

MINUTES
ST. ALBANS CITY DOWNTOWN BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
ST. ALBANS CITY HALL, 100 NORTH MAIN STREET
6:00 PM TUESDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2022

Approved January 24, 2023

Board Members Present: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards, Vice Chair; David Glidden; Donna Howard; Ashley Cleare; Jeremy Read;

Board Members Absent: Erik Johnson; Jeremy Perez; MaryPat Larrabee; Valdemar Garibay.

City Staff present: Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning and Development; Arleigh Young, Planning & Development Assistant (Via Zoom); Paul Clapps, Minute Taker.

Members of the public present: None

1. **Begin Recording and Call to Order.** *M. Brown starts the meeting at 6:00.*
2. **SAFF Financial Report.**
 - a. C. Sawyer starts by going over the financial report.
 - b. One member brings up that there's two additional cents sold on the Downtown Dollars. C. Sawyer says he will take a look at that.
 - i. Downtown Dollars expire December 2027. If you sell a gift card, it has to be good for at least 5 years. A new batch of gift cards has been sold that will expire in 2032.
 - ii. C. Sawyer mentions that the board is going to have to follow the cards they sell, since some of them are for forever, and others might expire. This will affect the budget.
 - iii. C. Sawyer concludes the review of the financial report.
 - c. The board moves on to discussing the radio ads.
3. The holiday radio ads.
 - a. **E. Richards makes a motion to pay for half of the cost of the 2022 holiday radio ads, D. Howard seconds. All vote aye and approve the motion.**
 - b. C. Sawyer eventually wants to discuss the source of the postcard and sticker funds. There is agreement throughout the board on the source of the funds and no motion is needed.
4. **Discuss events/programs/committees.**
 - a. **Festival of trees.**
 - i. C. Sawyer asks how the Festival of Trees went. A. Young wants to start earlier next year to avoid confusion like some of the confusion that came up this year. Emily knows people who have some feedback, nothing extremely negative, but she says she can share it. Donna would like to hear the feedback.
 1. E. Richards begins by saying that food was very limited for the price of the ticket. The drinks were also very expensive without a

large enough selection (and they were pretty weak). The music was good but you could not dance to it. The trees and auction items were great. The long tables were not liked because it was hard to hang out with people. But overall it wasn't bad.

- a. D. Howard says that the tables have been discussed before.
- b. The board clarifies on the date, which is always a week after black friday.
- c. A. Young thought it was fun and the food was good, but with the ticket price, you should get more food. The fact that it came together as quickly as it did was fantastic. Turnout was around 70 tickets but it could have been 200. The ticket price went up, which could have played a part.

2. E. Richards mentions that there are just so many things happening after COVID, that it's just hard to keep track. Everyone got used to a slower pace.
 - a. D. Howard mentions that a lot of people were sick that week too.
3. E. Richards concludes by saying that it's still great and that a lot of people are still willing to do it. It didn't "die" after everything that has happened and it's still worth putting on.

b. Last Night.

- i. There are multiple things going on at businesses downtown. Fireworks are happening as well.

c. Railroad Show for March 11th.

- i. This topic is skipped because Erik is absent.

d. Other events.

- i. D. Howard mentions an event in February. There's also a Comicon event planned this summer. C. Sawyer has not heard about the quilt show. D. Howard said most of the quilters were COVID-weary so it might not happen, but it's uncertain.
- ii. City Hall is reserved for May 8th for a book show downtown. Also, the bookseller's association is COVID-weary so that's still uncertain.
- iii. D. Howard has talked to 14th Star about doing a "Boozy Book Fair" some regional authors might come. The profits will depend on who sets up the event. D. Howard offers to run it through her and the profits can go to the Eloquent Page.

e. Holiday Raffle.

- i. E. Richards mentions that it's still going and it's doing fine. There should be an after holiday recap that invites merchants to come and discuss it. Sometimes raffle tickets are not being offered by merchants. What can be done to improve this?
- ii. D. Howard mentions that a sign at each register could help people from forgetting or asking. There hasn't been any customer negative feedback, only business negative feedback.
- iii. A banner could be helpful as well. There's a Festival of Trees banner but nothing for the holiday raffle.

iv. E. Richards mentions that maybe a card for purchase or larger stamps would be easier. But all of this can be discussed at an after-holiday recap for feedback. A survey can be sent out in January.

1. E. Richards mentions that they have had a ton of interaction on social media. Customers love it but the merchants are frustrated. How do we make the businesses more invested in it?

f. Downtown Dollars

- i. C. Sawyer mentions that a lot was sold and it was pretty good over the holiday. A Board member mentions that some people want a slightly higher price point like 25 dollars. Different cards would be required for that to be possible.

g. Downtown Business Social.

- i. A. Young mentions that no date has been set yet, but the date should be in February at Off the Rails. A. Young is going to ask around New Years.

h. Stickers.

- i. A. Young mentions that she and Erik did some editing on the original. It can be sold to businesses in batches and then sold to customers. She wanted to get their thoughts.

1. A. Cleare things that the price point is cheap enough for business to buy them without risk. There should be a selling price that's "highly recommended" to make sure they're all the same. But no consignment is necessary.

2. No vote is needed.

i. T-shirts.

- i. C. Sawyer advises that the Board should move on from the current design options. There haven't been any updates on their options. It should be both nostalgic for tourists and people who live here, but enticing for people who have never lived here before.
- ii. It could be sent to the high school as well. There are t-shirt contests done frequently at the schools.
- iii. The board agrees to put out the call for a new design.
- iv. D. Howard suggests going to social media for a design as well.

j. Postcards.

- i. These were shelved once the stickers became the highest priority. Those could be a good idea for the summer since the hotel could sell a lot of them.
- ii. D. Howard thinks that a postcard of the tractor parade could sell well, if there's a picture out there that can be licensed.
- iii. Sometimes the events can be confusing because of how many of them there are, but there's a lot of potential with 2.6 million dollars coming from federal grants.

k. Arts.

- i. There's going to be a coordinated event in late summer with the historical society. It's to get everyone together to read the same book. It's the anniversary of Mocking Justice.
- ii. There will be a musician day on the 21st of June.

- iii. C. Sawyer sent an email out about the website. He asks if the SquareSpace site should be shut down. This will require a response.

l. Social media and the website.

- 1. There is nothing new to report.

m. Organization.

- i. **New Candidates.** The Board clarifies that the City Council makes the choice for the boards. D. Howard wants to see if they can make these candidates alternate board members.
- ii. A. Cleare puts her name into the applications as well.
- iii. There is nothing else to discuss with the organization.

5. Other Business.

a. Approval of Minutes.

- i. **D. Glidden moves to approve the minutes from September 27, 2022, as presented. D. Howard seconds. There's no discussion. Everyone votes aye, motion is carried.**

b. Scheduling of the next meeting.

- i. Next meeting is scheduled one month from this day..

6. Adjourn. M. Brown adjourns the meeting at 7:10.