

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ST. ALBANS CITY DOWNTOWN BOARD
& BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ST. ALBANS FOR THE FUTURE
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM, TUESDAY, JANUARY 23RD, 2024

APPROVED

Members of the Board Present: IN PERSON: Emily Richards, Vice-Chair; Erik Johnson, Sec/Treasurer; Ashley Cleare; Jackie Hawkins; Shannon Smith; Donna Howard; Nichole Cunningham; Lauren Bode; Debra Morton; K.F. Samandari, Alternate VIA ZOOM: Jennifer Kostuck, Alternate

Members of the Board Absent: Maureen Brown, Chair; Jeremy Read; Sharon Holcomb; Valdemar Garibay;

Members of the SACA Committee Present: Nichole Cunningham; Jennifer Kostuck

Members of City Staff Present: Arleigh Young, Coordinator of Planning & Development; Katie Haseltine, Minute Taker VIA ZOOM: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development

Members of the Public Present: Karin Berno, Interim Director of the FCRCVT; Victoria Wilson

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order. E. Richards calls meeting to order at 6:02 PM.
 - a. Attendance and introductions.
 - i. New members: K.F Samandari and Lauren Bode in attendance, welcome!
 - b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda - None
 - c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda. - None
2. New Member & Returning Members Welcome
 - a. Attendance and introductions - already done
 - b. A. Young quickly touches on expectations of the board that were given to board members and asks if anyone has any questions. She reiterates the need to have at least 7 members in attendance at each meeting for a quorum to vote and make decisions. C. Sawyer adds that the Downtown Board is advisory, and the City Council makes decisions. However, the Downtown Board can make decisions on behalf of St. Albans For the Future since they act as the board for SAFF. C. Sawyer reiterates Vermont's open meeting law.
3. Vikki LaRose Sponsorship Request
 - a. V. Wilson discusses TATU (Travelers Around the Universe), a hip-hop event that provides artists in the area a platform for getting their name out there. She is seeking sponsorships and vendor opportunities (from 9 am - 3 pm) for the event planned on April 20, 2024.
 - b. A. Young asks if anyone on the board has any questions. N. Cunningham asks about the set-up of the day and what the target audience is for the daytime portion. V. Wilson shares that the daytime portion is targeted towards artists, but not limited to types of vendors. She is looking to have it be more of a farmers market feel with various vendors for the public. N. Cunningham had asked if the daytime portion would be family friendly. V. Wilson would like the daytime portion to be family friendly.
 - c. A. Young restates that V. Wilson is asking the board if they might have interest in sponsoring some portion of the event. Historically, the Downtown Board has never sponsored another event, but A. Young wants to be clear that any sponsorship for this, would set a precedent for future requests and asks the board to keep that in mind. E. Johnson shares that typically a donation to a

local non-profit within the community is earmarked when the Downtown Board puts on events and might request that to be part of this event if they were to support.

- d. E. Richards reflects that if we sponsor this, many more requests will come in. S. Smith echoes E. Richards and E. Johnson. V. Wilson wants to clear up and say that it is not all about sponsorship, but just an opportunity to get the word out and seek out vendors.
- e. A. Young asks if V. Wilson, over the next month, can come up with a couple areas the Downtown Board could support as well as sponsorship levels that break down what is included in each level. E. Richards shares her opinion that the board likely will not financially support this event, but that the board can absolutely help support pushing the word out via their channels and helping to provide volunteers and resources to ensure a successful event. V. Wilson understands and would like any support and volunteers that the board can provide.
- f. E. Richards proposes setting up a meeting with V. Wilson to discuss specifics around where the board can support with this event. A. Young asks if anyone else is interested. Nichole and Jennifer will join in that meeting. A. Young will be in touch with V. Wilson to set a date and time to meet.

