

**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, APRIL 22ND, 2025**

**APPROVED**

**Members of the Board Present:** IN PERSON: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards, Vice Chair; Jackie Hawkins; Secretary/Treasurer; K.F. Samandari; Donna Howard VIA ZOOM: Lauren Bode; Ashley Cleare

**Members of the Board Absent:** Shannon Smith; Jeremy Read; Debra Morton; Sharon Holcomb, Valdemar Garibay

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

**Members of the SACA Committee Absent:** Nichole Cunningham

**Members of City Staff Present:** Arleigh Young, Downtown Manager; Katie Haseltine, Minute Taker

**Members of the Public Present:** Ashley Sande (London Middlebury); Matt Haefele (London Middlebury); David Hutchinson; Erik Johnson (City Council Member)

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order - M. Brown calls meeting to order at 6:02 PM.
  - a. Attendance and introductions - Introductions are made around the room.
  - b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda - None
  - c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda - A. Young requests that the website be discussed first.
2. Social Media / Website
  - a. Website Contract award
    - i. A. Sandy introduces herself and explains that they've been working with A. Young since Covid-19 times. The Wix platform is highly recommended as a DIY platform that is very powerful and flexible in implementing the design ideas that the City has.
    - ii. A. Young asks about the team and how that will look throughout the stages of getting the site developed. A. Sandy provides further information around that.
    - iii. A. Young asks if they do photography in house. A. Sandy explains they don't, but they do have some local vendors that they can recommend.
    - iv. A. Young shares that the Wix platform is a little different from Wordpress, noting that the backend part of it has become very cumbersome to make edits and adjustments to. It sounds as though the Wix platform will better handle these changes and allow to operate self-sufficiently once set up.
    - v. J. Hawkins asks about the timeline of the process. M. Haefele anticipates about 4 months, but that can always be sped up or slowed down based on how conversations go.
    - vi. A. Young asks E. Richards about NCCS and their choice for a new website. E. Richards explains that NCCS went with a different vendor, but has heard really great things about Wix.
3. SAFF Financial Report
  - a. A. Young provides a quick summary (below), otherwise, nothing huge to note at this time.
    - i. Kingman Fest - starting to spend money out of there as the event dates approaches.
    - ii. Festival of Trees - meeting planned for this week, so sponsorships should start building up
4. Discuss events/programs/committees
  - a. Events
    - i. Maple Festival - Parade Help? (April 25-27), Green Up Day (May 3), Kingman Fest - Booth Help (May 10), Northwest Farmers Market Opening Day (May 10)
      1. A. Young reminds about the parade and walkers interested in joining.

2. E. Johnson mentions that a suggestion was made last year to section off shirts throughout the parade route to ensure that there is enough to hand out.
  3. E. Richards asks if any candy will be distributed in addition to the shirts. A. Young explains that they have not considered that but could.
  4. E. Richards motions to spend no more than \$250 for candy. J. Hawkins seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
2. Green Up Day - just a reminder that it is on May 3rd
    1. A. Young shares that there will be a team located within each Ward.
    2. E. Johnson explains that people will be set-up in the morning and as late as 1 pm in some spots.
  3. Kingman Fest - no major update
  4. Northwest Farmers Market Opening
    1. A. Young explains that they had trouble this year filling their roster, noting about half of the vendors are returning. A. Young shares that construction is underway for a structure to house the portalettes that can be locked, hopefully reducing the safety problems that arose last year.
    2. E. Richards asks if anything is being done to encourage people to sign up or do something to help people feel more safe. A. Young explains that SAPD is working on some strategies to help with this.
    3. M. Brown asks about the vendors in Taylor Park that was happening on Sundays last year. E. Richards asks if they are interested in joining NWFM. A. Young explains that NWFM is not largely interested in bringing on chain crafters like Scentsy (who made up those Sunday vendors) and would prefer to keep it to home made local crafters.
- ii. Downtown Holiday Raffle - Subcommittee
    1. A. Young does not have an update on this right now.
  - iii. Downtown Kids Event at NWFM - Snow Globes (SACA?) Date 8/30
    1. A. Young just had a thought that the snow globes could make another appearance since they were such a big hit last time. She'd like to connect with N. Cunningham about making it a kids event in collaboration between Downtown and SACA.
    2. A. Young will put together a sign-up for volunteers to help with that date.
- b. Programs - None
- i. Welcoming and encouraging Canadian Business - Banner over Main Street, Coupon book, discounts?? Purchase flags for shops to hang?
    1. A. Young shares that while taking the Amtrak Vermonter to the Main Street America Conference, she connected with a other local municipalities (from Montpelier and Bellows Falls). They have had some success with coupon books welcoming visitors.
    2. D. Hutchinson reached out to E. Johnson about his concerns with the political climate of visitors from Canada right now. E. Johnson then reached out to A. Young about a banner or other thoughts on how to welcome Canadiens.
    3. D. Hutchinson explains that him and his wife are part of [HomeExchange.com](http://HomeExchange.com) and they were contacted by a couple from Montreal who were interested in coming to the Maple Festival. He explained that this couple has now decided to not come because they aren't sure how welcome they will be and if there will be any troubles at the border crossing.
    4. E. Johnson believes that the sooner something is done the better, because the news is creating hesitation among visitors to come to Vermont.
    5. E. Johnson highlights that a lot of those visitors from Canada are likely following social media of downtown shops and could be a way to communicate to them that we are still very much welcoming visitors to come shop, dine, and enjoy the area.
    6. M. Brown wonders if it might be worth it to update the Welcome banner to include some flags, including the Canadian flag.

