

**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, JUNE 25TH, 2024**

***DRAFT***

**Members of the Board Present:** IN PERSON: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards, Vice Chair; Jackie Hawkins, Sec/Treasurer; Ashley Cleare; Lauren Bode; Shannon Smith; Donna Howard; K.F. Samandari; Debra Morton VIA ZOOM: Valdemar Garibay, Nichole Cunningham (SACA)

**Members of the Board Absent:** Jeremy Read; Sharon Holcomb

**Members of the SACA Committee Absent:** Jennifer Kostuck

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

**Members of the Public Present:** Erik Johnson

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order. M. Brown calls meeting to order at 6:03 PM.
  - a. Attendance and introductions.
  - b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda
    - i. E. Johnson would like the board to continue considering having areas to lock up bicycles downtown, noting the use of lamp posts. A. Young explains that Walk/Bike St. Albans has been actively seeking input and they will be involved in this process as it moves along. A. Cleare mentions placing bike parking near where cameras are. D. Howard mentions using the empty spaces in the parking garage.
  - c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda - None
2. City Safety Forum - Downtown crime issues - How do we help?
  - a. A. Young recalls S. Smith bringing up safety issues at the last board meeting and wanted to bring it back to this meeting to see if members have any further thoughts or ideas. Since then, there was a City Safety Forum and A. Young believes it was very informational and allowed residents to voice their stories and concerns.
  - b. M. Brown appreciated hearing updated statistics from Chief Lamothe regarding felony crimes being down, but retail thefts having skyrocketed. In addition, M. Brown is spending more of her day going through video to try and help identify the individuals committing these crimes at the request of the public who have been victims of these crimes.
  - c. D. Howard mentions that the Street Crimes Unit is coming back July 1st.
  - d. A. Cleare felt hopeful from that meeting, but it doesn't change the fact that things are happening on a daily basis that are continuing to not be addressed. She notes that we've missed utilizing a proactive approach and now need solutions for now and looking to the future.
  - e. D. Howard mentions that the hands' of the police are tied as the court is dismissing the cases. A. Cleare reminds that legislation is changing and there should be hope that some of that will change.
  - f. A. Young mentions that Jason Wetherby is always willing to come and have a discussion. A. Cleare mentions that he is also very responsive to emails and has popped down to chat with her when she reaches out.
  - g. E. Richards asks if there was any next steps or plans following this City Safety Forum. A. Young is not entirely sure, but knew that the forum was meant to be platform where concerned residents could voice their concerns and hear from the entities that are dealing with these problems day in and out.

- h. S. Smith is just concerned about people getting hurt.
  - i. L. Bode believes there is a practical way to look at this and that addressing basic human needs missing from the lives of many, by way of a safe space, could be a step towards fixing some of these problems.
  - j. A. Cleare shares that someone from Tim's House explained they have opened up their lobby and showers for everyone, regardless of if they are staying there or not.
  - k. M. Brown believes that it would be beneficial for the City to consider having a committee/group that is dedicated specifically towards the safety concerns in the area.
  - l. S. Smith recalls hearing that people are suggesting we look at what other small cities in other states are doing to address the problems we are facing.
  - m. D. Howard suggests the downtown businesses seek a security consultant who would have better knowledge on how to protect. E. Richards and A. Cleare are interested in what that could look like.
  - n. A. Young will look into a security consultant, as well as reaching out to Tim's House, Martha's Kitchen, CVOEO about a meeting to discuss how we can help one another. E. Richards adds that A. Young should consider inviting Melinda White as well.
3. SAFF Financial Report
- a. A. Young shares that not much has changed. SACA has gone down slightly, but that is because they are seeing a lot more traffic from the public and doing a lot of programming.
  - b. E. Richards asks for an update on Downtown Dollars. A. Young will have more at the next meeting.
  - c. D. Howard asks how much longer we have the Vibrancy Grant for. A. Young said it has come to close and we spent it all (Eclipse, Fireworks, Laser Light Show, etc.).
4. Discuss events/programs/committees
- a. Events
    - i. Northwest Farmers Market, Pride Weekend, Juneteenth, Summer Concert Series, Make Music Day, Church Street Festival, etc.
      - 1. Northwest Farmers Market - no update
      - 2. Pride Weekend
        - 1. A. Young thinks it went great. All board members agree. S. Smith thinks it will just grow next year, especially more involvement from volunteers. J. Hawkins has continued to hear positive things.
      - 3. Juneteenth
        - 1. D. Morton said it went well, but it was rainy, hot, and muggy. Due to the weather, some speakers did not show, but Winnie Wilkinson pulled people in to speak. Someone from Bennington traveled up to sell their food.
        - 2. A. Cleare notes that she saw something on social media that morning and that was the only reason she knew about it. She mentions having a banner posted at the top of Lake Street in Taylor Park to notify people of what is going on could be helpful.
        - 3. E. Johnson thinks it would be a great idea for the board to look into getting a digital sign board so that events can be posted regularly that updates the public on happenings in the park.
        - 4. M. Brown suggests that a flyer be given to downtown businesses so that when customers are asking what is going on, they have a resource to share with them.
      - 4. Summer Concert Series
      - 5. Make Music Day
        - 1. A. Young didn't hear anything about that, but they had to move it.
      - 6. Church Street Festival
        - 1. A. Young has a meeting on that this week.
    - ii. Sidewalk Sale Weekend - July 11-13 (Thurs-Sat)

