

**MEETING MINUTES  
ST. ALBANS CITY DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD  
REGULAR MEETING  
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET, ST. ALBANS, VT  
6:00 PM MONDAY, November 4, 2019**

**APPROVED**

**Board Members Present:** Denis LaPointe; Rebecca Pfeiffer, Vice-Chair; Dick Thayer, Tanner McCuin

**Board Members Absent:** Megan Manahan Bliss, Chair; Owen Manahan

**Staff Members Present:** David Southwick, Planning & Permitting Administrator; Tammi DiFranco, Property Services Assistant, taking Minutes; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development

**Public Present:** See Sign-In Sheet

- A. OPEN MEETING R.Pfeiffer opened the meeting at 6:00 PM
1. Pledge of Allegiance – The Pledge was recited
  2. Consider any additions or deletions to agenda – None
  3. Tanner McCuin was appointed as alternate.

B. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW SEGMENT – PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. **Case #2019-020 / Maple Run Unified School District - BFA High School / 71 South Main Street / Parcel # 23048046 CONTINUANCE** Applicant seeks approval for a Site Plan Review for the additional of a safety and security connector. This property is located in the Business 2 (B2) Zoning District and the Downtown Expansion (DR-2) Design Review District.

R.Pfeiffer invited the applicants to come forward and swore in those wishing to submit testimony.

D.Southwick introduced the application and submitted the staff report for the record (*including the recommendation from the Design Advisory Board (DAB)*).

Peter Garceau gave a quick introduction to the application and introduced the complete site plan with all the missing and requested data added. He introduced the requested traffic study and explained that they had also videotaped buses making the turn from Ferris Street onto Lincoln Avenue. Although the buses can make the turn, it is tight and they cross into the other lane. In Sketch SK-7, they are proposing to widen the lanes at the intersection to allow the buses to make the turn while staying in their lane. The lights are a minor change; they will be relocating two lights. No other sites changes proposed.

Laz Scangas took a moment to clear up past confusion about emergency exits. He introduced a floor plan that more clearly showed where the new emergency exits will be placed, drawing A5.1 and CE 1.2.

D.LaPointe asked if they could explain the numbers and red dots on the traffic report. P.Garceau explained that the number indicates the number of vehicles that went through the intersection at a given time and the arrow indicates the direction the vehicles turned. He is not sure that the red dots have any significance, but they could possibly be locations of stop signs. D.LaPointe asked if the 6 buses were added to the counts in the traffic report. P.Garceau affirmed that yes they are included. D.LaPointe asked if the changes in the intersection and curbing have been discussed with the city. P.Garceau affirmed that they have discussed the plans with the city and that they are ok with it.

R.Pfeiffer stated that they had also requested an alternative bus plan that does not include the use of Ferris Street. P.Garceau answered that the idea is to bring all parent drop-offs to the front on Main Street. The only alternative for the buses not using Ferris is to keep the current bus drop-off location on Academy Drive. If this happens, they will lose 22 parking spaces. R.Pfeiffer pointed out that they originally thought the school was trying to create one point of entry for everyone, but that students will be using entrances all around the building. P.Garceau clarified that the Ferris Street entrance will only be used for the 6 buses. R.Pfeiffer asked about using the Tech Center entrance for the buses. Bill Kimball pointed out that there is no easy way for the buses to turn around at the Tech Center. R.Pfeiffer asked about using Academy Drive as a parent drop off area. L.Scangas stated that they would lose the parking if they did that. When the voters approved this project, one main concern was for additional parking spaces. P.Garceau pointed out that only 6 buses will be rerouted to Ferris Street. This is the 15<sup>th</sup> iteration of the project and it allows for the maximum number of parking spaces, keeps the buses off of Main Street, and still allows BFA to have a centralized entry.

R.Pfeiffer asked for public comment.

**Chip Sawyer**, representing the City, stated that the city has seen the proposed plan for the intersection and accepts the proposal. The city is committed to problem solving with the school on any issues that may arise. He added that when he went to school at BFA, Ferris Street was still open to traffic and probably had much more traffic that the 6 buses will introduce.

**Christina Howe** asked if parents will still be able to drop-off on Academy Drive. B.Kimball stated that they would like to redirect parents to the Main Street entrances. R.Pfeiffer pointed out that the area will be for parking and will be a tight area for drop-off. C.Howe stated that Main Street will still have lots of congestion.

**With no further comments, R.Pfeiffer closed the hearing.**

2. **Case #2019-021 / Robert Bessette / 25 Lakeview Terrace / Parcel # 11050025**  
Applicant seeks to appeal a Zoning Administrator decision denying a second curb cut and driveway. This property is located in the Low Density Residential Zoning District.

