

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, MARCH 28, 2023

DRAFT

Members of the Board Present: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards, Vice Chair; Erik Johnson, Treasurer; Shannon Smith; Ashley Cleare; Jackie Hawkins; Valdemar Garibay (via Zoom, left early); MaryPat Larrabee (arrived at 6:04 PM); Donna Howard (arrived at 6:13 PM).

Members of the Board Absent: David Glidden; Jeremy Perez; Jeremy Read; Sharon Holcomb; Debra Morton.

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

Members of the Public Present: Jen Yandow, Civilian Conservation Corps.

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order – **M. Brown called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM.**

a. Attendance and introductions - none

b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda - none

c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda – M. Brown requested adding a discussion on the upcoming District Music Festival. C. Sawyer asked to add Chair Affair to the agenda.

2. Presentation by regional Youth Conservation Corps effort – J. Yandow from Civilian Conservation Corps explained the background and history of the organization, including their mission statement. J. Yandow explained that there will be several small groups of youths in the age group 15-24, completing critical conservation projects from throughout Franklin County. She presented a brief explanation of some of the projects the groups will work on, from tree trimming to trail work throughout St. Albans, Swanton, the Islands, etc., and explained that the group is hoping to open a retail space in the Hannaford plaza to resell thrift items and aid with overall funding for the group. J. Yandow wrapped up her presentation with a slide of how members of the community can get involved with the organization, including liking the group on Facebook ("Civilian Conservation Corps Northwest Vermont") and donating items for the resale store. M. Brown asked what the Downtown Board can help. J. Yandow answered to join the newsletter, join the Facebook page, or attend weekly Zoom meetings.

3. Consider support for adding 12 No. Elm St. to Designated Downtown – C. Sawyer explained that there is a local property owner at 12 North Elm Street who would like the property to be added to the designated downtown. He explained that there is a process involved and benefits to property owners who are part of the designated downtown, such as special tax credits for historic building renovation. The owner would like to have access to these tax credits for 12 North Elm, which they are in the process of fixing up. C. Sawyer said the City Council is considering the request and would need to make the official request to the State, but that a letter of support from the Downtown Board would help move the

process along. M. Larrabee asked if the boundary of the Downtown should be extended as well, rather than just this building. C. Sawyer said this property is the only one up for consideration now, but that there could be a boundary expansion in the future. E. Johnson asked how it would impact the neighbors. C. Sawyer it wouldn't affect the neighbors, only this one building. E. Johnson and D. Howard expressed support for the letter.

E. Johnson made a motion for the Downtown Board to write a letter in support of adding 12 North Elm Street to the Designated Downtown area of St. Albans City. Second by D. Howard. Motion carried with all in favor at 6:35 PM.

4. SAFF Financial Report – C. Sawyer presented the financial report. E. Richards asked if there are outstanding, unpaid invoices that need to be paid from the unencumbered fund. A. Young said she would look into it. C. Sawyer said the City may have paid some invoices and need to be reimbursed. A. Cleare asked why there are two expenses for the event at Off the Rails. A. Young explained that the first charge was a down payment, the second was the balance. M. Brown asked why the Summer Concert series went into the negative. C. Sawyer said the City will make it whole once the funds for this year's concerts come in.

5. Discuss events/programs/committees.

a. Events – debriefs and upcoming.

i. Maple Festival, Solar Eclipse April 8, 2024, etc. – Maple Festival is coming up. C. Sawyer said downtown businesses in the Maple Fest zone are only allowed to sell items on the sidewalk that are for sale inside their business.

C. Sawyer said the Mayor has asked if the City is planning anything for the total eclipse on April 8, 2024. D. Howard explained that St. Albans is expected to be the "center" of the 2024 eclipse and a new book about it is coming out soon. A. Young explained that there are already supply chain problems and eclipse items need to be ordered now. M. Larrabee said the library will be handing out free glasses as well.

C. Sawyer introduced the Chair Affair event to the agenda. D. Howard said she sent a craftsman who makes chairs some specs and information about what they're looking for but that he hasn't gotten back to her yet. S. Smith said it would be a good event to hold in conjunction with the return of the food and wine festival in Taylor Park, or something similar.

