

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, SEPTEMBER 24TH, 2024

DRAFT

Members of the Board Present: IN PERSON: Emily Richards, Vice Chair; Jackie Hawkins, Secretary/Treasurer; Shannon Smith; K.F. Samandari; Valdemar Garibay VIA ZOOM: Lauren Bode

Members of the Board Absent: Maureen Brown, Chair; Donna Howard; Ashley Cleare; Jeremy Read; Sharon Holcomb; Debra Morton;

Members of the SACA Committee Present: Nichole Cunningham

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: Adam Smith

1. Begin Recording and Call to Order.
 - a. Attendance and introductions.
 - i. Introductions are shared with Adam, and Adam shares they work at Barry Callebaut while also helping S. Smith with work at Nelly's.
 - b. Public Comment on items not on the agenda - None.
 - c. Additions or Deletions to Agenda - None.
2. SAFF Financial Report
 - a. A. Young notes a few things: Festival of Trees partnerships have come in, the bidding for chickens raised around \$7,000, and she needs to touch base with C. Sawyer regarding negative line item for Summer Concert Series, noting money has come in for that.
 - b. S. Smith asks how money gets into the "Last Night" fund. A. Young believes that money is past gala button sales.
3. Discuss events/programs/committees
 - a. Events
 - i. Northwest Farmers Market, Downtown Broodhaha 9/2-9/27 (Hen House Party 9/27), Spooky Saturday 10/26, Festival of Trees 11/30-12/8, etc.
 1. Northwest Farmers Market
 1. Just about a month left. The port-a-potty had to be removed again and will not be returned for the last farmers market, due to vandalism.
 2. Summer Concert Series - Going well
 3. Downtown Broodhaha (Hen House Party 9/27)
 1. 5:30 - 7 PM on Friday September 27th is the celebration.
 2. Nelly's is doing a cash bar.
 3. D. Howard joins at 6:10 PM.
 4. Spooky Saturday
 1. Saturday October 26th from 12pm - 4pm
 2. A. Young is going to focus on this next week. D. Morton has some girl scouts that would be willing to help pass out candy or help with the haunted house.

5. Festival of Trees
 1. A. Young is working on a tri-fold that will go out to businesses with information on the schedule events. Gala ticket prices will be lower this year. In addition to Josh Pallotta, Care Partners Adult Day Center and Manahan Feed a Family will also be joining as charities.
 2. E. Richards mentions the Holiday Raffle and needing to get started on that.
 3. A. Young highlights the need for volunteers with events throughout the weekend.
- ii. Film Festival, Fun Film experience
 1. A. Young attended a webinar that focused on civic film festivals where special viewings are shown around civic topics (arts in your community, homelessness, drug use, etc).
 2. A. Young met with Zach Scheffler (film club) to discuss their thoughts and what something like this could look like in our community, noting that we have the Welden Theater. V. Garibay curious how much a film costs. A. Young shares what she knows, but needs to do some more research around firm numbers.
- iii. Downtown Car Show events - Church Street vs. Main Street - recommendation?
 1. A. Young and C. Sawyer had discussed the possibility of shifting the closure of Main Street to Church Street for Car show events. No board members have strong feelings either way. S. Smith asks what the Downtown businesses think about it. A. Young will reach out to them and see what their thoughts are.
 2. J. Hawkins asks if the city gets anything for these events. A. Young explains they don't.
- iv. Calcutta - Saturday November 16th at American Legion Hall 5-9 PM
 1. V. Garibay explains it is a fundraiser put on by the St. Albans Museum. Flyers available.
 2. \$100 - 1 meal, 1 ball OR \$125 - 2 meals, 1 ball
- b. Programs - None.
- c. Fundraising/Appeals
 - i. E. Richards asks about shirts. A. Young explains that Rail City Market has the two new colors right now but does not have an update on what has sold.
- d. Marketing - None
 - i. Winter ad program with Seven Days and VPR
 1. Holiday Ad Program with Seven Days, A. Young explains the cost breakdown for 1/4 page and the board would seek buy-in from 6 downtown businesses, first come first serve.
 2. J. Kostuck thinks it wouldn't hurt to include the cost of the 1/2 page for downtown businesses in case they may be interested.
 3. J. Hawkins motions to approve \$500 for the Ad Program with Seven Days contingent on checking in about the 1/2 page. V. Garibay seconds. S. Smith asks what happens if we don't get buy in from 6 businesses. A. Young explains the board would be on the hook for the difference, but it is rare that 6 businesses aren't interested. Motion passes with all in favor.
 4. Holiday Ad Program with VPR, A. Young doesn't have updated costs for this, but shares what was spent last year, \$1,206. D. Howard motions to approve spending \$1,500 on the Holiday Ad Program with VPR. S. Smith seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
 - ii. East Coast Traveler
 1. A. Young explains that M. Brown works with someone who is associated with East Coast Traveler and that it hits a lot of people that may travel down this way. Last year, we were fortunate to advertise in there at no cost.
 2. He shared an idea with them around a co-op ad that would allow downtown businesses the opportunity to include their logo.

