

**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, October 24, 2023**

***APPROVED***

**Members of the Board Present:** IN PERSON: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richard, Vice-Chair; Ashley Cleare; Shannon Smith; Sharon Holcomb; Debra Morton; Nicole Cunningham, Alternate; VIA ZOOM: MaryPat Larabee, Valdemar Garibay

**Members of the Board Absent:** Jeremy Read; David Glidden; Erik Johnson, Treasurer; Jackie Hawkins; Donna Howard

**Members of the SACA Committee Present:** Nicole Cunningham, Jennifer Kostruck

**Members of City Staff Present:** Arleigh Young, Coordinator of Planning & Development; Katie Haseltine, Minute Taker.

**Members of the Public Present:** Victoria LaRose

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order. E. Richards calls meeting to order at 6:00 PM.
  - a. Attendance and introductions.
    1. Victoria LaRose joins the meeting again to gain insight into what the Downtown Board is working on
  - b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda – **None**.
  - c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda – **None**.
2. SAFF Financial Report
  - a. A. Young shares that \$40 will be paid back to Sam for the Chair Affair that got missed somehow.
  - b. No other comments
3. Discuss events/programs/committees
  - a. Events – Upcoming.
    - i. Winnie Wilkinson Vendor Sunday's and Pop Up Events Friday's in Taylor Park
      - i. A. Young shares that Winnie is considering doing some pop-up events on Friday's in Taylor Park next summer. She is open to exploring this but wants to consider the downtown merchants.
      - ii. S. Holcomb concerned with parking on the streets because the Vendors often park in those spots to set up and stay there through the day which takes parking away from potential customers to the downtown merchants.
      - iii. A. Cleare reflects that many customers who visit her shop on Sunday ask about the vendors in the park on Sunday's and thinks it needs a clearer name so the public knows what it is.
    - ii. Spooky Saturday (10/28), Downtown Holiday Raffle (start November 24), FOT (11/25-12/3), Last Night (12/31) etc.
      - i. Spooky Saturday
        1. A. Young shares that everything is pretty much in place making sure those who may have wanted help or candy have been taken care of. A. Young will finish any stragglers tomorrow.
        2. Dancing in the fountain will be 12:30 PM to 1:00 PM and it will take place every 15 minutes.
      - ii. Downtown Holiday Raffle (start November 24).
        1. E. Richards shares they haven't met yet, but they will.
      - iii. FOT (11/25-12/3).

1. A. Young shares that plans are coming together. Tickets for the Gala are on sale, it is on Friday December 1st, it is a masquerade theme.
  2. In addition, there will be a cool fashion show with veterans/service members on Saturday night. Salon Elixir will host and BFA students are going to volunteer to get people all decked out and dressed up and walk them down the red carpet. They will also share their stories.
  3. S. Holcomb asks about the tractor parade. A. Young shares it is the following weekend on Friday, December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- iv. Last Night (12/31).
1. A. Young shares they will be doing fireworks. She anticipates that she will have a number at the next meeting for the board to approve since they had agreed to pay for half of it.
- iii. Tattoo Convention Success and thoughts for next year
1. A. Young just wanted to share how it went. It was amazing. Over 1,500 people came through the doors that weekend. It was very well attended, and they are very excited to do it again next year.
  2. A. Cleare shares that it was the best day at her shop since the holidays. S. Holcomb and S. Smith both agreed that business was much busier due to the event.
  3. E. Richards shared that she heard the space wasn't big enough for the turnout. People shared that they couldn't see artwork that was being shown.
  4. E. Richards wonders if they would ever spread it out downtown using space across the street, the conference room in the hotel, etc. A. Young shares that the only thing with that is the State of Vermont requires a permit for the space, so you would need to permit those other spaces if that was explored.
  5. S. Holcomb wonders if they would add a day and make it Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. A. Young said they may consider that. S. Smith asks if there is any charity aspect to it. A. Young said there wasn't.
- b. Programs - None
- c. Fundraising/Appeals
- i. Fountain T-Shirt Update
    1. A. Young shares that it is going well, they have sold 26 online. A. Cleare said her sales for the shirts are going well; she has sold 11 shirts in her shop. A. Cleare also mentions that she doesn't believe she has it displayed as best she could, so she is going to re-think that. A. Young plans to reach out to other downtown businesses again to inquire if they would like to sell the shirt in their store.
    2. M. Brown asks if there is still consideration of changing the color. A. Young said they aren't right now and wants to give it 6-8 months. In her opinion, A. Young likes the color and thinks the fountain really pops on it. She also likes the material and comfort of the shirt more than the "chair affair" shirt.
- d. Marketing - None
- i. Marketing with O'Rourke Media
    1. A. Young shares the marketing plan that O'Rourke has proposed. It includes a full-page ad in print (15,000) and online on 4 sites. She believes it might be a good way to get information out to surrounding towns.
    2. The Mega Marketing proposal is a separate print of just ads and not in any other paper. The additional items are actual ads in the chosen newspaper.
    3. S. Smith shares that during Kingman fest, they found that radio/TV promotion and advertisement was not really all that successful.
    4. A. Cleare believes that targeting outer towns could be better than targeting St. Albans area residents. In her shop, she is hearing customers saying that they are staying in St. Albans to shop, and they don't want to go to Burlington. She also speaks with customers from the Burlington area that are coming to St. Albans to shop because they don't want to go into downtown Burlington. A. Cleare also shares that the 7 Days paper seems to be

widely popular, reflecting that she always runs out of them at her shop. A. Cleare also mentions that they often do promotions for ads, like buy two ads get one free.