1. A. Young saw that As the Crow Flies has put something up. D. Howard has some authors coming. A. Young will bring flyers around to everyone. D. Howard asks if A. Young can add the author open house to that.
- iii. The Downtown Broodhaha
1. A. Young shares that Donna Blachely (Artists in Residence) came to her with an idea around doing a fundraiser with knitted/crocheted chickens. They are considered “emotional support chickens” and are a very popular in the knitting/crocheting world.
  2. S. Smith asks how much it would be to sponsor a chicken. A. Young shares information on that, also explaining that the event is planned to be during the month of September (National Chicken Month). There is potential for a gathering at the end of the month where auction winners can pick up their chickens and enjoy some food.
  3. A. Cleare references the chair affair and that businesses are able to decorate a they wish, and can be branded to the business. She wonders what is in it for the businesses. A. Young explains that the idea is each business sponsoring chickens will have their own personalized post on social media. A. Young will also create a map to advertise who is sponsoring chickens.
  4. S. Smith asks what the plan would be in the case that not all the chickens are auctioned off. A. Young mentions that the plan would be to either sell them straight out at the end of the fundraiser, or to donate them to places like the Senior Center, Tim’s House, Laurie’s House, etc.
  5. M. Brown asks if businesses can special request their chickens. A. Young explains that most artists are using their leftover yarn and may not necessarily be wanting to increase expenses to personalize them.
  6. M. Brown asks what A. Young needs from the board. A. Young just wanted to be sure that everyone was on board and that we would be the fiscal agent.
- b. Programs - No update
- c. Fundraising/Appeals
- i. Sales at NWFM and Summer Concert Series - sign ups available
    1. A. Young mentions that Nicole and Debra were the ones at the last one and Debra had some thoughts and wanted to hear what she had to say.
    2. D. Morton suggests that the band should be mentioning that the Downtown Board is set-up and there selling shirts. The band announces the food trucks and 14th Star being there. M. Brown recalls bands making that announcement back when the Downtown board was selling raffle tickets.
    3. S. Smith asks about a space for donations. A. Young will be sure to have something for donations in the future.
    4. M. Brown would like to see improvement in the table/set-up. A. Young briefly looked into that and it was about \$350 for a tent and table. E. Richards thinks the tent should include the logo and can send information about where NCSS got theirs from.
    5. A. Young asks for approval of a certain amount. E. Richards motions to approve \$1,100 for the purchase of a logo’d pop-up tent and table. D. Howard seconds. M. Brown wonders if the city would consider pitching in. A. Young feels they wouldn’t since it will be branded specifically for the Downtown board. Motion passes with all in favor.
    6. J. Hawkins curious if the board wants to consider changing up the strategy for tabling at the Summer Concert Series and doing a raffle instead. The board decides to do a raffle at the next one, in addition to selling some shirts. A. Young also plans to promote the Broodhaha.
    7. M. Brown asks how sign-ups are going. A. Young is going to take a look and reach out regarding that later.

- d. Marketing - None
    - i. Business/Consumer Committee Update - no update
    - ii. Discover Guide Pages
      - 1. A. Young shares the proofs. M. Brown asks who designed them. A. Young shares it was her and Suzanne.
    - iii. Great Eastern Radio Ads for the Concert Series
      - 1. A. Young reminds that the board got the secondary banner sponsor from Great Eastern Radio. A. Young went down to Williston a couple weeks ago to record some ads and shares those with the board.
  - e. Arts
    - i. SACA Update
      - 1. A. Young quickly shares that they've been adding to their programming. New people are interested in starting new classes. Nicole and Jennifer have been discussing a potential membership for the frequent flyers of their programming. They are also working on a proposal for the Nourish space.
      - 2. A. Cleare asks if there has been any talk about the Nourish signage being taken down. A. Young explains that is on the city and it has been mentioned but hasn't happened yet.
      - 3. S. Smith asks if they are hopeful they can land permanently in the Nourish space. A. Young shares that is the hope, but there are people who are pushing back on that. J. Hawkins asks if the state owns the building. A. Young confirms. A. Cleare asks what the other options are for SACA if they can't be in the Nourish space. A. Young shares that the city does not have any alternative suggestions at this time.
  - f. Social Media/Website - None
  - g. Organization - None
  - h. Other - None
    - i. Promoting the train
      - 1. A. Young put this on there because Mayor Smith was curious about how to highlight traveling from St. Albans to other spaces.
      - 2. A. Cleare remembers looking into it and it being substantially more expensive than a flight. E. Richards' son takes it to and from DC for college and it is fairly affordable in her opinion.
      - 3. M. Brown shares that it can be difficult to promote since the train arrives in St. Albans at 9 PM and departs at 9 AM. This requires visitors to commit to a couple overnights, which makes it hard to promote day trips to St. Albans.
      - 4. A. Cleare mentions a mini campaign of day trips that people can do via the train. M. Brown thinks it's a great idea, but that it promotes people leaving the City to visit other towns in Vermont.
      - 5. A. Young will look into further and discuss with the state downtown coalition to see about some collaborating and partnerships with promotion.
5. Other Business
- a. Approval of Minutes 4/23/2024 and 5/28/24
    - i. D. Howard motions to approve April minutes as presented. E. Richards seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
    - ii. E. Richards motions to approve May minutes as presented. D. Howard seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
  - b. Next meeting July 23, 2024, 6 PM
  - c. Other - None.
6. Adjourn. M. Brown adjourns the meeting at 7:40 PM.