

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, FEBURARY 22, 2022

Approved March 22, 2022

Board Members Present: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards, Vice Chair; Erik Johnson, Sec/Treasurer (Via Zoom), Ashley Cleare, Jeremy Read, Keith Longmore, and Donna Howard.

Board Members Absent: Valdemar Garibay, David Glidden, Jeremy Perez and MaryPat Larrabee.

City Staff Present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Arleigh Young, Planning & Development Assistant/Minute Taker.

Members of the Public Present: Josh Ellerbrock, O'Rourke Media

1. Call to Order - **M. Brown called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.**
 - a. Attendance and introductions
 - b. Additions or Deletions to Agenda – None

2. SAFF Financial Report.

C. Sawyer kicks off the discussion with an update on the T-Shirt Fundraiser funds coming in. More than \$800 has been moved from the t-shirt funds to unencumbered funds. The rest of the funds will go to the City to reimburse them for the purchase of the t-shirts initially.

- a. Determine fiscal agency fee for Festival of Trees.

C. Sawyer began to discuss FOT final funding numbers, but can't fully finalize without D. Howard. He states it looks like FOT brought around \$1,900 into SAFF as the fiscal agent. Until we have D. Howard's sign off the board can approve transfer of funds.

Tabled until D. Howard arrives or the next meeting

C. Sawyer shared that funds are arriving for Kingman Fest. SAFF will keep an eye on this as the fiscal agent. C. Sawyer believes they will have enough funding to cover a large portion of the costs. The City has already contributed, but has a vested interest and may help bridge the gaps if they arise.

E. Richards asked for clarification on the allocation of fund to the City for the T-Shirt Fundraiser. C. Sawyer states that the City purchased the t-shirts from the start, and these Funds would just be paying them back.

- b. Update on integration with City accounting system.

C. Sawyer states that at this time he still needs to go over with City Accounting Staff step by step to be sure we are all clear on how things will work. Full integration is the best way to get comprehensive tax and financial reporting done. M. Brown asked if the financial report we see at meeting will change? C. Sawyer says no that he will continue to Tabulate funds to share them with the board. He furthers that the switch would deal

with things that the board had not typically dealt with. The invoices would go direct to the city to cut the check, but an authorized check signer will still have to sign the checks before they go out.

3. Discuss events/programs/committees.

a. Downtown Street Signs

No updates tonight

b. Marketing.

C. Sawyer begins with discussing his and A. Young's plans on working with the Interstate Information Centers to get some Downtown marketing materials out. A. Young interjects that she is in contact with the Georgia North I-89 rest area. C. Sawyer furthers that once we have more funding in place the board can discuss more marketing opportunities outside of the holiday season. For now we will look into options and cost associated. A. Cleare agrees that some summer advertising like in the Islander would be great, she sees a lot of business in the summer months from folks visiting the Islands. C. Sawyer believes the Islander Contact has changed, A. Young will look into another contact.

J. Read furthers that perhaps we should think about some historical tie ins as well, perhaps including the St. Albans Historical Museum. He believes the history can also draw visitors. He would like to put together some ideas to share at the next meeting. J. Read continues explaining that the tie in to the State as well as focusing on our Canadian visitors. Market better to folks outside of the downtown and city boundaries. C. Sawyer inquired to A. Cleare what the experience is like as a shop owner when events are happening downtown. A. Cleare states that business is great on Farmer's Market days, but specific events like the tree lighting do not necessarily bring her more business. In general it does bring in traffic. She furthered that during Maple Festival business is typically slow, especially on parade days.

C. Sawyer asked K. Longmore what his experiences have been with Green Mountain Hemp Co. K. Longmore states that it depends on the event. Recently high numbers of passport renewals have brought some good business. He finds Thursday to be good with cross business from Jeff's Seafood. Overall the loss of Canadian business is very noticeable, and he will be glad to see them returning. C. Sawyer is in hope the Maple Festival will bring some Canadians back.

J. Read believes pulling in some local sports stars like John LeClair would bring a many visitors to downtown. Bringing the local love for Hockey could be a great tie in!

K. Longmore brought up The Depot event space doing kids events has been a great addition. A. Cleare attended one and reports it was a great time. All agree The Depot is doing great things. Shannon and her booker Lauren are the duo behind the Kingman Fest.

c. Discuss Events/Programs/Committees

i. Downtown Holiday Raffle:

Nothing new to add.

ii. Festival of Trees Future:

C. Sawyer shares that St. Albans Recreation and the St. Albans Free Library are both interested in the event, particularly the Gala. They will be meeting next week to see if they want to share it, or if one entity takes it on. Once an entity takes the event on then a discussion has to start with D. Howard involved on the funding, profit sharing, or how that will all move forward. There will be a bit of a transition. C. Sawyer believes that the entity that puts on the Gala is going to want some monetary return.

ii. Gamefest:

D. Howard not present to discuss

iii. Quilt Show:

Was Cancelled, but they may reschedule for the summer.

iv. Maple Festival:

Happening April 22-24.

v. Kingman Festival:

Event planned for May 7th.

vi. Juneteenth/Pride:

C. Sawyer states the question for this event is will it happen on the Saturday or Sunday, and if they will or will not be having a parade. M. Brown inquires about what Burlington has planned. E. Johnson reminded us that when we spoke with Reier at the last meeting he was going to do the event on a different day than Burlington, but because the Saturday would have the Farmers Market tie in Reier felt they might stick with Saturday.

c. Fundraising/Appeals

i. T-Shirt Update.