R.Pfeiffer invited the applicants to come forward and swore in those wishing to submit testimony.

D.Southwick introduced the application and submitted the staff report for the record (including the recommendation from the Design Advisory Board (DAB)).

Before receiving testimony, D.LaPointe asked D.Southwick to clarify the property line. He was concerned that the neighbor next to the proposed driveway might be bothered by the project. D.Southwick assured that the proposed driveway meets all setbacks from the property line. All the abutting properties have been notified of the case and there have been no objections brought to his attention. R.Pfeiffer clarified that all of the conditions had to be met for the curb cut to be permitted by staff.

Testimony was presented by Christina and Jeremy Howe, who also own 25 Lakeview Terrace. J.Howe explained that Robert Bessette is a disabled veteran. He lives in an apartment that is in the back of the house, which is where the proposed driveway will be located. He needs an easy way to get to his apartment. Currently, he either has to climb a hill that has 6 large boulders for stairs, or go through the garage and up a flight of stairs. With R.Bessette's disabilities, stairs are very difficult for him. He also has someone from Home Health visit him 3 times a week. Having the new driveway will also make his apartment accessible to an ambulance if needed.

R.Pfeiffer asked if his entrance is a separate apartment. J.Howe affirmed that it is. R.Pfeiffer asked if they have considered creating a duplex. J.Howe answered that they had not considered that.

T.McCuin asked if they planned to pave the driveway. C.Howe answered that it would only be gravel. The new plan is to have the driveway only go to the entrance, and not include the turnaround area that is depicted in the sketch. She also pointed out that there is no real curb to access the proposed driveway.

R.Pfeiffer asked for public comment.

Sid Newcombe, 202 High Street, stated that he has no objections to the project. He does believe that the area they are proposing is a city right of way for water and sewer lines. This would only be a problem if the lines ever needed to be dug up, which he thinks the applicant should be aware of. He asked if the Howes would consider outing the driveway behind the house. C.Howe answered that it would be a very steep driveway.

C.Sawyer stated that the city has not checked the right of way map, but will look at it. He pointed out that the city builds roads over the water & sewer lines all the time with the understanding that the roads may need to be torn up to access the lines. He explained that the city created the one curb cut standard to limit the number of access points on the road in low density neighborhoods. A second curb cut is only allowed if the house has only one parking space and the only other way to create a second is with a curb cut. Sawyer stated that he had heard fair housing attorneys say in the past that the city can create a reasonable accommodation for a specific person that will need to be removed if that person no longer resides at the residence. He also stated a second driveway is a new curb cut even if there is no curb, and that it is a two-step process: approval from the DRB and then approval from the city.

Questions were again directed from members of the board.

D.LaPointe asked if the applicant had ever considered coming up the back side of the house since it will allow access from the floor level that Mr. Bessette will need. J.Howe stated that the landscaping with the boulder stairs and the slope of the ground would cause them to have to swing way into the backyard for a rear entrance. D.Southwick presented the property picture and showed that the hill is actually a 1-story steep climb up into the backyard.

**With no further comments, R.Pfeiffer closed the hearing.**

**C. OTHER BUSINESS**

**1. Planning & Development update**

- i. Chip Sawyer & Dave Southwick have been working on minimizing confusion in evidence documentation. D.Southwick pointed out the last page on Case #2019-021, and directed everyone to see the evidence tag on the document. They plan on using this method in the future to differentiate between different versions and updates on evidence. It will also enable them to refer to the specific drawings in decision letters. C.Sawyer added that they are trying to keep track of the latest and newest piece of evidence. When looking through property files, it will help to be able to recognize which is the latest site plan.

**2. Enforcement update**

- i. Staff has added the last two years of DRB & DAB decisions to the Citizen Serve software. Now we know which conditions are still open and which have been met. They are now going through the last two years of permits.
- ii. C.Sawyer reminded the board that board terms are expiring. When terms expire, board members are welcome to reapply. M.Manahan is the only DRB member whose term is expiring this year; there is also an alternate position available. Please encourage people to apply.

**3. Approval of October 7, 2019 Meeting Minutes – D&V**

**Motion by D.LaPointe to approve the minutes October 7, 2019, as edited.  
Second by T.McCuin and approved with all in favor.**

**4. Confirm next meeting date and time. Monday, December 2, 2019 6:30 PM**

**5. Other- None**

**D. PUBLIC COMMENT- None**

**E. ENTER DELIBERATIVE SESSION – D&V**

**Motion by D.LaPointe to move into Deliberative Session. Second by  
D.Thayer and approved with all in favor at 7:02 PM.**

St Albans Development Review Board - Regular Meeting  
4-Nov-19

Thank you for attending. Please sign in

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