M. Brown mentioned that BFA St. Albans is hosting the All-State Music Festival on May 11 & 12 and there will be a parade downtown to celebrate it. The hotel is sold out with high school students and their families who will be staying there and walking to and from the high school. There are three concerts planned – Thursday evening, Friday evening, and Saturday afternoon (just before Kingman Fest starts).

b. Programs.

i. Downtown Business Social, Downtown Dollars, etc.

M. Brown said the downtown business social went well. C. Sawyer asked if they want to do it again. D. Howard and M. Brown said yes. A. Young said it was well attended even by people

and businesses not from the downtown area. A. Young thought there was a great mix of new businesses and older businesses, as well as a nice mix of age groups. A. Young said she'd like to do another one, preferably a morning one to mix it up. She suggested contacting Main Squeeze about hosting. D. Howard suggested that the downtown businesses could share the responsibility of providing some food and refreshments if Main Squeeze doesn't want to do all the work by themselves. S. Smith and M. Brown said they have room to host a mixer eventually. C. Sawyer said the plan is to get to each business in time.

A. Young said there aren't a lot of updates for the Downtown Dollars program.

c. Fundraising/Appeals

i. T-Shirts art selection and design.

E. Johnson suggested that the Downtown Board members get the t-shirts, but in a special color that's exclusive to board members to wear to events.

A. Young pulled the two finalist t-shirt designs, "Anonymous 3" and "Blake Getchell 1," on the screen so everyone could view and discuss together. There was discussion and conversation surrounding the positives and negatives about each one, and whether the design should be on the front or back of the shirt. E. Johnson placed both designs on mock t-shirts online and shared them on the big screen in the room for the board to see which they prefer. D. Howard suggested using the designs as postcards and stickers as well. There was also discussion of using both designs and selling t-shirts with both designs, giving the customers an option of choosing which they prefer, as there was a fear that men might not like one design. C. Sawyer suggested getting Blake Getchell to make some edits, including moving "Saint Albans, Vermont" above the picture of the fountain.

E. Richards made a motion to accept the Blake Getchell design, with suggested changes. Second by S. Smith. T-shirt design approved with all in favor at 7:48 PM.

d. Marketing.

i. Debrief Rotary Expo display – A. Young said the event went well. D. Howard said the stickers were popular and they gave a lot away. E. Johnson suggested getting more oval stickers for the future, as they were popular. E. Johnson presented a brief summary of the weekend. E. Johnson suggested finding other events in the area that the Downtown Board could set a table up at and promote the downtown. E. Johnson suggested setting some promotion materials, such as posters, in an empty storefront in Hannaford plaza, to draw attention of people who might not make it downtown very often.

e. Arts – D. Howard is hosting a book fair in April with 15 authors coming in to share their books.

f. Social Media / Website – A. Young said the website is being updated with changes to business information. C. Sawyer said the website does need a little attention and filling in with more information. There was some discussion about changes to the way Facebook promotes events. E. Richards offered to work with A. Young to figure out how to better promote downtown events.

g. Organization – E. Johnson expressed an interest in putting together a list of events or planning items that board members should count on attending, so that all current and future members have an expectation to help out with different events. E. Johnson asked if the board could also limit the number of sitting members and expand the number of alternates so that it would be easier to reach quorum.

h. Other - none

6. Other Business.

a. Approval of Minutes –

M. Larrabee made a motion to approve the minutes of 1/24/23 as presented. Second by E. Johnson. Approved with all in favor except E. Richard abstaining.

M. Larrabee made a motion to approve the minutes of 3.6.23 as presented. Second by A. Cleare. Approved with all in favor except E. Johnson, J. Hawkins, and D. Howard abstaining.

b. Next meeting date format – April 25, 2023 (school vacation week)

c. Other – E. Johnson asked to add a proposed community survey with a raffle to the next month's meeting agenda. A. Young planned on including a "Downtown Dollars accepted here" sticker for businesses to the next meeting's agenda as well. J. Hawkins suggested the Downtown Board set up a table or booth at the 14th Star maple beverage tasting event during Maple Fest.

7. Adjourn.

M. Brown adjourned the meeting at 8:07 PM.