

**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, NOVEMBER 28, 2023**

***APPROVED***

**Members of the Board Present:** IN PERSON: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richard, Vice-Chair; Shannon Smith; Sharon Holcomb; Debra Morton; Jeremy Read; Jackie Hawkins; Erik Johnson, Treasurer

**Members of the Board Absent:** Ashley Cleare; Valdemar Garibay; MaryPat Larrabee, Debra Morton; David Glidden; Donna Howard

**Members of the SACA Committee Present:** None

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

**Members of the Public Present:** Victoria Wilson, Diane Read

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order. M. Brown calls meeting to order at 6:02 PM.
  - a. Attendance and introductions.
  - b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda.
  - c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda.
    - i. Vicki has come with a proposal, M. Brown suggests discussing that during the events.
    - ii. S. Smith would like to talk about what is going on in the downtown with crime.
2. SAFF Financial Report
  - a. A. Young shares that collection has started for Kingman Fest. Sponsorship has starting building its way up. The holiday raffle is building itself up as well. A few straggling participants are left and then it will be ready to go. Part of the participants fee was used towards putting Downtown Dollars in each basket that is raffled off. S. Holcomb asks about what businesses are participating, E. Richards share the most current list is on the website. S. Holcomb mentions there used to be a list given to businesses so they knew who else was participating.
  - b. A. Young shares that Festival of Trees still has some ticket sales and other pieces coming in, but it is about finished. M. Brown asks about gala ticket sales. E. Johnson verifies 31 tickets have been sold.
3. Discuss events/programs/committees
  - a. Events – Upcoming.
    - i. Taylor Park Vendors Pop-Up Events Fridays in Taylor Park - more information
      1. A. Young shares that she spoke with Winnie Wilkinson about this idea. Winnie is modeling it around Burlington’s downtown event on Pine Street with food trucks, and other vendors. She would like to include food trucks, craft vendors, home businesses, kids crafts and activities. Winnie shared that they have 48 vendors on that group list from doing the Sunday pop-ups. Someone had suggested doing Monday nights from 5-9 pm since many businesses and restaurants are closed. S. Smith and E. Johnson think its a great idea, especially since there isn’t really anything to do on Monday’s right now. A. Young will bring that to Chip Sawyer.
    - ii. Downtown Holiday Raffle (start November 24), FOT (11/25-12/3), Last Night (12/31) etc.

1. Already discussed in the financial report section.

S. Smith asks about Last Night. A. Young shares that the downtown board will sponsor the fireworks like they normally do, that has already been booked. A. Young shares that

1. rather than hosting an event, they will plan to promote events being put on by downtown businesses on the poster.

2. E. Johnson asks how the rest of FOT shook out and if there will be any refund for the light show. A. Young doesn't believe they will succeed in getting any money back. The vendor does not believe the fault is on them, and that the corrupt files were not their fault. E. Johnson reflects that the attendance was larger than he has ever seen and M. Brown is concerned with the two-thirds of people who left prior to the vendor resolving their technical difficulties with the light show likely having a bad taste in their mouth and wonders how we can re-capture them.

iii. Sponsorship Appeal

1. A. Young has become aware that sponsorships need to start sooner in the year because often businesses by the end of the year have exhausted their sponsorship funds. A. Young put together something that could be brought to businesses to appeal to our local businesses to think about giving and what opportunities are there and what they would receive in exchange for their sponsorship. J. Read asks about the Nightmare at City Hall and how long it has been done for. A. Young believes it has been 3-4 years and this past year saw about 300 people go through. J. Read asks if there is admission and A. Young shares it is a free event.

2. A. Young would love to see sponsorship for FOT, Laser Light Show (or whatever is chosen), the Fireworks for Last Night, etc.

3. M. Brown shares that she got on an Eclipse Facebook site and there is a lot of talk about eclipses around the United States. S. Smith asks if any communication has gone out to businesses in town since the eclipse falls on a Monday and businesses are typically closed. A. Young has been on a few calls with people who have had an eclipse in their town in the past and it is a huge draw and there will be many people around and pose opportunity for businesses to get sales and people through the doors.

4. A. Young hopes to get this sponsorship information out in early January to capture businesses. J. Hawkins shares that the Town of St. Albans gave out a brochure that is similar to the sponsorship A. Young is proposing.

iv. Hip Hop Event

1. TRVLRS podcast is in full effect ([travelerspodcast@gmail.com](mailto:travelerspodcast@gmail.com)). There is opportunity for businesses to sponsor on the podcast and get more exposure out to listeners.

2. Vicki has hand selected 5 Vermont musicians, and partnered with ABX Vision (based in Vermont), and would love give them a chance to shoot their video in St. Albans which could help bring more visibility and traffic to our city. The goal would be to shoot the video in local businesses, then use those videos to push out and advertise the city.

3. The cost is \$500 per artist, for a total of \$2,500. S. Holcomb asks if she has thought about fundraising. Vicki shares that is something they are looking at. A. Young also shares that they could consider doing a start-up campaign to help raise some funds. Vicki shares that they also have a go fund me. E. Richards wonders if Vicki would be open to splitting up the sponsorship, and she is.