3. S. Smith worries it may feel like it is always the same businesses, and maybe not all Downtown Businesses are in the loop with opportunities like this. A. Young suggests including the recreation that is available around (trails, rail trail, pool, etc.)
- e. Arts
- i. SACA Update
 1. N. Cunningham explains that they took a slight pause to spend time with family and recalibrate. Jennifer and Nichole plan to have something back and scheduled for Spooky Saturday and if not that, definitely for Festival of Trees.
- f. Social Media/Website
- i. Biking page on the website-including parking map, trail heads, bike stolen FAQ- working with Walk/Bike St. Albans
 1. A. Young and V. Garibay are members of the Walk/Bike St. Albans group. Recently, the group did a survey on the locations of bike racks and are now working on a map to show where they are. A. Young explained that the group wondered if there is opportunity to add a page on the website to spread awareness and information around this. The board loves the idea and is open to however the City formats it.
 2. V. Garibay shares that Spectrum had been looking to purchase two bike racks and the Rotary generously donated \$500 for the cause.
 3. S. Smith shares concern about the various social media pages and that visitors to the area are actually saying that they are afraid to come. S. Smith is wondering if there is any authority of the city to request more structure to that page. A. Young doesn't believe they do and explains they will touch on this later in the agenda.
 - ii. Photography with Lawrence Nixon-Drone VT LLC
 1. A. Young shares a quote from Lawrence Nixon-Drone for some drone footage and on the ground pictures. S. Smith asks what events. A. Young thinks Spooky Saturday, Festival of Trees, the Gala, Pride, and would be open to the boards thoughts on other events.
 2. D. Howard likes the idea and would just want to be sure that the board knows specifically what rights they will have with these photos. A. Young will check on that.
 3. D. Howard motions to approve the bid from VT Drone LLC (pending confirmation of photo rights). N. Cunningham seconds. Motion passes with all in favor.
- g. Organization
- i. Downtown Retreat - Takeaways
 1. Legislative agenda
 1. Negative Social Media (what do we do about it) was a topic A. Young brought to the table at this retreat. Neighborhood Ninjas was an idea that came out of that, noting that in her role, she is unable to respond to these social media posts. Another town has a group of people who speak up on behalf of them to spread information to the public around factual items that can be helpful when brought to light.
 2. S. Smith suggests a Positive Post campaign to try and turn the narrative. D. Howard wonders about reaching out to community groups and encouraging them to post positive experiences. A. Young mentions putting up flyers around the downtown area with QR codes encouraging people to post positive experiences.
 2. Supporting local public safety updates and ordinances
 1. A. Young reiterates that we are not alone in the city or state. This is going on across the country. Unfortunately, all the pressure we are feeling to make change, is not all on us. It is on the state to enact policy change.
 2. A. Young notes that Brattleboro, Vermont has done a lot of work on this. They have put forward ordinances and are seeing some positive changes from this. A. Young has suggested that C. Sawyer look into what they are doing.

3. S. Smith wonders if the Downtown Board could request an ordinance around prohibiting campers from parking on city streets. A. Young explains that the board can put together a proposal or petition with signatures and bring to City Council.
 4. *L. Bode leaves the meeting at 7:18 pm.*
 5. V. Garibay asks if A. Young could invite the mayor to next months Downtown meeting. A. Young will check.
 6. Part of the money paid to the Downtown Coalition is to hire a legislative representative that advocates and speaks on behalf of the downtowns
- h. Other - None
- i. NCSS Luncheon - Request for Downtown Dollar Donation, t shirts?
 1. E. Richards explains that the CRT program hosts a luncheon each year for their clients and staff and A. Young was asked by Meaghan LaChance if there was anyone willing to donate some things for their gifts.
 2. D. Howard is not opposed to the idea, but knows that it would set a precedence and maybe the board needs a policy around how requests like this would be decided on. A. Young will look into what other Downtowns do with these requests.
 3. If board members wanted to donate money towards this and, in turn, provide Downtown Dollars to NCSS, Arleigh would help coordinate that.
4. Other Business
- a. Approval of Minutes 8/27/24
 - i. A. Young forgot to print them off, will table until October meeting.
 - b. Next meeting October 22, 2024, 6 PM
 - i. E. Richard confirms the next meeting.
 - c. Other - None.
 - i. D. Howard plugs for a photo of Spooky Saturday to add in the Public Spaces book.
 - ii. V. Garibay shares upcoming blood drive dates (locations): 10/2 (City Hall), 10/7 (Legion), 10/26 (St. Mary's), 10/31 (City Hall).
5. Adjourn. E. Richards adjourns meeting at 7:39 PM.