5. S. Smith agrees with A. Cleare that 7 Days is popular.
6. E. Richards shares that the messenger is meant to be a community paper. She thinks that the board should do something small at least in the local paper. Also thinks that we should go to them regarding the strategy the proposed and request some other ideas. S. Smith also agrees with E. Richards that something should be put in the messenger, but feels only a small part of the marketing budget should be used for that and to spend more of it on other advertising areas like 7 Days, bordering towns, social media, etc.
7. N. Cunningham shares an idea of creating a direct mailer of our own to highlight downtown events and merchants through the post office.
8. A. Cleare curious about doing a survey after the holidays asking customers where they get their information (radio, TV, social media, etc.). D. Morton shares that her girl scouts are actually working on a media/marketing project where they have to come up with a survey and go around asking the public to respond to these surveys. D. Morton asks the board to send along questions to her that the girl scouts might be able to use on their survey.
9. A. Young shares that the funds received from the state require a merchant and consumer survey to be conducted. An after-holiday consumer survey could cover that requirement.
10. S. Smith asks what the monetary amount is from the state. A. Young shares they have \$10,000 for marketing to put in various locations and we have \$10,000 to put into hiring someone to get some media and video put into place.
11. A. Cleare shares that she had two different customers at different times tell her they came to visit Vermont during foliage on the Amtrak and chose St. Albans because it was the last stop on the train. A. Cleare curious if there is opportunity to advertise with Amtrak and highlight the town.

ii. Overall Marketing Strategy

1. A. Young believes the board needs to start brainstorming what the downtown board wants to target in their overall marketing strategy. Ideas being:
  - a. Attracting Visitors (shop local, spend a day/night, check us out!)
  - b. Supporting Visits (directions, parking, events information)
  - c. Things to Do (great dining, enticing shops, welcoming)
  - d. Organization (active board, building capacities, supporting businesses)
2. A. Cleare thinks that getting a calendar together is imperative to this initiative. S. Smith mentions using a QR code that links to the calendar for the most up-to-date information. A. Young reflects that getting a calendar set-up online is definitely a priority and a big piece that is currently missing. E. Richards wonders if the money the board got from the state could be used by the media group hired to do something like an events calendar for the board.
3. M. Brown asks if the board needs to make any decision on the O'Rourke media plan. A. Young asks if the board would like her to go back to them for some alternative ideas.
4. E. Richards recalls a holiday guide that the Messenger put out during the holidays years ago, she wonders if they still do that and if that might be an option. A. Young doesn't recall seeing anything like that last year.
5. M. Brown motions that \$1,000 be spent toward Messenger advertising. E. Richards seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.

e. Arts

i. SACA Update- Nichole & Jennifer

1. N. Cunningham shares they tabled at the vendor event in the park a couple weeks ago. The sticker event and promotion is coming along. J. Kostuck said the event will go from November-December and the people's choice winner would receive a prize of \$100. SACA would need the approval from the board for the prize.

2. E. Richards motions to approve the \$100 prize. S. Smith seconds. Motion passes with all favor.
  3. N. Cunningham mentions the Creative Connections event held on Wednesday. J. Kostuck discusses the event being very successful and all ages showed up for the event with various skill levels. She heard a lot about how excited people were that something like this is now local in St. Albans. J. Kostuck has scheduled out the next year of events like this.
  4. S. Smith leaves meeting at 7:10 pm.
  5. J. Kostuck has \$256.58 in reimbursement for materials purchased for the event. E. Richards motions to reimburse. S. Holcomb seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
- f. Social Media/Website
    - i. A. Young shares that numbers are up on Instagram.
  - g. Organization
    - i. A. Young quickly shares that M. Larabee plans to resign her seat at the end of this year, so a seat will be opening up. N. Cunningham has expressed interest in transitioning from her alternate seat to a full seat. J. Kostuck has expressed interest in applying for the alternate spot that might open from filling M. Larabee's seat.
    - ii. V. LaRose asks for clarity around what it means to be on the board and what she can do as someone of the public.
    - iii. E. Richards asks about the survey the city sent out and wonders if the Downtown Board will hear anything that they might be able to help support. A. Young would have to check-in with Chip regarding that and assumes the board will likely be looped in at some point.
    - iv. A. Cleare would like to know how many newspapers the Messenger does circulate. A. Young will reach out about that.
  - h. Other – None.
4. Other Business
    - a. Approval of Minutes both 8/22/2023 and 9/26/2023
      - i. E. Richards motions to approve both minutes as presented. S. Holcomb seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
    - b. Next meeting November 28, 2023, 6PM
    - c. Other
  5. Adjourn. Meeting adjourns at 7:22 PM