4. M. Brown asks if there is a timeline for this. Vicki shares that she is looking at the new year, but no set dates as of right now.

5. D. Morton leaves the meeting at 6:35 PM.

- v. The Vermont Railroad Show, March 9, 2024 (Erik Johnson)
  - 1. E. Johnson, every year there are about 400 people who come through Collins Perley to see the Vermont Railroad Show. E. Johnson thinks this would be another opportunity for the Downtown to have a table and get the word out about downtown St. Albans. We have done a table at the Home Show and it is successful. J. Hawkins motions to spend \$30 to sell and set up a table at the Vermont Railroad Show. S. Holcomb seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
- b. Programs - None
- c. Fundraising/Appeals
  - i. Fountain T-Shirt Update
    - 1. A. Young shares update that online 28 shirts have been sold and at Rail City Market another 28 shirts have been sold. That brings sales to a total of \$406, \$168 of those dollars will go to the flood relief program.
    - 2. A. Young shared that A. Cleare said people are still slow to buy and notices that if people pick it up in the store they tend to buy, but it is just getting customers to notice and see it in the store.
    - 3. E. Johnson asks if color was discussed at the last meeting. A. Young shares color was discussed a couple meetings ago. M. Brown asks if we would want to do a discount for the holidays. A. Young likes the idea but would have to discuss with A. Cleare to align online and in-store sale prices.
    - 4. M. Brown suggests for the next shirt that having one with a train would sell at the Model Railroad event like crazy. E. Johnson agrees.
- d. Marketing
  - i. Marketing with O'Rourke Media
    - 1. A. Young shares the marketing that has been done and advertised recently.
    - 2. E. Johnson asks where the online ads are going. A. Young shares they go on Colchester Sun, Essex Reporter, and the Messenger.
    - 3. A. Young shows some quick images of Vicki's flyers and artists.
  - ii. Marketing Strategy and prioritizing the website
    - 1. A. Young is looking to determine what is the priority and where should we start. A. Young shares that right now it is the website that is the priority and wondering if we want to move away from the photography piece and really focus on building the website. E. Johnson feels the photography and videography is what is going to help the website to pop and be dynamic. A. Young agrees, but thinks that the baseline needs to be built and then it can grow.
    - 2. A. Young's big question is if the board is open to her looking into potential outfits for building this website. S. Smith warns that it will likely be more expensive than you think. No motion is needed
    - 3. M. Brown would like to also see what the chamber is going to do since we don't want to duplicate things. E. Johnson shares that Milton has joint meetings with their chamber twice a year and wonders if this downtown board should consider doing that once our chamber gets rolling.
  - iii. Marketing Matrix
    - 1. Discussed above with Marketing Strategy.
- e. Arts
  - i. SACA Update- Nichole & Jennifer (not present)
    - 1. A. Young shares they have their sticker promotion out there and going on. She would also like Vicki to work with her on sponsorships and things like that.

- f. Social Media/Website
  - i. Already discussed.
  - ii. E. Johnson adds that there are some new photographers that have come to the forefront. He thinks that reaching out to some of those people and giving them credit would give us some more content, but also get their name out there.
- g. Organization - None.
- h. Other
  - i. S. Holcomb and E. Johnson both shared that Small Business Saturday was very popular and busy. S. Holcomb reflected that it was the best Small Business Saturday she has had at her shop in 17 years.
  - ii. M. Brown asks about opening city hall for hockey players. There was a tournament this past weekend and she had a lot of guests from Maine at the hotel and the kids were very antsy to play and have a space to do that. E. Johnson wonders is there is opportunity for the city to open the town hall and potentially have a vendor sell hot chocolate and advertise it as a place to warm up and keep shopping.
  - iii. S. Smith reminds that we didn't discuss safety in the marketing plan. A. Young asks what that strategy could be. S. Smith isn't sure but wants it to be at the forefront of people's minds to discuss. A. Young will bring this to Chip and Dom to see if the City Council wants to put this on their agenda and see if they have any thoughts on how to address this.
  - iv. A. Young shares that the Vermont Tobacco Coalition would like to put cigarette receptacles in St. Albans. E. Johnson remembers doing the clean-up earlier this year and suggests putting them where the hotspots of the butts were found. M. Brown shares that something is better than nothing, but people will use them as a trash or rummage through them. A. Young shares that the ones being proposed would be strapped to light posts, so they wouldn't be able to get flipped over. A. Young just wanted to share with the board that this is an initiative they are trying to start as a pilot program.

#### 4. Other Business

- a. Approval of Minutes 10/24/2023
  - i. E. Johnson motions to approve minutes. S. Holcomb seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
- b. Next meeting December 26, 2023, 6 PM (Adjust date? Possible alternate dates-12/19, 12/20, 12/27, or 12/29)
  - i. A. Young found out that 12/29 is no longer available. J. Hawkins and S. Holcomb would move to cancel the December meeting. All seem to be able to do 12/19 and A. Young will check on that and get back to the board.
- c. Other

#### 5. Adjourn. Meeting adjourns at 7:26 PM.