A. Young discussed that she will be talking to the businesses next month to see how sales are going. E. Richards asked if more will be ordered for summer. A. Young states that more shirts will be ordered, and that the idea is to keep an artist's shirt featured for a year. A new design would come out prior to the holiday season. M. Brown inquires if SAFF could sell shirts at the Northwest Farmers Market. C. Sawyer says that a space would be available, but SAFF members would have to man the table. E. Richards mentioned BFA juniors and seniors getting community service hours to work the table. C. Sawyer and A. Young agree that it is something to consider and discuss as NWFM season comes closer.

ii. Fundraising Appeal

C. Sawyer brought forth a couple starter letters for a fundraising appeal for SAFF that would go to the individual and businesses. For the individual citizen the letter discusses what the dollars they donate funds, and will offer an online payment and return voucher payment option. The suggested base amount for the individual would be \$50.00. M. Brown asks how these letters will be sent out? C. Sawyer states bulk mail is very expensive. E. Richards is wondering if it could go with the water and sewer bills and C. Sawyer thinks this might be a good option. It could also be emailed, put out on FPF, Social media and the website. It does not have to be a letter.

C. Sawyer furthered the conversation with some things to follow up on like how this will be tracked. Will we want/need a donor list public?

C. Sawyer also has a letter for the businesses. This will be similar to the individual letter except the offerings per donation level will correlate with some sort of return like features on the Downton website and Social Media. There are many logistics that will still need to be worked out on how this will all look.

C. Sawyer opens to ideas in the room. A. Young discusses adding incentives to the individual donation, a \$10 Downtown Dollar Card for a \$50 donation or a T-Shirt for \$100.00 donation. K. Longmore adds that for businesses perhaps the side bar on the website and the street signs as discussed at the last meeting could be a good package. C. Sawyer feels that the effort should stick to things SAFF can do, street signs would involve the City and may create issues. How about an I Donated To Downtown, or Downton Supporter sticker. D. Howard mentioned flags in the planters along Main Street with names. A. Cleare adds, could SAFF offer a parking pass as an incentive, C. Sawyer states that the group needs to hon in on SAFF available incentives and keep the City out of it.

d. Festival Of Trees

C. Sawyer asks D. Howard to look at the final report and confirm that the Eventbrite and one other deposit are in fact FOT, D. Howard confirms. D. Howard will confirm with her local spreadsheet, but that the financials all look correct. C. Sawyer asked if D. Howard could finalize and confirm financials for FOT at the next meeting.

e. Arts-

D. Howard discusses that the Quilt Show may be adding their event to the Arts In The Park event this year.

Also D. Howard would like to start looking for someone to take over St. Albans Community Arts. Since the start of the pandemic so much has changed, and D. Howard is running things alone. D. Howard would be happy to help and still wants involvement in Arts In The Park and The Make Music Event, but would like to see someone new at the helm of SACA. Right now D. Howard is also funding the website and would like to stop. Should SACA fall under the Downtown Website? Also FOT was tied to SACA and was the fundraiser for it, now that will change if the Gala changes hands. C. Sawyer feels that FOT and SACA have been effectively detached from one another.

C. Sawyer and D. Howard believe there is a good future for SACA. The first thing to do is get out there and get names and info for folks who want to partake. Create an artist directory.

M. Brown asks what events other than FOT did SACA take part in or host. D. Howard states that in the beginning 6-7 years ago they did some murals, and performances, they were just getting organized. The organizer became ill and it was hard after that to get much going. By the time they reorganized Covid hit and that put a halt on all forward progress.

f. Social Media/ Website:

A. Young states the Facebook page got to 5,000 Likes and counting. We now have access to the Instagram account and have been using Meta to post to both platforms. Currently working on getting "Stories" up, at least once a week.

C. Sawyer discusses that O'Rourke Media is working on the website and landing page. Prototypes were shown. It is a different WordPress platform so they are working to match it up with the current website. They are testing now, if everything comes together it will go live. M. Brown asks if there is a timeline to going live. C. Sawyer does not have one right now, but he will look into it.

C. Sawyer is also interested in figuring out a way to be more equitable with the business listing. Right now everything is listed by category and there is no search function. C. Sawyer wonders if there can be an ALL page. E. Johnson states that the ALL page would cause a lag in loading. He believes that the folks looking on the site will be looking per category, and if they know the specific business they may just google it. The other issue is if the list is paginated then a Z business would always be at the bottom of the list. C. Sawyer wonders if there could be a random load of businesses. E. Johnson will have to look into that. Perhaps the Dine, Shop, Stay, and Services tabs could be randomized. E. Johnson also suggests hiding the business names, only showing the tabs, and when you select which tab the list then comes up.

g. Organization

Nothing to report.

h. Other

None

4. Other Business

a. Approval of Minutes

Motion by E.Richards to approve the minutes of January 25, 2022 as presented. Second by D. Howard and Approved with all in favor.

b. Next meeting date and format – March 22, 2022, same format

c. Other - none

5. Public Comment - None
6. Adjourn

M. Brown adjourned the meeting at 6:48 PM.