

MEETING MINUTES
MEETING OF THE ST. ALBANS CITY DOWNTOWN BOARD
& BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ST. ALBANS FOR THE FUTURE
6:00 PM TUESDAY, JANUARY 26, 2021
VIA REMOTE CONNECTION

Approved February 23, 2021.

Board Members Present: Maureen Brown, Chair; Emily Richards; Elizabeth Reed, Secretary Treasurer; Keith Longmore; David Glidden; Donna Howard; Erik Johnson, Vice-Chair; Valdemar Garibay.

Board Members Absent: Ben Letourneau; Jeremy Read; Rachael Sink; Ashley Cleare

Public Present: Ashley Sandy, Matt Haefele, Emily Hoffman w/ London Middlebury, Judy Zsoldos w/ Festival of Trees (FoT)

Staff Members Present – Wendy Coy, Minute Taker; Chip Sawyer, Director of Planning & Development; Marty Manahan, Director of Operations

1. **Begin Recording**
2. **Call to Order – Chair Brown called the meeting to order at 6:15.**
 - a) **Attendance and introductions** – None
 - b) **Additions or Deletions to the Agenda** – None
3. **Annual Meeting**
 - a) **Nominations and elections of officers** – The Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary-Treasurer needed to be elected. Chair Brown stated that she would be willing to continue on as Chair. Member Richards stated that she would be willing to be Vice-Chair. Vice-Chair Johnson volunteered to be Secretary-Treasurer.

Current Secretary-Treasurer Reed made a motion to appoint Maureen Brown as Chair, Emily Richards as Vice-Chair and Erik Johnson as Secretary-Treasurer. Member Howard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.
4. **Discuss Social Media scope** – Ashley Sandy, Matt Haefele and Emily Hoffman started the conversation by introducing themselves. They are a South Burlington based company. London Middlebury did a SWOT analysis of the Downtown social media presence. Ms. Sandy praised the strength of the organic followers. One of the weaknesses was a lack of videos. An opportunity would be to collaborate more with the business owners. Ms. Hoffman has already started reaching out to the business owners and has been positively received. The demographic of followers is predominately female on Facebook and Instagram between the ages of 35 and 44 years old. One of the big objectives is to drive traffic to the website and to show that being promoted on the website is of great value. They have implemented tools and strategies to monitor traffic. They are planning a minimum of 3-5 posts per week / 12-20 posts per month. They would like to do more capture the moment stories. They are leveraging a very aggressive

hashtag strategy but, as time goes on, will optimize the hashtags. They are going to keep increasing the engagement with hashtags, comments & likes and stories. They are using three different programs to manage the content and posts - Later, Hootsuite and databox. Ms. Sandy said the Board could help by suggesting, sharing and creating content. She showed the Board a Google Form that can be submitted to London Middlebury with content. The next steps would be the need lifestyle photographs and an introductory training workshop for any Board member who would like to attend. Chair Brown asked if you video a person in the park do you need their authorization in order to post the video. Mr. Sawyer stated that if it is in a public space there are less restrictions. Ms. Sandy added that they can put a note on platforms that anything can be removed if you want it to be removed. Ms. Hoffman has reached out to businesses to have them create a sixty second video of themselves. Member Richards asked where the Google form lived and would it be distributed to the community. Ms. Sandy stated that she would send the form to the Board. The ability to post content would be included on the website. Member Richards stated that she was excited that, at the end of the raffle, pictures posted to Facebook were then posting directly to Instagram. Mr. Sawyer asked if the Google form was to be sent to London Middlebury to give them ideas or should it be sent to London Middlebury after a post had already been made. Ms. Sandy stated that she would send to all Board members the Google form and will use a Doodle poll to get the training scheduled.

