbors. P. Garceau said there is a ten-foot drop and also a thick tree line with a fence on top of the wall (six feet on top of ten feet) and the lights on the other side of the building are 20 feet high so there shouldn't be any lighting spilling over to the neighbors. Lighting is sitting quite a bit lower than neighboring properties.

D. LaPointe asked about the size of the lighting in comparison to the size of the building. The lights would be a little higher than the building. P. Garceau said they are downward facing lights and that once the design is complete, they will actually be about the same size as the building, not taller.

D. LaPointe asked about noise abatement. He inquired about where the air conditioning units would be. M. Connor explained they are evaluating different systems and have yet to make a decision about what that will look like. They plan to release that information within the next couple of months. M. Connor said when it comes to noise abatement and buffering, the best buffer will be the tree line that they plan to leave in place. D. LaPointe then asked about the fence. P. Garceau said it is a six-foot vinyl fence. D. LaPointe agreed that would help buffer the noise.

M. Preedom asked about whether the fence and retaining wall affect the setback. C. Sawyer said no that they help act as a buffer.

C. Sawyer asked if the DRB members received the construction sequence and schedule. D. LaPointe asked for it to be entered into the record that the board can consult later. M.

Connor provided opening date of April 1, 2022, closing date in December 2022, with interior finishes underway by November 2022.

D. LaPointe asked for further indication of where plants and vegetation would be. P. Garceau referred him to the page in the plans where it indicates where the plantings will be. C. Sawyer asked if any existing trees would remain. P. Garceau said almost all would be removed and replaced. M. Connor said there are a lot of undesirable species on the property and no trees of any value.

D. LaPointe opened the floor to comments from the public. None.

D. LaPointe closed the hearing.

3. **Case #2022-004 / Todd Minor / 172 North Main Street / Parcel 22063172.** Applicant seeks Site Plan Review. This property is located in the B2 Transitional Business Zoning District and the DR-2 Downtown Expansion Design Review District.

D. LaPointe introduced the case and opened the hearing.

No conflicts of interest from the board.

The oath was administered.

S. Gabaree entered the staff report into the record. The project has been brought before the board before at the November 2021 meeting and the applicant has returned with supplemental information and drawings. S. Gabaree went through the staff report and highlighted staff notes and recommendations for the board to consider, as well as previous permit applications on the property.

D. LaPointe opened the floor to questions from the board for city staff.

D. LaPointe asked why the request was denied at the November meeting. S. Gabaree said there were a few things missing from the original application.

L. Willey testified on behalf of the applicant and elaborated on the project. He showed a hard copy of the plan in person in council chambers that has a series of corrections. He acknowledged that this is the second time bringing this project before the board. The project is largely the same (nothing about the building that was approved by the DAB has changed) but the site plan is updated. L. Willey explained the property and the project, indicating that no changes are being made to the landscaping or parking. He showed the board two areas that were key to the project's denial at a previous meeting - where stormwater runoff would be directed and where the large snow storage area is include. L. Willey then showed the board where newly added roof drains are on the plan, helping to direct the runoff to the north and away from neighboring, abutting properties.

D. LaPointe opened the floor to questions from the board for the applicant.

D. LaPointe asked about the dumpster on the drawing and asked if it would be placed on gravel and if that is the exact location where the dumpster will be. L. Willey explained that the hard copy in the room in person indicates that the area is a section of expanded gravel, and the dumpster would be located there. It will be moved from its current location near the parking lot to the part in the drawing. D. LaPointe asked about the access and which driveway would be used to access it. There are two. L. Willey said both driveways leading into the property. T. Minor said one of the two driveways is a joint / shared driveway and both are used.

M. Freedom asked about a section of the drawing. L. Willey said it is a brick and gravel area where the stormwater can leave the site without causing erosion. A gravel stabilizing area.

L. Willey touched on notes from the city staff report. On the issue of setbacks, the original application showed just a partial setback. For the updated plan on hard copy in the room, a new ten-foot setback has been added in a couple of areas. On the issue of the construction sequence schedule, one has been included in the plan although it is slightly ambiguous due to the nature that this is an accessory structure. It is expected to be done during the next construction season and within a deadline set by the board.

D. LaPointe asked for an estimate for the time required. L. Willey said a couple months. T. Minor estimated through the course of the summer, around three months. D. LaPointe asked if the garage is for tenant use or owner use. L. Willey explained that hadn't changed from the previous plan and that it would be owner used as a shop, not for tenant use.

L. Willey commented that, in light of the previous denial, they would like to make it clear what they want, which would be either a blanket approval or an approval with conditions. They would like to discuss anything that might come up in deliberative session and answer any questions before the hearing is closed.

D. LaPointe asked for comment from the public. None.

D. LaPointe closed the hearing.

B. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Planning & Development update - C. Sawyer said in the next month or so they should look at DRB procedures and discuss elections for the board. B. Manahan is up for appointment by City Council.
2. Enforcement update - None
3. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Tabled. No quorum of members who attended the previous meeting to approve minutes.
4. Confirm next meeting date and time. **Monday, February 7, 2022, at 6:30 PM**
5. Other - None.

C. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

D. ENTER DELIBERATIVE SESSION

**Motion by M. Freedom to enter deliberative session. Second by D. Thayer.
Approved with all in favor. The board entered deliberative session at 8:25 PM.**

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