7. D. Howard also suggests adding the French language of welcome to the banner as well.
  8. D. Howard mentions having some articles written up and sending them out to publishing companies in Canada as free content to include in their newspapers. A. Young also wonders about smaller publications in surrounding towns of Montreal as a way to get messaging out. D. Hutchinson thinks that is a great idea.
  9. A. Young asks board members to share stories with her to help in writing some press releases/stories to share with these companies.
- c. Fundraising/Appeals - None
  - d. Marketing - None
  - e. SACA Update - None
    - i. Murals Downtown - A. Young shares that a few projects are brewing. Rebecca Chomyn does metal work, and A. Young had her come and look at the alleyway between City Hall and Welden Theater as that has become an area of concern. A. Young wanted to see about the potential of a creative gate that can be put in.
    - ii. A. Young adds that they are also looking at putting a postcard style mural on the side of the Ralston's building. Dee Christie and Nicole Gadouas will be the artists for this project.
  - f. Social Media/Website - *Discussed in Agenda item 2 at the beginning of the meeting.*
  - g. Organization - None.
    - i. Main Street America Conference Take Aways
      1. A. Young shares that it was amazing, over 600 directors attended. One of the biggest takeaways was two awards that are given out to successful downtowns. The two towns/city's that won were small (with populations of 4,000 and 2,200), showing that towns similar in size to St. Albans are earning these recognitions and have great ideas to bring life to otherwise unused spaces in their communities that encourages visiting/touristing.
      2. A. Young shares that she also attended a great seminar on self-guided tours and how Saco, Maine has a really great RiverWalk they've piloted. This reminded A. Young of D. Howard's previous suggestions about doing something similar with the history of St. Albans (the raid for example). A. Young knows that it would cost some money to get it going but could be a really cool thing to do. D. Howard has also wondered about reaching out to BFA to see if students would be interested in helping to make this project come to life, noting their requirement of community service hours.
      3. A. Young adds that her ride on the train was amazing and connected with other directors from Waterbury and Bellows Falls and discussed the potential of a Vermont passport to encourage travel in and around Vermont.
      4. J. Hawkins asks what A. Young's biggest takeaway was. A. Young feels strongly that the importance of art in our downtown communities seemed to be highlighted strongly and feels strongly that St. Albans has a lot of opportunities for that.
  - h. Other - None.
5. Other Business
- a. Approval of Minutes 3/25/2025
    - i. D. Howard motions to approve. E. Richards seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
  - b. Next meeting May 27, 2025, 6PM
    - i. M. Brown confirms next meeting. A. Young notes that it is the Tuesday following Memorial Day.
  - c. Other - None
    - i. D. Howard suggests that next year, at the Expo, there should be a QR code to sell the shirts online and have them shipped direct rather than having the cash box. E. Richards is not entirely sure she agrees, noting that she did make some cash sales for the shirts. E. Johnson

believes that a lot of those purchases at the expo are impulse buys and is likely a good time to sell them instead of directing them to purchase online.

- ii. A. Young adds that the Main Street America Conference gave her an idea around getting a gimbal to use for videoing that helps to stabilize videotaping. E. Johnson suggests some brands and ideas. J. Hawkins motions to purchase a gimbal and some microphones. D. Howard seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.

6. Adjourn. M. Brown adjourns meeting at 7:12 PM.