5. **Discuss FoT with volunteers** – Ms. Zsoldos stated that FoT was difficult to do this year due to COVID restrictions but that they wanted to keep it in front of the community. Gift baskets of Christmas Crafts were given out at Frozen Ogre and Santa stood in the window of the CCV building so children could stop by and visit. 75 children came by to see Santa. He would stand in lobby area so that they could speak to Santa through the door. When there were no children, he would step out and wave at the cars as they drove by. There was a donation box and they received \$25.00 in donations. Twelve trees were decorated and on display in the CCV building. Many people asked if City Hall was open. Martha's Kitchen did a takeout dinner. It was a success and they would like to do it again next year. The Committee was down to two people this year; worked out well managed quite well. Next year more volunteers would be needed for planning gala and trees. They had a number of people volunteer for next year but they could always use more. It would be best to have more people doing a lot of small things than have one person doing it by themselves. The Board discussed various ways to get more volunteers:
- Start putting posts out on social media to keep the Festival in people's minds. Secretary-Treasurer Reed suggested that it could be framed that even if a person can't make a big commitment of time there are various events taking place in the City that could use volunteers.
 - Circulate a to-do list at the beginning of September so that there would be an awareness as to what is needed.
 - The printing can be sent to City Hall.
 - Post a standard FAQ concerning the event to cut down on the amount of emails.
 - Have different people available to answer the emails as the event draws closer.
 - Festival of Trees should have an Instagram account

6. **SAFF Financial Report** – Mr. Sawyer reviewed the financial report. \$29,000 dollars of Downtown Dollars has been put into the field. Mr. Sawyer clarified the different deposits that were made. Mr. Sawyer asked how the Board would like to pay the \$500 / month social media fee. It was decided that it would be split between merchants and unencumbered. Member Howard asked if SAFF has taken their part of FoT fund. Mr. Sawyer responded that they hadn't. 10% would be \$300.00. Holiday Raffle still has to pay some hours to Member Richards and the remainder would go to City Hall for Raffle expenses.
7. **Discuss annual media schedule** – The schedule is not quite done.
8. **Discuss events/programs/committees** –
- a) **COVID recovery activities** – No updates
 - b) **Website Update** – No Update
 - c) **Last Night, Break the Winter Blues, Rotary Hearts event, Maple Festival, etc** -
 - **Last Night** – Secretary-Treasurer Reed stated that they were unable to do live band performances due to the Governor's restrictions of single family households. There was an online paint and sip over zoom. People watched the replay quite a bit
 - **Break the Winter Blues** – Eight businesses responded that they are interested in participating. Member Howard is reaching out for advertising.
 - **Rotary Hearts Event** – The Rotary is putting together a fund raiser selling hearts listing the person who bought it and the front line worker it is dedicated to. Businesses will sell the hearts and they will be displayed in the corner window at Ace Hardware. There will also be an electronic message board.
 - **Maple Festival** – It has been cancelled this year due to not knowing whether people will be able to attend in the spring. The Maple Festival Committee would like businesses to do a window contest that is Maple themed. Member Read has volunteered to be a judge. The windows would also display coloring and art by children. Member Howard volunteered to participate; Member Howard suggested flags for the light poles indicating that it was the Maple Festival.
 - d) **Welcome Decals** – Mr. Sawyer has not been able to move forward on them this month. He has had several discussions with people who have concerns about posting anything that criticizes any form of speech including hate speech. Every decal will have the welcome message on it with different designs around it.
 - e) **Downtown Dollars** – Member Howard stated that she has heard that people are hoping that this program continues. Mr. Sawyer stated that it seems to be going well and doesn't see the support for it going away. There should be a social media push that this program is still out there. Valentine's Day would be a good time for these. Chair Brown suggested contacting a florist to have them added in floral bouquets when they are sent out.
 - f) **Arts** – Member Howard stated that they have not met in a while. It is hard to get people motivated when there is so little that can be accomplished.

- g) Other** – Kingman Street Project going before voters in March. The City is looking at installing a five foot sidewalk down Center street. They are doing sidewalks and curbs on Stebbins St. this year. Member Howards asked about the Big Chair in the Park. It is popular. Maybe there could be a winter version. One suggestion was to get a ski resort to donate an old lift chair and have it painted.

- 9. Discuss renewal of SAFF / City merger contract** – Before April, the contract between the City and SAFF needs to be renewed. The contract was attached to materials for the Board to review.

- 10. Other Business**

 - a) Approval of November 24, 2020 Meeting Minutes** – Member Richards made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Secretary-Treasurer Reed seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.
 - b) Next Meeting Date and format** – February 23, 2021: It will be the same time and format.
 - c) Other** –

- 11. Public Comment** – None.

- 12. Adjourn** – Member Richards made a motion to adjourn at 7:53. Member Howard seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.