4. Proposed St. Albans Flag

- a. C. Sawyer shares there is a local resident who feels the City of St. Albans should have a flag. This resident has designed a preliminary flag design and presented to the City Council. Since then, the City Council has asked for this to be shown to some other boards and groups to seek feedback. C. Sawyer shares it has been presented to the Belonging, Equity, and Inclusion committee as well as the new chief of the Abenaki Nation of Missisquoi.
- b. E. Johnson suggests a staff member patch for public works. E. Johnson asks about the feedback from the chief. C. Sawyer has not heard back from him yet. The board all agree they like the flag.

5. SAFF Financial Report

- a. There are still outstanding items from the Holiday Raffle, so that balance will go down.
- b. Vibrancy Grant Adjustment (Laser Show/Fireworks) - A. Young shares that they had originally proposed that part of the grant monies would be used towards paying for half of the Laser Show and Fireworks. There is a truncated period of time remaining to use this funding, and A. Young is asking if the board would approve using \$7,150 (\$3,000 for Fireworks, \$4,150 for Light Show) of the grant money towards paying the balance of the Laser Show and Fireworks. L. Bode asks when the grant funding expires. A. Young shares the use it or lose it date is July 1st. After paying for the Fireworks, Light Show and VPR Holiday Advertising it would leave about \$9,000 available to pay someone for taking over the City's website. S. Smith counters and asks if the City could pay these outstanding balances since they had already planned on that, and allow the Downtown Board to use the grant monies towards more advertising with the summer and upcoming events. E. Richards mentions using it for the Eclipse. C. Sawyer believes the Eclipse will advertise for itself, but believes advertising for the Maple Festival and other upcoming events would definitely be beneficial. A. Young would like to separate the VPR advertising from the Fireworks/Laser Show.
- c. J. Hawkins motions to approve paying for the Fireworks and Laser Show with any remaining funds in the Vibrancy Grant come June 1st (otherwise, the City will remain fiscally responsible). A. Clear seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
- d. E. Johnson motions to pay VPR \$1,206 out of the Vibrancy Grant for advertising. J. Hawkins seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.

6. Discuss events/programs/committees

a. Events

- i. Downtown Holiday Raffle Wrap, FOT Wrap, Last Night (12/31), What's coming up? Eloquent Game Day, Town Meeting, Maple Festival, etc.

1. Downtown Holiday Raffle Wrap

- 1. A. Young compiled all entries and found the following:

- 3,773 total entries, multiplied by \$100, accounts for \$377,300 spent on businesses in our Downtown. That doesn't include other people who did not enter into the raffle. To compare, there were 3,326 entries in 2022.
 - 85 online submissions. She also reflects that there were some fishy submissions that the board may want to look into and consider for next year.
2. FOT Wrap
 1. A. Young believes there will be some new thinking behind the evening and the tree lighting, etc. She does mention that fireworks will likely not happen during FOT and will instead be saved for Last Night. A. Young sees a small group being formed to discuss this further. S. Smith is interested in being part of that group.
 3. Last Night (12/31)
 1. A. Young shares it went great, and that the City will continue to work with Northstar fireworks as a vendor for this event.
 4. Eloquent Game Day
 1. This Saturday 1/27 from 10am - 6pm in City Hall. Very family oriented. There will be many games from role playing to board and card games.
 5. Town Meeting - March 5, 2024
 1. A. Young shares a brochure for the Eclipse she has been working on and thinks it could be a good idea to hand these out with the glasses to the voters. E. Richards loves the design. D. Morton mentions advertising at Essex Cinemas. L Bode has searched the Eclipse and Burlington is what shows up for Vermont, so would be in favor of doing more targeted advertising for that. A. Young refers to the agenda item around Programs (b) and creating a working group. A. Clear would like to have a 1-year marketing plan in place to be proactive in advertising and getting the word out about happenings around the city. S. Smith, E. Richards, A. Cleare, and E. Johnson express interest in that working group.
 6. Maple Festival
 1. A. Young just doing a plug to remind about the event. The window display/decorating is going on again. It has an Eclipse theme, so A. Young has encouraged downtown businesses to complete their submissions early so visitors for the Eclipse can see the artwork around the City.
- ii. The Vermont Railroad Show (3/9) and Rotary Home Show (3/16-3/17) Sign-Ups
 1. E. Johnson shares the Downtown Board has already signed-up to table at these events. There will be volunteers needed for manning the tables. E. Johnson plans to open up at each of these events, but volunteers will be needed for morning and afternoon shifts.
 2. D. Morton also mentions that it is the 100 year anniversary of the Home Show and the City might want to consider doing a basket giveaway. A. Young will look into that.
 - iii. ECLIPSE-Cocoa Crawl/sidewalk sale? Weekend Events (Quilt Show), planning for the day (portage toilets booked). Event Flyer.
 1. S. Smith asks if anyone has reached out to downtown businesses about opening that day. A. Young has but hasn't heard much back yet.
 2. E. Johnson would like to see a committee for reviewing finances. J. Hawkins would help.

3. A. Young asks for any volunteers to help with the Eclipse planning and organization. N. Cunningham and D. Morton express interest in helping with that.
- iv. Business Social - The Drake February 5th
 1. Lots of interest already. A. Young shares if anyone has anything they'd like discussed at the event, to let her know.
- b. Programs - None
 - i. Vibrancy Grant - Business/Consumer Survey - create working group
 1. There are 2 components to the grant that the City has to meet. A. Young is looking to see who might be interested in being part of a working group for each.
 - Business inventory of downtown. S. Smith express interest.
 - Survey. L. Bode, E. Johnson, D. Howard express interest.
 2. A. Young will finalize a list for each working group and send to the board to review.
- c. Fundraising/Appeals
 - i. Eclipse Sweatshirt? Poster? Hat?
 1. A. Young believe it would be very worthwhile for the City to have some sort of merchandise available for purchase on the day. S. Smith shares she has found that sweatshirts sell better than t-shirts.
 2. A. Young shares a preliminary design by the artist who did the fountain t-shirt as well as some other t-shirt design ideas. L. Bode suggests using a simpler design and doing some stickers. E. Johnson leans towards using the artist design for a sticker and the less detailed design for a sweatshirt. A. Young likes the one that pops with "St. Albans, VT". A. Young will reach out to vendors for quotes and proofs and bring to next meeting.
 - ii. Event Sponsorship Appeal
 1. A. Young shares the sponsorship notice and levels. She wanted to bring it to the board for thoughts and feedback. S. Smith asks who goes around seeking sponsorship. A. Young does that leg work.
- d. Marketing - None
 - i. E. Johnson suggests merging the survey and marketing committees, thinks that makes sense.
- e. Arts
 - i. SACA Update- Nichole & Jennifer
 1. N. Cunningham shares there is not much of an update right now. J. Kostuck has taken over managing the Facebook page.
 2. J. Kostuck shares that she is meeting with NCSS around adult programming and classes that they have going on on a regular basis.
 3. J. Kostuck has a couple people who have shown interest in stepping up to lead an adult group as well as a youth program (up to 18 years old).
 4. A. Young shares the City received a bill for the SACA email. N. Cunningham motions to approve paying \$77.88 for the SACA email bill. E. Johnson seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
 5. N. Cunningham shares the Creative Connections monthly event is still going on. The January turnout was the largest yet.
- f. Social Media/Website
 - i. Website RFQ
 1. A. Young shares they are progressing along. The Eclipse has been added. E. Johnson plugs creating reels and that if anyone takes short videos to please send them to A. Young and himself so that there can be a compilation to use towards advertising.

g. Organization- None

h. Other

- i. D. Morton quickly mentions the girl scouts business survey and the girls said thank you. The girls are now working on putting the results together and summarize suggestions made by the residents of the City.

7. Other Business

a. Approval of Minutes 11/28/2023

- i. J. Hawkins motions to approve minutes. N. Cunningham seconds. Motion passes with all in favor, L. Bode and K.F. Samandari abstain since they weren't in attendance.

b. Next meeting February 27, 2024, 6 PM

c. Other

8. Adjourn. E. Richards adjourns the meeting at 7:55PM.